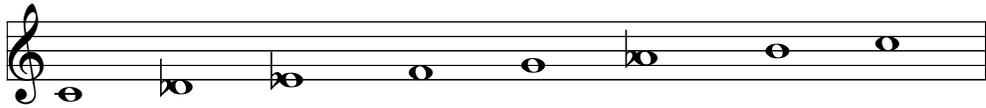


THE HARMONIC MINOR (b2) SCALE

I'm sure there must be a more esoteric name for this scale, but the above name sums it up quite neatly.

The scale I'm referring to is this:



As you can see it is just like a harmonic minor scale but has a flattened second note.

It has a bit of an exotic ring to it, on account of the minor third interval between the sixth and seventh notes and the semitone between the first and second notes. It has similarities with not only the harmonic minor scale but with the Middle-Eastern major scale.

Like the normal harmonic minor scale, the minor third interval can be bridged by playing the minor seventh note (the Bb in this instance), or sometimes by the major sixth, the A here.

Triads built from this scale are as follows:

Cm D^b E^{b+} Fm G⁽⁻⁵⁾ A^b B⁺

The Eb has been enharmonically changed to a D# in the B+ chord.

Only 1 triad with a flattened fifth is shown, but there are others - Db (-5), Ab (-5) and B (-5).

Now let's see what four-note chords can be built on the scale:

Cm^Δ Cm^{Δ(+5)} D^{bΔ} D^{b7} E^{b7+} Fm⁷ F[∅]

G⁷⁽⁻⁵⁾ A^{bΔ} A^{b mΔ} A^{b6} A^{b m6}

Ignore the time signature - my computer is having its own little joke on me.

There is no need to commit all of these to memory. However, it is interesting to note that where you find any of these types of chord, you will be able to use this scale, starting on the appropriate note. For example, for an E7+ chord, you could use the C# harmonic minor (b2); for an F#7+, you could use the D# (or Eb) harmonic minor (b2) and so on. What you have to do is to work out the intervals between the tonic and the bass of the chord and then apply this to the scale in question. Eg. G7(-5) is a perfect fifth above the tonic. Therefore if you have an Eb7(-5), the scale will be a perfect fifth down from the Eb - which is Ab. This is a general rule and applies to all scales and chords.

Apart from these chords, the scale could also be used against a C triad, ie. the major chord on the tonic. The Eb (minor 3rd) of the scale then becomes like a blue note against the major 3rd of the chord. This will apply to all other keys.

This scale is a bit cumbersome to remember. Where it might come in useful is where you get a long stretch on one chord - a simple major or minor triad, or a tonic or tonic and dominant pedal (eg. C + G). It makes a change from the major or minor Middle-Eastern scale but is less oriental in sound - a sort of half-way house between East and West.