

## Chapter 6 Natural Minor Scales and Minor Key Signatures

In this chapter you will:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Write the first five notes of a minor scale           | 5. Write some minor key signatures           |
| 2. Write a natural minor scale                           | 6. Find relative major and minor keys        |
| 3. Write natural minor scales on the circle of fifths, 1 | 7. Write major and minor key signatures      |
| 4. Write natural minor scales on the circle of fifths, 2 | 8. Write minor keys on the circle of fifths: |

### 6.1 Write the first five notes of minor scales

John Hopkins

We three kings of O-ri-ent are, Bear-ing gifts we tra-verse a- far.

1 2 3 4 5  
W H W W

key note

- The Christmas Carol, “We Three Kings” is in a minor key and its notes are taken from a minor scale. Music in minor keys often seems darker, more serious or more exotic than music in major keys.
- There are three minor scales: natural, harmonic and melodic.
- All three minor scales have the same pattern of whole steps and half steps for the first five notes: whole, half, whole, whole (see above).
- As a result of the half step between scale degrees 2 and 3, rather than between 3 and 4 as in major, scale degree 3 is lower in minor than in major. The lower third scale degree gives minor scales their character.

1. *PLAY* the first part of “We Three Kings” in the illustration above. Do you hear a darker, more exotic mood than in previous examples?
2. *WRITE* the first five notes of the following minor scales.
  - a. *DRAW* five notes in ascending order beginning with the key note
  - b. *WRITE* the numbers 1 through 5 beneath the notes.
  - c. *WRITE* the pattern W H W W between the numbers.
  - d. *INSERT* flats or sharps between notes according to the pattern.

f minor                      b minor                      c sharp minor

Date:

6.2 Write a natural minor scale

Greensleeves

A - las my love you do me wrong,

key note

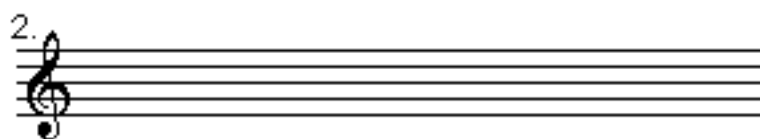
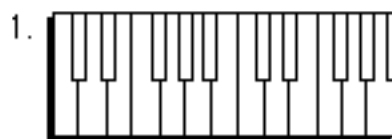
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
 W H W W H W W

↓

- The notes of “Greensleeves” are taken from the natural minor scale.
- The natural minor scale has this pattern of half steps and whole steps:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
 W H W W H W W

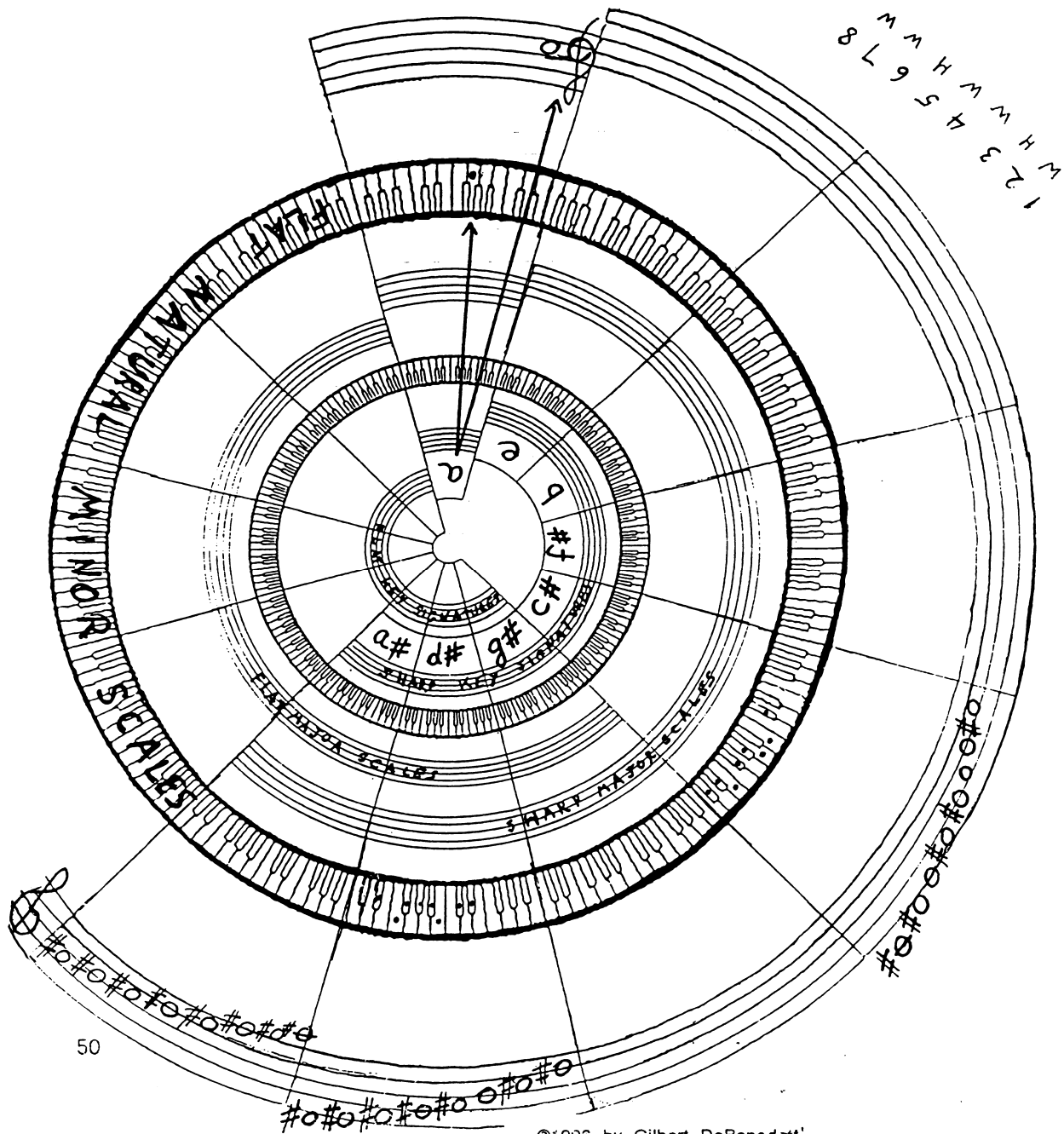
1. *DRAW* dots for a natural minor scale on the keyboard below beginning with the key note C.
2. *WRITE* the notes for a natural minor scale on the staff below beginning with the key note B.
  - a. *DRAW* eight notes beginning and ending on the note B
  - b. *NUMBER* the notes from 1 to 8
  - c. *WRITE* W’s and H’s between the numbers in the pattern shown above
  - d. *INSERT* sharps or flats between the notes so the distances between the notes correspond to the pattern of half steps and whole steps.



Date:

6.3 Write natural minor scales on the circle of fifths, 1

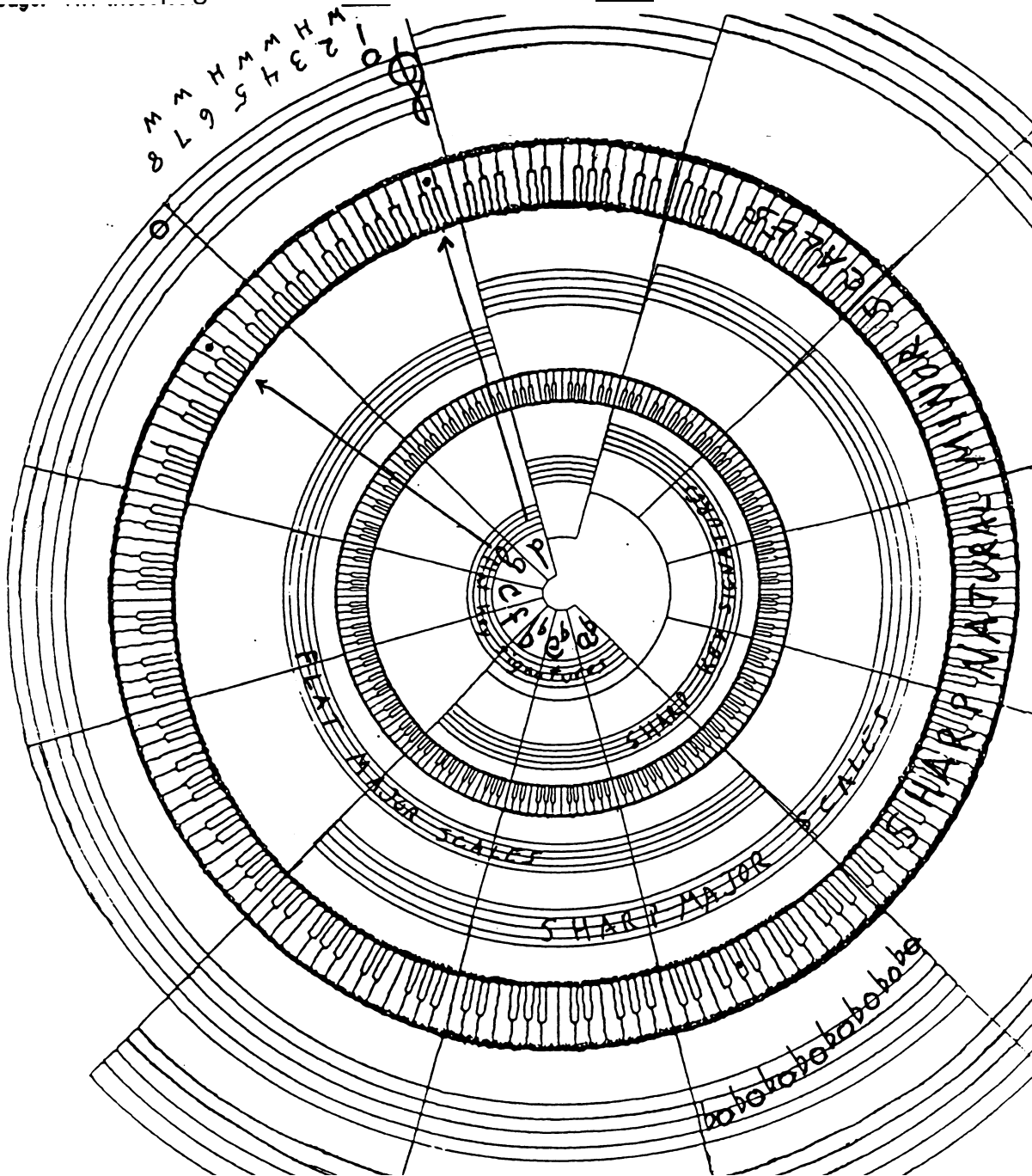
1. *DRAW dots* for the notes of the missing natural minor scales on the outside keyboard. Only use the key notes shown inside the innermost keyboard.
2. *WRITE notes* for the missing natural minor scales on the outside staff. All these scales, except the one on top (a natural minor), will have sharps.



Date:

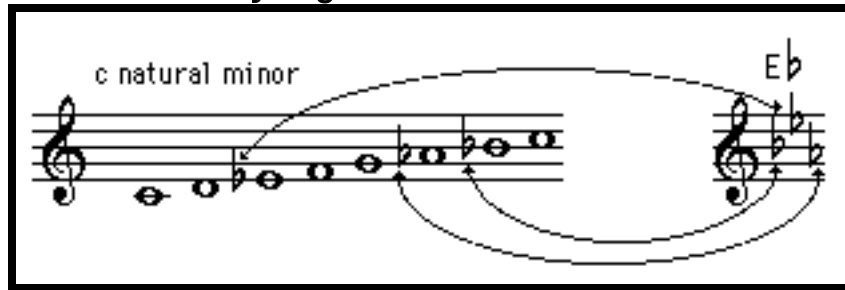
6.4 Write natural minor scales on the circle of fifths, 2

1. *DRAW* dots for the notes of the missing natural minor scales on the outside keyboard. Only use the key notes shown inside the innermost keyboard.
2. *WRITE* notes for the missing natural minor scales on the staff to the left and bottom of the page. All these scales will have flats.



Date:

6.5 Write some minor key signatures



- Sharps and flats in natural minor scales are the same as sharps and flats in major scales and major key signatures. In the example above, the flats in the c natural minor scale are the same as the flats in the E flat major key signature (and in the E flat major scale).
  - Key signatures for minor keys are derived from natural minor scales.
  - Therefore, all key signatures have both a major and a minor key.
- Three flats is the key signature for both E flat major and for c minor.

1. *WRITE* the following natural minor scales. Use the procedure on worksheet 6.2.
2. *WRITE* their key signatures.
3. *IDENTIFY* the major keys which have the same key signatures.

a. b natural minor

Two blank bass clef staves. The first staff is for writing the b natural minor scale. The second staff is for writing the b minor key signature.

same as
major

b. f natural minor

Two blank treble clef staves. The first staff is for writing the f natural minor scale. The second staff is for writing the f minor key signature.

same as
major

c. f# natural minor

Two blank bass clef staves. The first staff is for writing the f# natural minor scale. The second staff is for writing the f# minor key signature.

same as
major

Date:

6.6 Find relative major and minor keys

In f minor:

Key note F. Same key signature as A $\flat$

half steps  
1 2 3

F G A

Skip over one letter:  
The major key is A $\flat$ , not G $\sharp$

- Major and minor keys are related to each other when they have the same key signature. When there is such a relationship the keys are called relative major and minor keys. F minor is the relative minor of A flat, and A flat is the relative major of f minor.
- Minor keys are three half steps down from their relative major key. Major keys then must be three half steps up from their relative minor key. The keyboard above shows this distance between F and A flat.
- There must be one letter in between the letter names for relative major and minor keys. For the keys of f minor and A flat there is one letter, G, in between.
- Minor keys are written lower case to distinguish them from major keys.

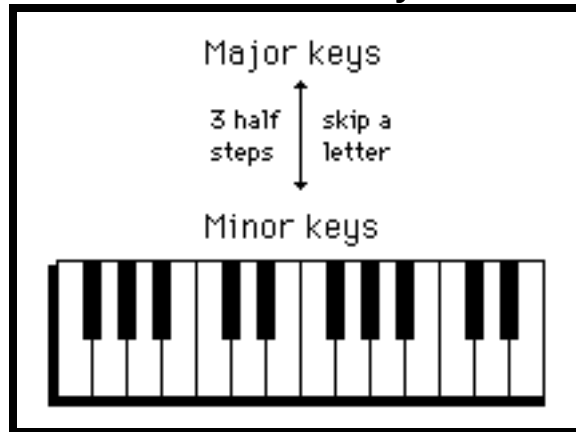
*WRITE* the relative major and minor keys. Use the keyboard above.

Example

Major keys	<u>B<math>\flat</math></u>	<u>A</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
3 half steps	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
skip a letter	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Minor keys	<u>f</u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>b</u>	<u>d<math>\sharp</math></u>	<u>c</u>

Date:

6.7 Write key signatures for relative major and minor keys



1. *WRITE* the relative major and minor keys for these key signatures

Example

Musical notation example showing key signatures: B-flat, three sharps (F#, C#, G#), B-flat, two sharps (F#, C#), and B-flat. Below the notation are lines for identifying the relative major and minor keys.

Maj. key	F	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
min. key	d	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

2. *WRITE* the relative major keys and the key signatures for the minor keys below.

Example

Musical notation example showing a minor key signature (B-flat) and a major key signature (C#). Below the notation are lines for identifying the relative major and minor keys.

Maj. key	G b	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
min. key	e b	e	a #	f	c #	a	g #

3. *GO ONLINE* to [www.gmajormusictheory.org](http://www.gmajormusictheory.org)

- a. *CLICK* "Music Fundamentals"
- b. *CLICK* in the "Virtual Flash Cards" column:
  - 6.1 Key Signatures for Minor keys *AND...*
  - 6.2 Sharps and Flats in Minor Keys
- c. *PRACTICE* the minor key signatures you have learned.

6.8 Write keys and key signatures on the circle of fifths

WRITE: 1) minor keys, 2) major keys, and 3) key signatures on the circle of fifths.

