



## The Harmonic Minor Scales

by John Falstrom

### Intro:

Here is an in-depth look into The Harmonic Minor Scales (Keys):

When compared to the natural minor scale, the harmonic minor scale has a major 7th note in it. The rest of the notes are the same in both scales.

### The Harmonic Minor Scale

w h w w h 1 ½ h  
R 2 b3 4 5 b6 7 8

### The (Parallel) Natural Minor Scale

w h w w h w w  
R 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7 8

### The Harmonic Minor Scales (Keys)

- The accidental (#, x, b, bb, or natural sign) used to raise the 7<sup>th</sup> note in the harmonic minor scale does not appear in the key signature.
- The harmonic minor scales (keys) are used as alternatives for the natural minor scales (keys).

### The Chords in Harmonic Minor Keys

Each one of the seven different notes in a harmonic minor scale is the root of its own chord:

<u>Notes in Harmonic Minor Scale (Key)</u>	<u>Chord Names (Roman Numerals)</u>	<u>(Basic) Chord Types</u>
1	The i Chord	Minor
2	The iio Chord	Diminished
b3	The bIII+ Chord	Augmented
4	The iv Chord	Minor
5	The V Chord	Major
b6	The bVI Chord	Major
7	The viio Chord	Diminished

- The flat (b) placed in front of the III+ and VI chords is in reference to their comparison with the iii and vi chords in (parallel) major keys i.e., the roots of the III+ and VI chords in harmonic minor keys are one half step lower than the roots of the iii and vi chords in (parallel) major keys.



## The Chords in Harmonic Minor Keys

What dictates the (basic) chord types is that the basic chord tones from each of the seven chords must be in the harmonic minor key. Therefore:

- The i and iv are minor chords.
- The v and vBI are major chords.
- The iio and viio are diminished chords.
- The bIII+ is an augmented chord.

## Playing the Chords in Harmonic Minor Keys - Arpeggio Style

Here is a chart example of how to play arpeggio forms on each one of the seven chords in a harmonic minor key:

<u>Chords in Harmonic Minor Key</u>	<u>Arpeggio Form</u>
i	R, b3, 5, 8, 5, b3, R
iio	R, b3, b5, 8, b5, b3, R
bIII+	R, 3, #5, 8, #5, 3, R
iv	R, b3, 5, 8, 5, b3, R
V	R, 3, 5, 8, 5, 3, R
bVI	R, 3, 5, 8, 5, 3, R
viio	R, b3, b5, 8, b5, b3, R

## The Chords in Harmonic Minor Keys

### Playing the Chords in Harmonic Minor Keys - Arpeggio Style

There is an infinite amount of different ways to play arpeggio forms on the seven chords in a harmonic minor key (e.g., inversions, notes below the root, different rhythm combinations, etc.).

Play arpeggio forms on the seven chords in each harmonic minor key; circle of fifths order.

**Note:** Each one of the seven chords in a harmonic minor key could always be altered. Borrowed chords are also used.

## Seventh Chords in Harmonic Minor Keys

Here are the seven chords in harmonic minor keys as seventh chords:

<u>Chords in Harmonic Minor Key</u>	<u>Seventh Chord Names</u>	<u>Seventh Chord Types</u>
i	The iMaj7 Chord	Minor Major 7 <sup>th</sup>
iio	The iio7 Chord	Half Dimished 7 <sup>th</sup>
bIII+	The bIII+Maj7 Chord	Augmented Major 7 <sup>th</sup>
iv	The iv7 Chord	Minor 7 <sup>th</sup>
V	The V7 Chord	Dominant 7 <sup>th</sup>
bVI	The bVIMaj7 Chord	Major 7 <sup>th</sup>
viio	The viio7 Chord	Fully Diminished 7 <sup>th</sup>

What dictates the seventh chord types is that the 7<sup>th</sup> note from each chord must be in the harmonic minor key



### Seventh Chords in Harmonic Minor Keys

Here is a chart example of how to play arpeggio forms on each one of the seven seventh chords in a harmonic minor key:

#### Seventh Chords in Harmonic Minor Key

iMaj7

iio7

bIII+Maj7

iv7

V7

bVIMaj7

viiio7

#### Arpeggio Form

R, b3, 5, 7, 8, 7, 5, b3, R

R, b3, b5, b7, 8, b7, b5, b3, R

R, 3, #5, 7, 8, 7, #5, 3, R

R, b3, 5, b7, 8, b7, 5, b3, R

R, 3, 5, b7, 8, b7, 5, 3, R

R, 3, 5, 7, 8, 7, 5, 3, R

R, b3, b5, bb7, 8, bb7, b5, b3, R

There is an infinite amount of different ways to play arpeggio forms on the seven seventh chords in a harmonic minor key (e.g., inversions, notes below the root, different rhythm combinations, etc).

### Harmonic Minor Keys

Each one of the seven different chords in a harmonic minor key is the root of its own scale:

#### Chords in Harmonic Minor Key

i

iio

bIII+

iv

V

bVI

viiio

#### Scale Types

The harmonic minor scale

Like locrian mode but with a major 6<sup>th</sup> noteLike Ionian mode but with an augmented (#) 5<sup>th</sup> noteLike dorian mode but with an augmented (#) 4<sup>th</sup> noteLike Phrygian mode but with a major 3<sup>rd</sup> noteLike Lydian mode but with an augmented (#) 2<sup>nd</sup> noteLike locrian mode but with a diminished (b) 4<sup>th</sup> note and a diminished (bb) 7<sup>th</sup> note

#### Note Relationship to Root

R 2 b3 4 5 b6 7 8

R b2 b3 4 b5 6 b7 8

R 2 3 4 #5 6 7 8

R 2 b3 #4 5 6 b7 8

R b2 3 4 5 b6 b7 8

R #2 3 #4 5 6 7 8

R b2 b3 b4 b5 b6 bb7 8

### Summary:

Study/Play/Memorize/ and Analyze as much as you can about the harmonic minor scales(keys).

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