

# Scales and Arpeggios: The Building Blocks of Music

## Importance

- used as the bases for melodies
- necessary parts of understanding keys
- necessary components of mastering technique

## Major Scales

- memorize and understand the circle of 5ths
- memorize and understand key signatures
  - o last sharp of key = leading tone
  - o next to last flat of key = tonic

## Minor Scales

- every major scale (key) has a corresponding relative minor scale (key)
  - o minor tonic = “la” of major scale
- use natural minor as the basis for the other forms
- learn natural minors in conjunction with the relative majors
- once natural minor form is mastered, others are relatively easy:
  - o melodic minor = raised 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> ↑, natural minor ↓
  - o harmonic minor = raised 7<sup>th</sup> (augmented 2<sup>nd</sup> between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>)

## Suggested Practice Procedures

- write out full 2-octave scale with both key signature and accidentals
  - o remember to include the arpeggio!
  - o include fingerings/positions and/or note names only where needed
- play on the piano to see, hear and feel the scale
- sing note names while moving valves or slide
- play slowly in rhythm on your instrument
  - o breathe after the middle-octave tonic note (both directions) to have plenty of air for the highest and lowest notes
- sing with solfege to check intonation
- alternate playing from the page and from memory
- build solid (and correct) muscle memory by playing scales *at least* 3 times in a row perfectly before moving on
- once you get to know a *scale*, really get to know the *key* by playing patterns

## Resources

- Arban, *Complete Method*, especially pages 64-87 and 160-167
- Clarke, *Technical Studies*, especially studies 2 through 6
- Parès, *Pares Scales*