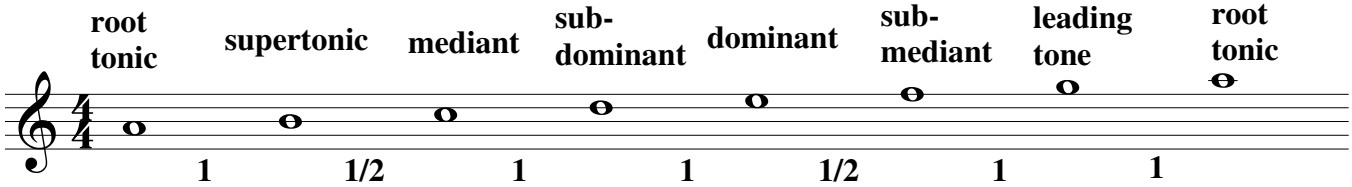
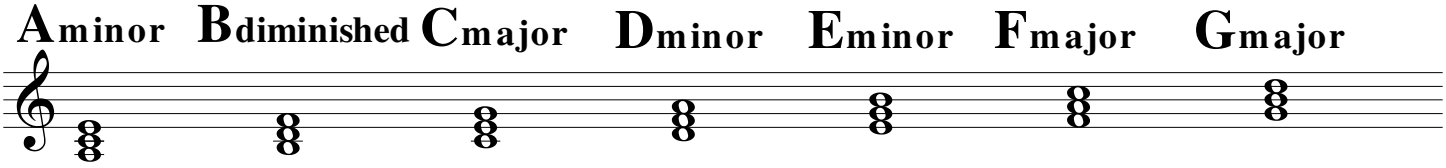
Minor Scales

11/7/2011

Natural Minor

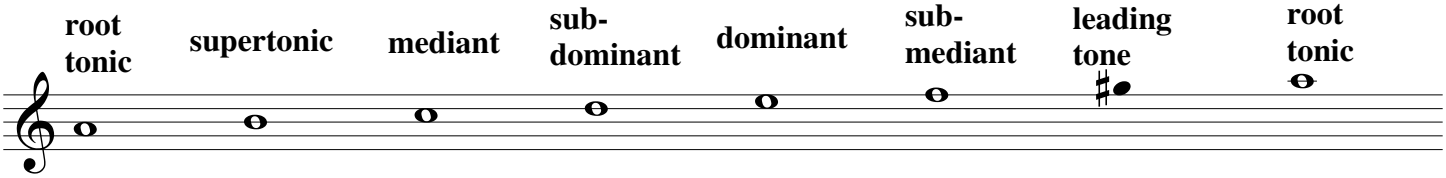


Chords are created by stacking thirds -- triads (3 notes)

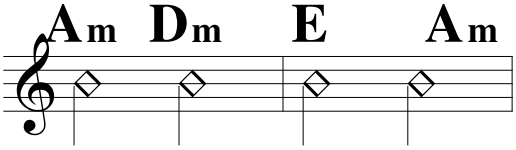


But something feels missing. Our European concept of harmony really requires a <u>strong</u> leading tone ... so let's raise the G to a G#

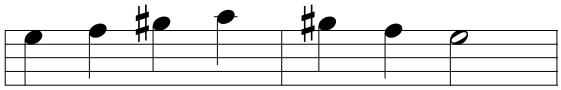
Harmonic Minor



Changing Em to E sounds 'stronger'



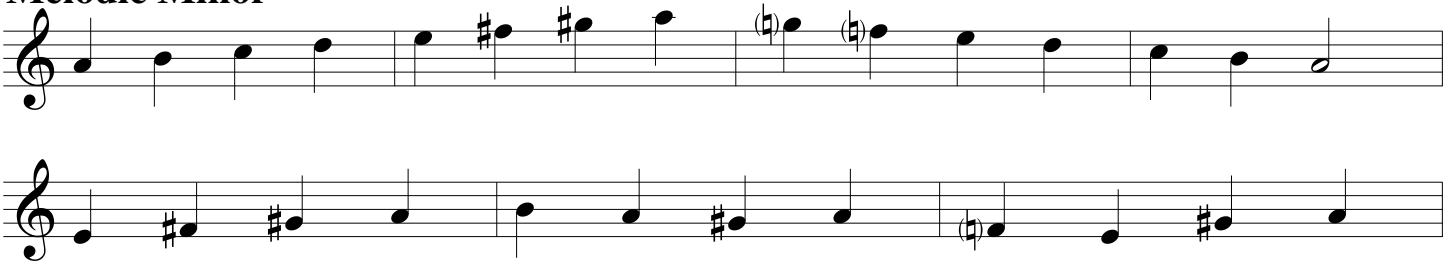
But now the melodies can sound funky



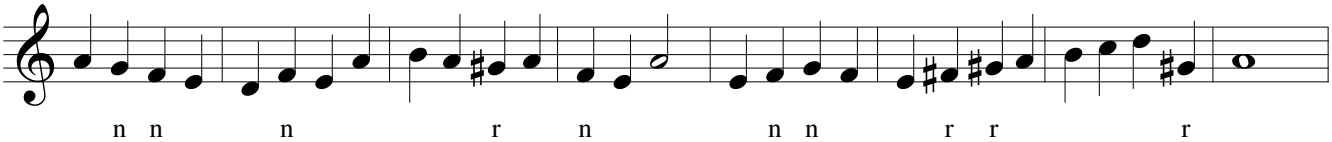
the augmented 2nd sounds 'middle eastern'

What happens is a total <u>breakdown</u> of something that started out as simple. When the leading tone goes to the tonic use the raised 'leading tone'. If the sub-mediant goes to the raised 'leading tone' <u>raise it as well!</u>

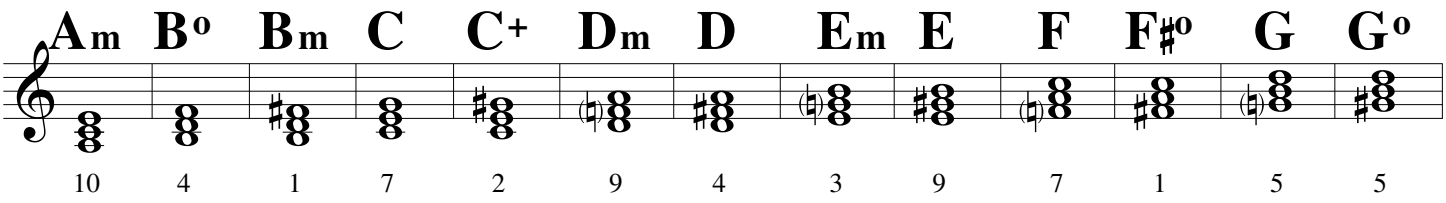
Melodic Minor



If the melody is descending and/or not rising to the tonic note, use the 'natural' notes.

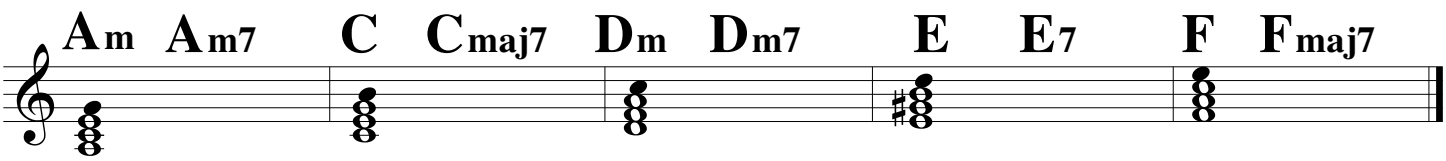


So what happens is that depending on the melodic context there can be different variations of the chords to accompany them. WHAT A MESS! ... ah .... but what richness!



The number above represent how often *I estimate* you might see the use of these chords in a minor key

But for our purposes we'll mostly see these triads and sevenths chords when playing a minor blues



You might also keep this thought in your mind. The idea of tonality is the organization of music around a central note (the root). In order to 'point at' or bring focus to the tonality of a piece we not only need to play the key-note as a way to tell the listener we're 'home' but we must also create tension by playing non 'key-notes' which require some sort of resolution back to the key note.

This skillful manipulation of the melodic palette between 'home' notes and 'tension' notes historically gave rise to the harmonic resources we employ and not vice versa. The work of constructing melodic patterns that support the tonality of a piece is called 'voice-leading'.