

Our present-day minor is, then, the old Aeolian, whose scale reads: *a, b, c, d, e, f, g*. Occasionally, whenever the seventh tone was to go to the eighth, the seventh was turned into a leading tone, that is, *g#* took the place of *g*. This change, however, created the augmented interval, *f-g#*, which was preferably avoided in older music. Therefore *f#* replaced *f*, also, so that where there was a leading tone the scale read: *e, f#, g#, a*. That the interval, *f-g#*, is hard to sing in tune is probably still true, even today. It is certainly not easy to sing it perfectly in tune. And the use of such intervals may contribute much to the difficulty choruses have in keeping on pitch when singing *a cappella*. The objection may be raised that the older keyboard music also avoided such intervals, even though for the keyboard one interval is as easy as another; hence, the appeal to intonation difficulties fails to explain the matter. This objection is disposed of as follows: such intervals are hard to sing in tune because they are hard to imagine, and for that very reason also hard to perceive. Moreover, instrumental music and vocal music are at no time differentiated as far as stylistic essentials are concerned. That means the what and the how of expression remain the same in harmony, counterpoint, melody, and form. The use of augmented intervals at prominent melodic places in keyboard music would have to have led to the use of such intervals in vocal music as well. Since, however, musical practice was oriented to vocal music, such intervals were understandably avoided, not only in vocal but also in instrumental composition.

A raised tone was substituted for the seventh, hence, also for the sixth, only where a leading tone was desired. If such was not the aim then the unaltered scale tones were retained. It is therefore incorrect to base the treatment of these tones on the so-called harmonic minor scale. The only correct way, it seems to me, is to take the Aeolian mode as the point of departure. After all it also has the characteristics of the melodic minor scale. We must, however, keep in mind that the raised tones were used only when a leading tone was needed, that is, for a cadence on *a*. Only then was *g#* used in place of *g*, and *f#* was then chosen only for the sake of the *g#*. Consequently, there are two forms of the minor

[<sup>1</sup> Schoenberg added a footnote here in his revised edition, namely, some remarks on the aftermath of World War I (see Appendix, p. 425). This footnote was deleted from the seventh edition.]

scale, which together are known as the melodic minor scale: the *ascending* form, which substitutes the raised seventh and sixth for the natural tones; and the *descending*, which uses the plain series of unaltered tones. The two forms are not mixed. In upward progression only the raised tones may appear, in downward only the natural tones. What was said here, summed up in rules, yields the *four laws of the pivot tones* (*Wendepunktgesetze*) of the minor scale:<sup>1</sup>

*First pivot tone, g#:* g# must go to a; for g# is used only for the sake of the leading-tone progression. Under no circumstances may g or f follow g#, nor may g# go to f# (at least for now).

*Second pivot tone, f#:* f# must go to g#; for it appears only for the sake of the g#. Under no circumstances may g follow, nor, of course, f. Nor e, d, a, etc. (for now, at least).

*Third pivot tone, g:* g must go to f, because it belongs to the descending form of the scale. Neither f# nor g# may follow it.

*Fourth pivot tone, f:* f must go to e, because it belongs to the descending form of the scale. F# may not follow it.

Adherence to these instructions is indispensable, since the character of the minor scale is hardly manifest without them. We must put aside chromatic steps for the time being, since we have not yet explained their conditions. And any other treatment of the raised sixth and seventh tones can easily serve to erase the feeling of tonality, which we want at first to keep absolutely pure and unequivocal. As soon as we have richer means at our disposal we can easily keep more adventurous excursions, apparent departures from the key, within bounds. But at present we are hardly able to do that. The third and fourth pivot tones can be handled somewhat more freely later by analogy with the Aeolian mode. This mode corresponds, so long as raised tones are not substituted, to the Ionian, to our relative major [i.e. the tones are the same]. The laws of the pivot tones refer more to the modern melodic minor, in which a treatment common in the Aeolian seldom appears: that is, rather long passages without raised tones, in which of course then the sixth and seventh unaltered tones freely go their way. In this sense a freer treatment could even now be permitted. Then it would be possible for an a to come after a g (say in an inconspicuous middle voice) or a g after an f. But these steps in the vicinity of raised tones can easily evoke the impression of unevenness similar to that produced by the so-called cross relation (which is to be discussed shortly [p. 102]). In such cases the g or the f should be, so to speak, resolved: the g should go to f, the f to e, before raised tones appear. Even if f and g be treated more freely now, the rules for-

bidding  $g$  and  $f$  to go to  $f\sharp$  and  $g\sharp$  still hold absolutely. It is more practical, however, to save this freer treatment [of  $f$  and  $g$ ] for later.

The  $a$ -minor scale, as we are handling it, is thus a  $C$ -major scale that begins on  $a$  and in certain circumstances (leading tone) allows the seventh tone to be raised a half step; and, for melodic reasons, for the sake of the seventh, the sixth may also be raised. If these tones are not raised, then everything is the same as in the relative major. If the tones are raised, then the instructions pertaining to the pivot tones apply.