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Simply Scales
(and Arpeggios)

for Violin

Compiled by Lynne Latham

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Simply Scales
(and Arpeggios)

Foreword by Lynne Latham

To the teacher:

This book is designed as a workbook for learning fingerboard geography. That is why fingerings and bowings have been omitted, allowing you as the teacher to make decisions that are best for your individual students. There are blank staves at the end of the book to write out specific bowing and rhythmic patterns for practice. The order of scales was determined solely by the circle of fifths and does not in any way imply order of study. *Simply Scales (and Arpeggios)* was conceived as a survival guide for those students needing to play scales and arpeggios for adjudicated events and all-state or honors orchestra auditions.

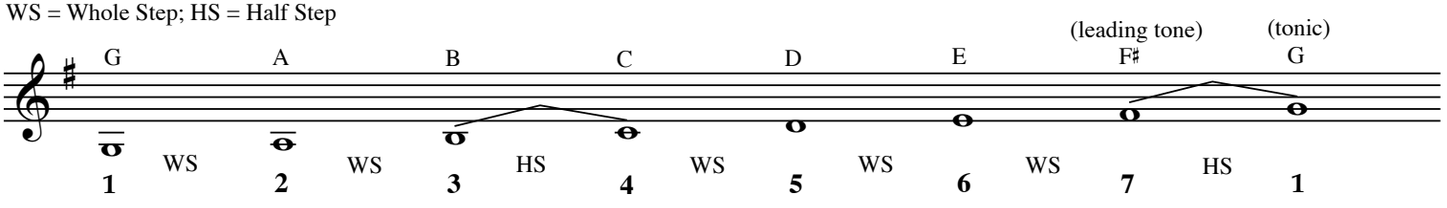
Why practice scales and arpeggios?

All music is made up of scales, however rearranged they might be. Scales are the building blocks for music of all periods and styles. Practicing scales and arpeggios is equal to the "eating your vegetables" part of string playing. No one really likes it, but it nourishes your technique and makes you a stronger player. Practicing scales and arpeggios in a variety of keys not only helps with note reading and learning the geography of the fingerboard, but it also helps you to recognize finger patterns (which in turn makes you a better sightreader). Solid sightreading skills enable a young player to learn new music more quickly and with fewer mistakes. While scales move you up and down the violin fingerboard in a step-wise motion using consecutive fingers, arpeggios cover the fingerboard more quickly and reinforce shifting skills and the importance of setting the hand in a new position. Therefore, the reward for being diligent with scale and arpeggio practice is secure, consistent intonation and an opportunity to progress to the more advanced (and more interesting and fun) violin literature.

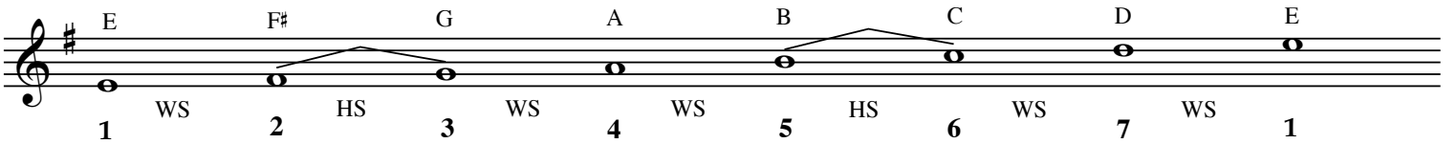
Scale construction

In this book you will find **major** and **minor** scales. What makes a scale sound major or minor? The difference is in how the scale is constructed. By varying the order of half steps and whole steps, major scales and the three forms of minor (natural, harmonic and melodic) each have a unique sound. On your violin, there will always be space between adjacent fingers for a whole step, and fingers will be close together for half steps. Major scales (such as the G Major scale below) are set up with the half steps between the 3rd and 4th notes and also between the 7th and 8th notes. The 7th note of the scale is known as the *leading tone*, as it leads strongly (resolves) to the *tonic* (or first) note of the next octave of the scale. Two more important scale step names to learn are the 5th note, called the *dominant*, and the 4th note, called the *subdominant*. Notice that the scale begins and ends with the same note name.

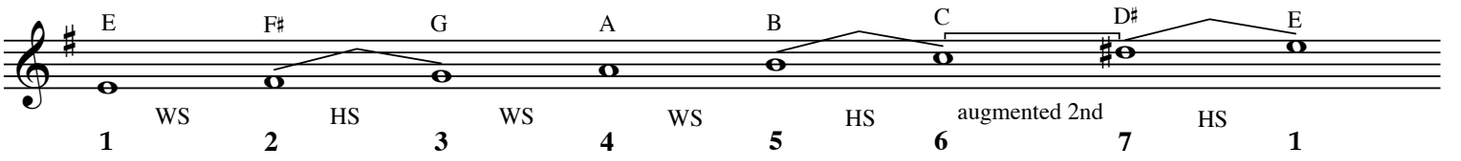
WS = Whole Step; HS = Half Step



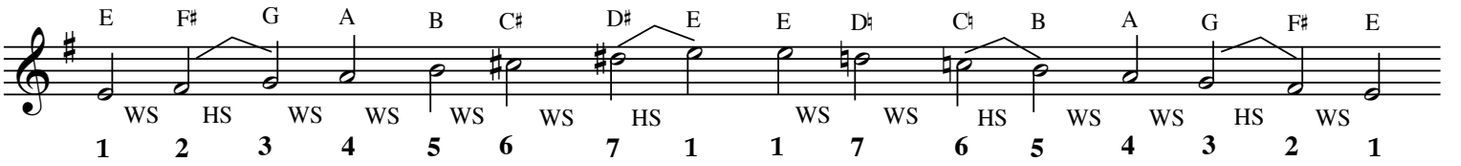
Now to examine the three forms of the minor scale. As you can see, the half steps appear between different notes than in the major scale. It should be noted that in the natural minor scale, there is no leading tone.



The harmonic minor scale raises the 7th note of the scale by a half step. This scale has a very unique sound and introduces a new interval (space between notes) called an augmented 2nd, a half step larger than a whole step.



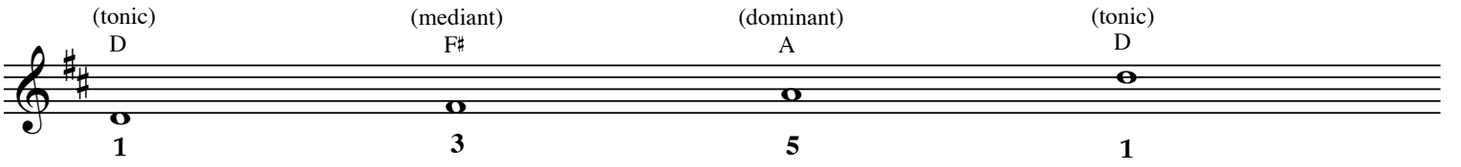
Finally, we examine the melodic minor scale, which is the most commonly used form of the minor scale in western music. The ascending and descending forms of this scale are played differently. On the way up, the 6th and 7th notes of the scale are raised by a half step. On the way down, they are lowered again to their original (natural minor) locations.



Why are the major and minor scales paired as they are? *Simply Scales (and Arpeggios)* is organized by key signature. The major and minor scales paired in this book share the same number of sharps and flats. Therefore they are "related" by key signature and known as *relative* major and minor. When scales share the same tonic note, they are called *parallel* major and minor, but will have different key signatures (compare the key signatures for C major and C minor scales).

Arpeggios

The arpeggios in this book are formed by playing the notes of the tonic chord (major or minor). A tonic chord is built on the first, third, and fifth notes of the scale (although arpeggios may also be built beginning on other steps of the scale). An arpeggio may go up and/or down, and it may include one octave or run the entire range of the fingerboard. The arpeggios presented in this book span one, two, and three octaves.



Scales and arpeggios should be practiced with no vibrato. Focus on making a beautiful tone, maintaining even bow speed, and listening for accurate intonation. Now for the most important part of all: practicing your musical vegetables! Enjoy!

Lesson Notes:

dedicated to my dear friend, Eve Neighbors Warner

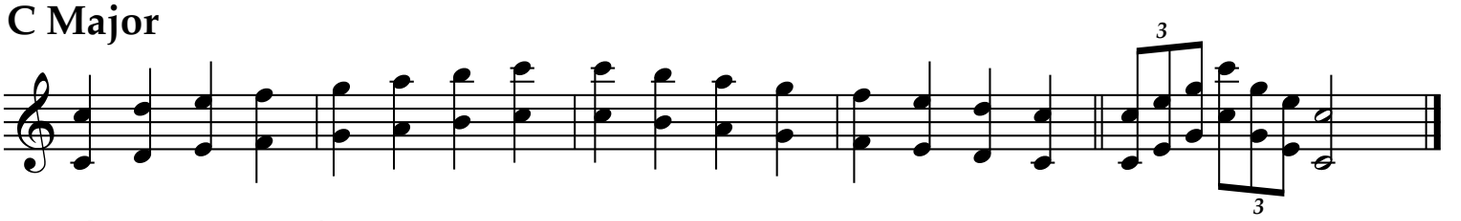
Simply Scales

(and Arpeggios)

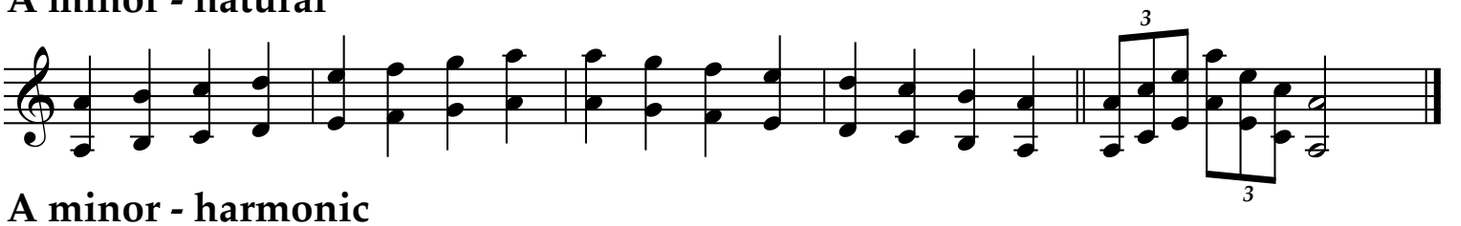
One-octave Scales and Arpeggios

Please note: When 2 notes are given, play either top OR bottom.

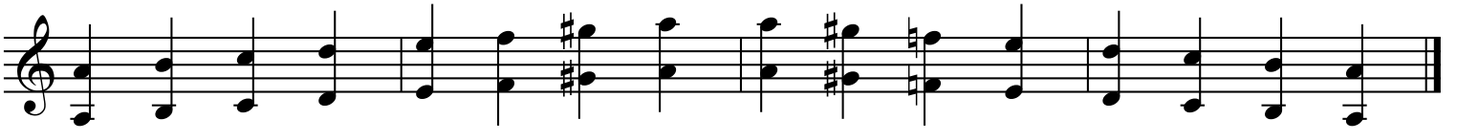
C Major



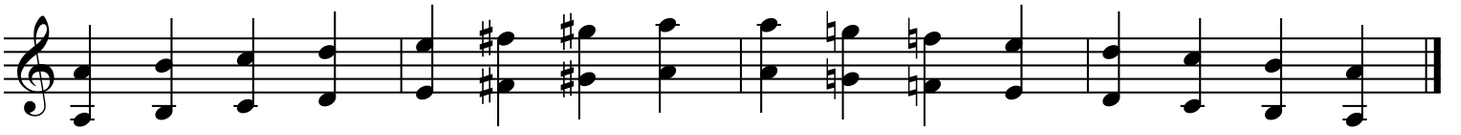
A minor - natural



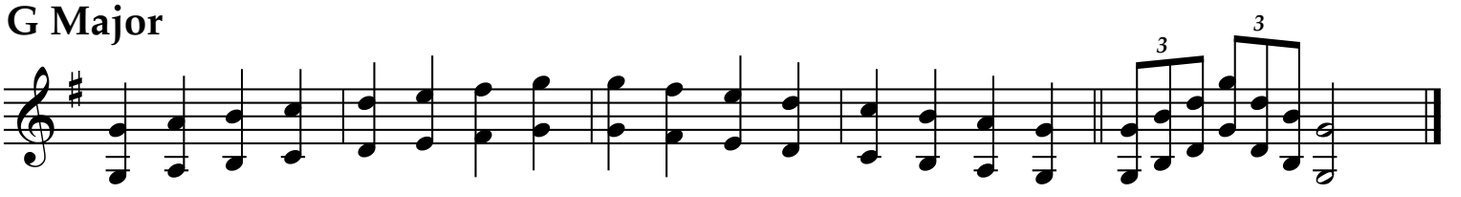
A minor - harmonic



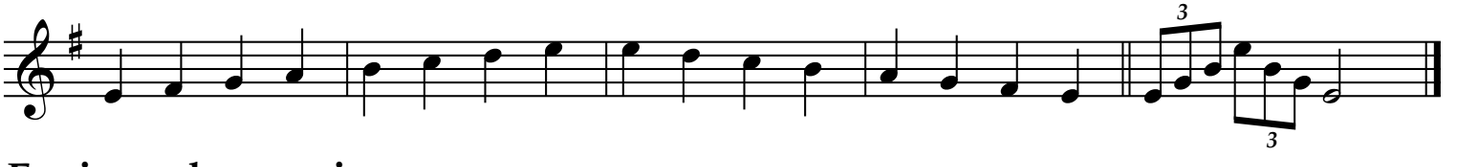
A minor - melodic



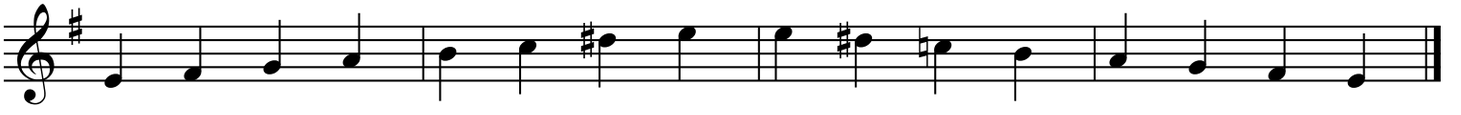
G Major



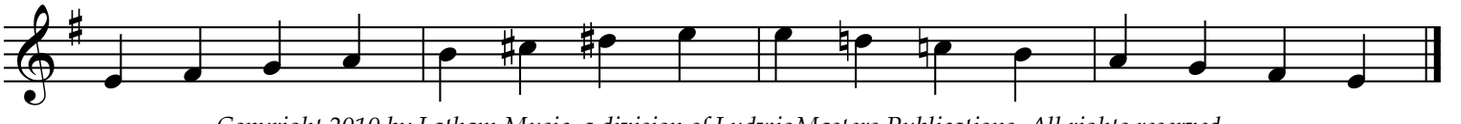
E minor - natural



E minor - harmonic



E minor - melodic



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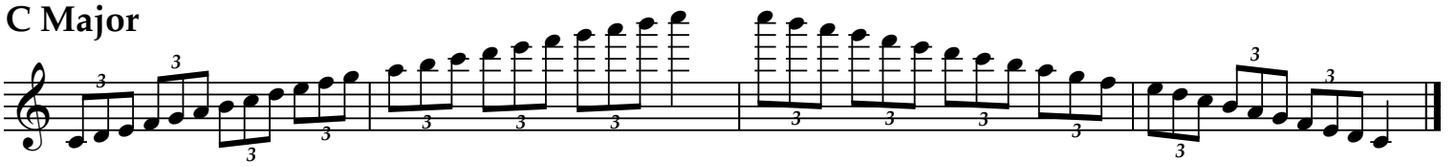
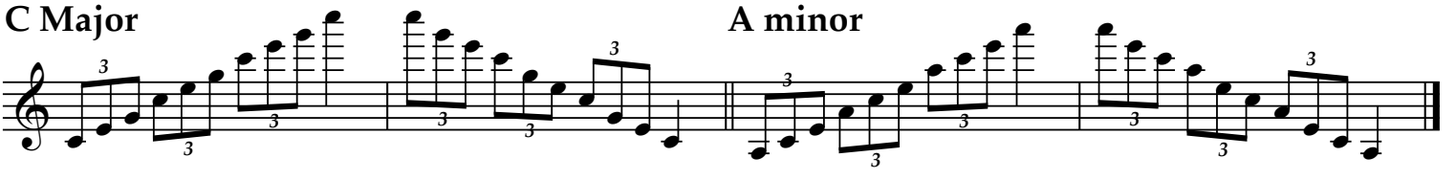
Three-octave Scales and Arpeggios

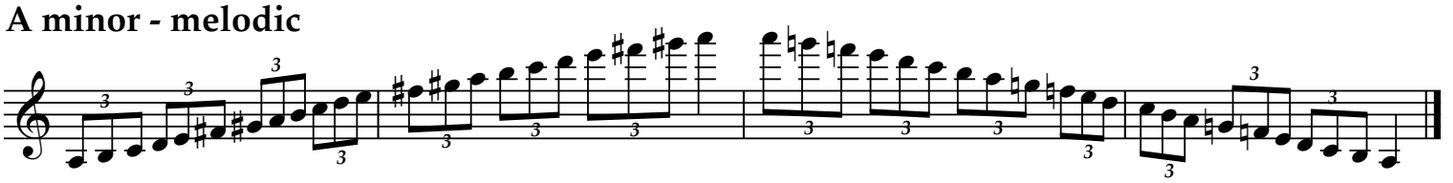
C Major



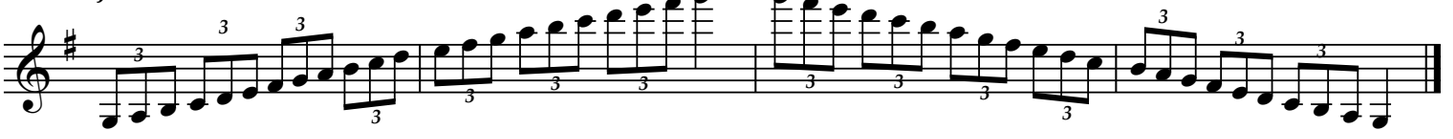
C Major **A minor**



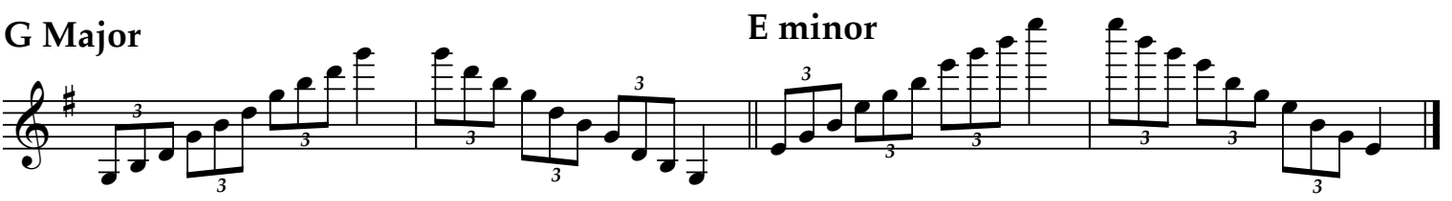
A minor - melodic



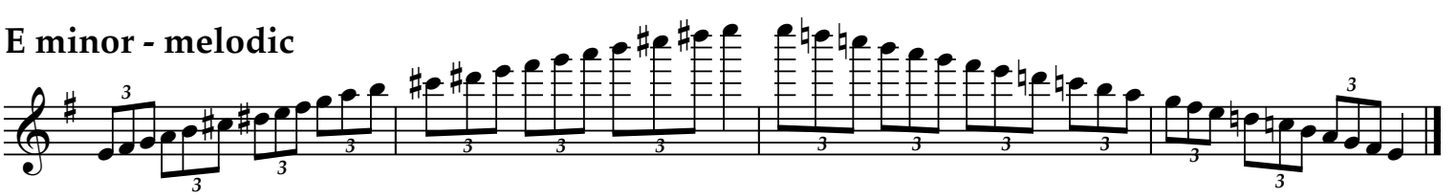
G Major



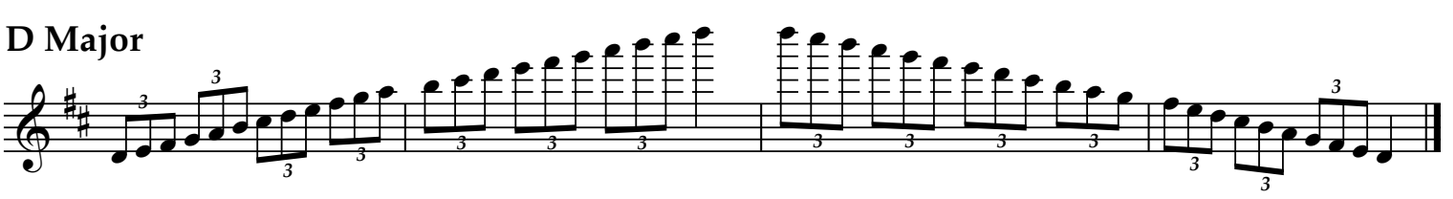
G Major **E minor**



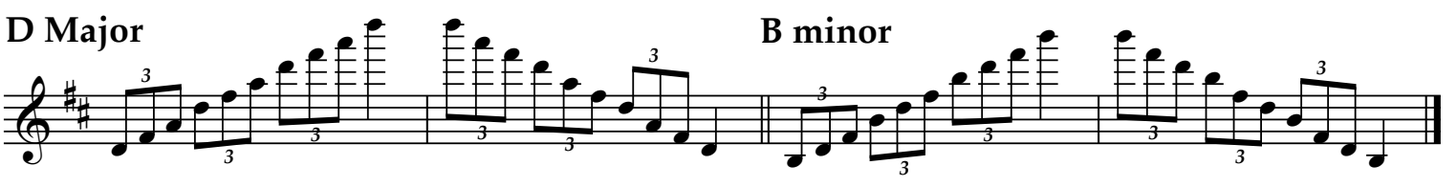
E minor - melodic



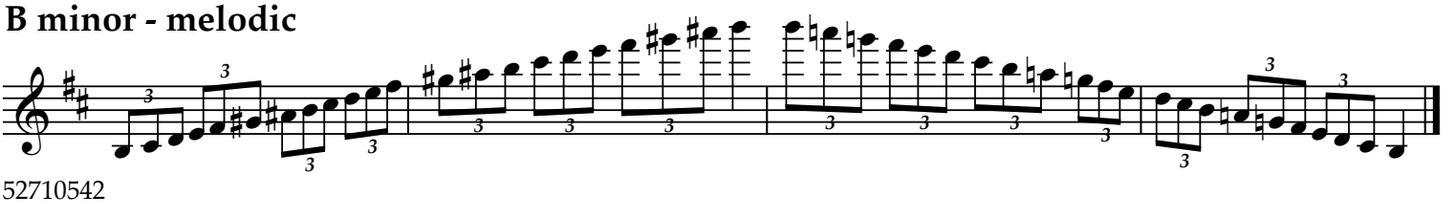
D Major

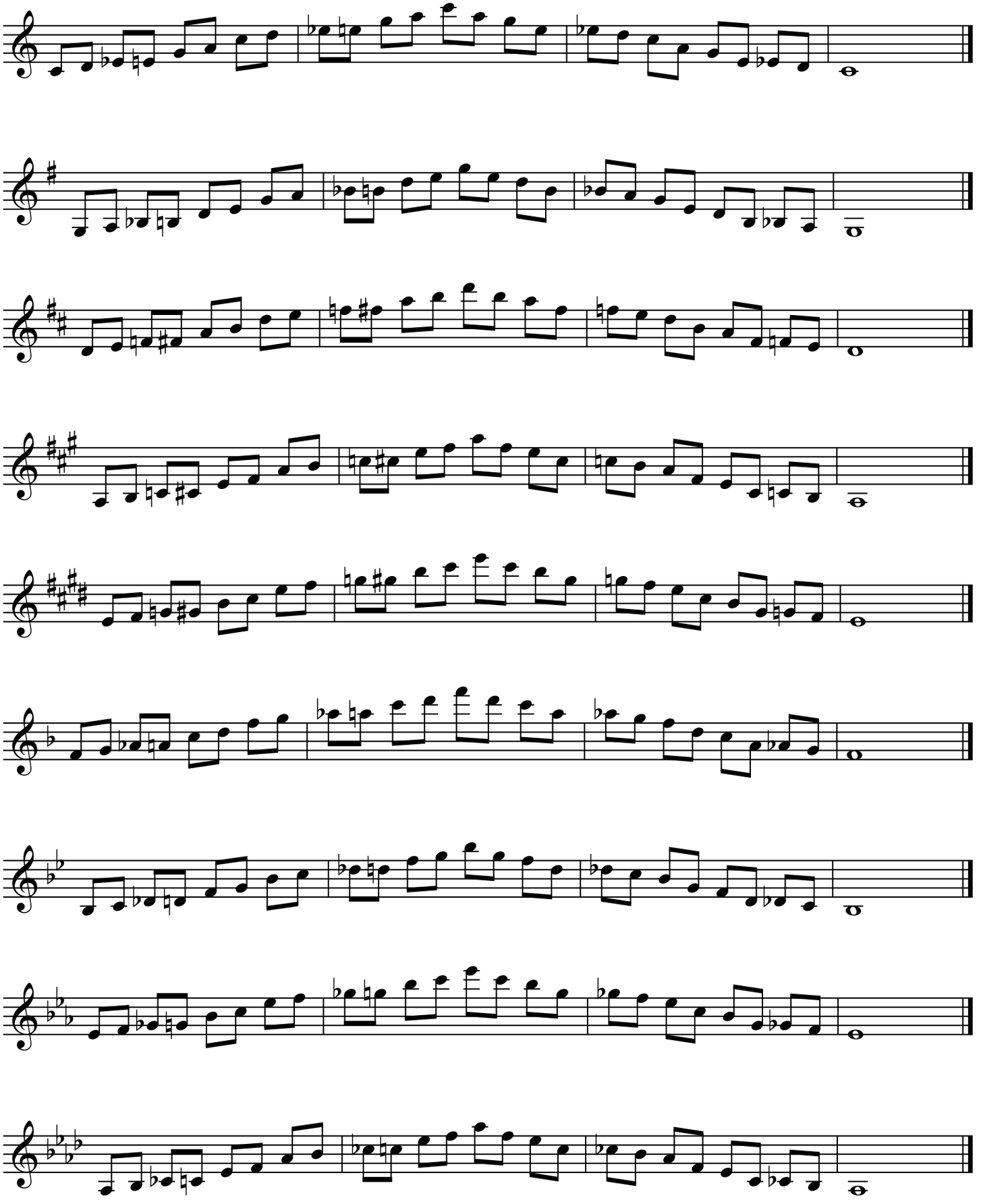
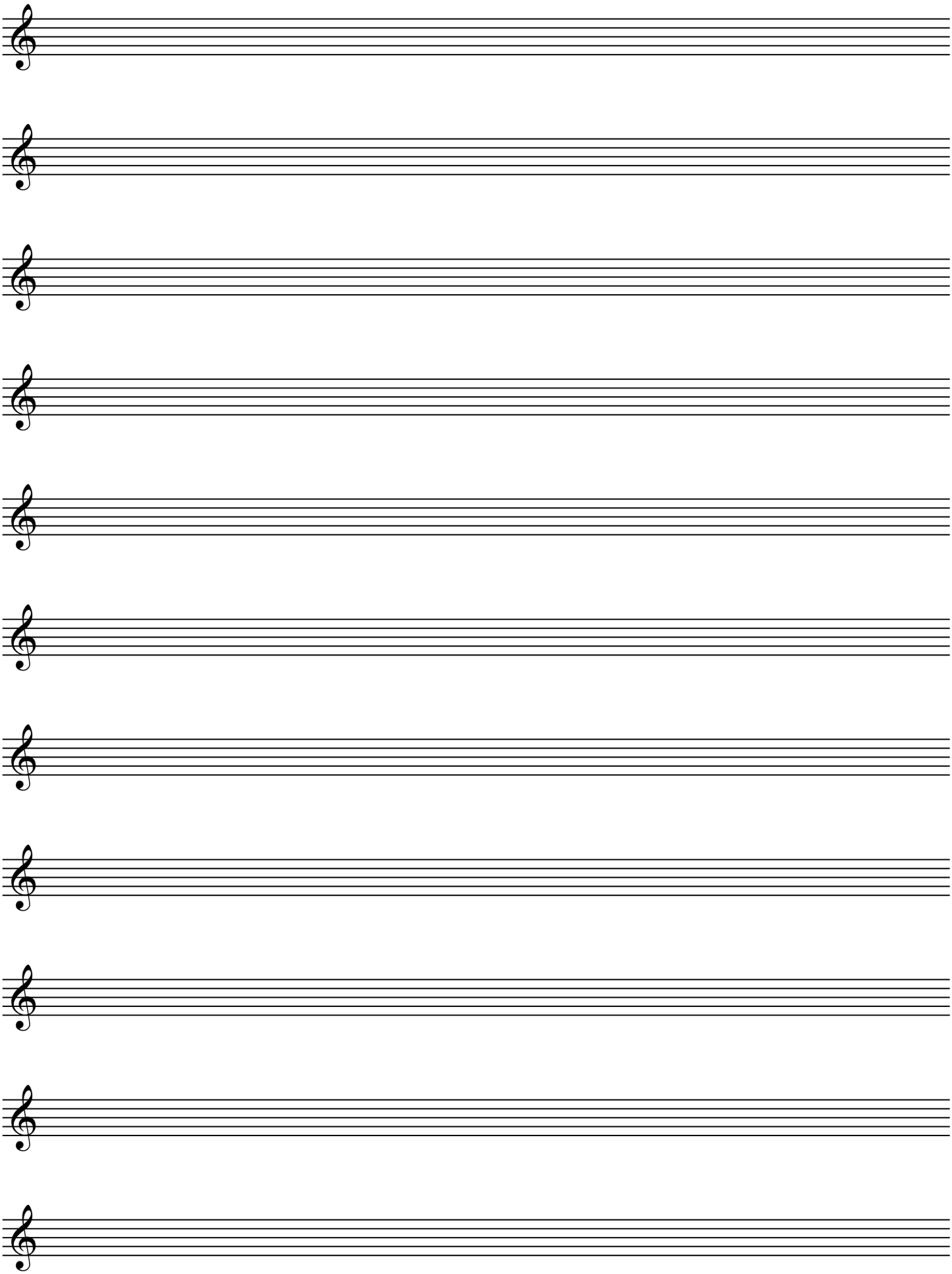


D Major **B minor**



B minor - melodic



Bonus! Two-octave Blues Scales

The blues scale is not only used in blues, but also fiddling, jazz and rock. Unlike the major and minor scales in this book which have eight notes each, the blues scale has only seven. Take a moment before practicing these scales to mark the location of the half steps because the scale is constructed differently.