

Advanced Guitar Theory- The Relative Minors

This short article presents a woolly description as well as a more technical one to make you familiar with Relative Minors.

A relative minor is a scale that is "related" to a major scale. As they work together harmonically, so they can be considered as being in the same family. Relative minors provide a great mode to move from a major to a minor key without too much of a jump or practice of complex chord successions and so they are considered as a well-set tool in songwriting.

Here is a more technical description:

The relative minor of a certain major scale is a scale that starts 6 intervals up and after that shares all of the same notes. Firstly, what is an interval? It is not easy to answer it precisely but you can say that an interval is a note in a scale. You can understand all this with the help of an example.

Let's look at the scale of C ?? it is liked by most of the people because it has no sharps or flats. It consists of following notes

C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C

We find that A is the relative minor of C by moving up 6 notes, (C-D-E-F-G-A). Therefore the possible notes we will use for A minor are A-B-C-D-E-F-G-A.

Although we start on the note of A, all of the notes also exist in the C major scale.

Taking it a step further, looking at the scale in terms of half and whole notes, as in the Major Scale 101 lesson, for a relative minor we would use the formula:

W H W W H W W, or

2 1 2 2 1 2 2

You can practice this formula to figure out the relative minor scale for any major scale by starting at the 6th note and practicing it.

Now, to conclude, a short note of a couple of fascinating facts about Relative Minors is given. Firstly, three various minor scales are there in western music ?? with a slight divergence in their formula. The scale above is in reality a "Natural Minor" or "Pure Minor" scale - two names for the same thing while the other two are called "Harmonic" and "Melodic". As their formulas differ from each other, so they do not share the same notes as the associated relative major scale and are harmonically speaking not such a right match as the Natural Minor.

And eventually, the Natural Minor (or Relative Minor) scale of a certain major scale is also known as the "Aeolian Mode". Modes are a concept that we will discuss later, but for now, you can say confidently that you have correct understanding of Relative Minors, Pure Minors, Natural Minors, and the Aeolian mode.

About the Author

E Walker is the founder of Planet of Rock. Find out how [backing tracks](#) will improve your guitar playing skills. Sign up for our FREE [guitar affiliate programs](#) and start making cash!

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