Dynamic Guitar Technique Part III
Scales

©2004 David Raleigh Arnold
Please see the end of this document for restrictions.

1 Introduction

These scales completely replace those of Segovia and his imitators.

The upper and lower octaves of each two octave scale have the same left hand fingering, sometimes also echoed in the way that the octaves meet in the middle. It is impossible to overstate the advantages of that kind of organization. These scales are exponentially more effective because practicing one octave is also practicing the other. Furthermore, there is no lack of practice of the reasonable extensions of the left hand which are necessary and realistic in performing scale passages. The fingers are extended in first position in any case. There is nothing sacred about the idea of one finger for each fret.

It doesn't matter much that particular notes are played with particular fingers, except that variety and organization are essential to good exercises. The important thing about scales is how shifting up and down the neck is practiced. These exercises are designed to promote *whole arm coordination*, not merely coordination between the right and left hands. Whole arm coordination is what it takes to get to be good at moving up and down the neck. To that end, these exercises exploit the maximum physical range of the guitar.

The harmonic minor scale has an interval that the melodic minor doesn't have, which makes the harmonic minor more interesting, so for that reason among others the practice of harmonic minor scales rather than melodic minor scales has become the tradition.

The guitar would need quite a few more frets to make it possible to extend these same scales another octave with the same fingering. Nevertheless, I have added one and three octave scales also. The one octave scales may serve as an introduction, but it's better for almost anyone to begin by working more slowly and carefully on the two octave scales instead. In the three octave scales the low octave is simply run up to the two octave version in first or second position. That makes the best possible three octave scales for practice, because at least the two top octaves have the same fingering. Many people will prefer three octaves because they like the idea of practicing over the entire musical range of the instrument. Happiness may entail some sacrifice in efficiency. I still advise first mastering the two octave versions before adding the low octaves.

It is not necessary to make an effort to memorize these scales, only to practice them. If you practice them in rotation at first, applying all of these right hand formulas to the scales you work on that day, you will be practicing them from memory at once. Later you may do it all or rotate through the right hand formulas.

Listen to yourself, not a metronome. Pure technique is for polishing, not just for grinding. The metronome is not going to sound one bit better no matter how well you listen to it.

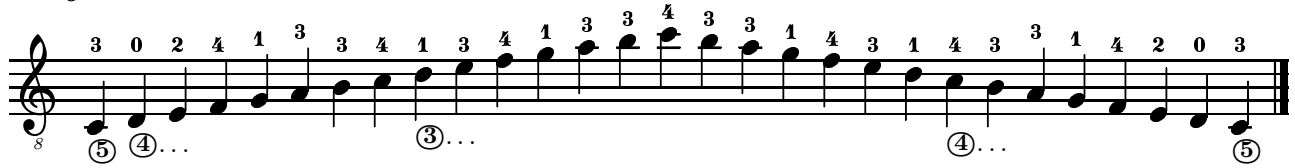
2 Right Hand Fingering Formulas

A bit more work on "mamama" is a good idea for most players. Variations in timbre and dynamic would not be a bad idea either. When not using the thumb, place it on various strings.

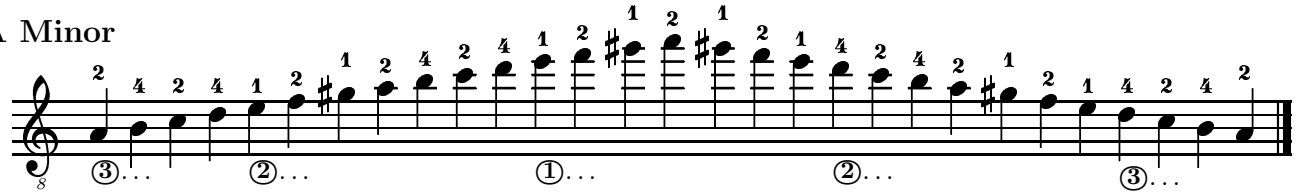
mamama...	amamam...	tititi...	itititit...
mimimi...	imimim...	tatata...	atatat...
mamama...	amamam...	tmtmtm...	mtmtmt...
iaiaia...	aiaiai...	mimi*(apoyando)*...	imim*(apoyando)*...

3 Major and Harmonic Minor Scales in Two Octaves

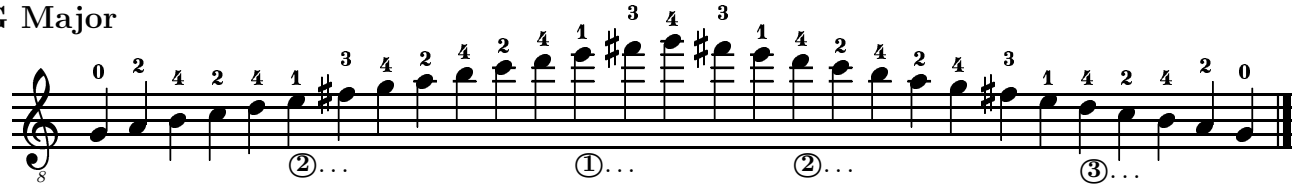
3.1 C Major



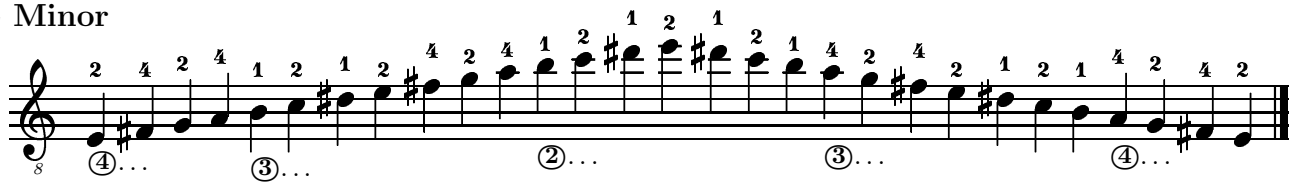
3.2 A Minor



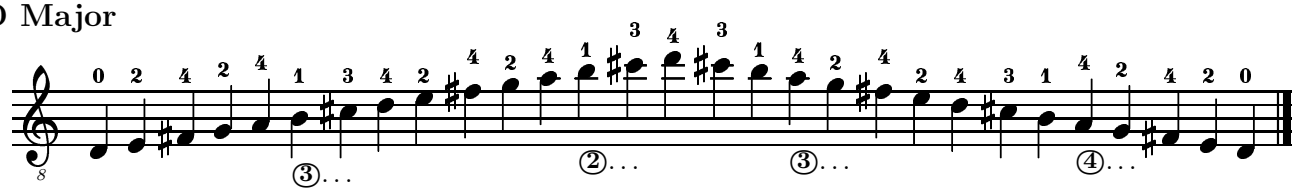
3.3 G Major



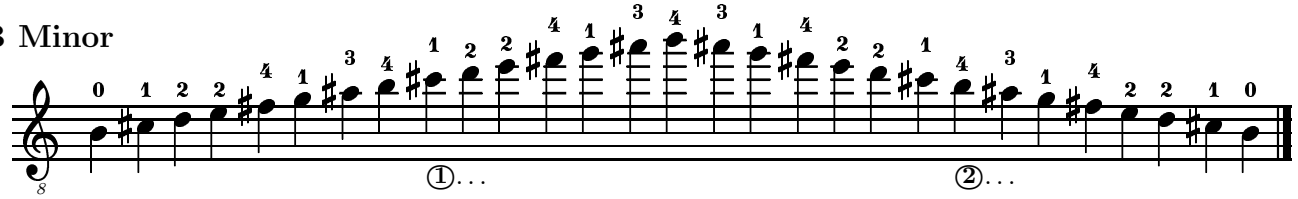
3.4 E Minor



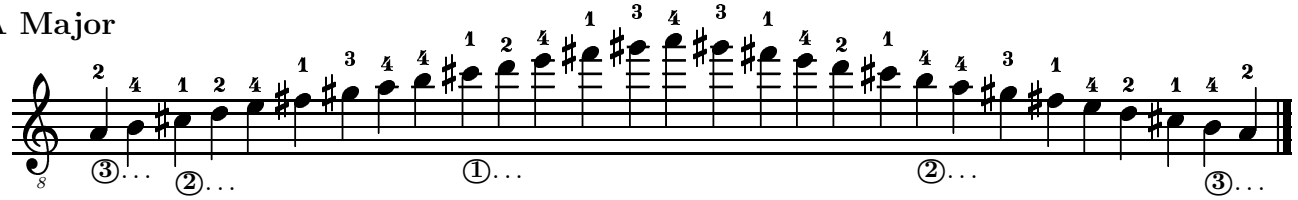
3.5 D Major



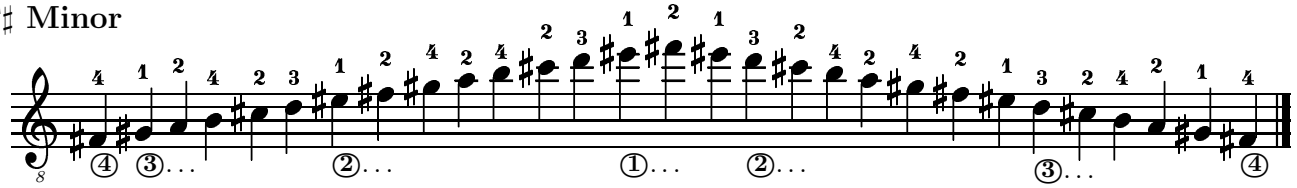
3.6 B Minor



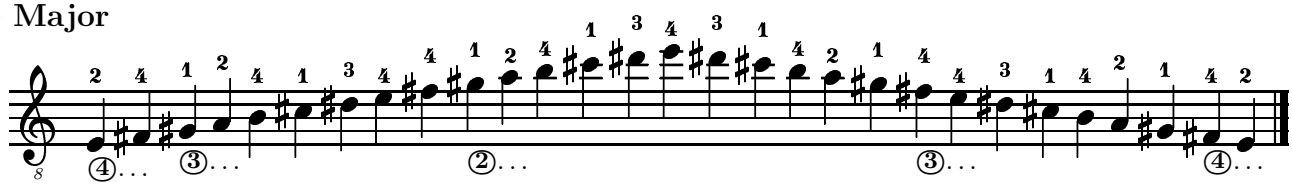
3.7 A Major



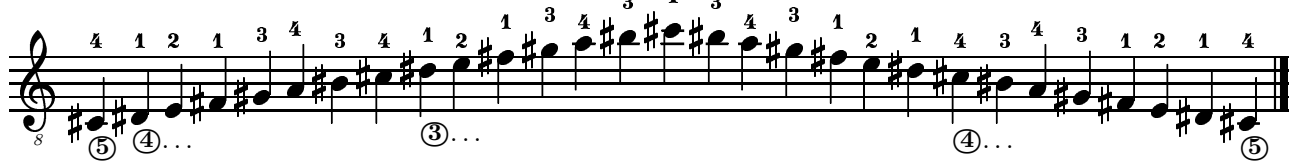
3.8 F♯ Minor



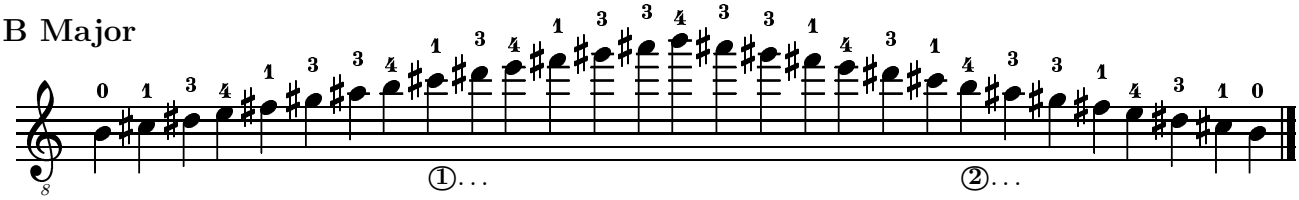
3.9 E Major



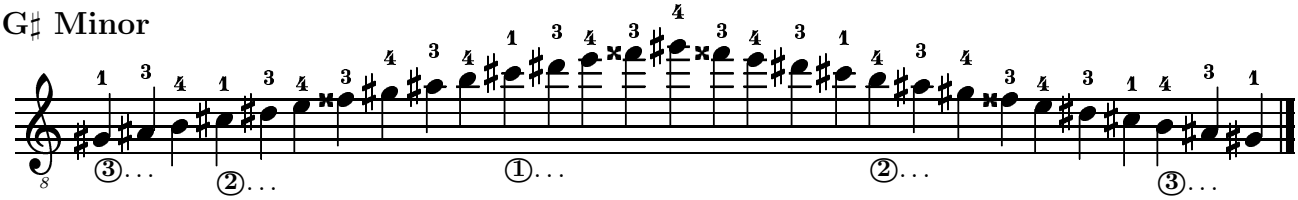
3.10 C♯ Minor



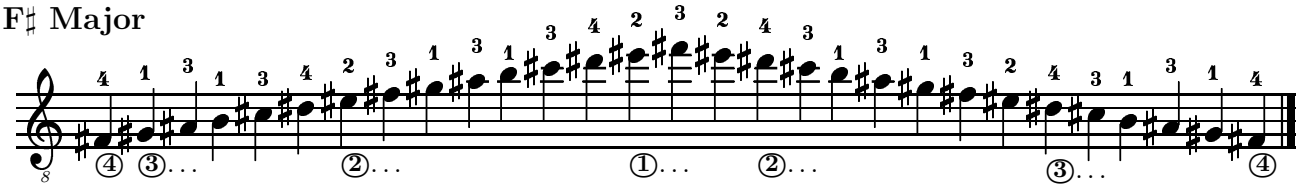
3.11 B Major



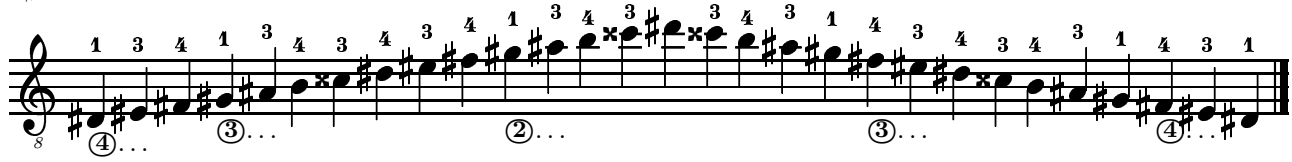
3.12 G♯ Minor



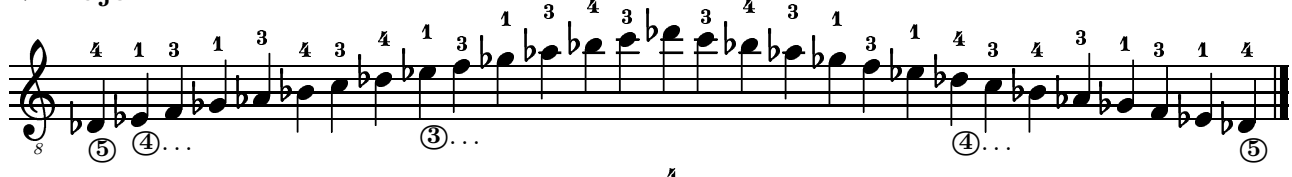
3.13 F♯ Major



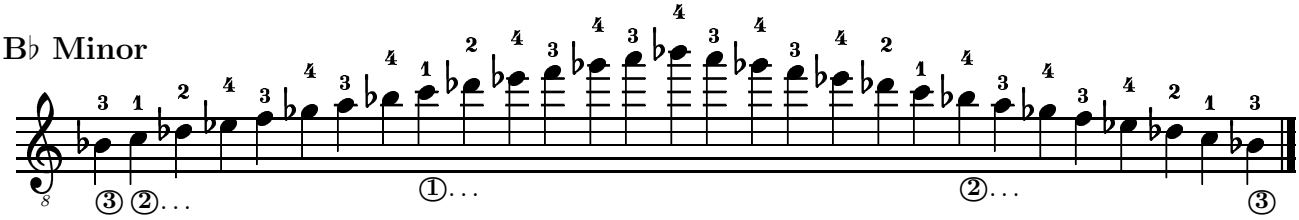
3.14 D♯ Minor



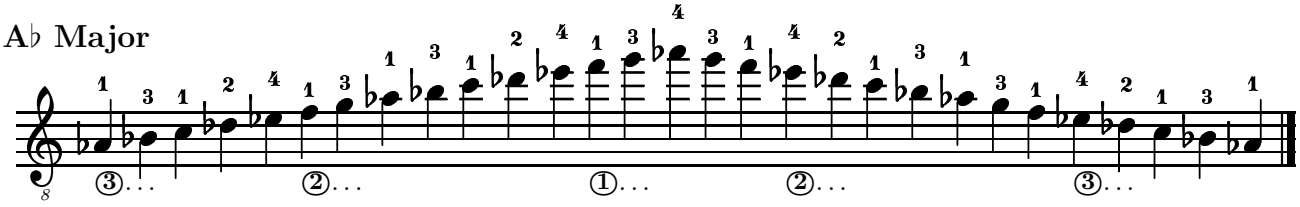
3.15 D♭ Major



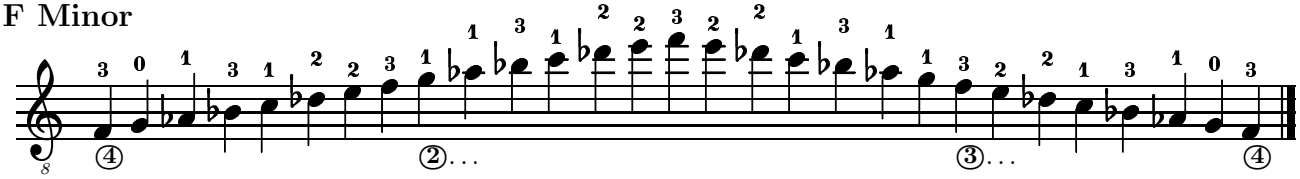
3.16 B♭ Minor



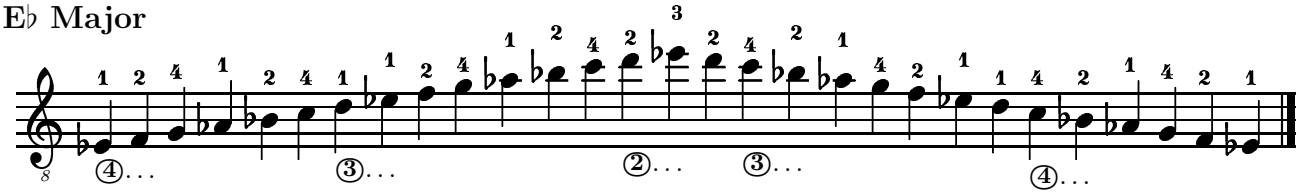
3.17 A♭ Major



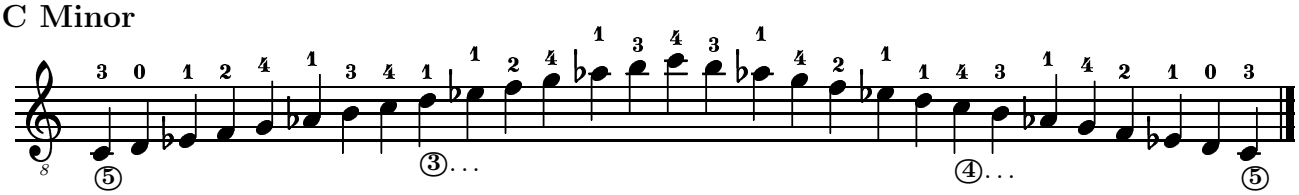
3.18 F Minor



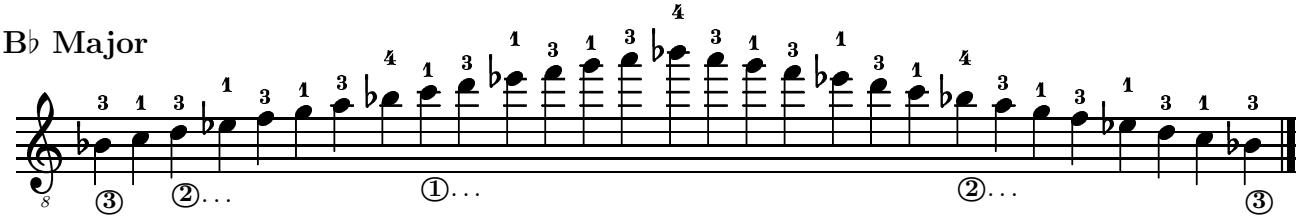
3.19 E♭ Major



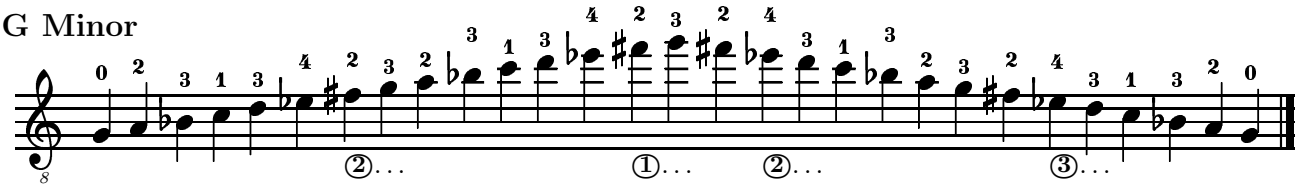
3.20 C Minor



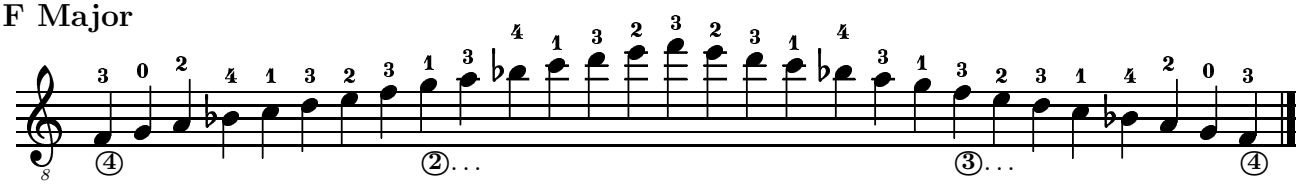
3.21 B♭ Major



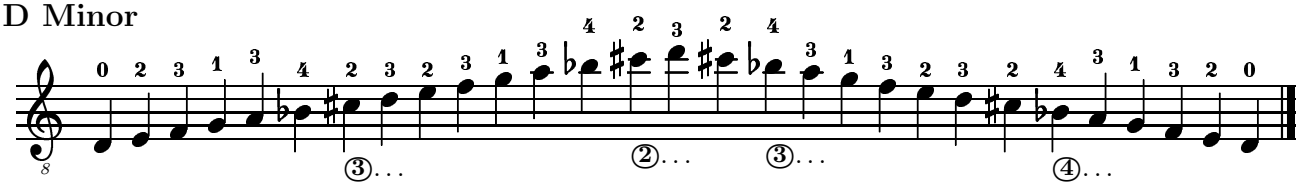
3.22 G Minor



3.23 F Major

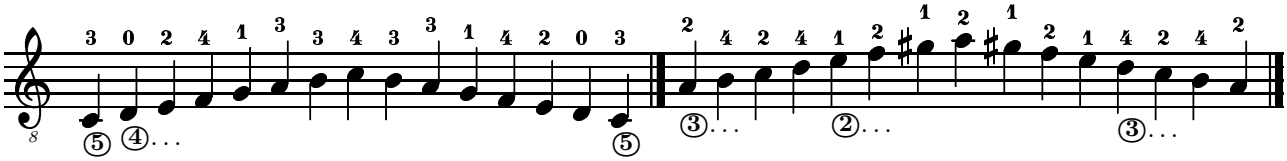


3.24 D Minor

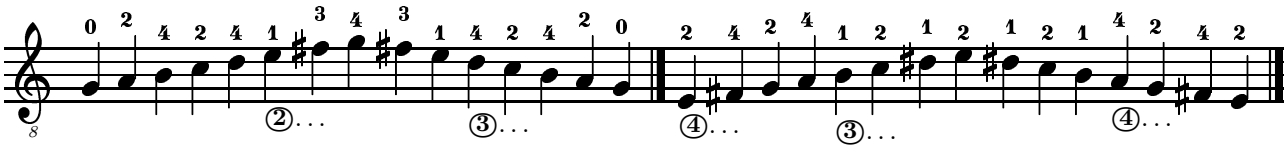


4 Single Octave Major and Harmonic Minor Scales

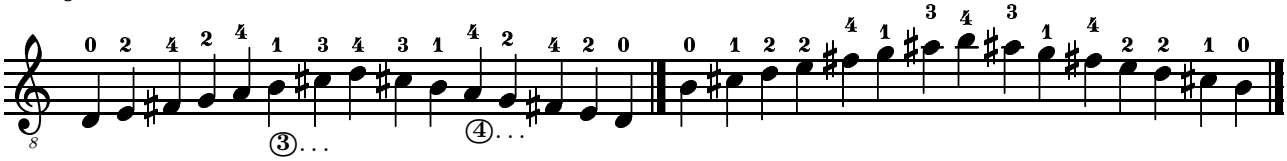
4.1 C Major and A Minor



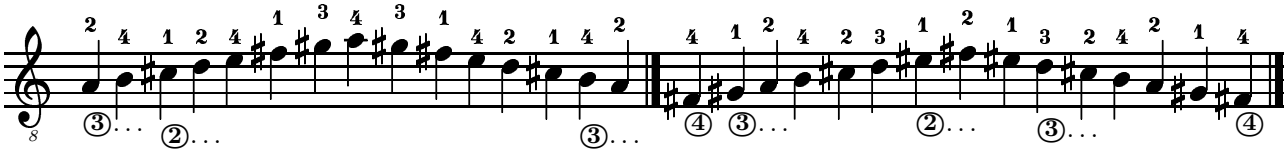
4.2 G Major and E minor



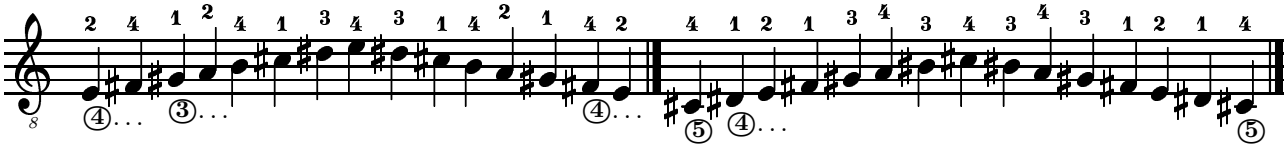
4.3 D Major and B Minor



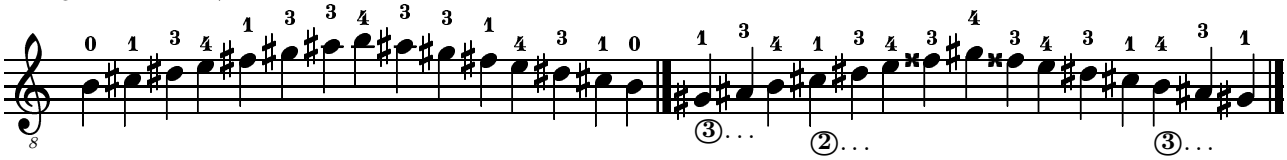
4.4 A Major and F♯ Minor



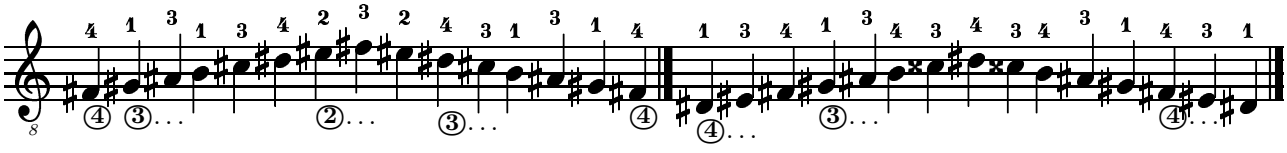
4.5 E Major and C♯ Minor



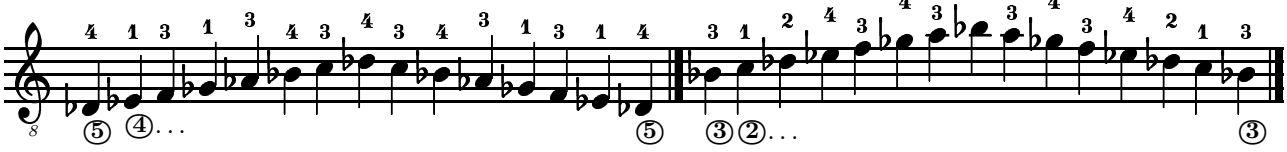
4.6 B Major and G♯ Minor



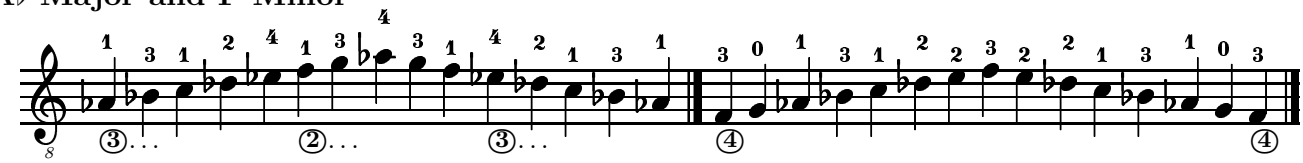
4.7 F♯ Major and D♯ Minor



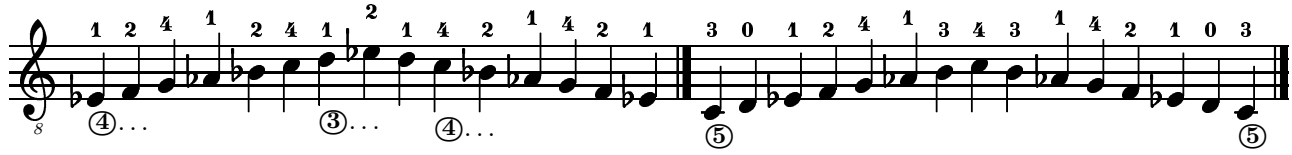
4.8 D♭ Major and B♭ Minor



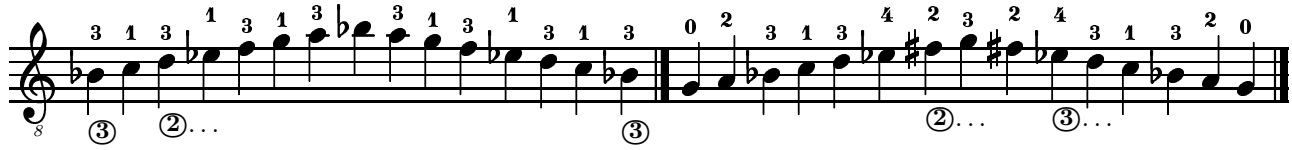
4.9 A♭ Major and F Minor



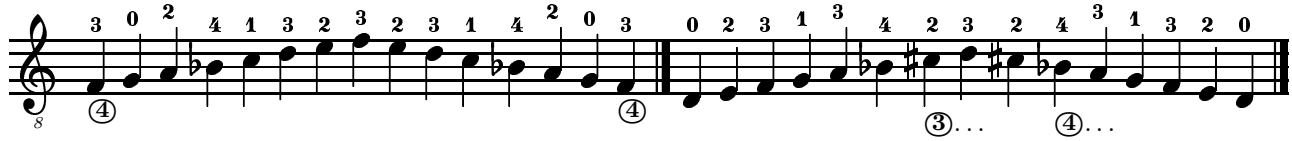
4.10 E♭ Major and C Minor



4.11 B♭ Major and G Minor

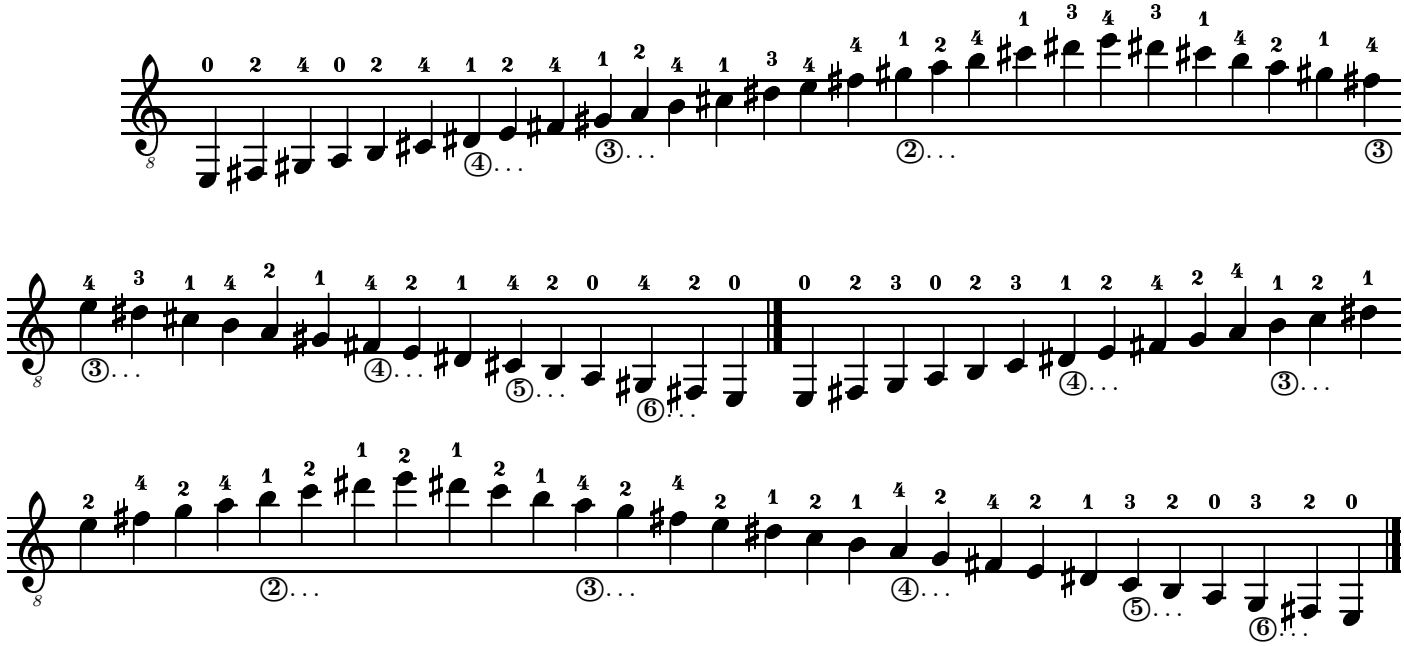


4.12 F Major and D Minor

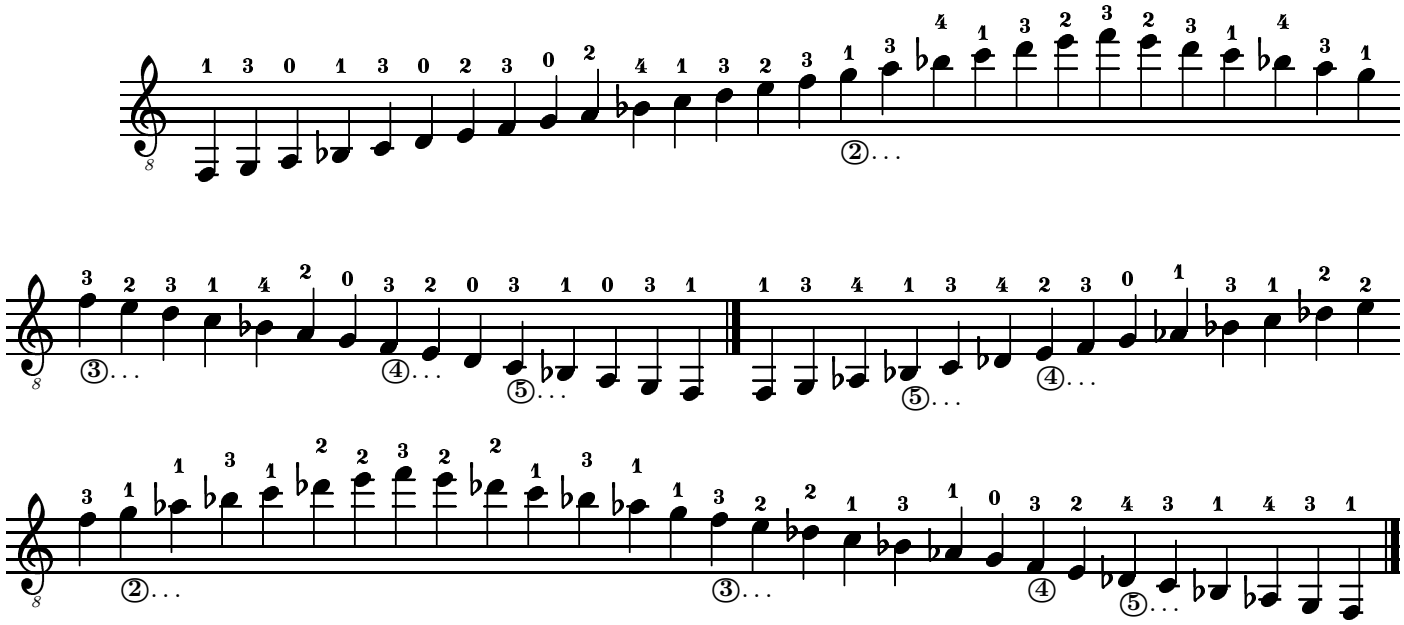


5 Three Octave Scales for Guitar

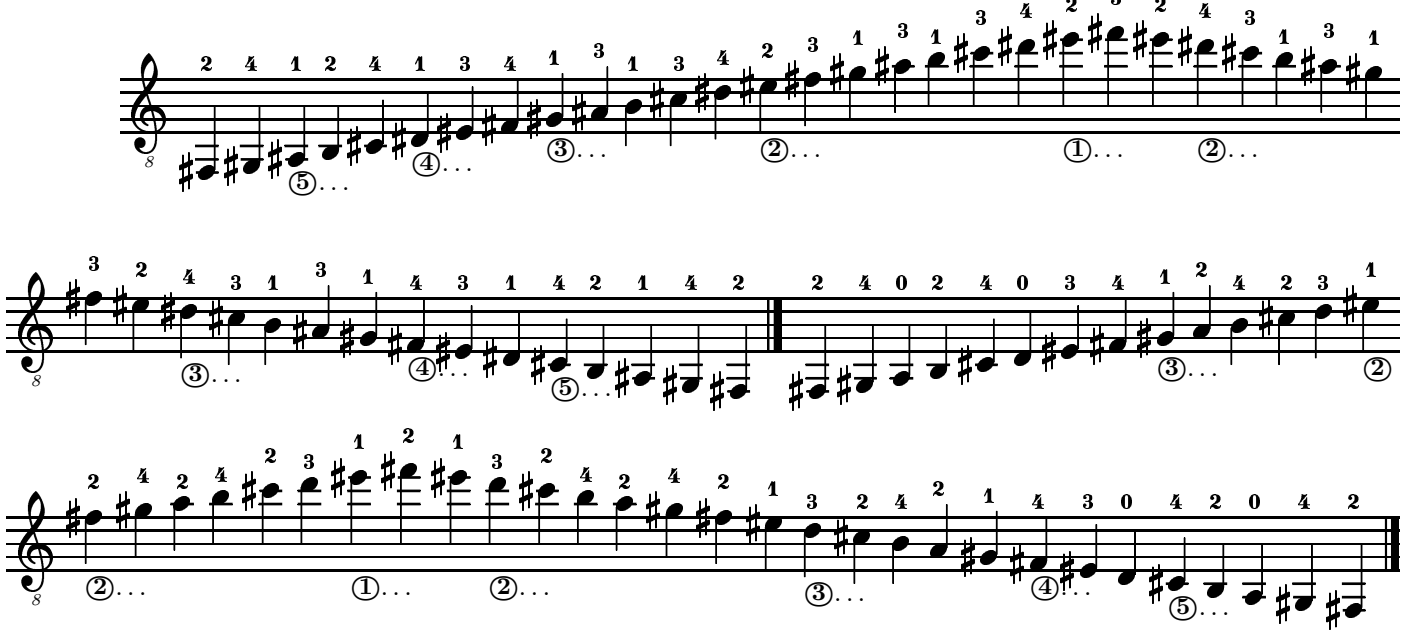
5.1 E Major and Minor



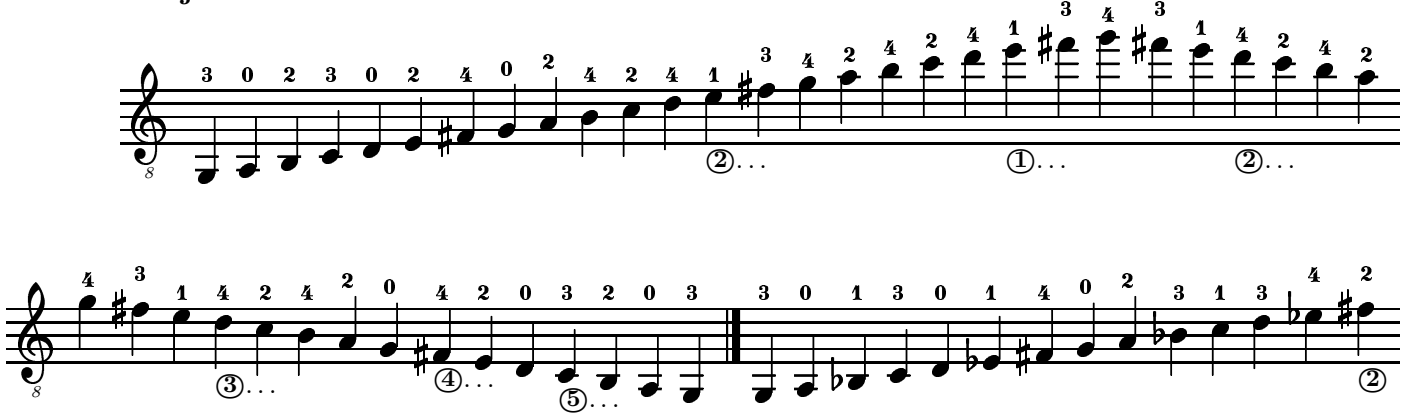
5.2 F Major and Minor

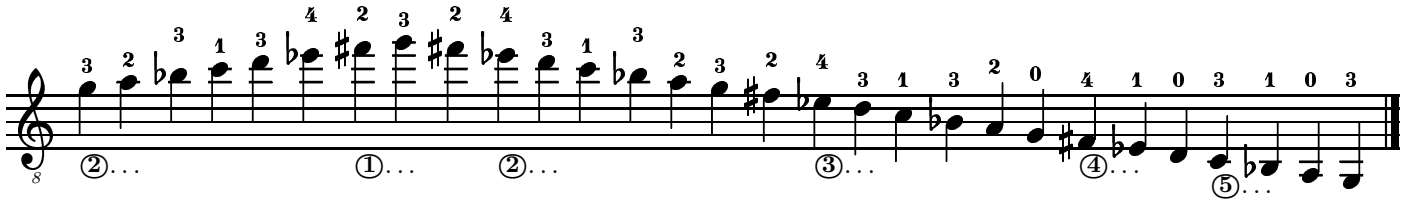


5.3 F♯ Major and Minor

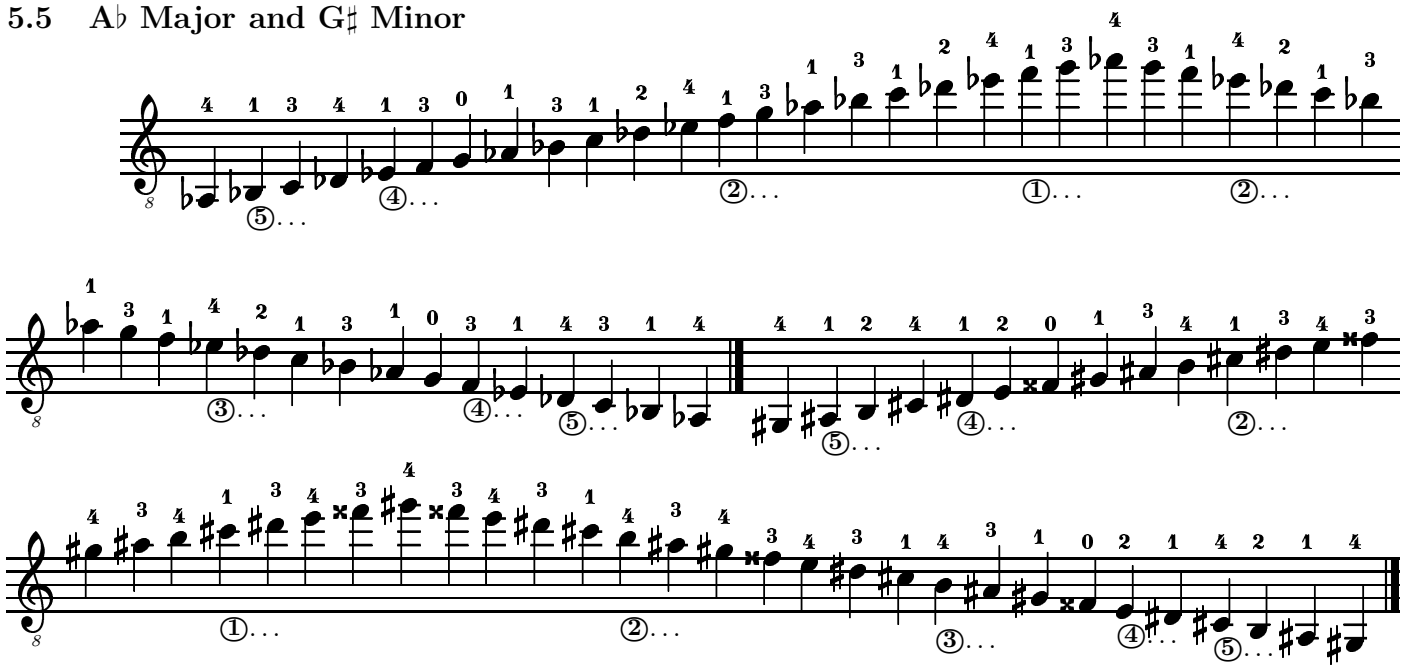


5.4 G Major and Mino

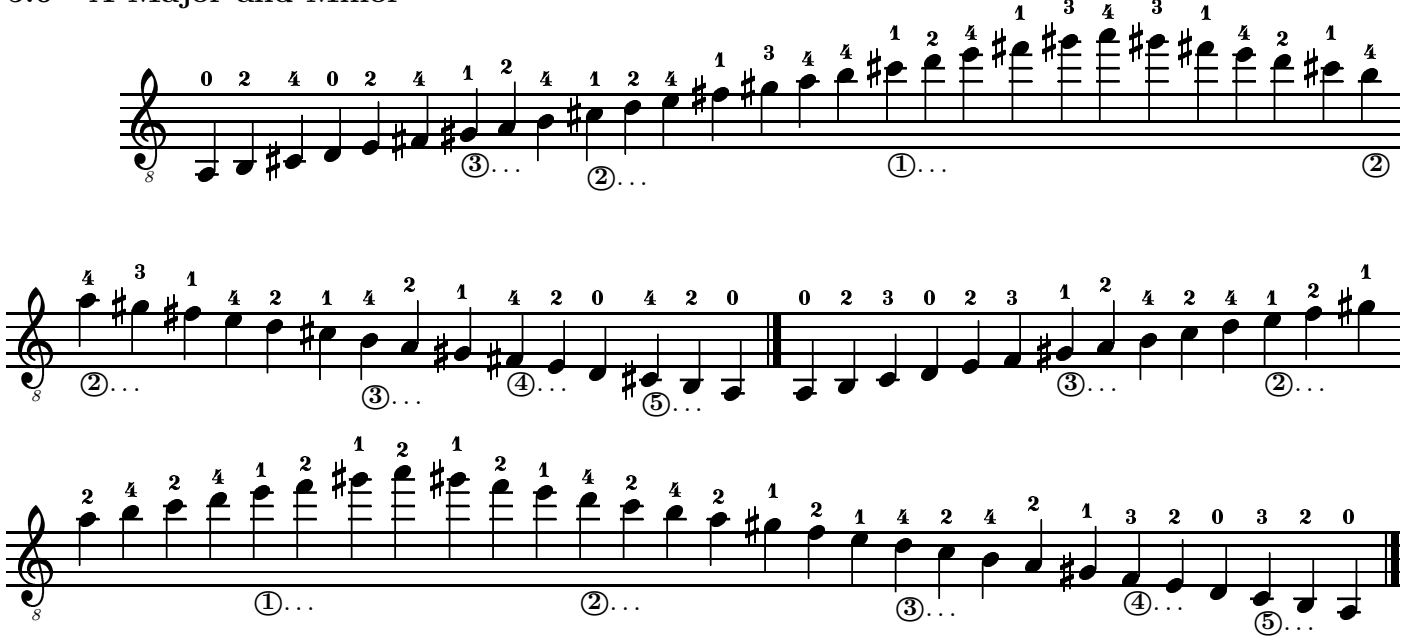




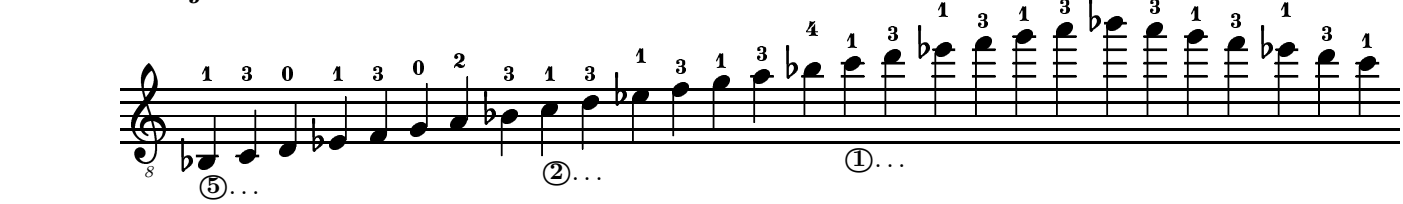
5.5 A♭ Major and G♯ Minor

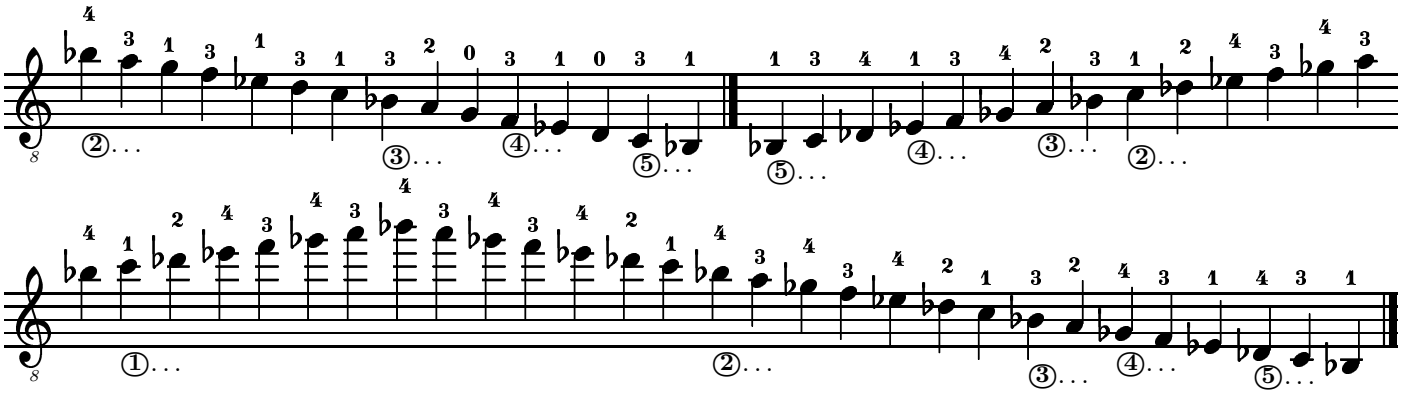


5.6 A Major and Minor

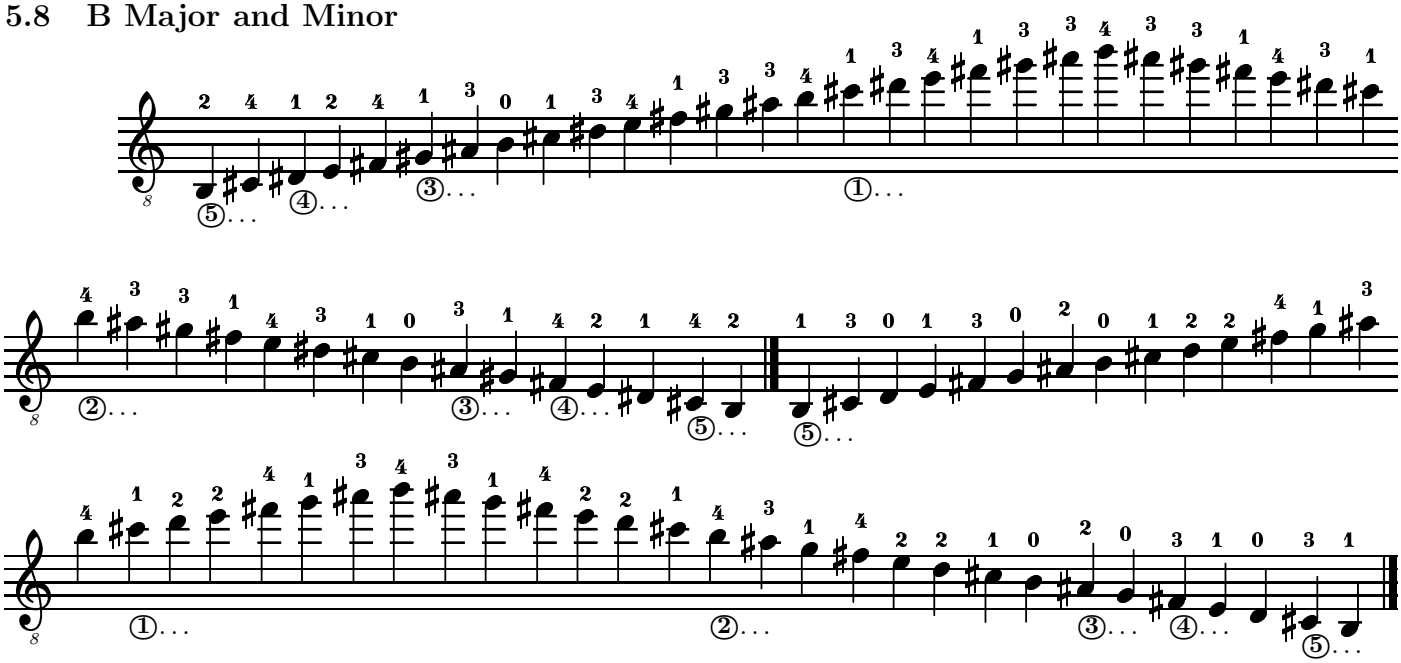


5.7 B♭ Major and Minor





5.8 B Major and Minor



6 Afterword

One half hour of these is worth much more of others. Because these are much more intense and much better organized, they are also harder. Any time you are working on basic abilities, you hit the wall very quickly, but if you persist I promise miracles. If you would ask me if you would ever become a good guitarist, I would answer that I don't know if you will ever be any good, but you will surely surpass your wildest dreams.[1]

[1]Feel free to use this document in unaltered form. This document is entirely original work. The author claims copyright to any recordings of these exercises or midi versions or tablature which may accompany this document. This document was produced using GNU software, especially the incomparable LilyPond typesetting program. The possession of this document does not confer on the bearer any rights at all. For any payment for copies of this document, you will remit to Amnesty International $1.00 US or 50% of the sale price, whichever is larger, for each copy sold. That offer may apply only to the latest version of this document, and is rescinded for older versions of this document, which may not be distributed. That offer may be rescinded at any time at the author's pleasure. dra@openguitar.com