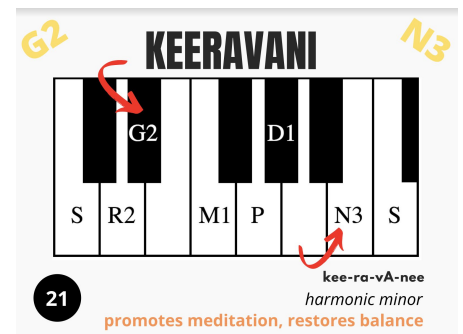


06/22/20

Major and Minor Scales - How it Relates to Carnatic Music

There are **24** major and minor scales, 12 each. Although all of them can be and are used in Carnatic music, some are more common than others. Each scale has its own sound, and if one song was played in every major and minor scale, it would sound different each time. Each major scale has a relative minor as well.

There are three common types of minor scales, **natural** minors, **melodic** minors, and **harmonic** minors. Natural minors start on the sixth degree of its relative major scale and are called diatonic scales. Melodic minors differentiate from natural minors because, in melodic minors, the sixth and seventh steps of the scale are different. The sixth step is raised, while the seventh step is lowered. This results in different pitches in a song than the sounds you would hear from a song in a natural minor. To put melodic minors in a Carnatic music format, melodic minors, while ascending are Gowrimanohari, and while descending they are Natabhairavi. Lastly, harmonic minors are very similar to natural minors. The only difference is that the seventh step is raised. These types of minors can be found in Carnatic music and Raga pop. For example, Havana is sung in **Natabhairavi**, a natural minor. Another example is Natural, which a song that is sung in **Keeravani**, a harmonic minor. All in all, all three types of minor scales can be found in Carnatic music and Raga pop, and are very easy to identify due to their distinct scales.



SHANKARABHARANAM



shank - arA- bha - ra - nam
Major scale | Ionian mode
happy, smooth, mellifluous

29

There are **twelve** major scales in total, some of which have sharps and flats. The most well known major scale is C major. C major has neither flat nor sharp, which is why it is considered the easiest scale to sing. Its relative minor is A minor, which also is a natural scale. “Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti, Do” is in C major. This can be found in Carnatic Music as well. Raga Shankarabarnam is C Major and sounds exactly like “Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti, Do”. This is a good example of how **all** music is connected.

In conclusion, major and minor scales are very important in Carnatic music, as they differentiate songs from each other. Although there are differences between American music and Carnatic music, they also share many similarities, such as the major and minor scales. Major and minor scales relate to Carnatic music because the Ragams in Carnatic music are different scales.