

Monteverdi Gloria for 8 voices M 13

Solving the dilemma of the 6th note of the minor scale - why you have to be ready for anything

It's helpful to use the keyboard so you can hear the patterns and work out the tune

Answers to the questions in Activity 12: Extracts 1 and 5 are in A minor. The others aren't

If you are someone who likes everything to feel cut and dried you may be uncomfortable with this bit. It is how it is. Luckily, unless you want to take a music exam, all you need to know is that when you are in a minor key, the 6th and 7th notes may be sharpened or they may not. It depends on the context. You may have to sing either.

a. This version of the scale was felt to be awkward to sing. It's that big jump between notes 6 and 7. *

b. Here's one solution - raise the 6th note. This is felt to sound nice if you are going up to the A.



c. When you sing solution b downwards, it sounds a bit odd - your ear begins to expect a C# not a C natural.

d. So in a splendid spirit of compromise, solution b is used for going **up** to A, and solution d for going **down**.*



Here's a really well-known tune that isn't quite sure whether it's in the Aeolian mode or A minor. By the end, it's come down on the side of A minor. You get G and F naturals in some places and G#s and F#s in others. Work out what the tune is by playing it.



* for the sake of completeness, version a is called the harmonic minor and version b + d is the melodic minor