

# APPENDIX III

## Musical Analysis

### How to Determine Major or Minor Tonality in Music

One of the first things that should be determined about a piece of music is whether it is in a major or minor key. We have learned that every key signature can signify either a major or minor key. So how do you decide the key?

Check the following:

1. The key signature will narrow the choice to two keys: a major key and its relative minor.
2. The beginning will often start with the tonic note, tonic chord, or a strong implication of the tonic chord.
3. The final note of the melody and the final chord (or lowest note in the bass) will usually be the tonic.
4. Certain altered notes (accidentals) will appear in most minor pieces as a regular and distinct part of the key. These notes are usually a step below the tonic.

The musical example below illustrates these points.

Key signature has no sharps or flats—the key is C major or A minor.

Notes from the A minor chord.

All sharped notes (circled) are the same letter name, G#.

A is strongly emphasized.

The final note of the melody is A.

The final chord is A minor.

An analysis of the musical example:

1. The key signature — no sharps or flats; the key is either C major or A minor.
2. The beginning — A is strongly emphasized in the bass; the notes of the A minor triad are implied in the treble.
3. The end — A is strongly emphasized in the treble; the A minor triad appears in the bass.
4. Altered notes — all the sharped notes are G#, which is a step below A.

We can safely assume that the musical example is in the key of A minor.