

Kamavardhini and the Blues scale – just one step and one note away

You know the Raga Kamavardhini? A keertana? A few phrases? If so, when done right, you could be admired for your blues/rock/jazz improvisation skills. Read on to know how...

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Blues scale from minor pentatonic

C Minor Pentatonic : C Eb F G Bb C (root – minor 3rd – perfect 4th – 5th – minor 7th – root)

C Blues scale : C Eb F F#/Gb G Bb C ((root – minor 3rd – perfect 4th – *sharp 4th/ flat fifth* – 5th – minor 7th – root)

Note : here we are talking about the hexatonic or six note blues scale. there are seven note and nine note scales which are also generally referred to as [blues scale](#).

The blues scale is derived from the minor pentatonic scale, by including the sharp 4th or flat fifth note.

The blues scale is used widely in blues, rock and jazz music.

The Kamavardani Connection

Now let us add the Major 7th note to this.

Major 7th note for C is B.

We get the scale : C Eb F F#/Gb G Bb B C

Now let us start playing the scale from the note one step below the root. Note one step before C is the B note.

B C Eb F F#/Gb G Bb B C

When written using interval names :

Root – minor 2nd – major 3rd – sharp fourth – fifth –
minor 6th – major 7th – root – (1)

Kamavardhani/kamavardhini/kamavardani raga

The 51st melakarta raga, has the following notes (ascend and descend)

- ārohaṇa: S R1 G3 M2 P D1 N3 S
- avarohaṇa: S N3 D1 P M2 G3 R1 S

Since the ascend and descend notes are the same, we will examine just the ascend.

When written in terms of western music intervals, the raga translates as follows :

Root – minor 2nd – major 3rd – sharp 4th – fifth – minor
6th – major 7th – root

which is same as the sequence we got in (1) above.

Just a step away

1. **Blues to Kamavardhini** : add a note one step below the root of the blues scale. start playing the blues scale from that note one step below the root, and we have the kamavardhini raga's notes. **C blues scale**? Add the note one step below C, which is B, and start playing the blues scale notes from B till next B and you have **B Kamavardani**.
2. **Kamavardani to Blues** : Start playing notes of Kamavardhini from the second note Ri to the Ri one octave higher, omitting the Sa – you get Blues scale with the Ri of Kamavardini as root.

You know a keertana or phrase in Kamavardani?

Suppose you want to improvise on a chord or key meant for G Blues scale.

You could try playing that Kamavardhini phrase with Gb as the Sa. You need to omit the Sa if you strictly want the six note blues scale. But then, experiment and 'feel' for yourself.

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