

Chord Theory: Writing With Natural and Harmonic Minors

Hi folks, hope you're keeping safe and well. The weather's on the up and the some of the shops are re-opening - hooray!!! Make sure you're still practicing and creating music at home and trying to get a bit of fresh air and/or exercise every day. Core Sports has many indoor and outdoor activities you can take part in so get in contact with your membership representative if you have any questions about that.

This week we're looking at the similarities and differences between the Natural Minor scale and the Harmonic Minor scale.

- **What are these scales?**

The Natural Minor and Harmonic Minor scales are both Minor scales in Western music that contain the standard of 7 notes.

- **They both have similar characteristics**

Many of the same chord voicings appear in both scales such as the 2nd chord in both scales being voiced as a Diminished chord. Another example is the 4th chord of both scales which is voiced as a Minor chord.

- **They both have differing characteristics**

There are different chord voicings for both of these minor scales too. For example, the 5th chord of the Natural Minor scale is always voiced as a Minor chord. Whereas the 5th chord in the Harmonic Minor scale is always voiced as a Major chord.

- **Let's look at both scales and their respective chord voicing**

Natural Minor:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor	Diminished	Major	Minor	Minor	Major	Major

Harmonic Minor:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor	Diminished	Major	Minor	Major	Major	Dimished

In this format the differences and similarities between both Minor scales can be quite clearly seen.

- Now let's apply an actual musical key to the scales - we'll use the rootnote of A - making these the 'A Natural Minor' and 'A Harmonic Minor' scales

A Natural Minor:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A Minor	B Diminished	C Major	D Minor	E Minor	F major	G Major

A Harmonic Minor:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A Minor	B Diminished	C Major	D Minor	E Major	F Major	G# Diminished

You may think that there isn't much difference between between the chords in these two scales but the effect that each one has on the accompanying melody can be quite drastic.

Activity:

- Using the note pattern shown see if you can work out any other Natural Minor and Harmonic Minor scales - start with C Natural Minor
- Using the A Natural and Harmonic Minor scales write a new song or piece of music - see what happens if you start mixing the chords up from each scale

I'm really looking forward to hearing what you've worked on once sessions start back at Core.

Take care,
Sam :-)