

Writing & Theory in the Key of D Minor

Hiya folks, hope you're all well and are enjoying this weekly broadcast of musical theory rantings, ramblings and raving :D

Try to make sure you're spending at least 20 minutes to an hour being creative every day if you can. Make a cuppa and sit down with your chosen craft - It's a great way to keep your mind and body occupied as well as improve your ability at whatever creative task you're carrying out.

Remember: **'Practice doesn't necessarily make perfect but it definitely makes better' :-)**

Also, Core Sports has many indoor and outdoor activities you can take part in so please get in contact with your membership manager if you have any questions about that.

This week we're going to continue looking at writing music in a minor key - namely the key of D minor. As usual we'll look at some light music theory and how it can be applied to aid in your song writing, jamming, and musical creativity.

- **What is the key of D minor?**

The key of D minor (or just 'Dm') is a musical scale of 7 notes that belong in the key of D minor. These 7 notes played in order are all of the notes you would expect to find when a piece of music is written in the key of D minor.

- **What are the notes in the D minor scale?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D	E	F	G	A	Bb	C

- **After the note of 'C' this pattern of notes repeats itself**

If you were sat at a piano you could start at the lowest note of D on the left hand side of the key board and play the scale of D minor repeatedly over and over until you reached the highest note of D on the right hand side of the key board.

- **What chords are in the key of D minor?**

As with all musical keys whether it be D minor, G minor, or A Major the chords in the key of D minor are based on the individual notes of the scale.

Below are the chords for each each note in the key of A minor

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Note	D	E	F	G	A	Bb	C
Chord	D minor	E diminished	F Major	G minor	A minor	Bb Major	C Major
Chord Shorthand	Dm	Edim	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C

Activity:

- Play the scale of D minor using only the root notes of each chord
- Play the scale of D minor using the fully voiced chords - Don't worry about 'E diminished' yet, we'll cover diminished chords in a later lesson - just use E minor for now or use the internet to research how to play E diminished

- **When writing music you can use a selection of any of the chords in the given key**

However, some chords are going to sound better when played in sequence with each other than some others. As students of music and musical artists it is our job to listen to the chords and figure out which ones sound nice when played with each other and in which order they should be played.

- **Alternating between the 1st chord of the D minor scale and the 5th chord of the D minor scale sounds harmonic and pleasing to the ear**

This would mean that you play one bar of D minor and one bar of A minor and then repeat this chord sequence over and over. These chords sound good together - and it's important to notice that in **any** key (whether minor or Major) if you alternate between the 1st chord of the key and the 5th chord of the key the resulting chord sequence will always sound harmonic and as if the chords are meant to be played together.

Activity:

- In the key of D minor find as many harmonically pleasing 2 chord sequences as you can
- Make sure that the first chord of each of these 2 chord sequences is always D minor

- **The only limit is what sounds good, pleasing or nice to your own ears**

As I've said before - the only rules in music are there to be stretched, broken and sometimes wholly ignored!

Activity:

- Using the chords from the D minor scale create 2 lists of 4 chord sequences
- One list should be titled 'Chord sequences I like' and the other list should be entitled 'Chord sequences I don't like'
- Try to find 4 chord sequences for each list
- Think about: Which was the easier list to complete? Why might that be?

The key of D minor only has one barre chord so should be quite natural to play on guitar and is fairly easy on key/piano. when sessions start back at Core Arts I'm looking forward to hearing all that you've been working on.

Take care,
Sam