



# Theory & Exercises: Little Sadie

## Key & Scale

We're playing *Little Sadie* in the key of Dm, so begin by reviewing the D natural minor scale. If you need a refresher on the natural minor scale, see the Resource Sheet devoted to the *Relative Minor Key / Natural Minor Scale*. Because this key is not a common one for us, the key signature has already been provided in the table below. To the right of that, fill in the notes of Dm scale. Start by playing the scale in open position. If that is already easy for you, play it in different positions on the fingerboard following the suggestions provided in the CAGED System Primer. Whichever approach you take, make sure you can not only play the finger pattern, but recognize each note by letter name and scale degree.

D minor	Scale Degrees						
Key Signature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 flat -- Bb							

## Arpeggios

In the table below provide the root, 3rd and 5th of each chord used in the song. Then play through each chord as an arpeggio. Start by playing the arpeggios in open position. If that is already easy for you, play them in different positions following the suggestions provided in the CAGED System Primer. Whichever approach you take, make sure you can not only play the finger pattern, but recognize each note by letter name and scale degree.

Chord	Root	3rd	5th
Dm			
F			
Am			
C			
G			

## Naming Notes

Following the Tab of either the 1st or 4th solo to this song, name each note by its letter name.

## Recognizing Chord & Non-Chord Tones

1. Below you see the Tab for the first solo to *Little Sadie*. Name each note as a scale degree of the chord supporting it. Notice in particular whether the note is a chord tone (1, 3 or 5) or not. Seen from this perspective you may notice that the melody doesn't "fit" as well over the G chord as it does over the other chords. Once you have seen this fact "by the numbers", listen to the solo with chordal backup and see if you can notice this same dissonance by ear.

Dm	F	Dm	C	Am
T	2	2	1	
A	2	3	0	2
B				2
				3
				0
				3
				3

  

G	Dm
2	3
3	2
0	0
3	
3	

2. If the exercise above is easy for you, do the same thing on Solo 4. Since this solo is being played beyond open position, in addition to naming the notes as scale degrees of the chord providing the harmony, be sure to identify the CAGED shape that would give you that chord in the position on the fretboard where the melodic line is being played. For example, the melody in the first 2 bars of this solo is played between the 5th and 8th frets. In that position of the fingerboard, the Dm is derived from the A shape; the F chord is a C shape.

### **Pentatonic and Blues Scales**

Since both these pairs of chords—F/Dm and C/Am—are the relative major and minor of one another, they share (among other possibilities) the same pentatonic scale. For example, F *major* pentatonic has the same notes as D *minor* pentatonic. Only the tonic—that is, the note on which the scale starts and ends, or “tonal center”—differs from one scale to the other. Below, you’ll see a list of the Resource Sheets at [communityguitar.com](http://communityguitar.com) that will help you understand these topics better, should they be new to you:

- *Major Pentatonic Scale*
- *Minor Pentatonic and Blues Scales*
- *Relative Minor Key / Natural Minor Scale*

Major/minor pentatonic scales are used several times in the solos provided for this song and you might want to try using them in your own lead guitar parts. Before reading on, try to identify some instances of pentatonic scale use in our solos for yourself. When you’re ready, examine the phrases listed below to see how the pentatonic scale is used within them.

- Solos 1 & 2, phrase 1 -- F/Dm pentatonic
- Solos 1 & 2, phrase 2 -- C/Am pentatonic
- Solo 3, phrase 3 -- Am pentatonic
- Solo 4, phrase 1 -- F/Dm pentatonic
- Solo 4, phrase 2 -- C/Am pentatonic

The so-called Blues Scale is a minor pentatonic scale with one note added: the chromatic passing tone between scale degrees 4 and 5. This modified minor pentatonic scale can be used to great effect anywhere you want a bluesier sound. Phrase 4 of Solo 4 is made up entirely of the Dm Blues Scale—two octaves worth, spanning the upper half of the fingerboard. If you are working up solos of your own, consider using the Dm Blues Scale to wrap things up, as here.

### **Sequences**

(See the Resource Sheet at [communityguitar.com](http://communityguitar.com) devoted to *Sequences* if this term is new to you.)

There are at least a couple really good examples of sequences in the solos for this song. (And arguably a couple more that are less clear.) Before reading on, try to find them yourself and identify both the scale that is being used and the pattern that makes up the sequence. When you’re ready, have a look at this list below.

- Solo 3, phrase 3 (Am minor pentatonic)
- Solo 4, phrase 3 (A natural minor)

### **Tonal Zones for Soloing**

The chord changes to this song fly by pretty quickly and there’s no avoiding the fact that you do have to keep track of your chord tones whenever you want to bring a melodic line to resolution. Still, it may be helpful to break the harmonic structure of this song into larger “zones” in which these details make more sense. Although different scales were used in different instances, you could say that all the solos for this song are organized into three such zones, as outlined below.

- Bars 1 and 2 are built around the relative major/minor tonality of F and Dm.
- The next 4 bars are built around the relative major/minor tonality of C and Am.
- From the G chord on, we are back to Dm (natural minor, minor pentatonic, or blues scale). Notice that in none of the solos do we actually try to resolve our melodic lines to G major.