

Drunken Sailor

A tune in Dorian mode



These are the notes of the Dorian scale, starting on D. This scale form is one of the ancient modes, which can be traced back to the music of ancient Greece.

A number of folk songs are in Dorian mode, including *Drunken Sailor*.

It is also much used by jazz musicians. So, although it is ancient in origin, it is very much part of 'living' music.

The musical notation consists of four staves of music in 2/4 time. The notes are: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8. The chord symbols are: Dm, Dm, C, C, D, D, C, Dm, Dm, Dm, C, C, DM, Dm, C, Dm.

This tune can be accompanied by the two chords of D minor and C major

Dm C

D F A D C E G C

We can begin to accompany the melody by selecting one note from each chord and playing it in a repeated rhythm, e.g.

Dm C

Later, we can add other notes from the chords, e.g.

Dm C

Try several rhythmic patterns and decide which works best

Below is a little map of the piece, showing where the chords change
Each chord lasts for the space of one bar:

Dm Dm C C
Dm Dm C Dm

When you are really familiar with these two chords, try creating your own melodies from the chord notes. Try a slow, sad, piece with two beats to the bar and a lively dance with three beats to the bar.

Here is an accompaniment pattern for the dance, suitable for chime bars, etc.