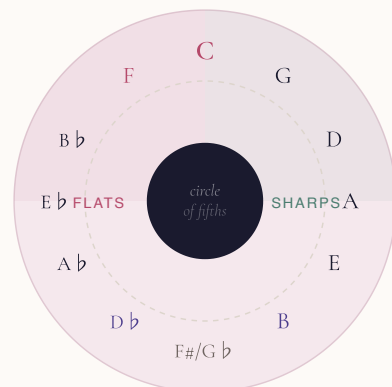


FREE RESOURCE

The map behind almost every song you *know*.

The circle of fifths organizes all 12 keys by how closely they relate to each other. Keys that sit next to each other on the circle share 6 out of 7 notes, which is why music moves so naturally between them.



WHAT IT IS

A circular arrangement of all 12 musical keys organized by the interval of a fifth. Moving clockwise adds one sharp. Moving counter-clockwise adds one flat.

WHY IT MATTERS

Keys close together on the circle sound natural together. Most songs stay in neighboring keys, which is why learning one key unlocks the next with only one new note to learn.

WHO USES IT

Pianists, guitarists, singers, composers, producers, teachers, and anyone who loves music. Once you see it, you start hearing it in every song you know.

KEYS, ACCIDENTALS & SONGS

C no accidentals Let It Be · *The Beatles*

| SHARP KEYS →

G F# Nothing Else Matters · *Metallica*

D F# C# Birds of a Feather · *Billie Eilish*

A F# C# G# Someone Like You · *Adele*

| FLAT KEYS ←

F Bb The Scientist · *Coldplay*

Bb Bb Eb A Thousand Years · *Christina Perri*

Eb Bb Eb Ab Killer Queen · *Queen*

CHORD PATTERNS THAT POWER POP SONGS

THE AXIS PROGRESSION · I – V – vi – IV

I **V** **vi** **IV**

In C: C – G – Am – F. The most used chord progression in pop music. Hundreds of songs are built on this exact pattern, including *Let It Be* by The Beatles, which is learned in the very first lesson of the group classes.

Want to learn more about chord progressions? Check out group classes at Emma Dessa Music · emmadessamusic.com

RELATIVE MINORS

Every major key has a relative minor that shares the exact same notes, just starting from a different place. Same circle, different emotion.

C MAJOR



A minor

G MAJOR



E minor

F MAJOR



D minor

THE I - IV - V ARE ALWAYS NEIGHBORS

On the circle, the three most harmonically important chords in any key always sit side by side. This is not a coincidence. It is the geometry of the circle.



This is how C Major sits on the circle.

ONE NOTE CHANGES AT A TIME

Moving one step clockwise adds exactly one sharp. Moving one step counter-clockwise adds exactly one flat. This means neighboring keys sound nearly identical, which is why song key changes often feel smooth rather than jarring.

I2

Keys on the circle

Each key has its own set of sharps or flats, with C Major at the top as the only key with none.

6/7

Notes shared by neighbors

Adjacent keys share 6 of their 7 notes. That is why one new note unlocks the next key.

EMMA DESSA MUSIC · EMMADESSAMUSIC.COM

Want to learn this in a small group?

The Circle of Fifths 8-Week Group Program teaches you to play real songs while actually understanding why they work. 3 to 5 students max, online, one hour a week. No theory background needed.

In your very first lesson:

Complete beginner? You will play *Ode to Joy* by Beethoven.

Some experience? You will play *Let It Be* by The Beatles and *Champagne Problems* by Taylor Swift.

Intermediate level? You will play *Imagine* by John Lennon.

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Emma Dessa Music

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