Mike Dana

The Circle of…*(wait a minute…)*

- The name issue: it IS a **circle**…of descending **5ths** (intervals), of dominant-to-tonic (V to I) and secondary dominant (V of V of V… all harmonic functions.)
- This is how music moves *forward*. Should go clockwise, the way time moves forward.
  - Example: the bridge of "Cherokee" (10 in a row!)
    C#mi7 F#7 B Ma7 Bmi7 E7 A Ma7 Ami7 D7 G Ma7 Gmi7 C7 Cmi7 F7 Bb
- The most important structure in jazz music?
- **Contains ALL key signatures:** Clockwise to add flats, counterclockwise to add sharps.
- **Contains ALL the ii – V^7 – I progressions**
  - Clockwise (forward!): mi7 – dom. 7 – Maj. [Dmi7 – G7 – C Ma7]
- **Gives important chord tone info for secondary dominant progressions**
  - Example: Bridge of rhythm changes: D7 G7 C7 F7 Bb Ma (the tonic)
  - Dominant chords "look ahead" to the next chord's key signature.
- **Contains ALL the iii – vi –ii – V^7 progressions** (common "turnaround")
  - Clockwise (forward!): mi7 – mi7 – mi7 – dom. 7 [Emi7 – Ami7 – Dmi7 – G7]
- **Contains ALL diminished chords**
  - Use the square; gives you 4 min. 3rds, spells complete diminished 7 chord.
  - "Rotate" the square to get the other two "sets" of dim. chords
  - Any note in a dim. chord can be considered root; so, only 3 different ones.
    - Example: C^{07} = Eb^{07} = $Gb/F\#^{07}$ = A^{07}
- **Contains ALL augmented chords**
  - Use the triangle; gives you 3 maj. 3rds, spells complete augmented chord.
    - Example: C aug. = E aug. = Ab aug.
- **Contains ALL tritones** (for tritone substitutions…very cool harmonic trick!)
  - Go directly across the "pole" to see the trtitone (aug. 4 or dim. 5 interval)
    - Example: C7 and Gb7 are tritone subs; Eb7 and A7 are tritone subs)
- **Contains all of the modes**
  - A bit more advanced. Please see the additional handout in the Dropbox folder.

Teaching, Practicing, and Applying the Circle

- Display prominently in band room, include handout in folder. Quiz, chant…VARY THE STARTING NOTE!
- Practice simple sequences around the circle. **ALWAYS GO FULL CIRCLE!**
  - Use the iReal tracks provided.
- Have the "hemisphere" talk. ☺
- Bass: "see the future" root movement, visualize patters on the instrument.
- Guitar: lower strings tunes in 4ths. Move to closest root (adjacent string) when comping.
  - Remember, down a 5^{th} = up a 4^{th}!
- Improvisers: map out changes that follow the circle. Indicate all ii – V^7 – I and other diatonic progressions. Look for patterns from song to song.
- Sneaky trick: Get one student fired up on this. When the others hear how good *she* sounds, they'll get on board. Trust me.

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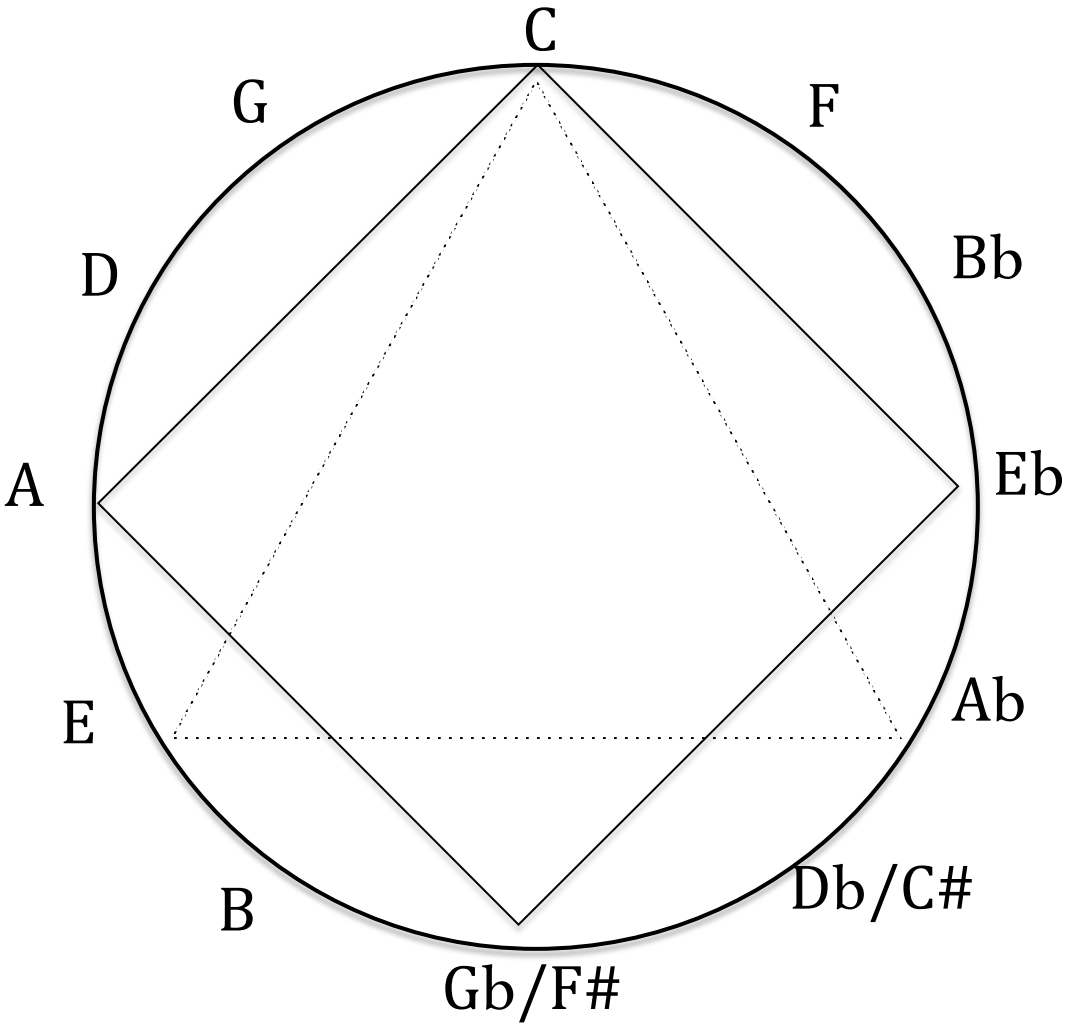
The Circle of Descending Fifths*



- *The name issue
  - Series of descending 5ths.
  - C is the dominant (V) of F, F is the V of Bb, etc.
- ii - V^7 – I progression follow the circle (m7 – dom7 – Maj)
- Time moves forward in a clockwise direction. **So does music**.
  - See "All The Things You Are", bridge of rhythm changes
- Clockwise to add flats
- Counterclockwise to add sharps
- "Squares" = minor thirds = diminished chords
- "Triangles = major thirds = augmented chords
- "Opposites" = tritones (aug. 4 or dim. 5)
- Transposition: this is a great tool for learning to transpose
- Modes: this will help you keep your modal relationships organized in your head
- I first learned it "the other way" too. People can change. ☺

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