

# MUSIC THEORY.aargh©

## Harmony - 3 (Session 23) "Harmonic Progression around the Circle of Fifths"

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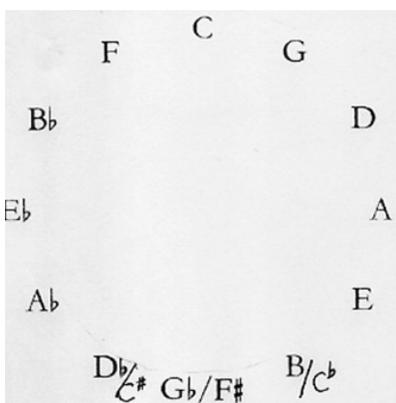


Remember 3, 6, 2, 5, 1 or E, A, D, G, C? (See above chart.) These are Perfect Fifths in a counterclockwise order around the Circle of Fifths. Think of the circle as a clock. If you move from 1 o'clock to 12 o'clock (G to C) that distance is a descending Perfect Fifth. If G is dominant, C is its tonic. Also, D is the dominant of G, and A is the dominant of D. (You move in counterclockwise descending motion.) And the same is true all around the circle.

If you move in clockwise motion (11 o'clock to 12 o'clock) you have a motion of a descending Perfect Fourth. F is the Subdominant on C Major.

Any three adjacent tones in the circle give you the subdominant, tonic and dominant of a key. For example, if you read 12 o'clock to 1 o'clock to 2 o'clock this is in order, the subdominant, tonic and dominant in the key of the middle number, or in this case, G.

### Circle of Fifths



These are the important chords in stressing tonality. Why is this important to me? I know as a conductor/ringer that when these chords are adjacent, the structure of the composition is in an important place. Often this structure is paired with a dynamic level change, a tempo change, a range change, or any of many other elements in a composition. It is the goal of the composition to reach tonic at critical sectional changes and endings and therefore gives purpose to the altering of steady pulse, loudness, etc., of the composition.

Until next time,

**Dr. P**

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