

# The Cycle of Fifths on the keyboard and grand staff

Major keys or scales are constructed a perfect fifth (P5) apart and are commonly referred to as the Circle or Cycle of Fifths.

The Major Sharp and Flat Keys are shown below to provide a visual illustration of their relationship to each other in the Cycle of Fifths.

C<sup>b\*</sup> G<sup>b\*</sup> D<sup>b\*</sup> A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> F C ←

8<sup>va</sup>----- 15<sup>ma</sup>-----

play 1 octave above

C → G D A E B\* F#\* C#\*

8<sup>vb</sup>-----

\* 2 KEYS share the *same* sound

The Cycle of Fifths SHARP KEYS:  
start with the *lowest* C and go **up** a P5

The Cycle of Fifths FLAT KEYS:  
start with the *highest* C and go **down** a P5

The Cycle of Fifths without the keyboard. Note that a fifth goes from line to line skipping a line or space to space skipping a space.

8<sup>va</sup>----- 15<sup>ma</sup>-----

play 1 octave above

8<sup>vb</sup>-----

RECAP: There are 15 major scales. (C+, 7 sharp scales and 7 flat scales)

Below are 3 letter names for each note. Major scales do not exist for the underlined letter names. Since a major scale may be *played* starting on any note, in order to *write* the scale, the enharmonic equivalent as indicated below must be used.

C<sup>b</sup> C C<sup>#</sup>; D<sup>b</sup> D D<sup>#</sup>; E<sup>b</sup> E E<sup>#</sup>; F<sup>b</sup> F F<sup>#</sup>; G<sup>b</sup> G G<sup>#</sup>; A<sup>b</sup> A A<sup>#</sup>; B<sup>b</sup> B B<sup>#</sup>

E<sup>b</sup> F E A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> C