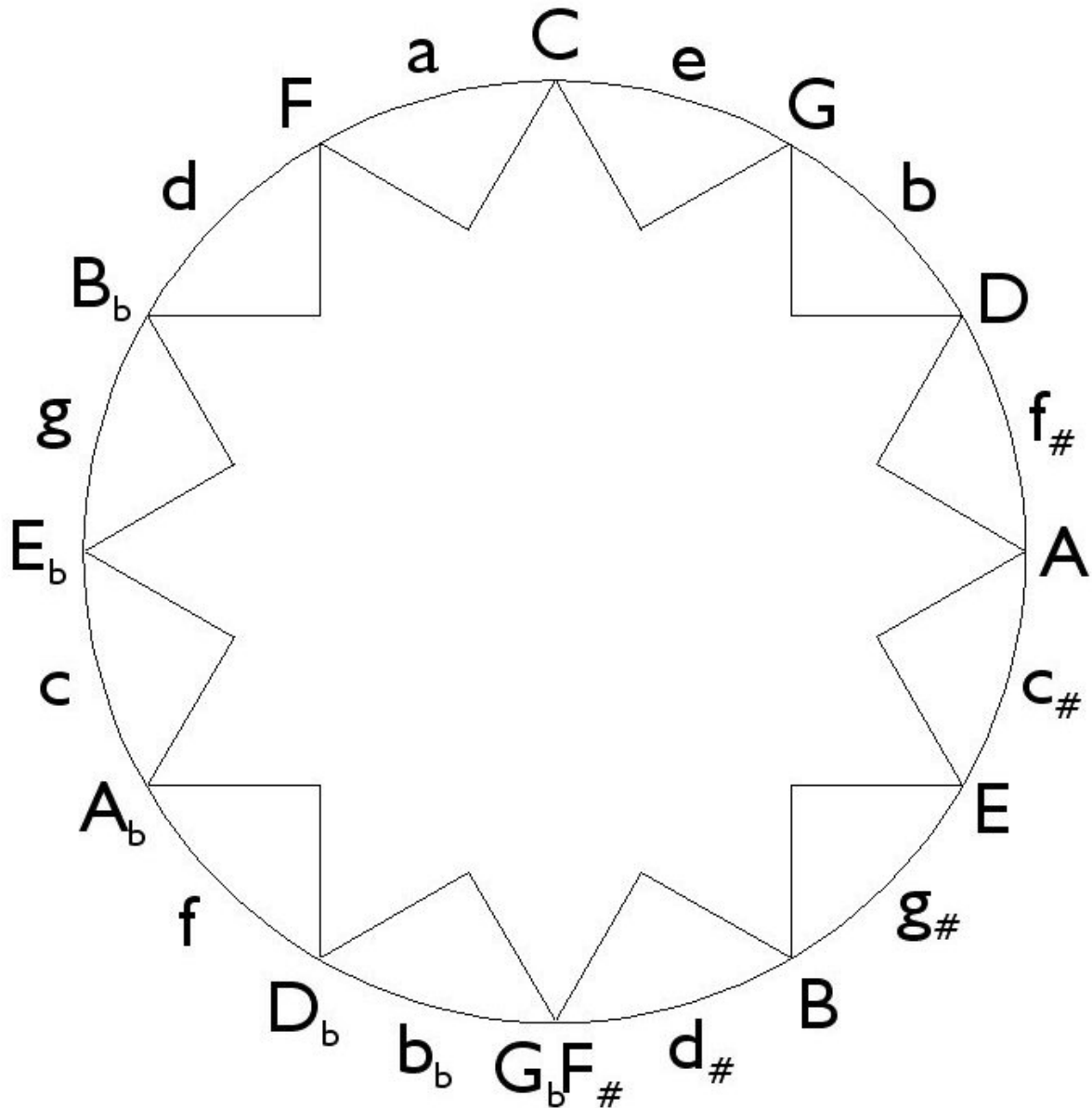


# The Circle of Thirds and Fifths



Notes next to each other are alternating major and minor thirds. From a note with upper case letter to the right clockwise we get a major third followed by a minor third, so two steps gives us a fifth. Three notes next to each other form a chord, base note, third and fifth. Major chords are formed with the base note having an upper case letter, minor chords are formed with the base note having a lower case letter, then going clockwise for the next two notes.

For each major chord the relative minor chord starts just one step to the left (anti-clockwise). The dominant (on the fifth) is two steps to the right (clockwise), and the subdominant (the fourth, or the fifth below) two steps to the left (anti-clockwise). This shows all six closely related chords, and all the notes used in the major scale based on the base note (tonic). Or find a base note with an upper letter, and take the three notes either side, to get the seven notes of the major scale.

The points of the star show all the base notes for major chords, and form a circle of fifths. The base notes for the minor chords are between the points.