# **Music Theory Cheat Sheet**

### 1. The Basics

#### A. The Musical Alphabet:

- The musical alphabet consists of 7 letters: A, B, C, D, E, F, G.
- These notes repeat in cycles across different octaves.

#### **B. Enharmonics:**

- Enharmonic notes are different names for the same pitch.
- Examples: C# (C-sharp) is the same as Db (D-flat).

#### C. Scales:

- A scale is a sequence of notes in ascending or descending order.
- The most common scales are Major and Minor.

#### D. Major Scale Formula:

- Whole, Whole, Half, Whole, Whole, Whole, Half.
- Example: C Major Scale: C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C.

#### E. Minor Scale Formula:

- Natural Minor: Whole, Half, Whole, Whole, Half, Whole, Whole.
- Harmonic Minor: Whole, Half, Whole, Whole, Half, Whole and a Half, Half.
- Melodic Minor (Ascending): Whole, Half, Whole, Whole, Whole, Half.
- Melodic Minor (Descending): Whole, Whole, Half, Whole, Whole, Half, Whole.

## 2. Intervals

#### A. Definition:

- An interval is the distance between two notes.

#### B. Types of Intervals:

- Unison: Same note.

- Minor Second: 1 half step.

- Major Second: 2 half steps.

- Minor Third: 3 half steps.

- Major Third: 4 half steps.

- Perfect Fourth: 5 half steps.

- Augmented Fourth/Diminished Fifth: 6 half steps.

- Perfect Fifth: 7 half steps.

- Minor Sixth: 8 half steps.

- Major Sixth: 9 half steps.

- Minor Seventh: 10 half steps.

- Major Seventh: 11 half steps.

- Octave: 12 half steps.

## 3. Chords

#### A. Triads:

- Major Triad: Root, Major Third, Perfect Fifth.

- Minor Triad: Root, Minor Third, Perfect Fifth.
- Diminished Triad: Root, Minor Third, Diminished Fifth.
- Augmented Triad: Root, Major Third, Augmented Fifth.

#### **B. Seventh Chords:**

- Major Seventh: Root, Major Third, Perfect Fifth, Major Seventh.
- Dominant Seventh: Root, Major Third, Perfect Fifth, Minor Seventh.
- Minor Seventh: Root, Minor Third, Perfect Fifth, Minor Seventh.
- Half-Diminished Seventh: Root, Minor Third, Diminished Fifth, Minor Seventh.
- Fully Diminished Seventh: Root, Minor Third, Diminished Fifth, Diminished Seventh.

#### C. Extended Chords:

- Ninth: Add the ninth interval.
- Eleventh: Add the ninth and eleventh intervals.
- Thirteenth: Add the ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth intervals.

## 4. Key Signatures

#### A. Major Keys:

- C Major: No sharps or flats.
- G Major: 1 sharp (F#).
- D Major: 2 sharps (F#, C#).
- A Major: 3 sharps (F#, C#, G#).
- E Major: 4 sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#).
- B Major: 5 sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#).

- F# Major: 6 sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#).

- C# Major: 7 sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B#).

#### **B. Minor Keys:**

- A Minor: No sharps or flats.

- E Minor: 1 sharp (F#).

- B Minor: 2 sharps (F#, C#).

- F# Minor: 3 sharps (F#, C#, G#).

- C# Minor: 4 sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#).

- G# Minor: 5 sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#).

- D# Minor: 6 sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#).

- A# Minor: 7 sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B#).

### 5. Circle of Fifths

- The Circle of Fifths is a visual representation of the relationships among the 12 tones of the chromatic scale, their corresponding key signatures, and the associated major and minor keys.

#### A. Clockwise Progression:

- Each step clockwise adds one sharp.

- Order of Sharps: F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B#.

- Key Signatures: C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, C#.

#### **B. Counterclockwise Progression:**

- Each step counterclockwise adds one flat.

- Order of Flats: Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb, Cb, Fb.
- Key Signatures: C, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb, Cb.

#### **C. Relative Minor Keys:**

- Each major key has a relative minor that shares the same key signature.
- Example: A minor is the relative minor of C major.

### 6. Modes

Modes are scales derived from the major scale but starting on different scale degrees.

#### A. Ionian (Major Scale):

- Interval Pattern: W-W-H-W-W-H.

#### **B.** Dorian:

- Interval Pattern: W-H-W-W-W-H-W.
- Example: D Dorian (D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D).

#### C. Phrygian:

- Interval Pattern: H-W-W-W-H-W-W.
- Example: E Phrygian (E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E).

#### D. Lydian:

- Interval Pattern: W-W-W-H-W-W-H.
- Example: F Lydian (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).

#### E. Mixolydian:

- Interval Pattern: W-W-H-W-W-H-W.

- Example: G Mixolydian (G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G).

#### F. Aeolian (Natural Minor):

- Interval Pattern: W-H-W-W-H-W-W.

#### G. Locrian:

- Interval Pattern: H-W-W-H-W-W.

- Example: B Locrian (B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B).

### 7. Cadences

Cadences are chord progressions that conclude a phrase, section, or piece of music.

#### A. Perfect Authentic Cadence (PAC):

- V (Dominant) to I (Tonic), both chords in root position.
- The tonic note is the highest note in the final chord.

#### B. Imperfect Authentic Cadence (IAC):

- V to I, but one or both chords are inverted or the tonic is not the highest note.

#### C. Plagal Cadence:

- IV (Subdominant) to I.
- Often referred to as the "Amen Cadence".

#### D. Half Cadence:

- Ends on the V chord.
- Creates an unfinished, suspenseful feel.

#### **E. Deceptive Cadence:**

- V to any chord other than I (commonly vi).
- Creates a surprise or unexpected twist.

## 8. Common Chord Progressions

#### A. I-IV-V-I:

- One of the most common progressions in Western music.
- Example: C-F-G-C in C major.

#### B. ii-V-I:

- Often used in jazz.
- Example: Dm-G7-C in C major.

#### C. I-vi-IV-V (50s progression):

- Example: C-Am-F-G in C major.

#### D. I-V-vi-IV:

- Example: C-G-Am-F in C major.

## 9. Rhythmic Values

#### A. Note Durations:

- Whole Note: 4 beats.

- Half Note: 2 beats.

- Quarter Note: 1 beat.

- Eighth Note: 1/2 beat.

- Sixteenth Note: 1/4 beat.

#### **B. Rest Durations:**

- Whole Rest: 4 beats of silence.

- Half Rest: 2 beats of silence.

- Quarter Rest: 1 beat of silence.

- Eighth Rest: 1/2 beat of silence.

- Sixteenth Rest: 1/4 beat of silence.

## 10. Time Signatures

#### A. Simple Time:

- Top number is 2, 3, or 4.

- Beats divided into 2.

- Examples: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4.

#### **B. Compound Time:**

- Top number is 6, 9, or 12.

- Beats divided into 3.

- Examples: 6/8, 9/8, 12/8.

#### C. Complex Time:

- Irregular divisions.

- Examples: 5/4, 7/8.

## 11. Dynamics

#### Dynamics indicate the volume of music.

A. Pianissimo (pp): Very soft.

B. Piano (p): Soft.

C. Mezzo-Piano (mp): Moderately soft.

D. Mezzo-Forte (mf): Moderately loud.

E. Forte (f): Loud.

F. Fortissimo (ff): Very loud.

G. Crescendo (cresc.): Gradually getting louder.

H. Decrescendo (decresc.): Gradually getting softer.

## 12. Articulations

A. Staccato: Short and detached.

B. Legato: Smooth and connected.

C. Accent: Emphasize the note.

- D. Tenuto: Hold the note for its full value.
- E. Fermata: Hold the note longer than its value.

## 13. Ornamentations

- A. Trill: Rapid alternation between two adjacent notes.
- B. Mordent: Rapid alternation between a note and the note immediately below or above.
- C. Turn: A sequence of four notes that decorate the main note.

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