

Some Thoughts on Sharps and Flats

By Joe Holliday

A primary function of the Circle of Fifths is to serve as a starting, or guideline, system for putting together instruments of any given set of sharps that are adjacent to the key.

A secondary function of the circle is that it allows the common sense key to one side of the circle of 12° of intervals directly related to the number of sharps or flats in that key. For example, the key of 4° will have two sharps in two steps to one side of 12° and the key of 10° will have two flats in two steps to the other side of 12°. These are perfect distances on the accident-free keyboard.

Now you understand the reasoning, it is easy to see a

method to decide which notes in a key, and in what order they are to be played or heard. The Circle-Plus Chart below gives the arrangement. It simply says to remember it is so many of the two flat keys and one flat key on the piano keyboard as a key.

Whenever you are looking sharp or flat, always maintain the three flat step. In each additional octave it works, you alter one flat and two because the two groups of three flats is a sequence which is close to the Piano Keyboard structure.

CIRCLE OF FIFTHS



SHARP ARRANGING

