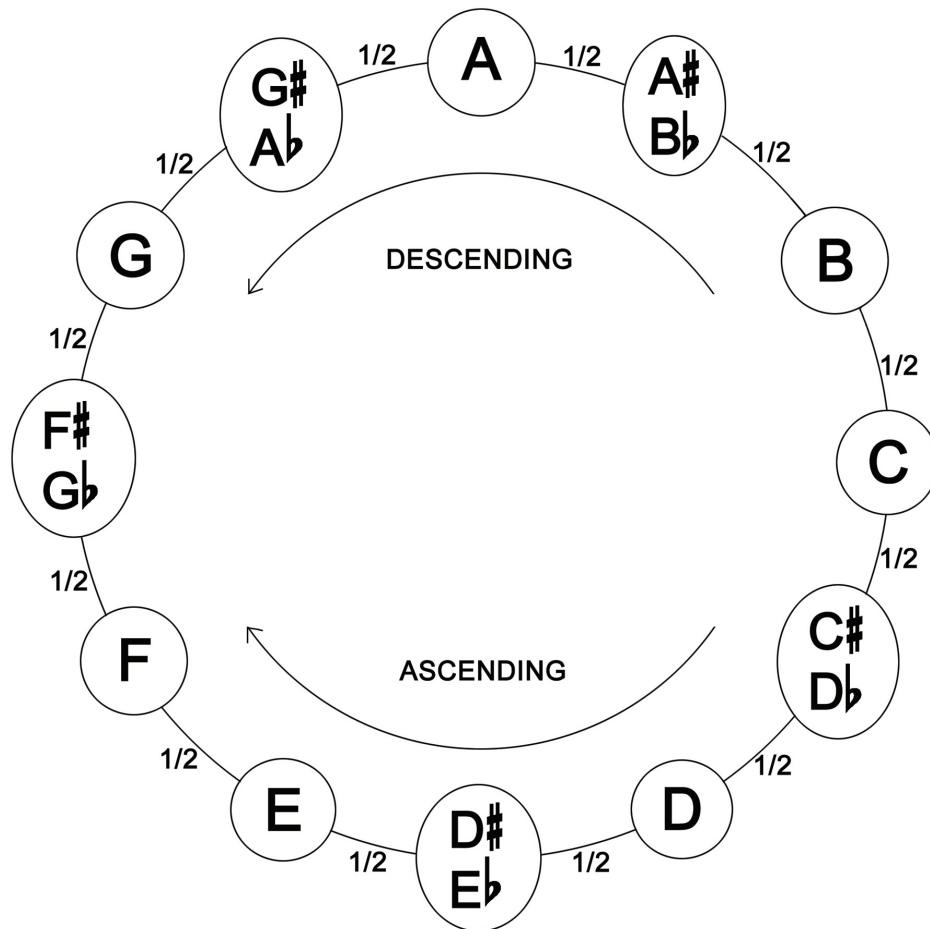


# The Chromatic Scale

The first step in learning how to improvise is to become familiar with the language of music. Like all languages, music has its own unique alphabet. The musical alphabet draws its natural notes from the first seven letters of the alphabet, A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. In between those pitches are sharp and flat notes. Sharp means higher in pitch, and flat means lower in pitch. A natural note is a note that is not flat or sharp. Every "in between" note has two names, its sharp name and its flat name. Even though it has two names, it is one pitch. Take a look at the Chromatic Scale chart below. Notice that there are a couple of sharps and flats "missing": there are no sharp or flat notes between B and C, nor E and F. Memorize these two omissions.



We can see that there are seven natural notes and five sharp/flat notes, giving us a total of twelve notes. These twelve notes constitute every pitch in music. The distance between two notes is called an interval. The interval of the notes that are next to each other in the Chromatic Scale is called a half step. A half step is the smallest interval in music. All of the intervallic names are listed on the next page.

**SUMMARY:** The Chromatic Scale contains all of the notes in music. All adjacent notes are a half step apart. Memorize the order of notes ascending and descending, and practice saying and playing them in order from different starting points and at different tempos with a metronome.

## KEY:

- $\flat$  = flat, meaning lower in pitch
- $\sharp$  = sharp, meaning higher in pitch
- $\natural$  = natural, meaning not flat or sharp
- $1/2$  = half step