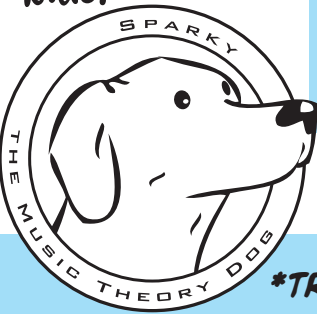


hey, it's
kids!

SPARKY^{THE} MUSIC THEORY DOG!



Q: Dear Sparky: What does it mean when music theorists talk about “relative minor” and “parallel minor”? In what ways can major and minor keys be connected?

-M.T., Ohio, USA

A: WOOF!*

SINCE D MINOR HAS THE SAME
KEY SIGNATURE AS F MAJOR,
WE SAY THAT D MINOR IS THE
RELATIVE MINOR OF F MAJOR.

***TRANSLATION:** WHEN TWO KEYS THAT HAVE THE SAME *KEY SIGNATURE* BUT DIFFERENT *TONIC NOTES*, WE SAY THEY'RE *RELATED*.



SURE, D MINOR
MIGHT USE A
C SHARP AS
A RAISED
LEADING-NOTE,
BUT WE DON'T
CONSIDER THAT AS
PART OF THE
KEY SIGNATURE.



PARALLEL KEYS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE KEYS THAT HAVE THE SAME TONIC NOTE, BUT DIFFERENT KEY SIGNATURES.

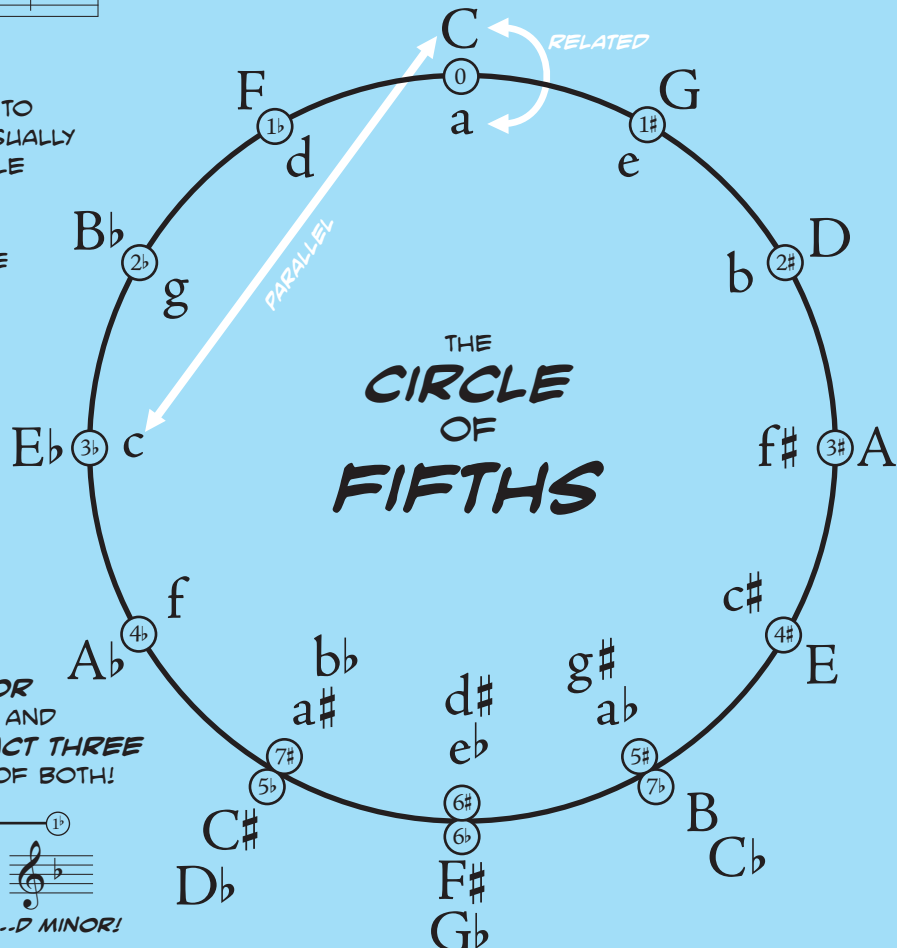
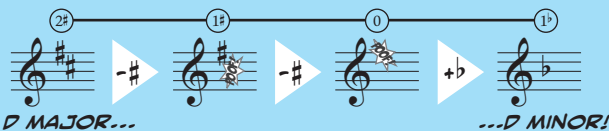
SO F MINOR IS THE PARALLEL MINOR OF F MAJOR!

IT'S CONVENIENT TO ADD MINOR KEYS TO THE **CIRCLE OF FIFTHS**; THEY'RE USUALLY PLACED ON THE **INSIDE** OF THE CIRCLE IN **LOWER CASE**.

BECAUSE *RELATIVE KEYS* SHARE THE SAME *KEY SIGNATURE*, THEY ALSO SHARE THE SAME *POSITION* ON THE CIRCLE OF FIFTHS!

PARALLEL KEYS HAVE DIFFERENT KEY SIGNATURES, BUT SEEING THEM ON THE CIRCLE OF FIFTHS ILLUSTRATES THEIR **CONSISTENT KEY RELATIONSHIP**: MINOR KEYS ALWAYS APPEAR **THREE DEGREES COUNTERCLOCKWISE** FROM THEIR PARALLEL MAJOR KEY.

SO TO FIND THE KEY SIGNATURE FOR A **MINOR KEY**, START WITH THE **MAJOR** KEY SIGNATURE WITH THE SAME TONIC AND EITHER **ADD THREE FLATS**, **SUBTRACT THREE SHARPS**, OR SOME **COMBINATION** OF BOTH!



DOING STUFF THE SPARKY WAY IS ALWAYS FUN!