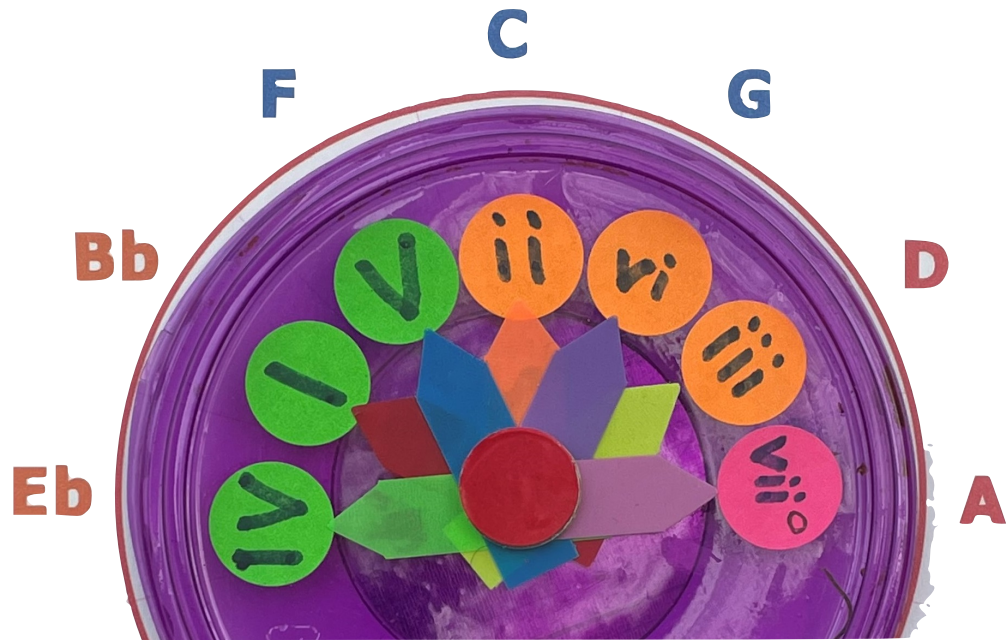


## Magical Musical Decoder Ring



# Musical Decoder Cheat Sheet

Gives You the Answers

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In this short cheat sheet handout you will learn how to see which chords are in any Major key.

This will enable you to quickly create a piece of music in the desired key.

We will also briefly explore the modes which can add unique flavor and texture to any song creation.

# The Key of Bb Major

## Check out the Roman Numerals

See how the inner circle has some Roman numerals that point to letters? This gives you all of the Major, Minor and Diminished chords in the key of Bb. This is all you need to get started creating music in the key of Bb.

Upper case Roman numerals are Major chords.

I = Bb Major chord

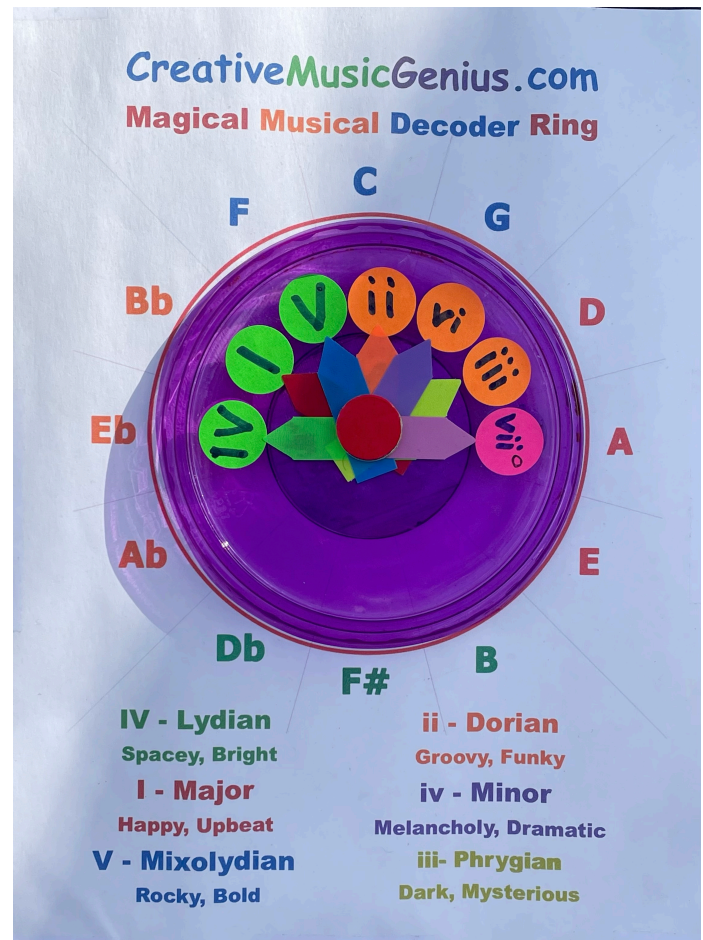
Lower case numerals represent Minor chords.

ii = C minor chord

Lower case numerals with a little circle o; make a Diminished chord.

vii<sup>o</sup> = A Diminished chord

Of course we can achieve any Major key by rotating the inner dial. That would change the above chord names depending on the key. We will explore some other keys in the next chapter.



Chords in Bb Major	
Bb Major	I chord
C minor	ii chord
D minor	iii chord
Eb Major	IV chord
F Major	V chord
G minor	vi chord
A Diminished	vii <sup>o</sup> chord

Here we have the same of chords in a table. For some people this might make it easier to visualize.

Now it's time to create a piece of music in the key of Bb.

Of course you could randomly choose any of the chords of Bb, play around with them and get something interesting, or not. Experimentation is always fun and can lead to some creative discoveries. Some of the songs you know and love have been made this way.

If you have some sheet music or a chord app, (like ultimate guitar or one of many others, you could find a song in the key of Bb and look at how the chords are sequenced together.

## Common chord progressions

There are also a number of chord combinations that have been used over and over throughout the decades.

The I, IV and V chords (all the major chords) have been used to create countless songs. This is one of the simplest groups of chords to use in a song. Many songs have been written using just these 3 chords.

Try playing around on your instrument with these 3 chords, the I - Bb Major, IV - Eb Major and F the V chord. See if it doesn't automatically sound awesome.

Below is an example of a tune I put together with these 3 chords. I enlisted the help of Scaler 2 and Zenbeats for this one.



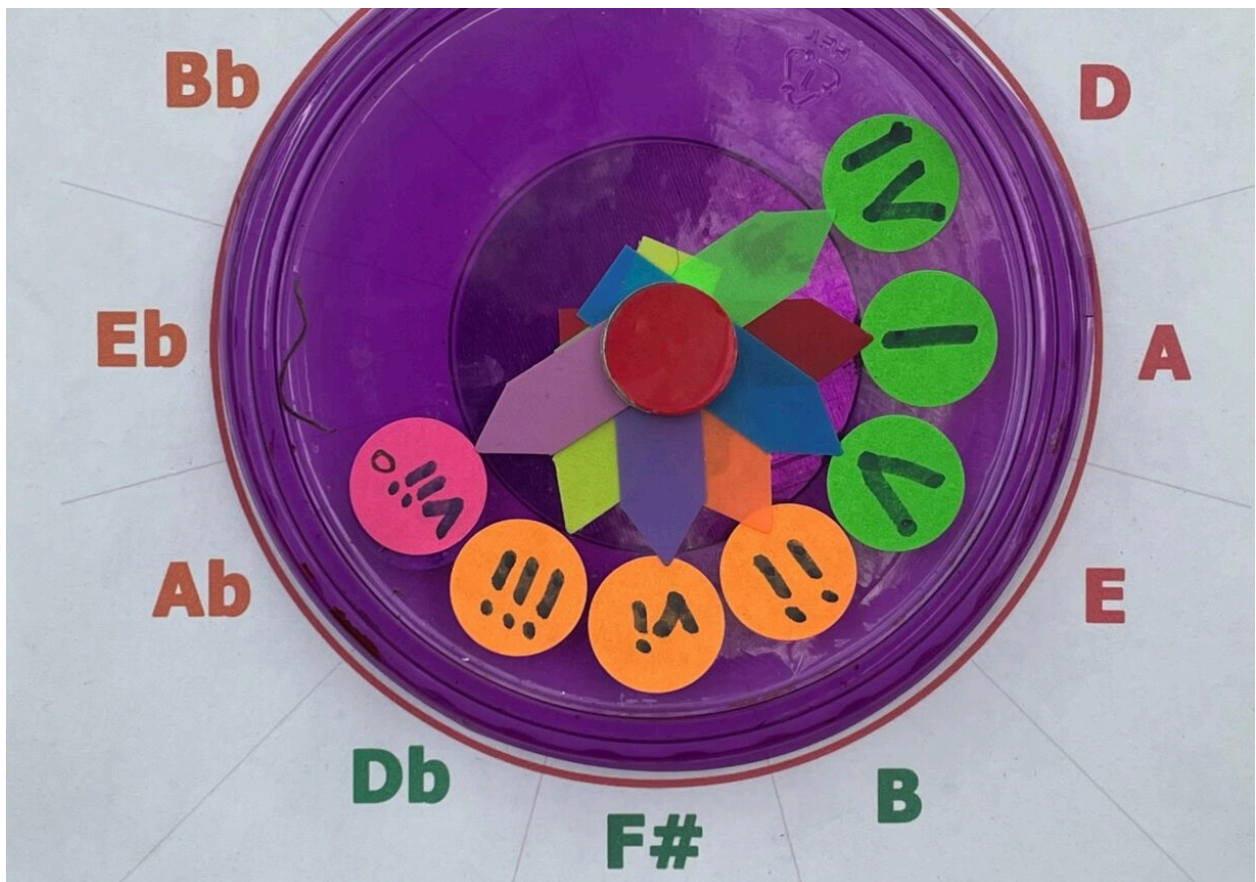
Bb - Bb - Eb - Eb - Bb - Bb - F - Eb - Bb - Bb

Each chord is played for 1 measure. You can always use pen and paper to sketch out a progression.

# The Key of A Major

## Melody an Riffs

Just like we can see what chords are in a key, we can also see the notes in the scale. Just look at which number is next to each letter and you have the notes of the Major scale.



Once you have these notes you begin creating melody lines, riffs motifs, lead guitar parts and more.

## Notes of A Major Scale

A	1
B	2
C#	3
D	4
E	5
F#	6
G#	7

The numbers represent the scale degrees.

Try creating a chord progression using the chords of A Major from the image, then play along with the notes of A Major. With a little fiddling and experimentation, you're likely to hear something awesome.

# The Key of C Major

## Major Default Mode

Let's explore modes along with the flavor, texture and mood they can add to a song.

The Major scale is the "Default " mode. All the other modes are just a variation in the sequence of the notes and chords.

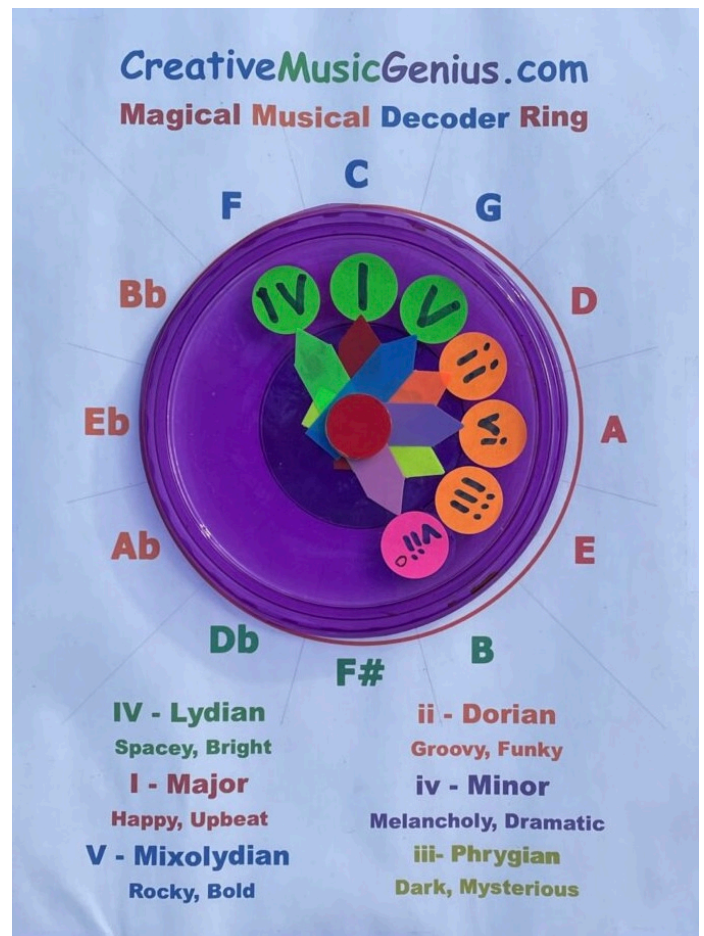
The decoder ring makes it simple. Rather than dive into all the music theory we can use the decoder ring to give us the answer.

You can see the modes listed under the decoder ring

- Lydian
- Major
- Mixolydian
- Dorian
- Minor
- Phrygian.

These are the most commonly used modes. They are listed in order of brightness.

Each mode has a number next to it.



Characteristics are shown next to each mode. These are the flavors a mode can lend to a song.

Modes in Number Order		
Mode	#	Feelings
Major - Ionian	I	Happy, Upbeat
Dorian	ii	Groovy, Funky
Phrygian	iii	Dark, Mysterious
Lydian	IV	Spacey, Bright
Mixolydian	V	Rocky, Bold
Minor - Aeolian	vi	Dramatic, Sad
Locrian - seldom used	vii <sup>o</sup>	Dark, Disorienting

Each mode has feelings or moods associated with it. There are many other feelings that could be added to this list. The modes are very flexible.

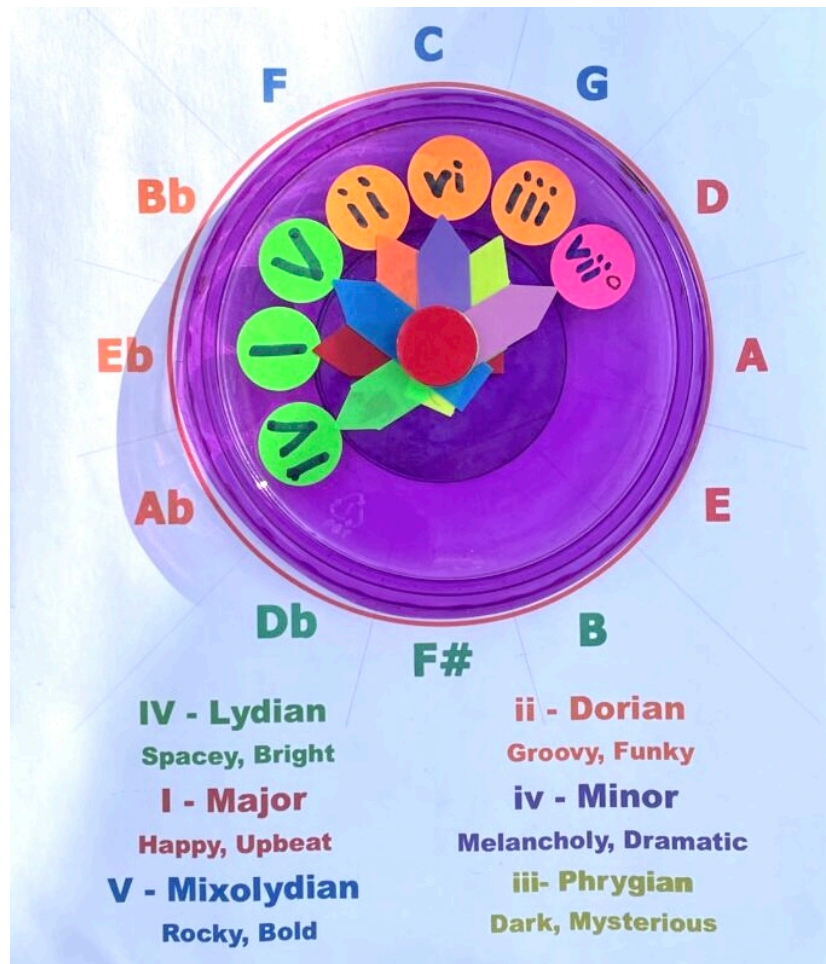
You could start writing a song in Major for example, and then switch to Lydian for a bit to inject variety and a different vibe into your tune. Modes can be used in any combination. Sometimes songs are written in just one mode, but more often modes are blended together to create a vibe and flow to a piece of music.

## How to Use the Decoder with Modes

So Major, or sometimes called Ionian is the default mode. If we dial the I on the decoder ring to C, we get the chords and notes of C Major.

But let's say we wanted to find the chords and notes of C minor. How could we do that? We need to Think outside the box, expand our minds.

See that there is the number vi next to minor. Now dial the decoder so that the vi lines up with the letter C.



This gives us the chords and notes of the C minor mode. (Also known as Aeolian)

## Let Go of the Math

The only trick is the numbers are not in order anymore. We simply rely on alphabetical order.

- Everything else applies the same though except the order of the numbers.
- Lower case Roman numerals point to minor chords
- Upper case Roman numerals point to Major chords
- Lower case with a circle -o means diminished chord

So the chords of C minor are:

Chords of C Minor	
Cm	
D diminished	
Eb Major	
Fm	
Gm	
Ab Major	
Bb Major	



