



Mando-lele 101

[The songs we played during this workshop are on the website here](#)

This is my take on what we learned from Chris Waite’s Mando-lele 101 workshop in February, 2020. I’m happy to receive any corrections or observations that others may have picked up.

The key we worked in was the Key of C, but it could be adapted to any other key, with a bit of work. I’ll say more about that later. Obviously the Key of C is a good one to work with because there are no sharps or flats, and of course, it’s a ukulele so C works for us on many songs.

So first he wrote a column of the Chord names starting with C:
C D E F G A B

Next to that he wrote a column Chord Numbers:
I ii iii IV V7 vi vii°

This is a relative scale position and can be used in any key. The Upper Case “numbers” indicate major chords and the lower case “numbers” indicate minor chords, so our original chord names for the key of C now become

C Dm Em F G7 Am Bdim

Chris then wrote the triad of notes that make up each chord. So if you play a C chord on your ukulele (postcode* 0003), you have an open G string, open C string, open E string, and the A string has your finger in the third fret. This gives the notes: g, c, e, c
So the notes required for a C chord are c, e, and g.

He then went down the Chord names and put the appropriate notes against them: (refer photo)

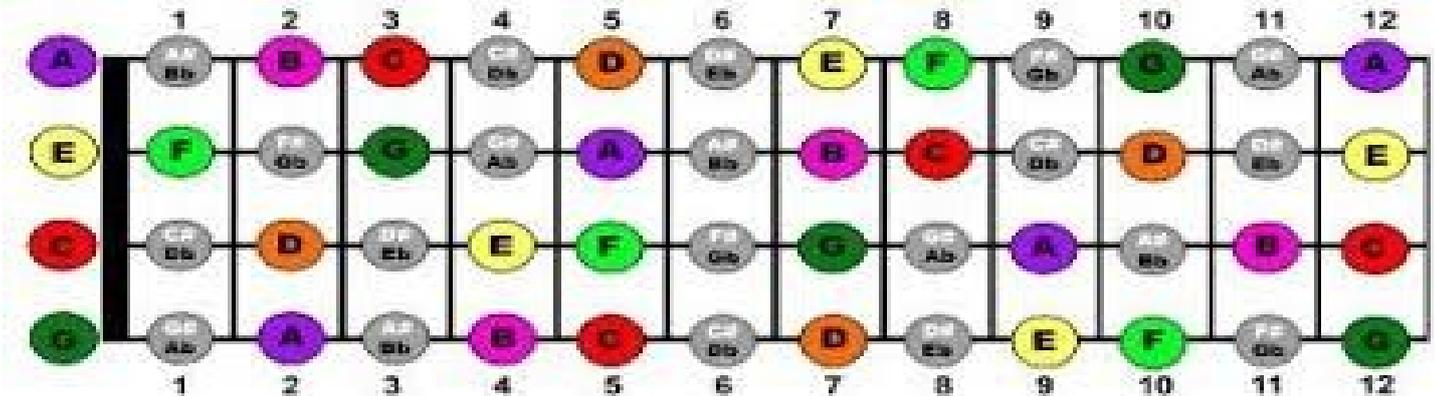
CHORD NAME	CHORD NUMBER	notes in chord
C	I	c e g
Dm	ii	d f a
Em	iii	e g b
F	IV	f a c
G7	V7	g b d f
Am	vi	a c e
B°	vii°	b d f

*postcode numbering was Chris’ way of explaining the positions of the fingers to form a chord shape working from the top string (G) down to the floor

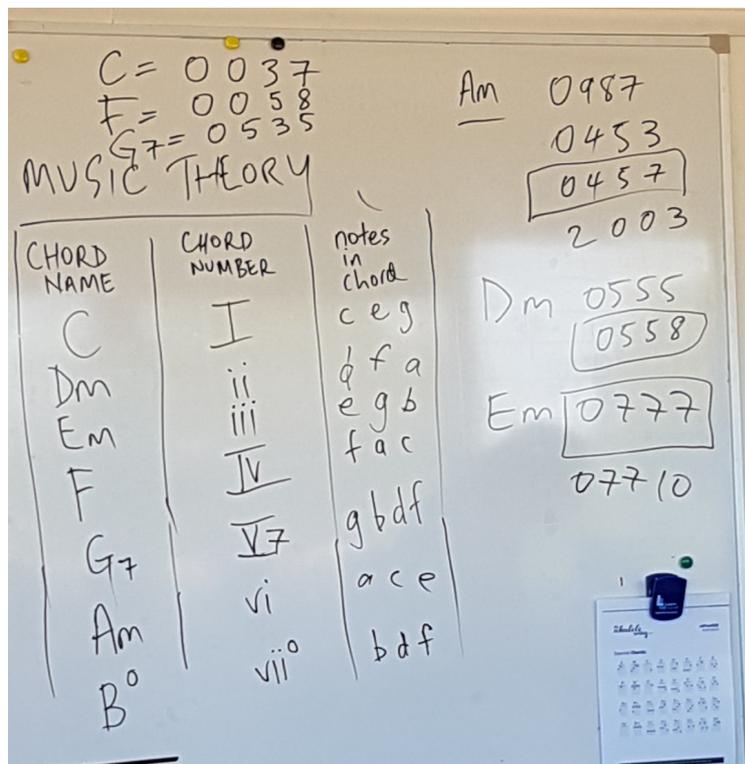
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Here is a diagram of the fretboard with notes for each fret:



We then did an exercise for finding alternate playable shapes for chords on the fretboard, a few of which can be seen in the next photo.



For us, the important chord shapes to take out of this were:

- C 0037
- F 0058
- G7 0535

With these three chords we are able to play quite a number of songs, and we used the chord shapes to play One Love, and Shenandoah. I will post these songs at the end of this document, along with some other mandolin chord voicings for ukulele.



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Just an extra note from me on the Chord Numbers, and slightly off topic

I ii iii IV V7 vi vii°

You can use this notation to play a song in any key. In our case we used the key of C, so "I" became C. If you wanted to play in the key of G, then "I" would become G... so you would have:

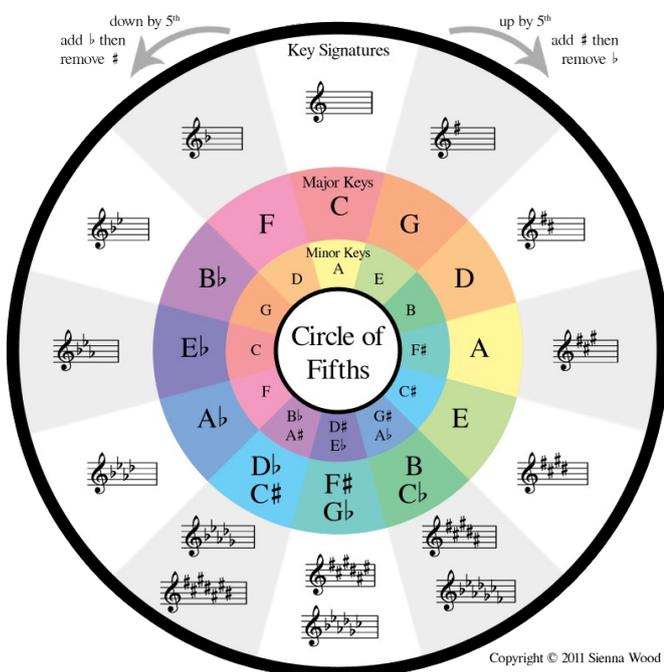
I	ii	iii	IV	V7	vi	vii°
G	Am	Bm	C	D7	Em	F#dim *

* F# because the key of G has one sharp (F#)

Sometimes, particularly in blues type songs where you have a regular format, the chords are written as numbers, and it is up to you to decide what key you want to play it in. This is particularly handy if you are playing barre chords and you only have to move up and down the neck playing basically the same chord shape, especially on a guitar with a longer neck than a ukulele.

This can also be handy for writing songs if you are so inclined. If you want to write a song in the key of C, for instance, you can see the choice of chords that you may want to use. This is not to say you cannot use other chords, but the sound and progression of these chords is going to create an acceptable form for the song.

Another good tool for this is the Circle of Fifths:



Concentrating on the Key of C here, you find C Major, which is at 12 o'clock. You can see by the key signature in the outer circle that it has no sharps or flats. So if we are in the key of C you form a wedge on the circle with C in the middle and F and G at the edges. This shows the likely major chords in a song in the key of C are C, F and G, and the likely minor chords are Dm, Am, and Em.