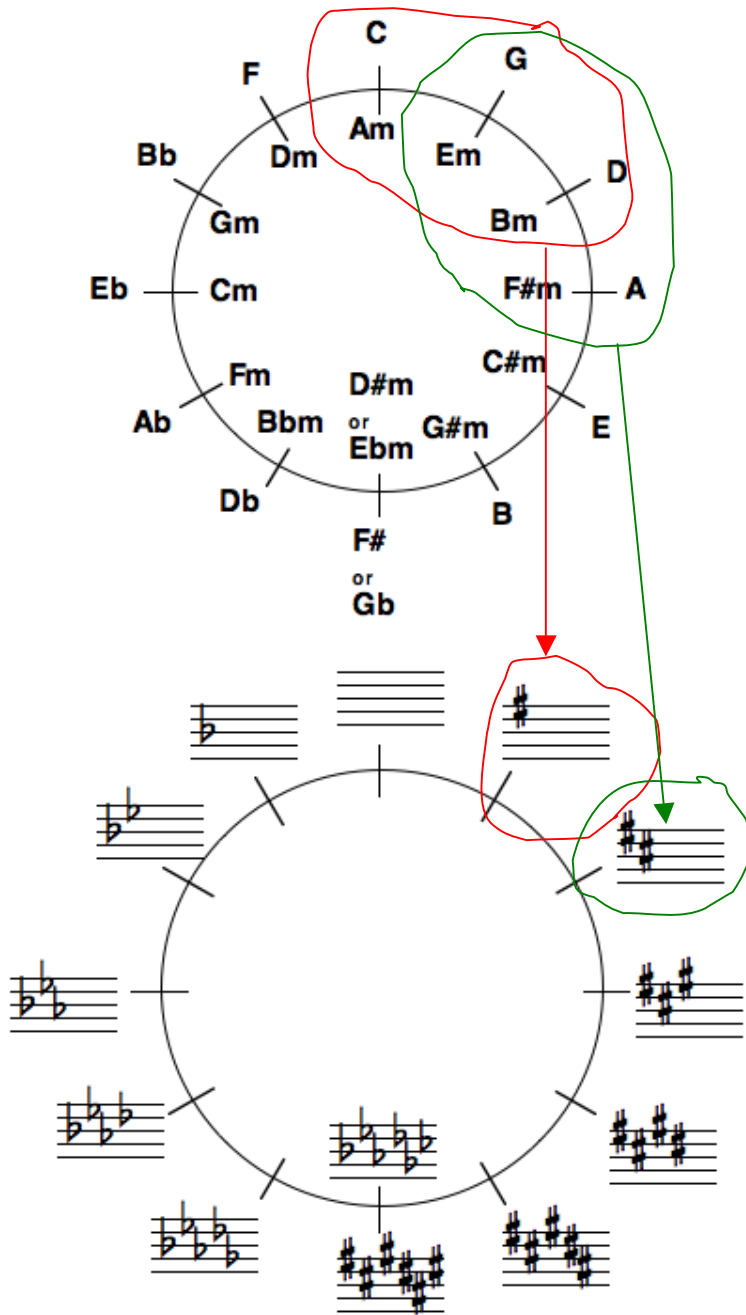


Circle of Fifths/Fourths

“How is knowing this useful for Dulcimer Playing?”



This is another question I hear often.

1) In the first place, the Circle of Fifths helps me make sense of the chords that belong together in the same “family.”

I’ve circled the chords that are a part of the G family in red.

I ii iii IV V vi --
G Am Bm C D Em

And this family has the key signature of 1 sharp (see Lesson 11 if you need to review).

2) For Transposition, the circle can help me see which chords to substitute

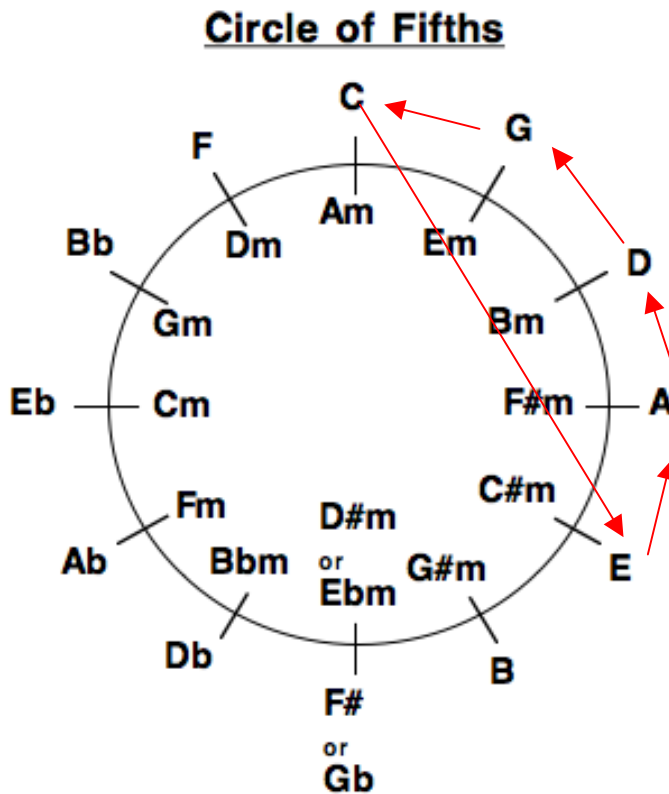
if I want to play a song in D (2 #s), even though it is written in the key of G (1#).

G → D
Am → Em
Bm → F#m
C → G
D → A
Em → Bm

3) The Circle is also useful for deciding where to use a capo when trying to play accessible chords and have them match written or recorded music.

4) The Circle is useful for discerning the chord patterns in a song at a jam when one of the players says, “This song works backward through the Circle of Fifths.”

For example “Five-Foot-Two, Eyes-Of-Blue” does this:



C → E → A7 → D7
→ G7 → C

(turn-around: A7 → D7 →
G7 → C)