

PLAYING SONGS IN DIFFERENT KEYS

Ukulele Tuesdays – Evergreen Library

May 7, 2019



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PLAYING MUSIC IS MORE THAN JUST MEMORIZING A BUNCH OF CHORDS ON YOUR INSTRUMENT.

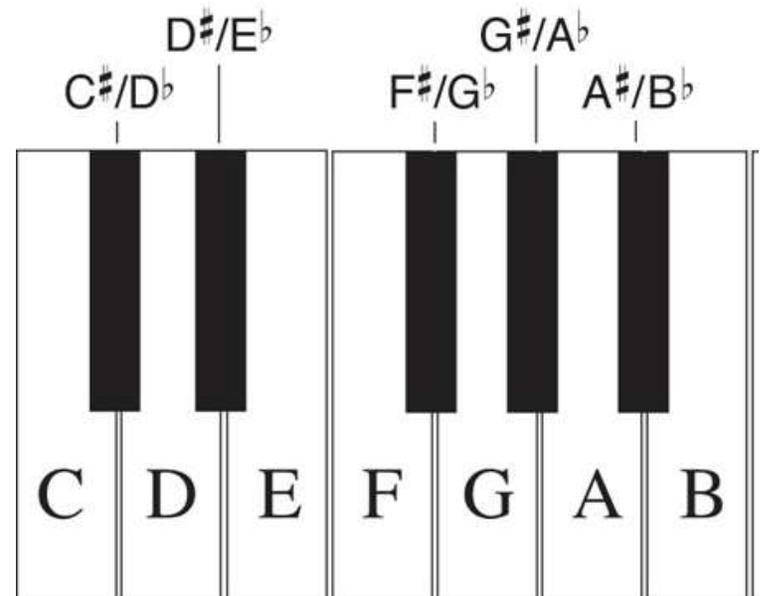
That's difficult. And takes a long time.

SONG KEYS

- Every song is played in a *Key*
- The *Key* denotes the *Root Note* (or *Tonic*) and the corresponding *Scale*
 - The *Scale* is a set of *intervals* (or distances) from the root
- Each *Key* has a *Key Signature* that is printed in sheet music using sharps or flats

24 POSSIBLE KEYS

- Keys are either Major or Minor
- And have one of 12 possible Root Notes
 - One for each piano key within a single octave



WHY HAVE DIFFERENT KEYS?

- **Complex music theory:** Some intervals sound better in certain keys
 - Some songs will sound better in certain keys
 - Especially on instruments using *equal temperament* tunings (fretted instruments, pianos)
- To fit a singer's vocal range
- Some key's are easier to play on certain instruments
- Some keys are easier to read than others (C Major vs D# Minor)
- Some composers just like certain keys

SWITCHING KEYS

- Called *Transposing* a song
 - Similarly, *Modulating* is when you change keys mid-song
- Two ways to do it on a ukulele
 1. Use the new key's chords
 2. Use a capo on the neck

THE CAPO

- The capo is a device that mounts to the neck of your instrument and squeezes / “frets” all of the strings behind a single fret
- This raises the pitch of each string equally without the need to retune them
- There are many different capo designs

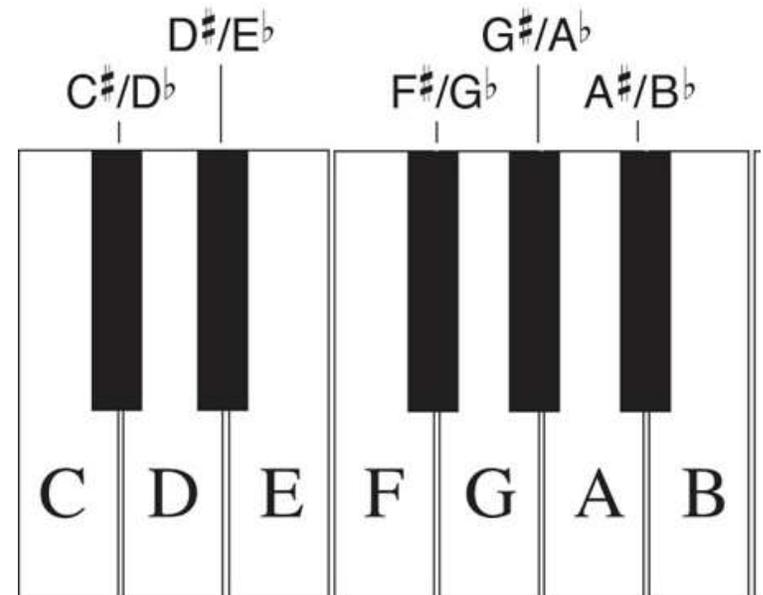


THE MAGIC OF A CAPO

- Allows you to play the ***chord shapes*** you are accustomed to, but phonating (sounding) another ***chord***
- Especially useful for obscure keys such as G \flat Major
- Considered “cheating”

WHICH FRET TO USE?

- Decide which *Chord Shapes* you want to use
 - Probably *C Shapes* on a uke, possibly *G Shapes*
- Count the number of notes between the song's Key and the shapes you want
- Or use the Internet Chord Database

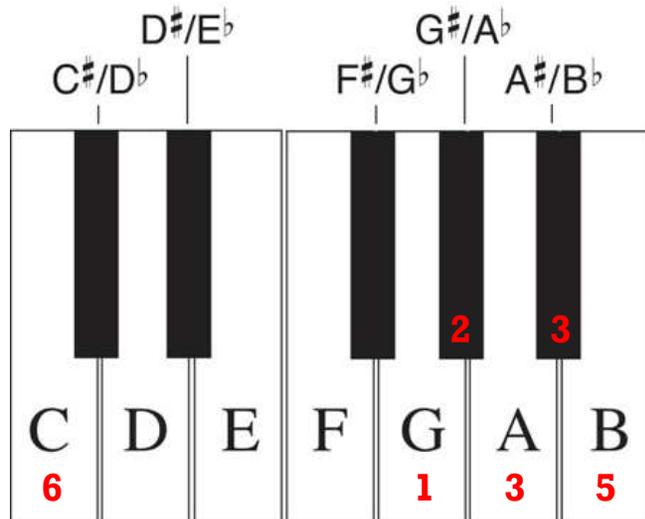


WHICH FRET TO USE?

Key of G \flat Major

Chorus

G \flat C \flat G \flat
 You are my sunshine, my only sun-shine
 G \flat C \flat G \flat
 You make me ha-ppy when skies are gray
 G \flat C \flat G \flat
 You'll never know dear, how much I love you
 G \flat D \flat 7 G \flat
 Please don't take my sunshine a-way



Count the keys between G \flat and C

Capo at 6th Fret
 Use C Major Shapes
 Play in the key of G \flat Major

Chorus

C F C
 You are my sunshine, my only sun-shine
 C F C
 You make me ha-ppy when skies are gray
 C F C
 You'll never know dear, how much I love you
 C G7 C
 Please don't take my sunshine a-way

ICDB CAN HELP YOU

You are my Sunshine (A Major)

Artist: Jimmie Davis & Charles Mitchell Genre: Traditional Folk
 ▲ Hide transpose, instrument, and other display options ▼

Chord Shape Key

- A \flat Major
- A Major ***
- B \flat Major
- B Major
- C \flat Major
- C Major
- C \sharp Major
- D \flat Major
- D Major
- E \flat Major
- E Major
- F Major
- F \sharp Major
- G \flat Major
- G Major

Sung Key

- A \flat Major - capo fr. 8 (-2 steps)
- A Major * - capo fr. 9 (-3 steps)**
- B \flat Major - capo fr. 10 (-4 steps)
- B Major - capo fr. 11 (-5 steps)
- C \flat Major - capo fr. 11 (-5 steps)
- C Major - **No capo** (+6 steps)
- C \sharp Major - capo fr. (+5 steps)
- D \flat Major - capo fr. 1 (+5 steps)
- D Major - capo fr. 2 (+4 steps)
- E \flat Major - capo fr. 3 (+3 steps)
- E Major - capo fr. 4 (+2 steps)
- F Major - capo fr. 5 (+1 steps)
- F \sharp Major - capo fr. 6
- G \flat Major - capo fr. 6**
- G Major - capo fr. 7 (-1 steps)

* Standard Key



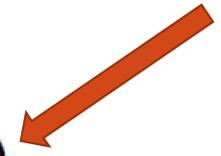
You are my Sunshine (G \flat Major)

Artist: Jimmie Davis & Charles Mitchell Genre: Traditional Folk Rom
 ▼ Show transpose, instrument, and other display options ▼

Printable Version

Capo 6th fret

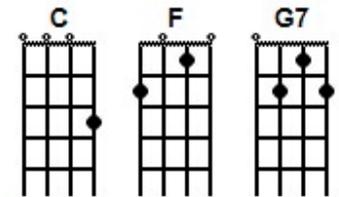
Playing in the key
of G \flat Major



C shapes shown

Chorus

C **F** **C**
 You are my sunshine, my only sun-shine
C **F** **C**
 You make me ha-ppy when skies are gray
C **F** **C**
 You'll never know dear, how much I love you
C **G7** **C**
 Please don't take my sunshine a-way





QUESTIONS?