

# DETERMINING THE KEY OF A SONG OR RECORDING

Ukulele Tuesdays – Evergreen Library

May 21, 2019



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

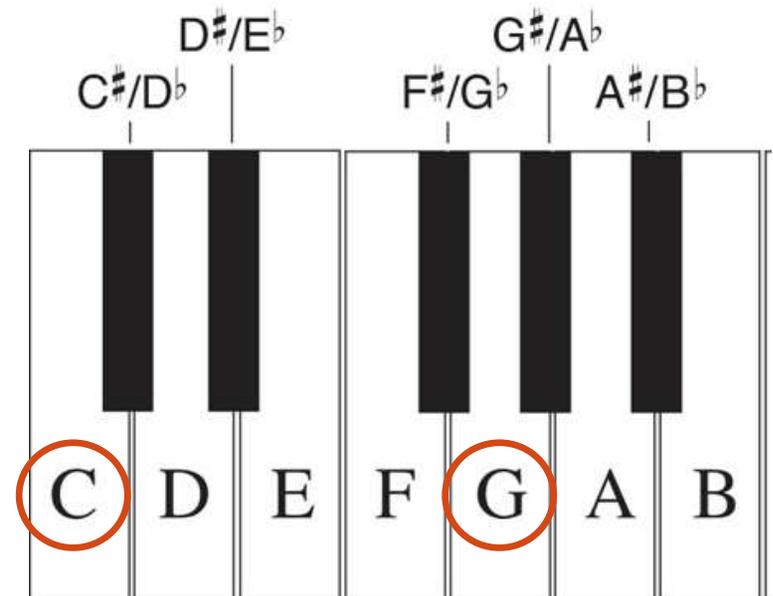
That's difficult. And takes a long time.

# SONG KEYS

- Every song is played in a *Key*
- The *Key* denotes the *Root Note* (or *Tonic*)
- Why have different keys?
  - 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

# 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
- We mostly play in the Key of C-Major and G-Major



# RESOLVING TO THE ROOT

- There is a lot of theory on song writing
- In general
  - A song's melody (the singing part) resolves to the root note of the song's key at the end of a chorus
  - Most of time it resolves at the end of a verse, too

Row Row Row your Boat  
in Key of C-Major

## Verse

[C]Row row row your boat

[C]Gently down the stream

[C]Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily

[G]Life is but a [C]dream



The melody resolves  
to the root note: **C**

# FRET BOARD REVIEW

- Reviewing the **C-Major Scale**

Nut	G4	C4	E4	A4
Fret 1	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb
Fret 2	A	D	F#/Gb	B
Fret 3	A#/Bb	D#/Eb	G	C
Fret 4	B	E	Ab/G#	C#/Db
Fret 5	C	F	A	D
Fret 6	C#/Db	F#/Gb	A#/Bb	D#/Eb
Fret 7	D	G	B	E
Fret 8	D#/Eb	Ab/G#	C	F
Fret 9	E	A	C#/Db	F#/Gb
Fret 10	F	A#/Bb	D	G
Fret 11	F#/Gb	B	D#/Eb	Ab/G#
Fret 12	G	C	E	A
Fret 13	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb

# DETERMINING THE KEY OF A RECORDING

- **This method works for most songs, but music often has outliers**
- Tune your instrument first!
- Steps:
  1. Listen carefully to the final note played at the end of a chorus (and usually the verse, too)
  2. Pluck the string at different frets until you find the same note (ex. 3<sup>rd</sup> fret = Note C)
  3. Once you find the note, you know the root chord of the song. (ex. C Major, probably)
  4. **Thus the song is in that key (ex. Key of C Major)**
- When the next chorus comes, strum that chord to verify it sounds right.
- *Watching the fret hand of the person playing can give you clues*

# EXERCISE 1

- Turn! Turn! Turn! by The Byrds
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4ga\\_M5Zdn4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4ga_M5Zdn4)

### Chorus

To every-thing turn, turn, turn  
There is a season turn, turn, turn  
And a time to every purpose, under heaven

### Verse

A time to be born, a time to die  
A time to plant, a time to reap  
A time to kill, a time to heal  
A time to laugh, a time to weep

### Chorus

To every-thing turn, turn, turn  
There is a season turn, turn, turn  
And a time to every purpose, under heaven

### Verse 2

A time to build up, a time to break down  
A time to dance, a time to mourn  
A time to cast away stones, a time to gather stones together

Nut	G4	C4	E4	A4
Fret 1	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb
Fret 2	A	D	F#/Gb	B
Fret 3	A#/Bb	D#/Eb	G	C
Fret 4	B	E	Ab/G#	C#/Db
Fret 5	C	F	A	D
Fret 6	C#/Db	F#/Gb	A#/Bb	D#/Eb
Fret 7	D	G	B	E
Fret 8	D#/Eb	Ab/G#	C	F
Fret 9	E	A	C#/Db	F#/Gb
Fret 10	F	A#/Bb	D	G
Fret 11	F#/Gb	B	D#/Eb	Ab/G#
Fret 12	G	C	E	A
Fret 13	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb

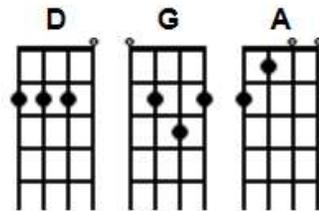
# EXERCISE 1

- Turn! Turn! Turn! by The Byrds
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4ga\\_M5Zdn4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4ga_M5Zdn4)
- Chorus resolves to an = Note D
- Key of D Major (not minor)
- Thus, chords D, G and A
  - (because of the 1, 4, 5 pattern)

Nut	G4	C4	E4	A4
Fret 1	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb
Fret 2	A	D	F#/Gb	B
Fret 3	A#/Bb	D#/Eb	G	C
Fret 4	B	E	Ab/G#	C#/Db
Fret 5	C	F	A	D
Fret 6	C#/Db	F#/Gb	A#/Bb	D#/Eb
Fret 7	D	G	B	E
Fret 8	D#/Eb	Ab/G#	C	F
Fret 9	E	A	C#/Db	F#/Gb
Fret 10	F	A#/Bb	D	G
Fret 11	F#/Gb	B	D#/Eb	Ab/G#
Fret 12	G	C	E	A
Fret 13	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb

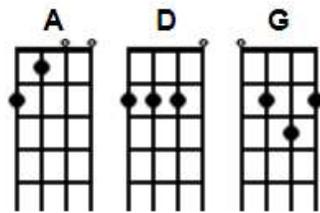
**Chorus**

**D G D A**  
To every-thing turn, turn, turn  
**D G D A**  
There is a season turn, turn, turn  
**G A D**  
And a time to every purpose, under heaven



**Verse**

**A D**  
A time to be born, a time to die  
**A D**  
A time to plant, a time to reap  
**A D**  
A time to kill, a time to heal  
**G A D**  
A time to laugh, a time to weep



[https://www.internetchorddatabase.com/Songs/Turn Turn Turn by Pete Seeger v1/D Major?vml=1cal&ft=0&cdk=D Major&rrs=1&cl=eng&scs=cbs&tu=4](https://www.internetchorddatabase.com/Songs/Turn%20Turn%20Turn%20by%20Pete%20Seeger%20v1/D%20Major?vml=1cal&ft=0&cdk=D%20Major&rrs=1&cl=eng&scs=cbs&tu=4)

# EXERCISE 2

- **Hallelujah by Jeff Buckley**
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8AWFf7EAc4>

### Verse 1

Now I've heard there was a secret chord  
That David played, and it pleased the Lord  
But you don't really care for music, **do you?**  
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth  
The minor fall, the major lift  
The baffled king com-posing Halle-lujah

### Chorus

Halle-lujah, Halle-lujah  
Halle-lujah, Halle-lu-uu-**jah**

### Verse 2

Your faith was strong but you needed proof  
You saw her bathing on the roof  
Her beauty and the moonlight over-**threw you**  
She tied you to a kitchen chair  
She broke your throne, and she cut your hair  
And from your lips she drew the Halle-lujah

### Chorus

Halle-lujah, Halle-lujah  
Halle-lujah, Halle-lu-uu-**jah**

Nut	G4	C4	E4	A4
Fret 1	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb
Fret 2	A	D	F#/Gb	B
Fret 3	A#/Bb	D#/Eb	G	C
Fret 4	B	E	Ab/G#	C#/Db
Fret 5	C	F	A	D
Fret 6	C#/Db	F#/Gb	A#/Bb	D#/Eb
Fret 7	D	G	B	E
Fret 8	D#/Eb	Ab/G#	C	F
Fret 9	E	A	C#/Db	F#/Gb
Fret 10	F	A#/Bb	D	G
Fret 11	F#/Gb	B	D#/Eb	Ab/G#
Fret 12	G	C	E	A
Fret 13	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb

# EXERCISE 2

- Hallelujah by Jeff Buckley
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8AWFf7EAc4>
- Chorus resolves to 1<sup>st</sup> Fret on 2<sup>nd</sup> string = Note C#
- Key of C# Major (not minor)
- Thus, chords C#, F# and G# (and others)

Nut	G4	C4	E4	A4
Fret 1	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb
Fret 2	A	D	F#/Gb	B
Fret 3	A#/Bb	D#/Eb	G	C
Fret 4	B	E	Ab/G#	C#/Db
Fret 5	C	F	A	D
Fret 6	C#/Db	F#/Gb	A#/Bb	D#/Eb
Fret 7	D	G	B	E
Fret 8	D#/Eb	Ab/G#	C	F
Fret 9	E	A	C#/Db	F#/Gb
Fret 10	F	A#/Bb	D	G
Fret 11	F#/Gb	B	D#/Eb	Ab/G#
Fret 12	G	C	E	A
Fret 13	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb

**Verse 1**

**C#** **A#m**  
Now I've heard there was a secret chord

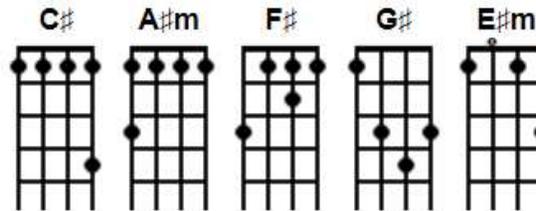
**C#** **A#m**  
That David played, and it pleased the Lord

**F#** **G#** **C#** **G#**  
But you don't really care for music, do you?

**C#** **F#** **G#**  
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth

**A#m** **F#**  
The minor fall, the major lift

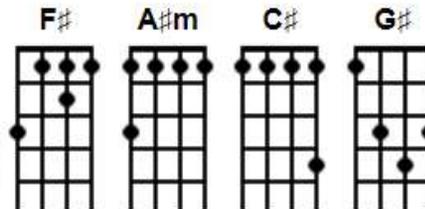
**G#** **E#m** **A#m**  
The baffled king com-posing Halle-lujah



**Chorus**

**F#** **A#m**  
Halle-lujah, Halle-lujah

**F#** **C#** **G#** **C#** **G#**  
Halle-lujah, Halle-lu- uu-jah.....



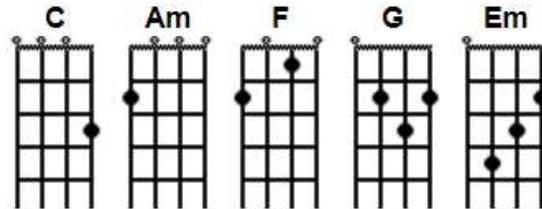
[https://www.internetchorddatabase.com/Songs/Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen/C-Sharp Major?vml=1cal&ft=0&cdk=C-Sharp Major&rrs=1&cl=eng&scc=cbs&tu=4](https://www.internetchorddatabase.com/Songs/Hallelujah%20by%20Leonard%20Cohen/C-Sharp%20Major?vml=1cal&ft=0&cdk=C-Sharp%20Major&rrs=1&cl=eng&scc=cbs&tu=4)

**Capo 1st fret**

**Instrumental Intro (1:10)**

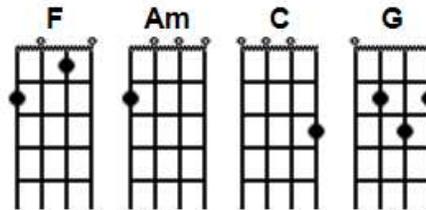
**Verse 1**

**C** **Am**  
Now I've heard there was a secret chord  
**C** **Am**  
That David played, and it pleased the Lord  
**F** **G** **C** **G**  
But you don't really care for music, do you?  
**C** **F** **G**  
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth  
**Am** **F**  
The minor fall, the major lift  
**G** **Em** **Am**  
The baffled king com-posing Halle-lujah



**Chorus**

**F** **Am**  
Halle-lujah, Halle-lujah  
**F** **C** **G** **C** **G**  
Halle-lujah, Halle-lu-uu-jah.....



[https://www.internetchorddatabase.com/Songs/Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen/C-Sharp Major?vml=lcal&ft=0&cdk=C Major&rrs=1&cl=eng&scc=cbs&tu=4](https://www.internetchorddatabase.com/Songs/Hallelujah%20by%20Leonard%20Cohen/C-Sharp%20Major?vml=lcal&ft=0&cdk=C%20Major&rrs=1&cl=eng&scc=cbs&tu=4)

# EXERCISE 3

- Hallelujah by Pentatonix
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRP8d7hhpoQ>

### Verse 1

Now I've heard there was a secret chord  
That David played, and it pleased the Lord  
But you don't really care for music, **do you?**  
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth  
The minor fall, the major lift  
The baffled king com-posing Halle-lujah

### Chorus

Halle-lujah, Halle-lujah  
Halle-lujah, Halle-lu-uu-jah

### Verse 2

Your faith was strong but you needed proof  
You saw her bathing on the roof  
Her beauty and the moonlight over- **threw you**  
She tied you to a kitchen chair  
She broke your throne, and she cut your hair  
And from your lips she drew the Halle-lujah

### Chorus

Halle-lujah, Halle-lujah  
Halle-lujah, Halle-lu-uu-jah

Nut	G4	C4	E4	A4
Fret 1	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb
Fret 2	A	D	F#/Gb	B
Fret 3	A#/Bb	D#/Eb	G	C
Fret 4	B	E	Ab/G#	C#/Db
Fret 5	C	F	A	D
Fret 6	C#/Db	F#/Gb	A#/Bb	D#/Eb
Fret 7	D	G	B	E
Fret 8	D#/Eb	Ab/G#	C	F
Fret 9	E	A	C#/Db	F#/Gb
Fret 10	F	A#/Bb	D	G
Fret 11	F#/Gb	B	D#/Eb	Ab/G#
Fret 12	G	C	E	A
Fret 13	Ab/G#	C#/Db	F	A#/Bb

# EXERCISE 3

- Hallelujah by Pentatonix
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRP8d7hhpoQ>
- Chorus resolves to 1<sup>st</sup> Fret on 4<sup>th</sup> string = Note B $\flat$
- Key of B $\flat$  Major (not minor)
- Thus, chords B $\flat$ , E $\flat$  and F (and others)

Nut	G4	C4	E4	A4
Fret 1	A $\flat$ /G $\sharp$	C $\sharp$ /D $\flat$	F	A $\sharp$ /B $\flat$
Fret 2	A	D	F $\sharp$ /G $\flat$	B
Fret 3	A $\sharp$ /B $\flat$	D $\sharp$ /E $\flat$	G	C
Fret 4	B	E	A $\flat$ /G $\sharp$	C $\sharp$ /D $\flat$
Fret 5	C	F	A	D
Fret 6	C $\sharp$ /D $\flat$	F $\sharp$ /G $\flat$	A $\sharp$ /B $\flat$	D $\sharp$ /E $\flat$
Fret 7	D	G	B	E
Fret 8	D $\sharp$ /E $\flat$	A $\flat$ /G $\sharp$	C	F
Fret 9	E	A	C $\sharp$ /D $\flat$	F $\sharp$ /G $\flat$
Fret 10	F	A $\sharp$ /B $\flat$	D	G
Fret 11	F $\sharp$ /G $\flat$	B	D $\sharp$ /E $\flat$	A $\flat$ /G $\sharp$
Fret 12	G	C	E	A
Fret 13	A $\flat$ /G $\sharp$	C $\sharp$ /D $\flat$	F	A $\sharp$ /B $\flat$

**Verse 1**

**B<sub>b</sub>** **Gm**  
Now I've heard there was a secret chord

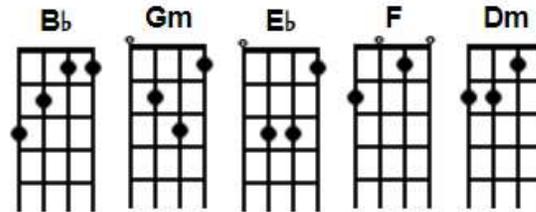
**B<sub>b</sub>** **Gm**  
That David played, and it pleased the Lord

**E<sub>b</sub>** **F** **B<sub>b</sub>** **F**  
But you don't really care for music, do you?

**B<sub>b</sub>** **E<sub>b</sub>** **F**  
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth

**Gm** **E<sub>b</sub>**  
The minor fall, the major lift

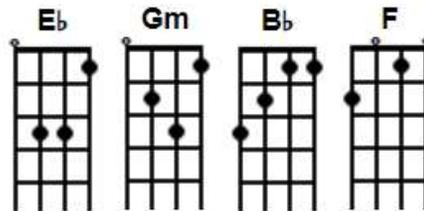
**F** **Dm** **Gm**  
The baffled king com-posing Halle-lujah



**Chorus**

**E<sub>b</sub>** **Gm**  
Halle-lujah, Halle-lujah

**E<sub>b</sub>** **B<sub>b</sub>** **F** **B<sub>b</sub>** **F**  
Halle-lujah, Halle-lu-uu-jah.....



[https://www.internetchorddatabase.com/Songs/Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen/B-flat Major?vml=1cal&ft=0&cdk=B-flat Major&rrs=1&cl=eng&scc=cbs&tu=4](https://www.internetchorddatabase.com/Songs/Hallelujah%20by%20Leonard%20Cohen/B-flat%20Major?vml=1cal&ft=0&cdk=B-flat%20Major&rrs=1&cl=eng&scc=cbs&tu=4)



# QUESTIONS?

