

## 13. Changing Keys

A typical "C" chord pattern is "C-F-G7-C" (basic boogie-woogie, blues and be-bop). Add a few more chords for "C-C7-F-Fm-A7-D7-G7-C" and it becomes a more complete set of chords for many songs in the key of "C". This works for the key of "C" but what about songs in other keys? It so happens that the frets on the finger board of stringed instruments are precisely spaced to the musical scale. This can be seen on the charts that show the notes of the strings at the frets on the neck. As an example, if you play a chord then slide it up (up is towards the bridge) or down (away from the bridge) one fret it goes up or down in pitch according to the musical scale.

If you play a "C" chord then move it up one fret it becomes a "Db" chord. Move it up one more fret and it becomes a "D" chord, up one more fret it's a "Eb" chord. If you play the chords of the progression in the key of "C" three frets up the neck the "C" chord progression is now an "Eb" progression. Play that same chord fingering up two more frets and it is now an "F" progression. So you started in the key of "C" moved up the scale to "Eb" then to "F".

An example of this is playing "When The Saints Come Marching In" in "F" then in "G" and finally in "C". By playing the same chord fingering played for the key of "F" up two frets it becomes the key of "G" then up 5 more frets for the key of "C". Stringed instrument players (banjo, guitar and ukulele) most often play songs in the keys of "Bb, C, Eb, F & G" because the chords and melody notes mostly fall within the "range" of the neck. If you are playing in a band that includes non-stringed instruments you should be prepared to play songs in the keys of "Ab, D & Db" also. However, knowing that of the key "Ab" is simply moving one fret up from the key of "G" and that "Db" is one fret up from the key of "C" makes it pretty easy. With practice, playing the various chord progressions that you are familiar with at different locations on the neck isn't all that hard. Changing keys when playing chord melody works the same way up and down the neck but is it more difficult because of the neck markers that are used for position references – a lot of practice is the answer.