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## Using capos to avoid retuning the basses.

Posted by Ronin Minstrel - 2018/04/20 07:38

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Hello friends,

I've been playing my alto for a solid 8 months now, and just had my first solo concert performance along with various excellent 7-string guitarists. I'll be finishing up post-production on the video soon, and will post a link here when I'm done.

In the process of learning and performing several pieces as a soloist, as well as with my trio, I've discovered that I dislike having to retune the basses. I decided last week that I'd had enough.

I looked into harp levers-- too bulky and expensive.

I considered "railroad spikes" like banjo players use-- too destructive.

I even considered having my 8th string extension removed like James did. But... sometimes I want an open C#.

Then, in a semi-delerious state of prolonged internet browsing, I discovered my solution: the "Spider Capo". The ukulele/banjo 4-string size fits perfectly on the fretboard extension of my alto and lets me capo one string without effecting the others. That goes on the 8th string, which I can now toggle between C and C# in less than 1 second.

Some players might "Spider Capo" the other 3 basses, but so far all I've needed are the one on the 8th string and then a normal capo on the 11th string. I can now play in D and A without re-tuning. If I raise my 7th string to D#, I can do E major as well. Or, with the B string tuned down half a step, I can capo that up to B and quickly go to the key of F or Bb when needed.

Without re-tuning or using a capo, the alto really only plays in C or G (assuming you are using the extended basses). With my two capos (one spider and one plane waves NS classical), I can now play in Bb, F, C, G, D, A, and E, all with a maximum of one string re-tuned. With a couple more Spider capos, you could also get the keys of B, F#, Eb, or Ab. Not bad. B)

This is a lifesaver in concert situations where you are playing pieces in multiple keys back to back. Your audience will thank you. Guitar concerts already have enough tuning!

Sean

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