# VOL. 1, ISSUE 2, MARCH/APRIL 2018 GIRI MAGAZINE

Ukulele Body Types and Tones

I WAS JUST READY TO SPRING INTO MY DREAMS OF MUSIC

A Beginner's Guide to Purchasing Your First Ukulele

7 STEPS
FOR BEGINNER
JKULELE PLAYERS

### **GEAR REVIEWS**

- » Fender Zuma Concert Ukulele
- » GiGY Ukulele Gig Bag
- » D'Addario Eco-Comfort Ukulele Strap
- » D'Addario NS Ukulele Pro CAPO
- » Snark SN-6X Ukulele Tuner

**GEAR FEATURE** 

MARTIN GUITAR 2 CONCERT UKE

### THE MIGHTY UKE AND THE GIRLS THAT SLAY IT

### TARA Talk

As I'm sitting here eating my lunch going over the finishing touches for March, I'm reflecting on the interviews and content in this issue – "The Mighty Uke and the Girls that Slay It." My goal is to give broader exposure to this wonderful instrument and to focus on encouraging a beginner player to consider the ukulele, or for an established guitar player to consider adding the ukulele to their arsenal. I mean, if George Harrison and Paul McCartney could find a place in their music for the four-string small guitar, then why not create an entire act based on this instrument?

Grace VanderWaal came to mind, and she was a perfect fit for this issue with her recent partnership with Fender as their youngest signature artist ever and her new line of ukuleles coming out soon! And, she's such a positive role model for young girls. I recently attended her *Just The Beginning Tour*, when she came through Atlanta, with my daughter and 2-½-year-old-granddaughter (I'm pretty sure she was the youngest fan in attendance) and the crowd was full of young girls and teenagers and it was great to see the smiling faces on these young girls.

I also met some amazing women at NAMM that can slay the uke, and I wanted to show them some love and introduce them to you. So, meet Olivia Millerschin, Lucy LaForge, and Brit Rodriguez.

In this issue, we also explore the shapes and tones of ukuleles, get a beginner uke lesson, review a Fender Zuma uke, a GiGY gig bag, and a few other gadgets designed for the ukulele, take a look at a Martin Guitar concert Uke, get a few tips from Ukulele Ray, and some other fun stuff.

Thanks for your support...and let's get started!

~ Tara Low



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## GGM COMMUNITY

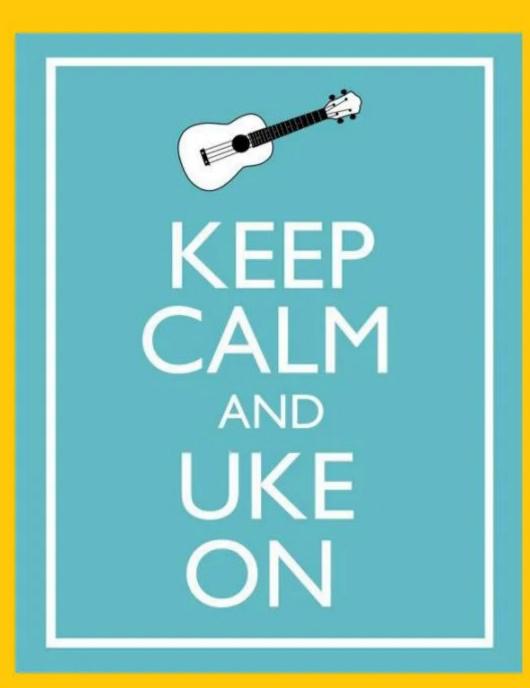
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I was lucky enough to get my hot little hands on the debut issue of Guitar Girl Magazine and let me tell you I was not disappointed. The magazine is full of surprises because it goes beyond the normal interviews and reviews, it gives us a place of our own. The reviews are honest in this 1st issue and it gives the good with the bad, which is not always the case in other gear reviews. The women who are interviewed show us the possibilities within all of us not only as musicians but as women in general. Tara Low and her staff have hit a homerun as far as I am concerned. I will stand behind this magazine 100%.

Thank you.

#### Debbie De Steno

Guitarist/writer and all around nice person Bowling Green, Ohio



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We really appreciate the platform you have built to showcase all the amazing female talent that is out there!

Woolgoose Records

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Love your content!"

Monique Hernandez

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Girl power to the max! Fender Guitars

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Keep up the great content! Melissa VanFleet

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Thanks so much for the love + support...
Wildwood

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Congrats on the new e-zine. It looks great! Thanks so much for your donation of those beautiful guitars to Special Angel through LA Women in Music. Our guitar workshop at Children of the Night continues to be well received. Thanks so much for all you do. Special Angel



We want to hear from you! Questions, comments, suggestions, road stories, and, ...well, anything else you may have on your mind!

Send them directly to: info@guitargirlmag.com

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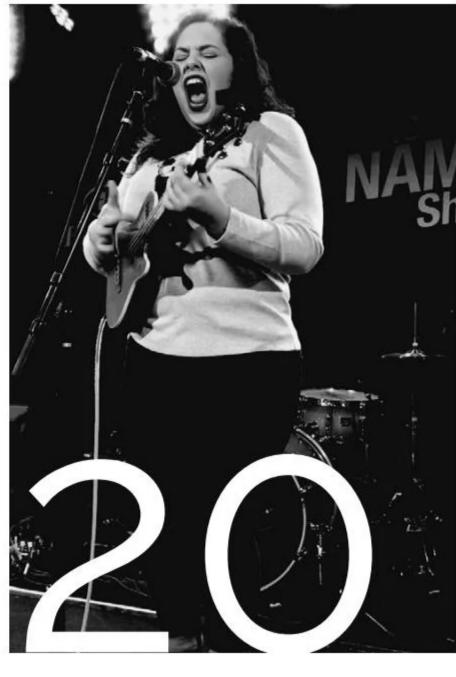
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### 2018 GUITAR GIRL MAGAZINE CALENDAR



As a continuation of our feature in our Debut Issue, our first annual Guitar Girl Magazine 2018 Official Calendar was released in January and features some of the very talented ladies that we have had the pleasure of interviewing throughout the years.

Gracing the cover are the extremely talented twin sisters from the United Kingdom, Mona and Lisa

Wagner. The MonaLisa Twins' love for the '60s and sounds from that era has influenced them as musicians with an emphasis on rhythm, lead guitar and a great back beat from the drums. Their sound is unique in today's music landscape but bears a striking resemblance to the sounds of perhaps the most influential decade of our past- the 1960s. Their recent album Orange was released last Fall to rave reviews.

The next twelve months feature artists across all genres from blues, rock, soul, pop to Latin pop/reggae. Meet the women of Guitar Girl Magazine's 2018 Calendar.

### APRIL

### Diana Rein

Known as the Six String Siren to her fans, blues rocker Diana Rein is a huge fan of Stevie Ray Vaughan and her last album Long Road won the 2016 LA Critics Award for Best Female CD, as well as Best Blues Artist and Fan Favorite. Born in Romania, raised in Chicago, and currently residing in the Los Angeles area, Rein began her career in the '90s as a child actor in the Home Alone movies playing the role of Kevin McCallister's cousin, Sondra.



Rein currently is working on her new album Queen of My Castle through a fundraiser campaign on her site.

April's Inspirational Quote: "I would say that number one, before anything else, is be sure that your motivation to be a musician is about the music as opposed to fame. Be a sponge and learn all you can as it's important to keep an open mind to all genres of music. I think that if you have the intent of being a professional musician and completely absorb yourself in music, you will pull energy toward yourself to make that happen." ~Jennifer Batten, Guitar Girl Magazine Interview, June 29, 2013





### Debra Devi

Rock Musician Debra Devi is our May featured artist, a Fender artist, and author of The Language of the Blues: From Alcorub to Zuzu (foreword by Dr. John). She self-produced her debut solo album Get Free and recently released a new EP Wild Little Girl to rave reviews. Devi believes in: "A woman's right to rock," and was the first female guitarist to record for Guitar World's "Lick of the Day" app. Devi continues to write music, perform, produce shows, and is currently working on a new book which we're excited to read.

### JUNE

### Jackie Venson

Austin native Jackie Venson began playing piano at the early age of eight and grew up on classical music ultimately attending the acclaimed Berklee College of Music. It wasn't until after Venson graduated from Berklee that she decided to pick up the guitar and began a new musical career.

With heartfelt songs written and performed with such sincerity, Venson performs with style and grace. Her exceptional instrumental skills on both piano and guitar and her velvety smooth voice can be heard throughout her music.



Venson's latest EP *Transcends* is a perfect blend of blues, funk and jazz with a slight touch of pop, and follows previous albums The Light in Me in 2015 and Jackie Venson Live in 2016.

June's Inspirational Quote: "...if you're passionate, if you can become proficient, if you work hard, if you learn from everyone and everything else that you hear from everyone you play with and everything you listen to; and be insatiable, be invincible, be doggedly determined, and don't take no for an answer, then I would say keep going." ~Nancy Wilson, Guitar Girl Magazine Interview, September 22, 2017

The calendar can be purchased on our website at http://guitargirlmag.com/shop/. GGM

### UKULELE BODY TYPESANDIONES

By Crystal Grabowski

here are four basic ukulele sizes, all varying in tone from one another, as well as the toy sopranino size. Types are determined by the total length and scale of the instrument, length being the measurement between headstock to bottom, and scale being the distance from nut to saddle. Each size creates a somewhat different sound and playing experience. Personal playing preferences can help a player determine which body type is most ideal for them.

Ranging from smallest to largest, ukuleles come in the following sizes: sopranino, soprano, concert, tenor, and baritone. Ukuleles that are soprano, concert, or tenor are tuned to G-C-E-A, also known as standard tuning. The largest type of ukulele, the baritone, is tuned to D-G-B-E. The majority of ukulele music is written for standard tuning, which is important to consider when assessing which body type and tone you are looking for.











### Sopranino Size

The sopranino ukulele is a very small instrument, much like a toy, with only about 10 frets on its neck. Because of its minute size, the sopranino is not a commonly played instrument and exists more as a novelty ukulele. The small size leads to the sopranino's sound being more high-pitched and tinny compared to the traditional ukulele sound.

### Soprano Size (Length: 21", Scale: 13")

Soprano ukuleles were the original version of this instrument, and are the smallest type of commonly played ukulele with just a 13" scale. These small, traditional ukuleles are the most purchased and likely what comes to mind when someone pictures a ukulele. They are very transportable due to their size, as well as popular and stylish.

Due to their short scale, the frets are quite close on the neck of the instrument, making them ideal for smaller hands. Their lack of length makes their sound a bit quieter than larger body types, and their compactness produces a higherpitched, tinny tone. For those seeking a small, traditional, "cuter" ukulele, this is an ideal purchase.

### Concert Size (Length: 23", Scale: 15")

In 1925, the first concert ukulele was developed to fill the demand for a larger and louder ukulele sound. Because the scale of a concert uke is several inches longer than that of a soprano, there is more space between the frets on the fretboard, and therefore more room for larger fingers. This may make the concert size more comfortable for certain players.

The larger size leads to a slightly fuller sound, with more resonance. Still, their tone is more subdued, with less projection, than other larger ukulele types.

#### Tenor Size (Length: 26", Scale: 17")

Not long after the concert ukulele was introduced in the 1920s, the tenor ukulele was created. With an extra 3" in length and 2" in scale, tenor ukes have a richer and louder tone than their smaller counterparts. There is also more space on the fretboard for fingers and movement.

Although a tenor ukulele is much larger than a soprano, the unique ukulele sound can still be recognized on this instrument. The tenor size is still classified as a standard sized ukulele.

### Baritone Size (Length: 30", Scale: 19")

The baritone ukulele wasn't developed until the 1940s and is quite different from the other types in a number of ways. First, the size of the instrument is more similar to that of a small guitar, which generally has 22" scales, producing a lower pitch and deeper tone with greater projection. Second, baritone ukes are tuned differently. In fact, they are tuned like the top four strings of a guitar: D-G-B-E.

Due to the difference in tuning, standard ukulele chord sheets are not as easy to pick up and play with a baritone uke. The baritone is similar enough to a small 4-string guitar in that you can play guitar chords on it, as long as you ignore the bottom two guitar strings. But it's important to remember that a baritone ukulele is still not a guitar; there is still a bright, familiar ukulele chime to the tone.

For musicians transitioning from guitar playing to ukulele, a baritone ukulele might make sense. Otherwise, the difference of the baritone from the more

standard ukulele sizes might make this instrument a bit more difficult to learn.

#### **Body Shapes**

Each type of ukulele is generally available in three common shapes, all ranging in popularity. The body shape of a ukulele does not have a great effect on the sound of the instrument, and thus the choice of body shape often comes down to personal preference and comfort.

#### Figure Eight/Guitar Shape

The traditional, and most popular, ukulele body shape is the figure eight, which closely resembles the shape of a guitar. Each curved segment is called a bout. There is some variety within the figure eight style of ukulele: some instruments are shaped with a smaller upper bout and a bigger lower bout, more like a guitar, while others have more symmetrical bouts.

#### Pineapple Shape

The pineapple body shape was popularized by the Hawaiian-owned Kamaka Ukulele Company, founded in 1916. The second most popular variety of ukulele, this shape is more rounded on the back and lower half of the instrument - producing an overall oval shape. Due to the shape, the body of the ukulele is larger, which some players may prefer.

#### **Boat Paddle Shape**

The boat paddle ukulele is the least popular of the well-known body shapes, but has an eccentric look that some may love. Square and larger on the bottom, tapering into a more narrow shape on top, this instrument is shaped - as one might guess - like a boat paddle. Some variations of this shape have a sound hole that is up in the corner of the body, compared to its usual central location.

Each ukulele body type, shape, and tone will produce a slightly different sound and playing experience. The ukulele's variety in style and sound make it the flexible, portable, and entertaining instrument that it is today. Take your time to determine what shapes and styles interest you most, then start playing! GGM



By Tara Low

t's been a whirlwind since young Grace VanderWaal won not only Season 11 of NBC's hit show America's Got Talent but the hearts of America and teens across the country. Recording, filming music videos, winning awards (namely the Rising Star Award From Billboard's Women in Music), traveling, touring, attending school, inking a record deal with Columbia Records, being named as Billboard's 21 Under 21, and garnering an endorsement with Fender for a new line of her own signature line of ukuleles due out this Spring.

VanderWaal released her first EP Perfectly Imperfect December of 2016 followed by a full studio album Just the Beginning in November of 2017. Those two albums have produced hit songs "I Don't Know My Name" which was her audition song which prompted Howie Mandel to hit "The Golden Buzzer," "Moonlight," "Burned," "Gossip Girl," and "So Much More Than This."





Just finishing up her tour, there's no slowing down in sight as VanderWaal just announced an upcoming summer tour with Imagine Dragons. As the title of her album says, this is Just The Beginning and we can't wait to see what's next.

We had a chance to catch Grace between finals and the start of her tour for a short, quick interview to ask a few questions about her ukulele, her endorsement with Fender, and being a role model.

Everyone knows you as the winner of Season 11 of NBC's hit show America's Got Talent. I read where it was your dream that you always wanted to be on American Idol, but as fate would have it, you ended up on AGT and were able to perform your original music versus covers which AI features. How perfect was that?

America's Got Talent ended up being the perfect fit for me because I am different, and I think the show just lends itself to having different and unique people audition.

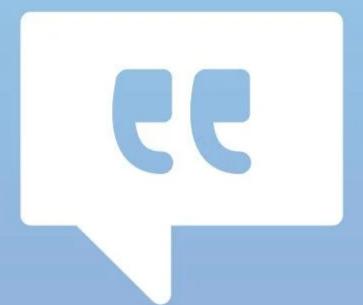
So, did you begin writing music at three as it has been reported? Because in another interview, you clarified that by saying you were actually "singing" by the age of three, the typical children's songs like ABC's and other songs like that. When did you actually begin writing your own lyrics?

I was basically singing stories - not literally writing. I would make up a story in my head and sing it out. I was 11 when I wrote the first real song that I actually put on paper.

### What inspired you to pick up the ukulele and how old were you?

A friend was staying with us and she had one. I just loved the sound and the way it looked. It felt good and I picked it up pretty fast.

You bought your first uke with your own money. How did you decide which one you wanted to play?



Fender is the best partner for me because they are such an iconic and trusted guitar brand. I want my fans to have a level of trust when buying from my signature ukulele line.

I really wanted a fun colorful one, but my mom told me I had to get one that sounded good, so I wouldn't get tired of it. She believed the colorful ones were toys, so I ended up getting the nicest uke I could afford that didn't look like a toy. Because I had limited money, brand wasn't the priority; it was really just getting my hands on one.

You were self-taught by watching YouTube. Where did your searches begin? Were you looking for basic chord structure to learn the foundation of the ukulele or just trying to learn songs?

In the beginning, I just wanted to learn a cover song. Then after I got a couple of songs down, I really started to focus on how to play chords.

What is your writing process? Do you start with a lyric or a chord progression? Or do you just start improvising with chords and lyrics until something sticks, and then go from there?

I do both lyrics and melody. Sometimes lyrics first and sometimes the other way around.

Recently you became the youngest Fender Signature Series artist ever and are working with them on your own signature line of ukuleles that will be available in Spring of 2018. That's so exciting, congratulations! When designing these ukuleles, what will be some of the features you will want to incorporate for young beginner players?

Thank you!!! I really want a fun ukulele that sounds great! Something that all ages can enjoy. I am excited to be able to create a quality beginner uke that any beginner can pick up and make music with. Fender is the best partner for me because they are such an iconic and trusted guitar brand. I want my fans to have a level of trust when buying from my signature ukulele line.

It's been said you're inspiring a whole new generation of ukulele players, but it's really more than that. I think you're reaching everyone, young and old. How does that feel to know that you're having such a positive impact on people?

really don't know what to think actually, it is amazing! I am touched so many people get me and my music. It really makes me realize how important this social platform is. I want to use it for positive things.

Since you're currently breaking into the music industry and while it's fresh on your mind, share with us one piece of advice you've learned so far that you would offer young girls like yourself pursuing a career in music?

Be patient, surround yourself with those you love, and stay grounded, and always remember why you live in the first place.

### What was some of the music that you grew up listening to in your household?

We listened to pretty much everything from gospel to old time rock and roll to '80s pop. We listened to a lot of the Beatles mainly.

### Who are some of your favorite artists that have had the biggest impact on your writing style?

My writing style inspirations are constantly changing, but I would say Frankie Cosmos at the moment.

Perfectly Imperfect, was your first EP released last December of 2016, followed in November of 2017 by your first full-length album, Just the Beginning. You said this album would be less acoustic than your first EP, and I can hear that in songs like "Sick of Being Told" with more percussion and "Burned" with more piano. What was the decision to bring more instrumentation into your songs, and the recording process?

I was just ready to spring into my dreams of music, the recording process of it was super cool, too.

### How do you juggle school, friends and family with your busy music career schedule?

I think it's best to just surround yourself with family and those you love, otherwise, it all might just turn into a big blur.

Well, you've had a hectic last few years since captivating the hearts of America as the winner of AGT. Winning awards, a new album, and a new line of Fender ukes coming soon -- so what's next?

Tour! Finishing up my Tour is what's next for me, I have some big news coming up and I'm excited to share it with everyone as well. GGM

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Photo Credits: Fender Guitar

I really want a fun ukulele that sounds great! Something that all ages can enjoy.



### GRACE VANDERWAAL JUST THE BEGINNING TOUR 2018 REVIEW

Grace VanderWaal 'graced' Atlanta with her Just the Beginning Tour on February 10<sup>th</sup> at Terminal West. Fans were lined up around the building and down through the parking lot- even standing in the rain! Thank goodness just a quick rain shower.

There's an old soul in this young lady that makes her an incredible performer. From performing her ever popular pop songs to beautiful, soulful ballads, she's literally an amazing talent to watch and she had the crowd mesmerized from the moment she entered the stage. The show started a little late and the crowd was ready chanting "We want Grace! We want Grace!"

From young toddlers to grandparents, VanderWaal was a crowd pleaser singing and dancing the night away in a two-set performance. Opening wearing a light colored, flowy demure dress, she started with "Moonlight" strumming along on her uke while the crowd sang and danced along. Backed by a three-piece band comprised of Destiny Petrel on guitar, Eliljah Wood on drums, and Gabe Rudner on keys, the excitement continued throughout that entire set with songs like "Crazy," "Clay," "Burned," "Gossip Girl" and "City Song." I enjoyed how she talked to the audience between songs filling them in with litt or background into the writings of the songs. After a short break during which the band

"Moonlight" while VanderWaal made a quick costume change to a coral colored velvet dress, she opened with a cover of "Home" by Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros followed by "River" by Leon Bridges.

The rest of the second set was filled with songs

from Perfectly Imperfect's "Light the Sky" and "Beautiful Thing," Just The Beginning's "Escape My Mind," "Talk Good," "A Better Life," and "Florets," and a song "Clearly" that she referred to as the Claritin commercial song. She explained that she originally thought it was a jingle written for the commercial and really liked it, but then learned that it was actually a hit in the '70s. Her version was rewritten with the help of Ido Zmishlany, Chloe Angelides, Michael Watters, and Neil Ormandy with an adaptation of the chorus

I enjoyed how she talked to the audience between songs filling them in with little stories or background into the writings of the songs. from Johnny Nash's "I Can See Clearly Now."

And what show would be complete without an encore? VanderWaal had the crowd singing and screaming along with "So Much More Than This" and brought the house down with her AGT audition song "I Don't Know My Name." It's clear to me that she truly connects with her fans and has proven that she's comfortable on stage and can command an audience. If this is Just The Becan't wait to see what's next! GGM



### MILLERSCHIN

### FROM GRASSROOTS TO THE OLYMPICS

By Michael Dowdell

iva is a TWO TIME John Lennon songwriting award winner AND also won "The Great American Song Contest." More recently, you probably heard Olivia in the 2018 Winter Olympics! Olivia has a history of success, which is very understandable once you listen to her music.

Olivia's music is pleasing and relaxing to the mind. You can truly hear her passion in every song, while being transported to a tranquil place, as she goes through each verse. Whether she is playing the piano, guitar or ukulele, you are sure to be captivated by an amazing performance. It is an honor to be able to interview her today and learn more about her journey into music.

Oliva, your music is so diverse and complex. It is very admirable how you create music with an "old soul" yet you are still relevant to pop culture today. How do you find such a good medium of soul and pop to gain such a large following?

Probably like most people, I grew up with my parents' favorite music being my favorite music. I easily fell in love with the craft of classic songwriters like Carole King, Simon

t is a pleasure to introduce everyone to Oliva Millerschin. Ol- & Garfunkel, Stevie Wonder, James Taylor, John Denver, and so many more. As I got older, I realized it was important to be aware of current pop and hip hop music to better understand where we're at culturally and musically and technologically. In short, what we're filling our ears with says a lot about where we're at as a society. It also keeps my old fogy soul in the modern day and allows me to be more approachable, relatable in my own writing. All of this is to thank for my never-ending interest in combining the traditional songwriter-style structure with the incredible technology we have access to today.

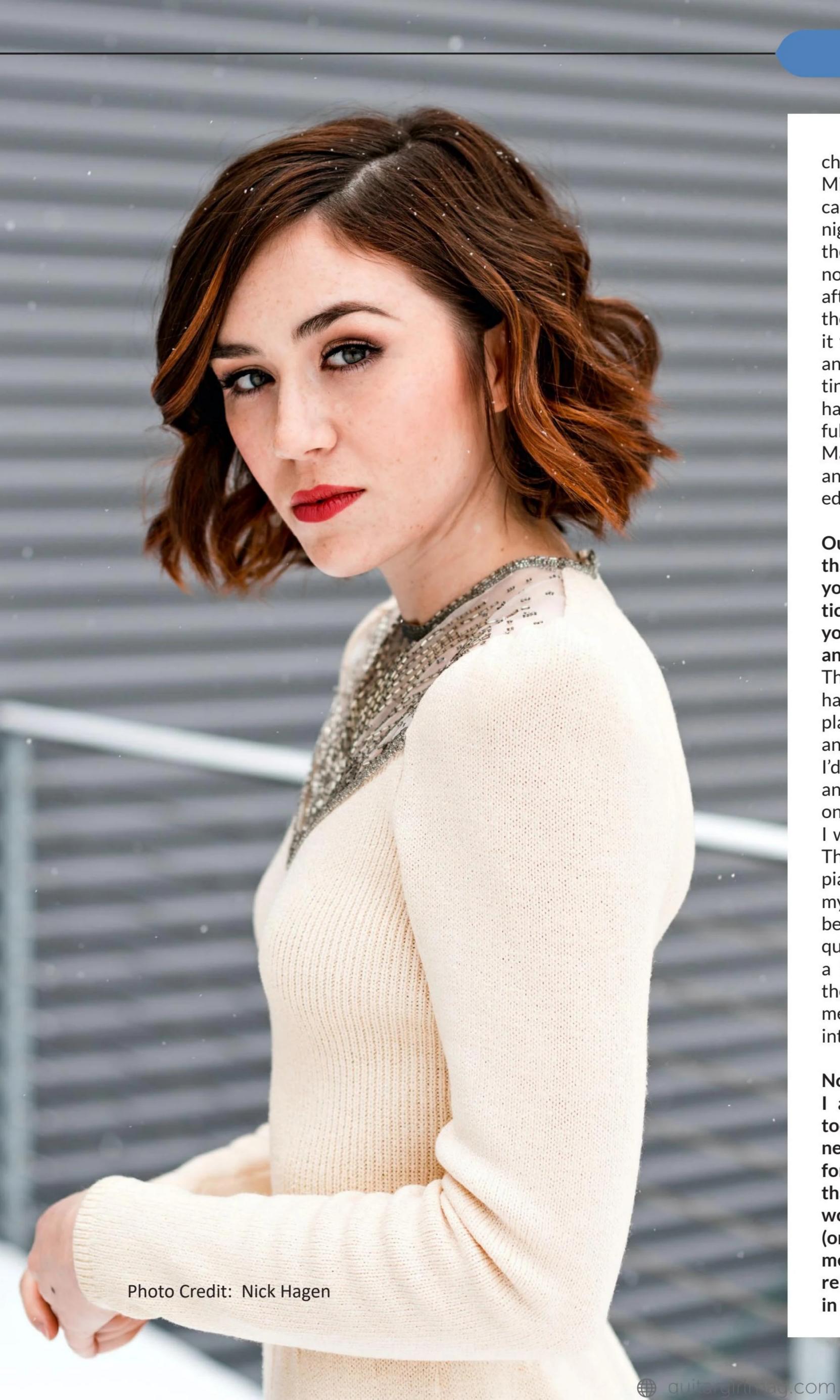
> So, congratulations on winning TWO John Lennon songwriting awards! It must be an honor to receive an award with such prestige. Would it be far-fetched to ask if the legend John Lennon has influenced your music in any way? If not, who would you say are the top musicians who influence your music?

> I mean I'm bold enough to say that he has influenced almost ALL music and musicians in some way. He and three friends invented rock 'n' roll. INVENTED IT. Their writing, though I'd never dare compare it to mine, also came about from capturing a

vintage, familiar sound while also creating a catchy, modern pop, and loved by the masses. So, that's all my long-winded way of saying, everything about Mr. Lennon and The Beatles have been, and always will be, an enormous influence in my life and music. Other influences of mine are, as I said before, songwriters of the 60s/70s, Jazz/Blues from the 20s/40s, and modern-day pop/hip hop, which steers where we are and where we're going. Ex.: Norah Jones, Ingrid Michaelson, Carole King, Paul Simon, Lorde, The Staves, Broods, John Mayer, Billie Holiday, Chet Baker, Fats Domino, Boswell Sisters, Andre 3000... I'm just now seeing how vast and unspecific that list is...

We were amazed to see that your voice was featured in the 2018 Winter Olympics! Was this something you were working to get featured in, or did Olympic staff reach out to you? Either way, your music was heard by millions of people!

That was entirely luck and a couple of true angels looking out for me. One of my all-time favorite people and musicians, Sonia Lee, actually orchestrated it. She's an incredible violinist/composer/arranger who's toured and played with artists including Josh Groban, Ingrid Mi-



chaelson, Paul McCartney, Joni Mitchell, and many more. She called me last summer, late one night, and asked me to come to the studio to record John Lennon's, "Imagine." It wasn't until after I recorded the vocals for the song that Sonia told me what it was even for: Madison Chock and Evan Bates Ice Dancing Routine for the 2018 Olympics. I have a ton of people to be thankful for the opportunity, Sonia, Madison, Evan, their coach Igor, and the entire team who recorded and played on the song!

Out of all of the instruments that you play, which one would you say is your favorite? We notice in your music videos that you use the Ukulele quite often and are very talented with it!

Thank you so much! You don't have to say that. I really love playing all of my instruments, and my favorite changes yearly. I'd say my overall favorite is piano. I'm not nearly as proficient on the keys as I'd like to be, but I write all of my music on them. The emotion and dynamic of piano is almost unmatched in my mind. Something tells me I'll be back on the ukulele pretty quickly here, considering I've got a beautiful, new Kala Tenor on the way. Do you play any instruments? Guitar, perhaps? Reverse interview roles!

No, I don't play any instruments. I always loved the piano and took lessons at one time, but never continued to practice. As for the guitar, I fell in love with that because my grandfather would always play songs (originals and hit songs) for me and my sister. You seem so relaxed and calm on stage and in your music videos. Obviously,



your music is relaxing and pleasing to your fans, but does this transcend into your performance? Do you get into a "flow type" state that you are able to maintain with each performance?

I really appreciate you saying that. Most of the time, I'm at home on stage. I'm comfortable and calm and it's absolutely a floating sensation. Sort of like an unfocused focus if that makes any sense at all. There are times when I will diminish myself up there and not perform up to my best ability. I know it all comes from not feeling deserving of being there and not feeling great about myself. I think we always run the risk of falling short of our own expectations, especially when we put our own raw selves out there, but the couple hiccups are worth the many, many more successes.

### Do you enjoy going on tour and seeing a fan base spread all around the United States?

I LOVE touring, the way we do it at least. I get to travel the country with my best friends and meet and connect with kind, diverse people through music. Sounds like a dream, right? The constant movement/change can be really tough on your head and heart and body if you aren't taking care of yourself. My saving grace: we have so many great old friends and meet so many great new ones along the way, and they all tend to adopt us in and create temporary homes for us along the way. You know who you guys are. Also contributing to my sanity: apples and juice in the tour vehicle at all times.

### Was the experience on Americas Got Talent something that really assisted in your personal growth? Do you think, without getting so far in the contest, that you would be where you are today?

I wouldn't say the show necessarily shaped my music. Before the show, I had already been going at this full-time and touring quite a bit, so I don't really credit it with putting me where I am today. I would say the show shaped my head, though. Getting off of AGT, I came home with a different view of the industry and the people in it. I think it made me a more empathetic and cautious person, in a good way. Exposure-wise, I actually entered the show with a band name instead of my own name, due to rights issues, so the actual exposure, "Olivia Millerschin," got from the show wasn't too crazy. All in all, I'm thankful for the extremely valuable lessons and friends the show gifted me with.

Many times, an interview question that is asked to artists is something along the lines of "what advice can you offer to aspiring artists who look up to your work?" We would like to ask the same question, but with a bit more to it. Maybe something like specific opportunities you took



advantage of when starting out, the work involved with branding yourself, and what really led you to the path of success!

The path of success. I feel like I'm still searching for that one. We all have incredible advice and knowledge from our own unique experiences to give to each other. I think my two best pieces of advice (that I'm still trying to listen to myself!) are: 1. Stick with your original intentions. I came at this with the grassroots mindset of, "I love music. I love using music to expose the light in a seemingly pitch-black room. I hope I can make other people see that too." We all start out with pure, good intentions, then we slowly allow those intentions to be warped by power and bitterness and money and goofy things. So, I probably sound like a broken record, but check your intentions. 2. Go before you're ready. That's not to say, you should learn two chords on guitar and take to Madison Square! I'm just saying, had I not jumped on an opening tour slot when I was 16, had I not released a record online at 14, blah blah, I wouldn't have been led to other wonderful opportunities. And when you go before you're ready, you're going to look back at some of your previous work and cringe, but it worked then, and it allowed you to grow. So just go! Got any advice for me?

Keep doing you. Anyone can feel your passion for music just by turning on one song of yours. It is amazing! Just keep staying positive and consistent with your beautiful music and I am sure your career will only continue to grow! **GGM** 



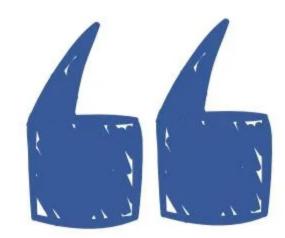


Photo Credit: Myke Wilken

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MY UKULELES ARE MAGICAL

By Tara Low



I knew I had to keep playing and exploring music as a career because music has such a healing power."

ucy LaForge is a Los Angeles based singer-songwriter, guitarist, and activist and heads ■the American folk-pop band Lucy & La Mer. With her signature baritone uke and delicate, breathy vocals, along with the bands' stunning string instrumentation, they have developed a catchy indie-pop sound.

Their latest single "Honey, Put Your Weapons Down" was produced by Grammy Award-winning Jared Lee Gosselin (India Arie, Eminem, Corinne Bailey Rae). "The central theme for the single is transitioning, most of my songwriting happens when there's a change occurring in my life" reveals Lucy.

Recently, the band has been spending a lot of time performing but will soon be hitting the studio to record a new EP and accompanying music video, so we're excited to hear the new music. We caught up with Lucy after we returned from NAMM as we wanted to learn more about her background, her music, and her ukuleles.

Lucy & La Mer originally started as a solo project but has since transformed into a band. Tell us about how you first started and your current band line up.

I started by writing songs by myself, just me and my guitar. I was pretty shy and playing songs for other musicians was intimidating. Once I moved to LA though, and started performing solo, I'd meet musicians at my gigs and we'd jam and that lead to playing with a band. It's such a different experience on stage with a full band - I really love it. I've been playing with drummer Sheldon Reed, guitarist Liv Slingerland, and bassist Jonathan Richardson. They each bring their unique energies and

talents to the music and it makes all the difference.

You grew up in a very musical family. How old were you when you first started playing guitar and who were some of your early musical influences?

My Dad taught me a few chords on a camping trip when I was 10. And then I couldn't put the guitar down. I learned every song my Dad liked to play; my early influences were John Prine, Janis Joplin, Bob Dylan, Simon & Garfunkel, and Peter, Paul & Mary.

You credit your dad for teaching you finger-picking patterns on guitar and that you still play those same patterns today. Was he your primary teacher or did you take lessons?

My Dad taught me the basics, and then I took to the internet around 14 to learn the rest. I dove into bands like Bad Religion, The Distillers, Tsunami Bomb, and Unwritten Law. I'd learn all their songs and play along to their records. I've still never had an "official" guitar lesson, but I've been lucky to play alongside great guitarists who share their tips and tricks with me.

Originally planning a career as a therapist, you decided you wanted to pursue a career as a musician. When did that occur and what was the motivating factor behind that career choice?

I think that wanting to be a therapist came from wanting to connect with people on a deeper level, and that's something I experience every time I perform. I realized writing songs was the most therapeutic thing I had ever experienced for myself as well, and it was encouraging to hear from fans how they personally connected to the music. I knew I had to keep playing and exploring music

as a career because music has such a healing power.

Your last single "Honey, Put Your Weapons Down" was written during a time in your life where a lot of change was occurring. It was also produced by Grammy Award-winning producer Jared Lee Gosselin (India Arie, Eminem, Corrine Bailey Rae). Tell us about that song and working with Jared.

The song was a breaking point for me. I realized I'd been trying to preserve a very unhealthy relationship just for the sake of avoiding change and confrontation. Putting the words down on paper and recording it in the studio really helped me clarify how I felt. Jared and his team at the Fab Factory (Shaun Fabos, Dave Pensado) were very encouraging and brought out new elements of the song that the band couldn't have done alone.

Recently completing a successful Kickstarter campaign, you'll be filming a new music video and heading into the studio to record a new EP. What can we expect to hear on the new EP and when approaching songwriting, do you collaborate with the band, or is it something you create on your own first and then take to the band to write the music?

In the past, I've written the words and melody, and then I'd take it to the band to build up the sound and bring it to life. But for the new EP, I'll be writing with other songwriters (outside of Lucy & La Mer) for some of the tracks. I was totally nervous at first and very intimidated by the idea of sharing a creative space in that way - but it's been amazing. I'm learning more about song structure and expanding from my usual format. Also, BIG SHOUTOUT to my Kickstarter backers for being a part of the new project! We love our fans so much.

I know you play your Fender strat and a couple of Kala ukes. Tell us about your gear and what you love so much about them.

My Fender strat has been my obsession for the last couple years. I'd always written my songs on acoustic guitars, so writing with my strat has changed the sound of my music and my singing style. There's something really empowering about playing an electric guitar.

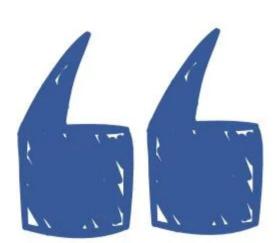
My ukuleles are magical - they have a warm, bright tone and positive energy that fills a whole room. I play a Kala Mahogany Baritone uke, which has a similar resonance to an acoustic guitar. I think playing both an electric guitar and acoustic uke during our shows represents the two sides of our music very well. Strong and present, while also sweet and fun.

Also an advocate for the LGBTQ community, tell us about any work you're involved with or upcoming festivals.

I just produced a Valentine's Benefit Concert called "LOVE IS GAY" in Los Angeles, raising funds for LA's LGBT Center. We had 5 bands perform at The Echo (us included) and I had vendors, artists, crafts, tarot and other fun activities happening at the same time. Kala even sent some ukuleles for us to raffle, too!

It's important to me to build community wherever you are; I want everyone at our shows to know they are in a safe space where they can fully be themselves. A few of the tracks on the new EP are all about my experience in the LGBT+ community (both positive and negative). I feel very grateful to have a community of fans that are tolerant and accepting of all people. GGM





My ukuleles are magical - they have a warm, bright tone and positive energy that fills a whole room.





### BRIT RODRIGUEZ

### IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME THAT I EXPERIMENT AND PUSH MY SONGS TO BE AS BIG AS THEY CAN BE

By Tara Low

hen I think of the ukulele, the first thing that comes to my mind is light, cheery and bright songs. Brit Rodriguez adds another dimension. She has this beautiful, deep voice that has been described as a "soulful, smoky voice that beautifully contrasts with the bright, colorful sound of her ukulele."

Brit recorded her last album The Little Song in her home studio mixing the sounds of the ukulele, timpani, and cello with her smooth harmonies, and is currently working on new music. She is sponsored by Godin Guitars, Guitarras Manuel Rodriguez & Sons, Boulder Creek Guitars, and Aquila Strings.

We got a chance to see Brit perform on stage at NAMM and she puts on one powerful performance! After all was settled down after NAMM, we caught up with her to learn more about this talented young lady and her music.

### I read where you said this was your best NAMM ever. Share with us your experience this year.

This was the most joyful NAMM I have ever experienced because:

- » I promised myself that I would approach every moment with honesty, kindness, and bravery;
- » I played the Hilton with two of my best friends, while my family screamed and danced in front of the stage;
- » I fell in love while screaming my heart out in a polar bear sweater and Doc Marten boots;

- » I was asked to play for the incredible guys at Hawaii Music Supply;
- » I became a Pono artist; and
- » At the end of my recording session with Hawaii Music Supply, my mom, partner, and I piled into the car and drove out of the parking lot. As we turned the corner, a single firework went off and filled the sky directly in front of us. Nothing blocked our view. We saw it from start to finish, and after it went off, that was it. It was like it was just for us. And it felt like the universe was saying, "I told you so."

I had a chance to see you perform on the Hilton stage and I must say I was blown away by your powerful and soulful vocals which are quite a contrast to what I was expecting to hear. Who are some of your musical influences that helped develop your style of music?

My biggest influences tend to be the divas I listened to obsessively growing up like Selena Quintanilla, Nina Simone, Dolly Parton, and Ann Wilson (Heart). Another woman who consistently breaks my heart and rebuilds it is Brittany Howard of Alabama Shakes. These women all have strong, powerhouse voices that coincide with their amazing abilities to command a stage. My style of music is more organic and less structured, because at the end of the day, everything just follows my voice.

You recorded your last album The Little Song last year in your home studio mixing the sounds of the

### ukulele, timpani, cello and harmonies. Did you play all of the instruments on the album?

No, but lord do I appreciate you thinking I did! I made everything with GarageBand. Staying up until 4 am most nights to get what was in my head out into the world. The Little Song was my personal project and the only goal was to create something honest. I'm happy that people are listening.

### Where do you draw the inspiration for your music and what is your writing and recording process?

The inspiration for my songs usually come from life experiences. Other times, inspiration comes from odd places--I'll like the way a word sounds in my mouth, or I'll see a color that makes me feel kinda weird. My writing process is pretty simple: it can start with a sentence, a melody, or a chord progression. I let the song build itself, slowly. For recording, I like to take my time and try out different sounds. It's important to me that I experiment and push my songs to be as big as they can be. My next album is going to have a heavier funk element.

How old were you when you began playing the ukulele?

16, maybe.

### What attracted you to the instrument?

I had previously tried playing piano, flute, guitar (both acoustic and electric), and the harmonica. I failed at everything miserably. It wasn't until I saw a video on YouTube with a ukulele that I became interested in the tiny instrument. Eventually, I was able to play one and it just felt right.

### Endorsed by Godin, tell us about your ukulele and the sound and playability of your particular instrument.

My Godin Multiuke has been my baby for the past four years--it has gone with me on several tours, including a month in New Zealand. It has never



My favorite part of the instrument is its neck. It has a slight curve and it's wider than most tenors I've tried. Basically, this thing feels like butter. Playing it is a dream.

failed me and continues to blow audiences away with its bright tone and full sound. With a pick up on each string and a solid body, the Multiuke has a sound like no other. My favorite part of the instrument is its neck. It has a slight curve and it's wider than most tenors I've tried. Basically, this thing feels like butter. Playing it is a dream.

### Do you play any other instruments?

You'll have to pry my ukulele out of my cold, dead hands. (I'm secretly learning how to play tenor guitar.)

### You're involved in a lot of charity work. Tell us about some of those charities and how you got involved with them.

Volunteering is one of the most important things to me. From the beginning of my music career, I have made music for seniors, vets, and kids. I once played a set in a thunderstorm for a special event put on for the developmentally disabled! We had a blast. I also set up a music program for the Ronald McDonald House in 2015; it was tough, but I'm glad that I had that experience. My most recent charity work involved playing music through livestreams and raising money for a local foundation. I'm lucky enough to be followed by kind and generous people who care just as much as me about making the world better.

### Any new music in the works?

I'm currently writing a new album with my band! I've got some fun songs that I played for a wonderful audience at NAMM, and I'm taking out some older material that has some good bones. This time around I'm accepting the help of my bandmates, and we all vibe really well together--I'm excited for what we make! GGM



### CORDOBA GUITARS INTRODUCED THE 21 SERIES UKULELELINE

At Winter NAMM, Córdoba released the 21 Series ukuleles which feature solid spruce tops and exotic striped ebony back and sides for a guitar-inspired look and sound. The aesthetic is subtle and classic with a satin finish, timeless hand-inlaid wooden rope rosette, and matching purfling. Striped ebony features a high-contrast wood grain pattern, making each ukulele unique. Available in four sizes: soprano, concert, tenor and baritone, and one tenor cutaway-electric option. https://www.cordobaguitars.com/ukuleles/



# LUNA GUITARS EXPANDS UKULELE LINE

una expanded their great line of ukuleles this year with over 20 new models and showcased them at the Winter NAMM 2018 Show. A few we were impressed with was the addition of a soprano size to their popular The Great Wave series. The story behind this model is the artwork The

Great Wave off Kanagawa (1830-1833), also known as The Great Wave which is a woodblock print by the Japanese artist Hokusai, with copies of the print in many collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and The British Museum in London. Luna has taken this historical artwork and features it on the 13-scale length soprano body shape. The ukulele is made using mahogany wood for the back, sides, top, and neck,

Another addition is the beautiful Flamed Acacia series which is available in Soprano, Tenor and Concert.
Acacia wood has close similarity to KOA wood due to its warm sounding playability and stur-

with pearl dot inlays.

dy construction. The Luna Acacia Wood Series is an eye-catching line of exotic ukuleles from the beautiful wood grain pattern rippling across the natural acacia wood body up the mahogany neck and walnut fretboard.

Last but not least, Luna has added to their premier line of ukuleles - the High Tide Series which are made from exotic tropical hardwoods with the addition of the High Tide Exotic Mahogany in soprano, tenor and concert sizes. The idea behind the series takes its inspiration from the full moon at the first fret which causes the abalone wave fret markers below it to "rise" as they make their way up the fretboard towards the moon's pull. Each High-Tide ukulele features a sound hole framed by an elegant abalone rosette. The sturdy mahogany neck together with the walnut bridge and fretboard provides lasting sustain and clarity to

your tone. This series features exotic mahogany top and body, and multiply maple and walnut binding.

This is just a sampling of their new offerings. They also have new vintage inspired ukuleles, bamboo ukuleles, the HONU Turtle Spruce, the TAPA Concert A/E, as well as several others. See Luna's website for pricing. http://www.lunaguitars.com/new-for-2018

# KALAUNVEILSANEW

### A SPECIAL EDITION TENOR, AND NEW U-BASSES

KALA BRAND MUSIC ADDS SOME BEAUTIFUL UKULELES TO THEIR ALREADY EXTENSIVE LINE OF PRODUCTS.



The Exotic Mahogany Baritone is made of a laminated mahogany body, black binding, and chrome geared tuners with a mahogany neck and walnut fingerboard. Aquila Super Nylgut® strings. \$254.99

> It's Kala's 13th anniversary and to celebrate they're making 500 limited editions of the Special Edition Red Mahogany 13 tenor with a cadmium red satin finish on a laminated mahogany body, with a unique "13" logo on the headstock. \$239.99



Kala is making three new lower-cost U-Basses that will feature mahogany bodies with cream-colored Aguila Thundergut strings: the Wanderer, the Passenger, and the Journeyman. They all have a mahogany body with cream-colored Aquila Thundergut strings. The Passenger is the stripped-down version giving the "no-frills" approach and has an MSRP of \$269.99, the Wanderer has an "austere" appearance with binding and MSRP of \$299.99, and the Journeyman has binding and f-holes and MSRP of \$359.99.







### FENDER DISPLAYS THEIR CALIFORNIA COAST **UKULELES**

Fender recently launched five new ukuleles in what they're calling the California Coast series named after beaches along the Southern California coast from Santa Barbara down to Los Angeles. We love the affordability of these new ukes and especially the headstock on the Venice, Zuma and Montecito that replicates the Telecaster's iconic shape which lends an authentic Fender vibe. They all offer a slim "C"-shaped neck profile and no-tie bridge.

The Venice Ukulele is a soprano uke with a stylish bound top and Tele headstock, and comes in natural, black and cherry finishes. Retail price - \$59.99.

The Seaside Ukulele is a soprano uke and is crafted of laminated mahogany for a warm, bell-like tone, with an open-pore finish that gives it an organic look. Traditional 2x2 headstock. Retail price - \$89.99.

The Zuma Ukulele is a concert uke crafted from laminated sapele with an open-pore finish for balanced earthy tone. It features a 16-fret net, acrylic abalone rosette, bound back and fingerboard and the Tele headstock. Retail price - \$139.99.

The Rincon Ukulele is a tenor uke electrified with an onboard Fishman® Kula preamp and is crafted from ovangkol, with a solid top for enhanced volume. It also features a no-tie bridge, bone nut and saddle, acrylic abalone rosette, and 2×2 headstock with vintage-style closed-back tuning machines. Retail price -\$199.99.

The Montecito Ukulele is a tenor uke constructed completely from koa, complemented by bluegreen acrylic abalone top binding and a bound back and fingerboard. Other features include a no-tie bridge, a bone nut and saddle, acrylic abalone rosette, and a Tele headstock with vintage-style closed-back tuning machines. Retail price - \$249.99.



### MARTINGUITAR INTRODUCED UKULELE PREMIUM STRINGS

Martin is known for making exceptional ukuleles for over 100 years, and now the company proudly unveiled a premium line of ukulele strings at Winter NAMM 2018. Developed exclusively with Aquila, the new strings provide precise intonation and clear, balanced tone with exceptional sustain and projection. Martin's premium ukulele string line was launched with three models to suit every ukulele enthusiast: Soprano (M605), Concert (M610), and Tenor (M625). All Nazareth-made ukuleles will be strung with Martin's premium ukulele strings.



There were so many more new ukulele product launches for instruments and accessories at Winter NAMM 2018 we only scratched the surface. GGM

### MARTIN GUITAR 2 CONCERT UKE

For advanced ukuleleists or the ukulele enthusiast, a Martin Ukulele might just be what you're looking for. Martin has been making ukuleles for 100 years and are well known for the quality craftsmanship and superior sound.

The 2 Concert Uke is a concert-sized model crafted with genuine mahogany top, back and sides, joined with an applied dovetail genuine mahogany neck. Appointments include ivoroid binding with black/white top inlay; the entire body is finished in satin lacquer. GGM

2 Concert Uke \$2,049.00 www.martinguitar.com





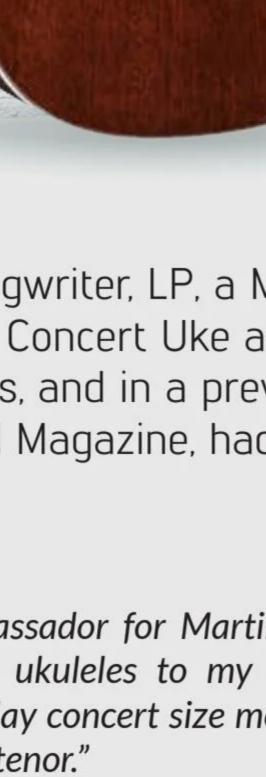
American singer and songwriter, LP, a Martin Ambassador, plays the 2 Concert Uke as well as some custom Martin ukes, and in a previous online interview with Guitar Girl Magazine, had this to say about Martin Guitar:



"I'm an Ambassador for Martin Guitar. They make all my ukuleles to my specs. They're awesome. I play concert size mostly, but we're working on a tenor."

"They are just an amazing company and their instruments speak for themselves. Every time I get a new instrument or something vintage of theirs, I just feel like there are a thousand songs in them."

Photo courtesy of Martin Guitar



CARRY YOUR LUNCH & STRUM IT, T00?

In an age where it seems that there is no end to the new innovations in musical instruments hitting the scene, repurposing is now becoming an amazing trend in musical instrument creation, and one of those pioneers is now, the legendary Ukulele Ray, creator of the "LUNCHBOX-A-LELE" (combination lunchbox and ukulele)!

"I've made Cigar Box Ukuleles since the age of 21 (37 years)," says Ukulele Ray. "One day, I was just sitting there, looking at my vast ukulele collection (over 1,000 pieces), and noticed I had an old 1931 Max Fleischer Betty Boop vintage ukulele displayed next to a new, contemporary tin Betty Boop lunchbox, and wondered... could that box be a ukulele?"

"So, I took photos of the box and Photoshopped the two, together, and

thought it's worth a try," Ray added.

Ray posted the Photoshopped picture on his MySpace blog, and overnight it went viral appearing on such hightech and gadget blogs including GIZMODO, BOING BOING, Fretboard Journal, and more!

"All of a sudden, I was contacted by TV, media and more to do interviews and actually perform on them, and hadn't even made one, yet!" Ray said.

REALT

Rushing down to his San Francisco garage workshop, Ray had a collection of old, damaged and unplayable ukuleles, so like Dr. Frankenstein, took the random parts he needed to make his creation, combining the

two to make one!

Ray was shocked that it played... and, it did! Naturally, a bit "tinny," but nevertheless, a musical instrument, now worthy of playing, and a piece of col-

lectible folk and pop art! This now launched a flurry of art and style blogs, as well as media, who started reaching out to Ray for interviews, leading to a national cable TV profile from HGTV's I Want That!"

> "I couldn't believe the coverage! You would've thought discovered the cure for the common cold," Ray exclaimed! "Before I knew

it, I was appearing on news and talk shows, playing my wild creations!"

In 2006, Ray's LUNCHBOX-A-LELES won Best of Show at the San Francis-

co International Gift Fair, world's largest gift show with more than 5,000 exhibitors and millions of new products, setting his pieces on an International Art Gallery and Museum Exhibit Tour!

Ray's custom pieces have also found their way into the hands of a number of well-known celebrities, including Paul McCartney, Gene Simmons, Steven Tyler, Cheech & Chong and more!

GEAR: FEATURE

"Who would've ever thought a simple lunchbox could become so big in music," laughs Ray. "Sure puts a new spin, now, on singing with your lunch, instead of, for your lunch!"

Although Ray only produces custom pieces, plans are in the works with a major manufacturer who is helping Ray to have these mass produced for mainstream distribution, making them available and affordable, so anyone can have!

"Every child should have one, and it's my goal and dream to get there," Ray added!GGM

### FENDER ZUMA CONCERTUKULELE

By Ted Low

We've covered in this issue body shapes and sizes, and what to look for when purchasing your first ukulele, so if budget and quality are an important issue for you, the Fender Zuma Concert uke fits the bill. The Zuma is one of Fender's five ukuleles in their California Coast Series which are named after beaches along the Southern California Coast. This particular model is named after Zuma Beach, which is one of the most popular beaches in Los Angeles located in Malibu and is known for its superb surf and expansive sandy beach.

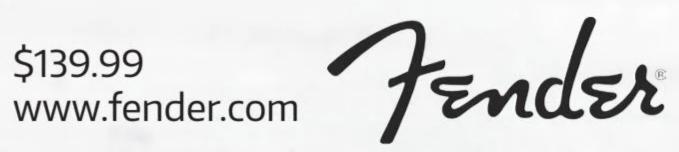
In this price range (\$139.99), there a ton of options on the market, but for me, honestly, what drew me into this little beauty is not only the quality, but the aesthetics. I'm a Fender fanatic- I own several including my beloved tele, so the 4-in-line Tele® headstock makes this ukulele unique and all Fender. The headstock has the Fender logo and vintage style gear tuners adding to that Fender vibe.

As for the quality of this ukulele, the body is made of a laminated Sapele with an open pore satin finish which Fender claims gives it a balanced earthy tone, and I believe it does. The slim "C"-shaped neck made of Nato wood also has the satin finish making for easy and comfortable playability for a young player with smaller hands.

Aesthetically, the Zuma has a cream bound rosewood fretboard with 16 frets, cream binding, and an acrylic abalone rosette. Another great feature I love about this ukulele is the ease of changing strings. The 'no tie" bridge has slots along the bottom of the bridge allowing you to just make a knot at the end of the string and slip it through the slots.

Overall, the uke feels good, plays good, has a rich tone, and is a great value for the money for any level of player. And, if you're a Fender lover and want to add the uke to your arsenal, I highly recommend acquiring the Zuma for your Fender family. I can't wait to try out the other ukuleles in the California Coast series. GGM

Fender Zuma Concert Ukulele



### GIGY UKULELE GIG BAGS

By Tara Low

You've got your ukulele, now you need to protect it. Enter GiGY gig bags. At GiGY, you can go online and design your own high-quality gig bag. Choose your color, your handle, your "Pote," and check out, it's that simple.

GiGY is the creation of the mother and daughter team of Jen and Madeleine Anderson. Daughter Madeleine is a singer-songwriter and wanted to start a business as a way to pay for college. Jen, the owner of another creative business, was on board with the idea, especially as a way to create exciting, colorful gig bags as opposed to the typical boring, black gig bag.

I chose a teal bag with the Succulents and Roses mini pote that fits the ukulele bag. A pote is a small zipper bag that can fit your picks, a capo, or maybe a small note pad and pen. The

larger the gig bag, the larger the pote, so larger gig bags will have more space to carry more items like music and cell phones. The pote snaps on to the outside of the gig bag and also comes with a guitar pick zipper.

After ordering and receiving the gig bag, I was pleasantly surprised with the quality of the GiGY gig bag. It has a sturdy foam padding on the top, bottom and all sides with a really nice soft, white fleece interior lining to protect the finish of your instrument. The exterior feels like a nice quality canvas and is water repellant, and the bag has a heavy-duty zipper with white piping and backpack straps, and a handle in a color you choose.

Be creative. Be bold. Show your style and protect your uke at the same time! GGM



Prices start at \$83.00 for the soprano size and go up from there depending on size, with add-on pricing for the handle and the pote, so visit their website for complete pricing. www.gigystuff.com

D'ADDARIO ECO-CONFORT

UKULELE STRAP

By Tara Low

The beach theme seems to be in the air. While Fender has their California Coast series ukuleles, D'Addario this year unveiled its new line of Eco-Comfort Premium Ukulele Straps in traditional black and four "beach-inspired" colors including seafoam, sand, coral, and stone.

This strap is so comfortable, and the fabric is made from recycled water bottles. It's a sound hole style strap (thong strap) which has a hook made from soft rubber that won't damage your instrument and is made to fit any standard ukulele sound hole. This is ideal for those wanting a strap because a lot of ukulele straps need a strap button to attach to, or they wrap around the body under the strings.

This strap is easy to attach and super comfortable-just slip it over your head and adjust. It couldn't be simpler!

The only thing I would say is that this is a thong style strap so be aware of how you handle your ukulele in the beginning until you get used to wearing it. GGM

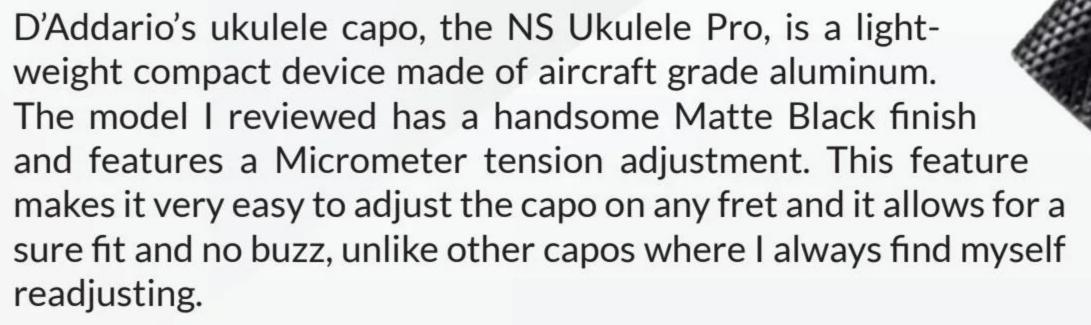
### D'Addario

D'addario Eco-Comfort Ukulele Strap \$32.99 | www.daddario.com



### D'ADDARIO NSUKULELE PRO CAPO

By Ted Low



This capo is designed specifically for the uke. It is lightweight and durable, so it is no problem taking it everywhere with you. Even if it gets thrown around a bit, it is tough enough to take it. Heck, you can just slip it in your shirt or pants pocket, so it is always a couple of fingers away when it is time to play. GGM



NS Ukulele Capo Pro Model PW-CP-02 \$13.90 | www.daddario.com



### SNARK SN-6X UKULELETUNER

By Ted Low

The Snark SN-6X Ukulele Chromatic tuner is perfect for the 4-string small guitar. It features a new chip which improves accuracy and comes with a high-definition display. The frequency range of this tuner is tailored to ukuleles, but it I have been able to use it on my six string guitars, as well. The pitch calibration is 415Hz-466Hz and it comes with a high-sensitivity vibration sensor.

This is great little tuner and should always travel with your ukulele, so you are always in tune and right on pitch! GGM

Snark SN-6X Ukulele Tuner \$9.95 | Most online retailers



So, you've decided to play the ukulele. You must be so excited!

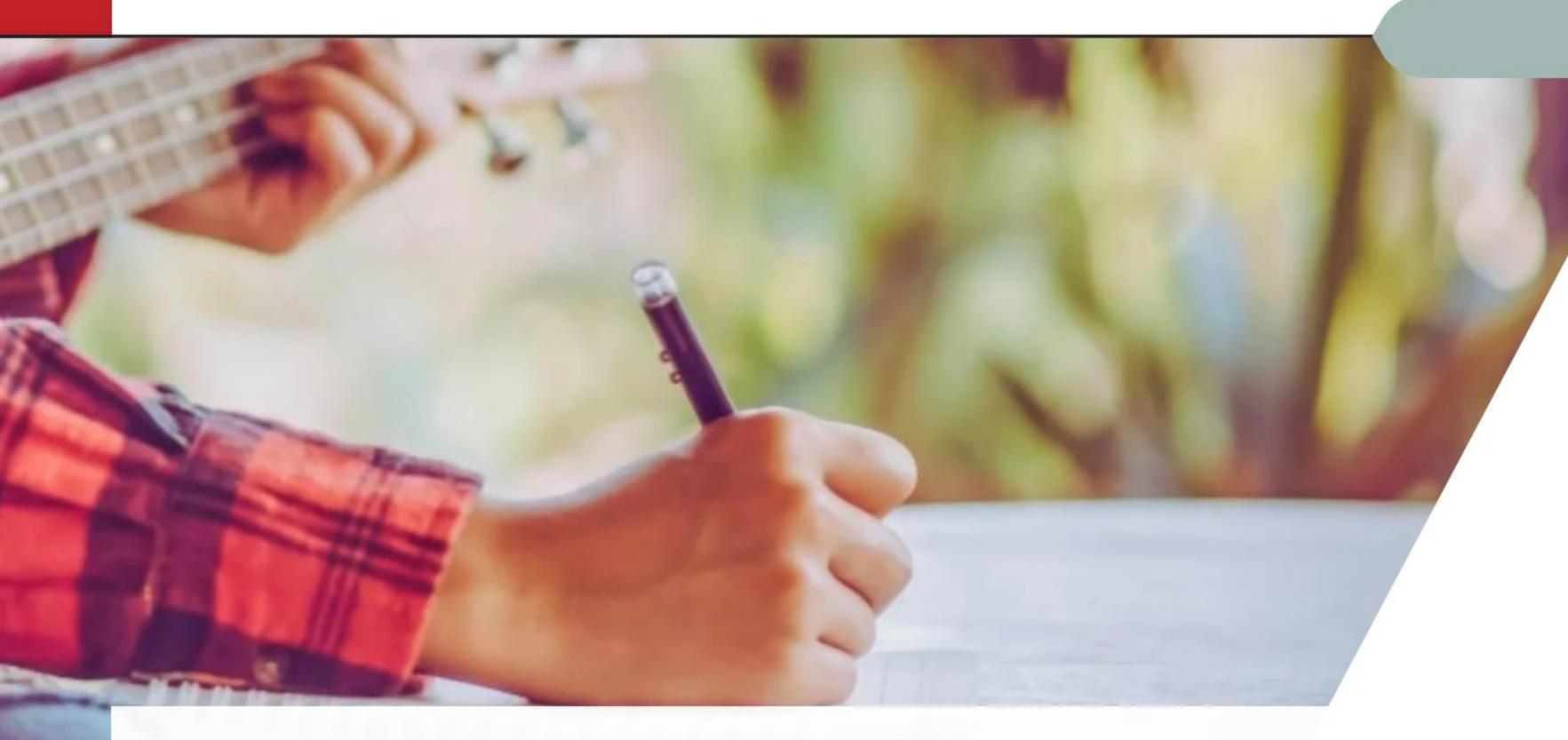
### STEPS FOR BEGINNER UKULELE PLAYERS

By Paige Harwood

The ukulele is a beautiful instrument with a rich and joyful tradition. Strumming along on my instrument has always put a smile on my face, and on the faces of everyone around me. You're in for a lot of fun even if you aren't quite sure how to get started. Once you've decided to play the ukulele, there are a couple of first steps you'll need to take before you really get rolling.

1. Choose the instrument that is perfect for you: For a beginner, I suggest a soprano or concert ukulele. Both have

that great ukulele sound everyone loves so much. The concert ukulele is larger than the soprano and has more space on the instrument and between the strings. It can be easier to handle for a beginner, especially one with larger hands. The soprano ukulele is the smallest and highest in pitch. This makes it great for younger learners or people who travel a lot. Both are great instruments! You can't go wrong with either one, so choose what you think will work best for you and the sound you enjoy the most.



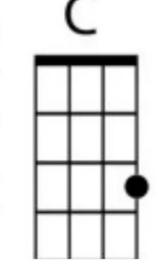
### 2. Decide how you are going to learn:

A lot of people have been very successful teaching themselves ukulele from online tutorials, videos, and ukulele tabs. This is a fantastic option! There are so many resources online for a new ukulele player. If you are someone who needs a little more guidance or accountability, ukulele lessons are a great option. Look around in your area for ukulele teachers who teach in your home or in their space. I suggest contacting a few teachers and even scheduling a trial lesson to make sure you choose someone you genuinely enjoy working with!

3. Get your ukulele tuned: Once you have your instrument, you'll need to get it tuned. It is not as intimidating as it seems! The standard ukulele tuning for the strings is G – C – E – A, from left to right, when you're looking at your ukulele. I suggest finding a tuner app on your phone or purchasing a guitar tuner from your local music store. All you need to do is pluck the string to sound a note and the tuner will display the note you are playing. Then turn the tuning pegs until you reach the correct note.

4. Get yourself in a comfortable playing position: Putting your ukulele in the correct playing position is very important. You want to make sure you are comfortable to reduce tension in your hands. Set the ukulele in your lap and wrap your right arm around the body to hold it close to you. Then put your left thumb on the back of the ukulele neck and wrap your hand around to position your fingers over the strings.

5. Play your first chord: Now you are ready to play your first chord! Let's start with C. To play the C chord, all you need to do is place the ring finger of your left hand just behind the third fret of the first string. See the chord diagram below for a visualization.

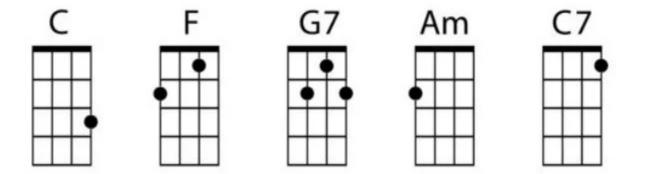


Reading chord diagrams is such an important skill, especially if you are teaching yourself the ukulele. It is how you will learn the chords you need to play any new song. To read chord diagrams, follow the process below:

- Each vertical line represents a string if you are looking straight at the ukulele.
- Each horizontal line represents a fret on the ukulele.
- The dots are your fingers. For example, for the C chord, the dot is on the far right three lines down. This means you put your finger on the highest string and hold down right at the third fret.
- The numbers at the bottom tell you which fingers to place on the string. 1 = index finger, 2 = middle finger, 3 = ring finger, and 4 = little finger.

### 6. Practice your first strumming pattern:

Start slow with your strumming patterns! The most important thing right now is to keep your rhythm smooth and consistent. First, just try strumming downward starting with the lowest string and moving your hand towards the floor hitting every string along the way, circle your hand back around and strum downwards again. There are so many strumming patterns. If you're ready for something more advanced, you can check one of the many ukulele resources online.



7. Play your first song: One of my favorite songs I learned as a beginner was the chorus of "You Are My Sunshine." It is such a sweet and happy song that is perfect for the ukulele. To play the chorus of this song, you'll need to learn the chords above. Start slow! Practice each chord individually until you feel comfortable with the finger position. Next, practice the chords in the order of the song strumming very slowly. There are many online ukulele resources where the strumming pattern for "You Are My Sunshine" can be found. Switching between chords is what will require the most practice. After you are able to strum through the whole song smoothly, try singing along! I guarantee it will brighten your day. GGM

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO PURCHASING YOUR FIRST UKULELE

By Crystal Grabowski

You've decided to purchase a ukulele, and that's fantastic! However, first-time buyers will soon discover that there is a great variety of options when it comes to ukuleles. The instrument can vastly range in size, price, and playability. This begs the question: How can a beginner determine which ukulele is the best purchase for them? Here are the most important factors to

consider as you browse and consider your first ukulele purchase.

#### Size

There is no single standard size for ukulele. While some sizes are more traditional and popular than others, there is a variety of ukulele sizes, each with a slightly different scale and sound.

### Soprano

The first, traditional ukulele was soprano size. The smallest of all modern varieties of ukuleles, soprano ukes have a brighter and more high-pitched sound than the other standard models. They are also quieter than the larger ukulele sizes. However, sopranos do work well for people with smaller hands and fingers, as the frets are closer to one another.

#### Concert

Concert ukuleles are just a few inches larger than sopranos, thus producing a richer and slightly louder sound. For those who find the soprano size too small to be comfortable in their hands, a concert ukulele may work better. Due to only a small difference in size, concert ukuses still have that tinny traditional ukulele sound, much like the soprano.



#### **Tenor**

Tenors are the second largest variety of ukulele, with frets that are far enough apart to accommodate larger hands. They have a fuller, deeper tone than the concert and soprano ukuleles, and are still fairly simple to learn for beginners.

#### **Baritone**

The largest of all the types of ukuleles, baritone ukes are just a few inches shy from the general size of a small guitar. Due to their size, they are tuned more like a guitar as well. The different tuning of baritone ukuleles makes them more difficult for beginners to learn, as most ukulele chords and songbooks will not work with the baritone's tuning. However, they have a loud, deep sound that is good for those who are used to guitar.

Before you decide which ukulele to purchase, spend some time thinking about what kind of size and sound works best for you. Typically, concert and tenor ukuleles are best for beginners, but this may not be true for you if you're seeking something else.

### PRICE

A beginner looking to purchase a ukulele should aim for an instrument within the \$75 to \$200 price range. There are ukuleles cheaper than that available, but they are more similar to toy or novelty ukuleles and will not have the traditional ukulele sound you are likely looking for.

### **Budget Ukuleles**

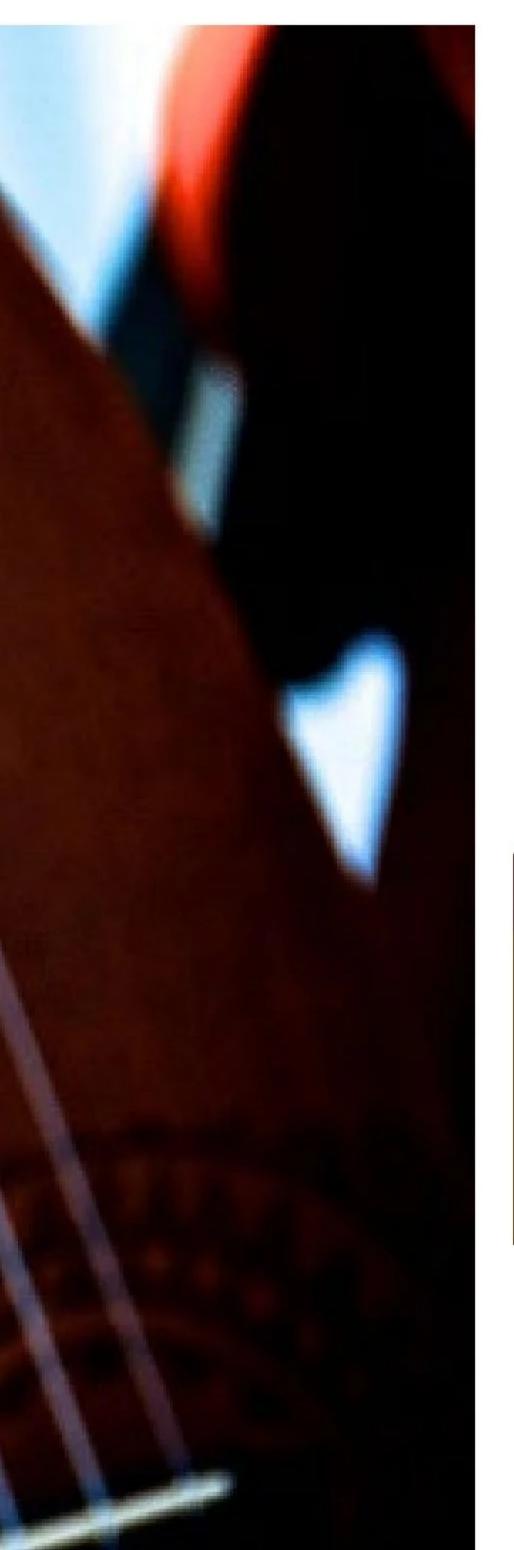
(\$75 to \$200)

This is a fairly good place to start as a beginner. There are many different brands, models, and sizes in this price range that are affordable and sound good. Saving up for a solid ukulele in this price range can lead to a pleasant and successful learning experience. Budget ukuleles are usually made out of a laminated material.

### Mid-Level Ukuleles

(\$200 to \$600)

If you want a ukulele that is constructed out of better quality material, such as solid wood, then this is the price range to explore. Wood gives the ukulele more volume and a nicer sound. However, wood instruments





require more maintenance, so conduct research beforehand.

### **High-End Ukuleles**

(\$600+)

Ukuleles in this price range are built by many popular American manufacturers like Martin Guitar and Kala Brand, but more exotic and artistic models can be found from well-respected Hawaiian manufacturers, such as Kamaka, Kanile`a, and Ko`olau. This expensive of an instrument might not make sense for a ukulele beginner, but it could be something to strive for.

#### Shapes

There are three basic shapes found amongst the ukulele varieties, some more popular than others.

### **Guitar/Figure Eight**

This shape is the most commonly designed and purchased. The ukulele will be shaped like a guitar, with two bouts, either symmetrical, or with the lower bout larger than the upper body.

The majority of ukuleles resemble this shape.

### **Pineapple**

The pineapple ukulele was popularized by the family-based Kamaka Ukulele Company. Instruments with this shape are ovals that are smaller on top and rounder on the bottom, often with a rounded back.

#### **Boat Paddle**

The least common ukulele shape, boat paddle ukuleles are smaller on top, with a wide and square lower body. Their sound hole is either in the center, or sometimes off in the upper corner.

### **Tuning**

Not all ukuleles are tuned the same. The smaller sizes – soprano, concert, and tenor – are standardly tuned to G-C-E-A, so most ukulele songbooks and chords fit with these types of ukuleles. There are other possible tunings as well, which can be researched and learned as you develop your ukulele playing skills.

Baritone ukuleles are tuned like the top four strings on a guitar: D-G-B-E. Due to this, some guitar chords can be played on a baritone ukulele by ignoring the notes that call for the bottom two strings.

It's normal to replace strings on your ukulele, as strings do stretch and grow old. Periodically tune your ukulele and examine your strings and screws. GGM



The pineapple ukulele was popularized by the family-based Kamaka Ukulele Company.



### ACCESSORIES FOR YOUR UKULELE

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT UKULELE ACCESSORIES THAT CAN BE PURCHASED, BUT HERE ARE THE MOST USEFUL FOR THOSE BEGINNING TO LEARN UKULELE.

### By Crystal Grabowski

#### **Electronic Tuner**

Electronic tuners can be quite affordable, and they simplify and shorten the tuning process. They often have a mode that will match with ukulele strings. Use them by simply clipping them onto the ukulele headstock and reading the notes off a digital screen while you pluck the strings. See our review of the Snark SN-6X Ukulele Tuner in this issue.

#### **Ukulele Case**

Although ukuleles are small and transportable, they are still susceptible to damage and wear like any instrument. Keep your new ukulele in top shape by purchasing a nice case. A soft gig bag will keep your instrument free from moisture and dust but will not protect it from damage. A heavier gig bag will provide more protection. In this issue, we reviewed the GiGY ukulele gig bag which offers 3/4 inch cell foam full body construction. A hard case will provide your instrument with the ultimate protection, so depending on the price of your instrument, decide on which option fits your needs.

### Strap

Generally, not everyone uses a strap with a ukulele, but for children, it might be easier to keep control of the instrument, and some people prefer a strap. First, check your instrument to see if it has a strap button. Unless your instrument is one of the larger body styles or has pickups, it most likely will not have a

strap button. That will determine what type of strap to purchase. There are many options to choose from. In this issue, we reviewed the new D'Addario Eco-Comfort Ukulele Strap which does not require a strap button, but there are plenty of other options to consider, so do your research and choose an option that fits within your budget.

### Capo

There are a variety of capos from elastic straps to the lever capos which we prefer because of their convenience and they create less buzz. Check out the D'Addario Capo review in this issue.

Many ukulele players like to use their fingers alone

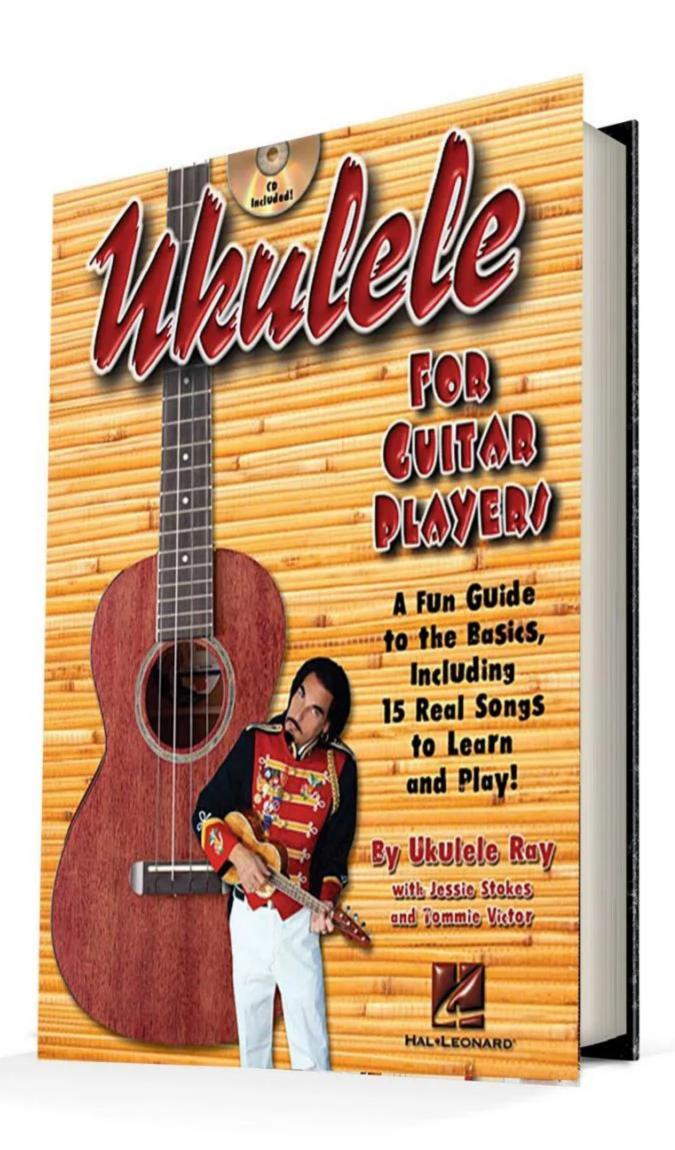
#### **Picks**

to play, but it's also normal to prefer a pick on a ukulele, especially for children with delicate fingers learning to play or adults with arthritis. Different methods do affect the sound, so experiment with different options and see which sound you prefer. The most common type of ukulele pick is a felt pick which produces a much mellower sound than a traditional guitar pick. D'Addario offers a 3.0 mm thickness felt pick that has an elliptical cutout for better grip control for around \$8.50 for a 4 pack. Picks can be inexpensive, so it

doesn't hurt to grab a few and try. GGM

### 3 TIPS TO TURN YOUR GUITARINTO AUKUTETE

BY UKULELE RAY



According to Webster's Dictionary, Ukulele is a small, 4-string guitar, and that's exactly how UKE have to look at it! Ukulele was the first instrument that inspired some of the greatest guitarists of all time, including: Jimi Hendrix, George Harrison, Johnny Winter, Dick Dale, Brian May and more! Because of its small size, it's less intimidating and more appealing to a child, and because of its direct correlation to the guitar, makes it the easier starter instrument to segue from ukulele to guitar. So, here are my top 3 tips to making it easier for UKE to go from guitar to ukulele:

### **TURN YOUR GUITAR INTO A UKULELE:**

By placing a capo on your guitar's 5th fret, UKE will now have a ukulele from the nut down, with a Low G C E A tuning, and not playing the top 2 strings! Only difference between this, and an actual uke, is the ukulele tunes the G string an octave higher, giving it that unique sound it's known for.

**USE GUITAR CHORDS ON A UKE:** 

Ukulele chord shapes are the same as guitar, so just make your guitar chords without using the top 2 strings and you'll get the feel of a ukulele! For example: D on a guitar, is G on a ukulele, with the exact same finger position. You'll now notice, that C will require only one finger, instead of 3, and so on! It's just that easy!

### PLAY YOUR UKULELE LIKE A GUITAR:

Don't hold back! Just because it's small, doesn't mean UKE can't still shred like you do on your guitar. In fact, because of its smaller fingerboard, you'll find that you won't need to stretch your fingers so wide and far to make those hard-to-get chord shapes!

My Hal Leonard book, UKULELE for GUITAR PLAYERS, goes into more detail, including strumming, barre chords, and more! Now, go out and UKE-it UP!

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Ukulele Ray is a world-renowned Ukulele Artist, Author and maker, with 15 albums and multiple endorsements including Fender, Fishman Acoustic, Hal Leonard, Eddy Finn, and more. For more information: www.ukuleleray.com! GGM



### 

#### **ABOUT ME:**

My name is Sue Ray and I'm an independent indigenous singer-songwriter based in Queensland, Australia. I've been performing professionally for over ten years and in that time have dabbled in many varied genres. Early in my career, I was quite the metal head so my first few bands were predominantly all-female rock bands where I played electric guitar, then I gravitated to bass

for a while when I was in a Rock'A'Billy band The Fondelles, then later in my 20s, I started to move back to my roots. My early musical influences were heavily entrenched in old school country music, so I started playing acoustic guitar again and playing my own style of country that was a blend of blues, folk, dark murder ballads and old school country that has over the years been given the title "Americana."

After I graduated high school, I moved to Brisbane to study sound engineering, video production and Diploma of Film and Television. I also completed a Certificate IV in Contemporary Music at Southbank Tafe (eloquently titled "Rock School") where I actually met and became great friends with an incredible performer and someone I'm so proud of and influenced by today, Sash The Bash, who is based in Atlanta, Georgia now.

I have released three critically acclaimed albums: Best Beware in 2008, Red Roses in 2011 produced by Aria award winner Magoo, Live At The Junk Bar in 2017 recorded and co-produced

by renowned engineer Jamie Trevaskis, followed by an EP titled I Would Never Do That recorded live in Nashville by Pal Sheldon at Artec Sound Vision Productions.

In the past five years, I've been fortunate to have a number of awards and nominations, from "Most Promising New Talent" in the 2013 Deadly Awards to "Female Artist Of The Year" in the QLD Music Awards that same year.

In 2012, my album Red Roses was nominated for "Country Album Of The Year" in the AIR Independent Music Awards Australia, and later that year my single "Lover Evermore" received the award for "Best Indigenous Track" in the QLD Music Awards.

I'm not known to be an artist that sticks to one sound or genre. Some agents have worried that I might confuse my audience by not sticking to one specific style, but I've found it actually works in my favor. Being diverse, I am able to perform at many varied concerts or festivals ranging from Blues festivals, Folk Festivals, and Country Music Festivals so it's actually been a blessing. Quite often, the feedback I receive from fans and patrons at my shows is that they love the diversity through my set as the range of song styles keeps them interested and on and their toes.

### **MY INSPIRATION:**

I'm so blessed to come from a musical family. My father is a huge inspiration and influence in my life. He played in a band for over 50 years and thanks to him, I was immersed in music nearly every day of my life. He was also chairman of my hometown Country Music Club, so every week I was listening to or performing the country classics. He also taught me how to play guitar, roll a guitar lead, use a microphone and set up a PA. I am so lucky to have such a solid foundation.

My guitar is an Australian made Maton EBG808 in Cherry Red with Gold Hardware.

In my teens, which thankfully was the '90s, I was really influenced by music that had strong driving rhythms and intense lyrical content. Pantera, L7, Nine Inch Nails, Babes in Toyland and The Cure were some of my favorite bands, but I was particularly taken with Tori Amos and Melissa Etheridge. I can actually hear all of those influences in my music today. When I was 15, a friend gave me an album of Nina Simone's greatest hits and to this day, I listen to it often. Her voice, her lyrics and the intensity of her performances are a big influence to me, so much so that when I asked to perform at a show called "Live Spark" in Brisbane years ago where a local artist is asked to perform their favorite album start to finish, I chose Nina Simone's first album, surprising everyone who'd imagined I'd do Patsy Cline or Chris Isaac. I might be known these days as a "country artist," but my influences are diverse and often contradictory.

#### MY GEAR:

Of late, my sound has been getting darker and crossing over that border of murder ballad and stoner rock. Although I use an acoustic guitar, I've gradually built up quite a large pedal board ranging in effects to help create my own unique sound and build the vibe and mood in my set. I used to get the sound engineer to just add some reverb to my guitar and voice, but these days I choose to use my own effects.

On my pedal board today, you'll find a TC Electronics Polytune, BOSS Pitch Shifter Delay, TC Electronics Ditto X2 Looper, BOSS Blues Driver, Fender FRV-1 63 Reverb pedal, BOSS TR-2 Tremelo pedal and a BOSS VE-20 Vocal Processor. And I use them all in every set!

My guitar is an Australian made Maton EBG808 in Cherry Red with Gold Hardware. My father used to own a musical instrument store where he sold them, so he had it custom made by them for me. I often get called the "girl with the red guitar." When I travel, I take my Maton Mini Diesel which is an amazing guitar. Although it is small, it has an AP5 pick-up, which puts out a huge sound often surprising unsuspecting sound engineers. Being a smaller body, it works well with all of the effects I'm using and doesn't get that boomy feed-back loop that you can get with bigger guitars.

If I'm able, I also prefer to use my own guitar amp rather than go direct through a PA and I'm currently using a VOX AC30.

I also have a set of Hohner harmonicas in every key at my disposal and am proud to say, I'm actually pretty good these days.

### WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

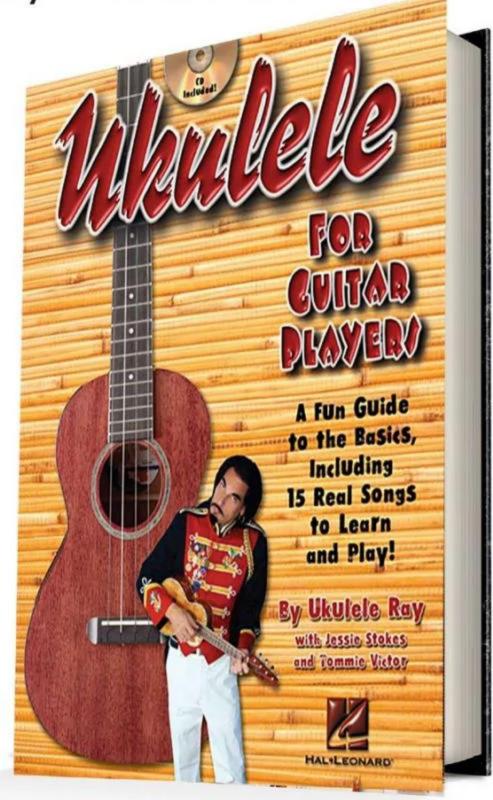
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K	E	K	J	C	Α	L	Ι	F	O	R	N	I	A	L	М	C	E	P	W	BARITONE
Т	E	V	I	Α	Y	Z	L	Т	Α	D	A	D	D	Α	R	I	O	A	L	BRIT
F	L	L	P	L	В	G	A	C	X	Q	0	N	Н	L	U	P	N	N	A	CALIFORNIA
0	E	Y	L	Α	В	R	K	0	Н	V	L	G	S	Y	Y	C	P	Q	A	CAPO
C	L	X	N	В	X	Z	N	N	V	E	N	S	O	N	S	K	Z	J	W	CONCERT
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Α	N	X	C	Α	I	Y	F	Н	N	D	K	D	A	X	S	D	W	A	J	TENOR
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K	Υ	X	Α	N	F	V	Y	I	Α	K	E	H	S	Y	J	V	Q	W	U	VENSON
S	N	F	Υ	Т	Ι	R	В	R	F	R	Z	X	I	В	I	G	Т	В	Α	ZUMA

- What are the four main body shapes for ukuleles?
- Which ukulele has a higher pitched sound a soprano or a baritone?
- Grace VanderWaal recently became the youngest endorsed artist with her own line of signature ukuleles for which company?
- Olivia Millerschin was heard singing on what song that was played at the 2018 Winter Olympics?
- T or F? Lucy LaForge has never taken an "official" guitar lesson.
- What was the name of Brit Rodriguez's last album?
- The five ukuleles in the Fender California Coast series are inspired by \_\_\_\_\_?
- LP is a Martin Ambassador and likes to play which Martin ukulele?

Mind Game and Trivia answers found on last page.

### WHAT WE'RE READINGNOW!

By Tara Low



### Ukulele Ray's Ukulele for Guitar Players

While at Winter NAMM in January, I ran across the Rocking Around the Clock booth and Ukulele Ray was there with some of his products. Ray is the author of this book, along with Jessie Stokes and Tommie Victor, and the book was released back in 2010, but I thought I would check it out since I had just met him and was working on the Mighty Uke issue. It sparked my interest because a lot of guitar players like to pick up the uke and play around.

Ukulele for Guitar Players is a cool little tool that comes in handy for those wanting a quick and easy guide to get them on the right path to playing the uke. It comes with a book full of diagrams and chord charts with instruction on tuning and strumming, and a CD with 14 songs like "Folsom Prison Blues, "Hound Dog," "Twist and Shout," and so many more. Ukulele Ray's Ukulele for Guitar Players Book/CD (Hal Leonard, 2010, \$16.99)

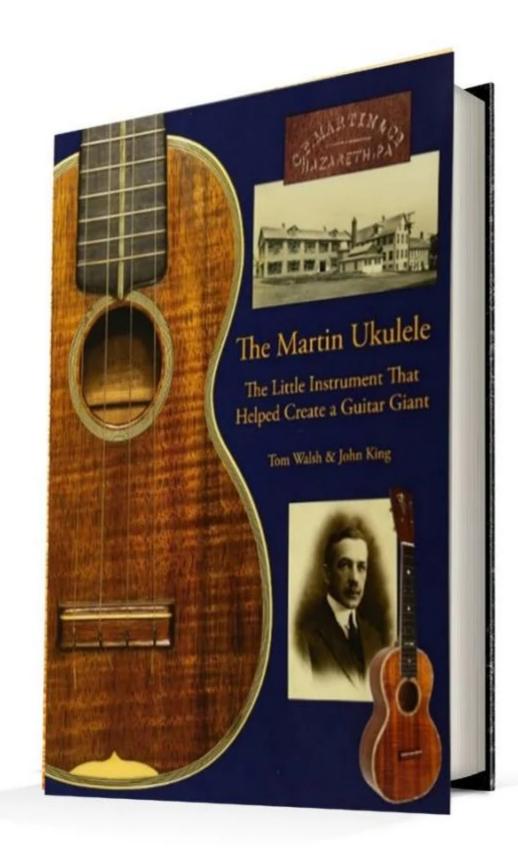
### The Martin Ukulele: The Little Instrument That Helped Create A Guitar Giant

Being a fan of LP, a Martin ambassador who plays the Martin 2 Concert Uke (among her many) and which we featured in this issue, I came across this book on Amazon and thought I would check it out. If you're a historian, you will thoroughly enjoy this book. Authors Tom Walsh and the late John King, who unfortunately passed away before the book was completed, provide a full and complete detailed history of the Martin Ukulele.

It starts with a very brief history of Christian Frederick Martin, who was born on January 31, 1796 in Germany, and then continues on to his emigration to NYC in 1833. As most guitar enthusiasts know, Martin went on to build a "Guitar Giant."

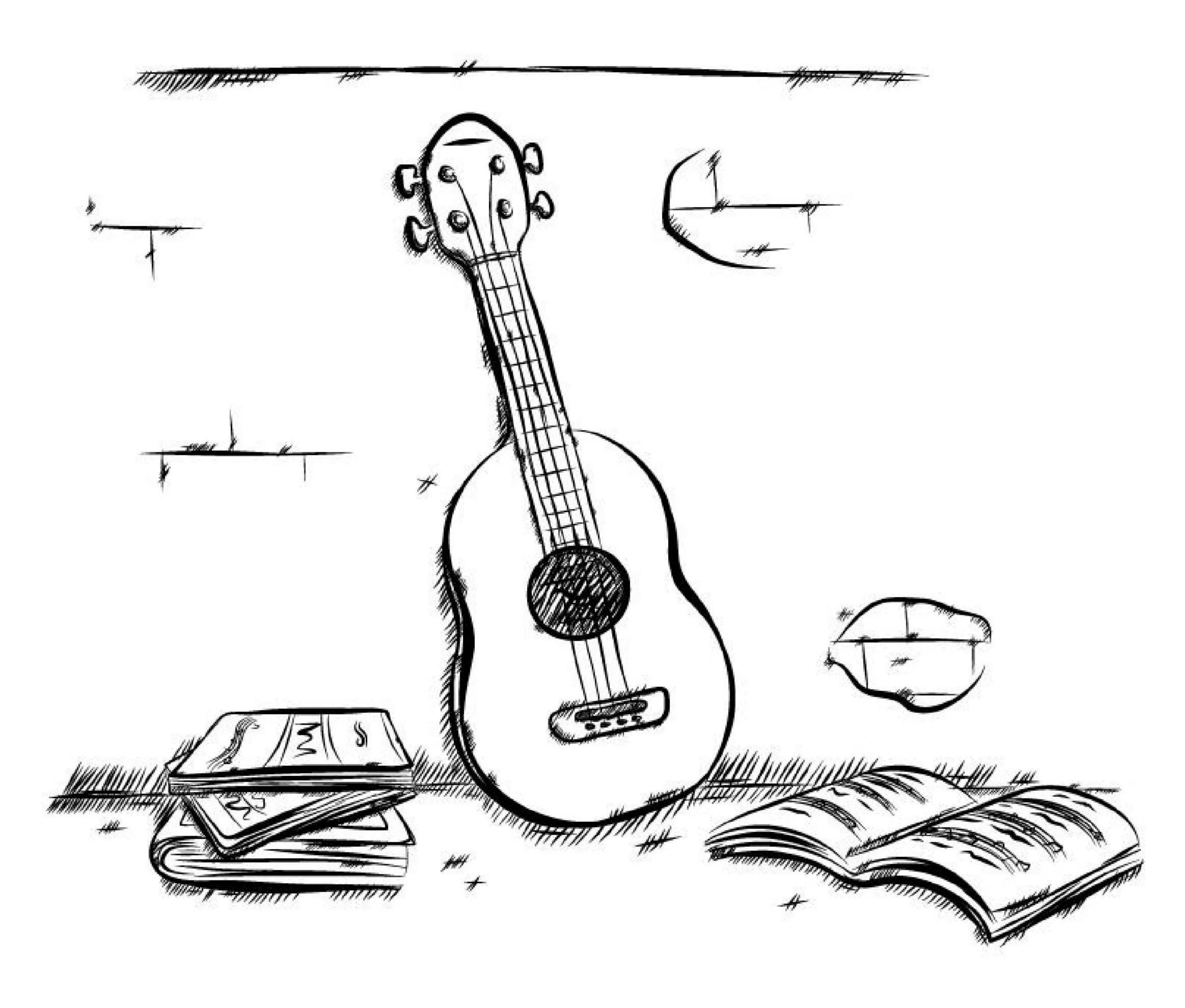
This book is broken into 11 chapters with five excellent appendices detailing general information about Martin ukuleles, the styles, custom ukuleles that were made for individuals and companies, and the tools used to make these instruments. There are tons of pictorials from the Martin Museum and Archives making this book a great find and interesting read.

One notable individual that received several custom Martin ukuleles was May Singhi Breen, quite an interesting woman. She was a well-known radio star in the '20s, author of ukulele method books, and known as the "Ukulele Lady." Martin made quite a few ornate custom ukuleles for Breen with UKULELE LADY inlaid on the fretboard in mother of pearl and also her name on the headstock.



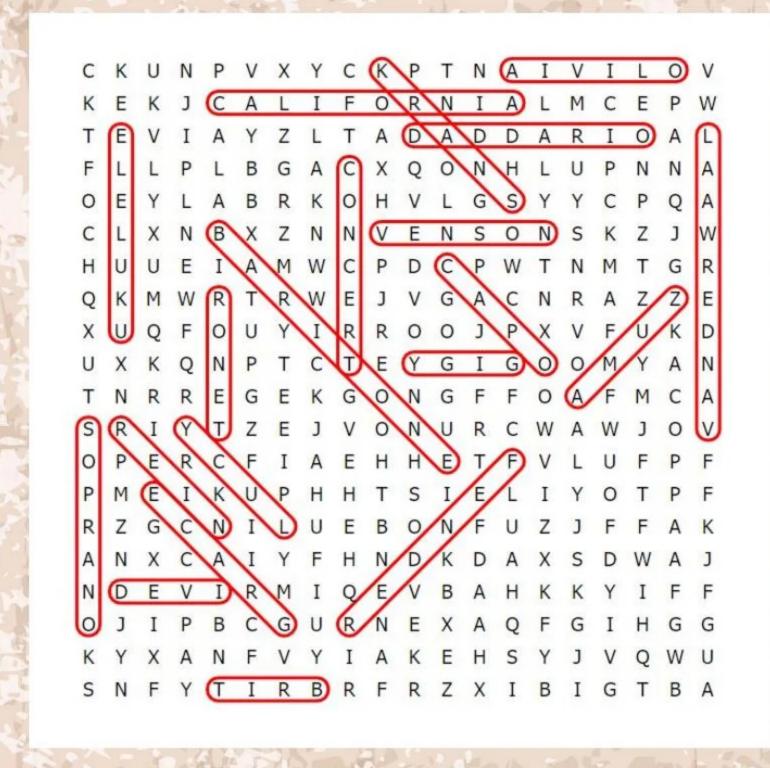
A treasure trove of information behind this cover- The Martin Ukulele: The Little Instrument That Helped Create A Guitar Giant (Hal Leonard, 2013, \$30.00) By Tom Walsh & John King.

## If I could write a song for you...



# 

### MIND GAME ANSWERS:



### **TRIVIA** ANSWERS:

- 1. Soprano, Concert, Tenor, Baritone
- 2. Soprano
- 3. Fender
- 4. "Imagine" by John Lennon
- 6. The Little Song
- 7. California beaches
- 8. 2 Concert Uke

### WHAT'S NEXT

### May Issue

Ladies Play the Blues

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