
October 2012 edition

Ukulele Stuff



Simon Taylor

Well, if you got this far, then you've got this book loaded on your iPad.

If you want to understand my obsession with the uke, take a look at the "Blogs" section, I hope you find it interesting.

Otherwise, it's a collection of songs and some other experimental stuff.

I will update it from time to time, but feel free to check at www.phooto.co.uk/books for an update.

Any feedback is welcome, to me at simon@phooto.co.uk

Enjoy!

Simon

Covers

**Some well-known songs.
Some are easy, some not
so easy...**

Country Roads

G Em
Almost heaven, West Virginia

D C G
Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River

G Em
Life is old there, older than the trees

D C G
Younger than the mountains, blowing like a breeze

CHORUS:

G D
Country roads, take me home

Em C
To the place, I belong

G D
West Virginia, mountain momma

C G
Take me home, country roads

G Em
All my mem'ries, gather 'round her

D C G
Miner's lady, stranger to blue water

G Em
Dark and dusty, painted on the sky

D C G
Misty taste of moonshine, teardrops in my eyes

CHORUS

Em D G
I hear her voice, in the mornin' hours she calls to me

C G D
The radio reminds me of my home far a-way

Em F C G
And drivin' down the road I get a feeling that I should have been home

D D7
yesterday, yesterday

CHORU

Delilah

Am E7
I saw the light on the night that I passed by her window

Am E7
I saw the flickering shadows of love on her blind

A* A7* Dm
She was my woman

Am E7 Am G7
As she deceived me I watched, and went out of my mind

C G
My, my, my, Delilah

G B C
Why, why, why, Delilah

C C7 F Dm
I could see that girl was no good for me

C G C E7
But I was lost like a slave that no one could free

Am E7
At break of day when that man drove away I was waiting

Am E7
I crossed the street to her house and she opened the door

A A7 Dm
She stood there laughing

Am E7 Am G7
I felt the knife in my hand, and she laughed no more

C G
My, my, my, Delilah

G B C
Why, why, why, Delilah

C C7 F Dm
So before they come to break down the door

C G C E7
Forgive me, Delilah, I just couldn't take any more

Am E7

Am E7

A A7 Dm

She stood there laughing

Am E7 Am G7

I felt the knife in my hand, and she laughed no more

C G

My, my, my, Delilah

G B C

Why, why, why, Delilah

C C7 F Dm

So before they come to break down the door

C G C E7

Forgive me, Delilah, I just couldn't take any more

Am E7 Am E7 Am E7~Am

Forgive me, Delilah, I just couldn't take any mo--oo--ore

Dreaming

Intro: X4 DG

D G
When I met you in the restaurant,

D G
I could tell you were no debutante.

D A G
You asked me what's my pleasure, "A movie or a measure?"
A

I'll have a cup of tea and tell you of my...

Chorus

D G
Dreaming, dreaming is free.

D G
Dreaming, dreaming is free.

Verse 2

D G
I don't want to live on charity.

D G
Pleasure's real or is it fantasy?

D A G
Reel to reel is living rarity, people stop and stare at me,

A D

We just walk on by; we just keep on dreaming.

Bridge

G
Beat feet, walking a two-mile,
Meet me, meet me at the turnstile.

D A
I never met her, I'll never forget her.

G
Dream, dream, even for a little while,
Dream, dream, filling up an idle hour,

D A /// //// ///// ////

Fade away, woo, radiate.

Verse 3

D G
I sit by and watch the river flow.

D G
I sit by and watch the traffic go.

D A G
Imagine something of your very own; something you can have
and hold,

A
I'd build a road in gold just to have some...

Chorus / Outro

D G
Dreaming, dreaming is free.

D G
Dreaming, dreaming is free.

D G
Dreaming, dreaming is free.

D G
dreaming is free.

D G
< no lyrics >

D G D G

Section 4

Istanbul

(Intro Chords: Am Am Am E7 E7 Am Dm Dm Am)

Verse 1:

Am Am Am Am
Istanbul was Constantinople, now it's Istanbul, not Constantinople
E7 E7

Been a long time gone, old Constantinople

Am - Dm Dm Am
Now it's Turkish delight on a moonlit night

Am Am Am Am
Every gal in Constantinople lives in Istanbul, not Constantinople
E7 E7 Am - E7 Am

So if you've a date in Constantinople, she'll be waiting in Istanbul

Chorus:

Am Am Am Am
Even old New York was once New Amsterdam
Bm7-5 E7 Am E7
Why they changed it I can't say, people just liked it better that way

Am Am Am Am
So take me back to Constantinople, no you can't go back to Constantinople
E7 E7 Am Am

Been a long time gone, Constantinople, why did Constantinople get the works?
E7 Am

That's nobody's business but the Turks

Verse 2:

So take me back to Constantinople
No, You can't go back to Constantinople
Been a long time gone Constantinople
Why did Constantinople get the works?
That's nobodys business but the Turks.

Bridge Chords:

Am Am
Do do do do dodo do dododo, Do do do do dodo do dododo
E7 Am
Do do do do dodo do dododo, Itstanbul,(Itstanbul)
Am Am
Do do do do dodo do dododo, Do do do do dodo do dododo
E7 Am
Do do do do dodo do dododo, Itstanbul,(Itstanbul)

Chorus:

Verse 1:

Istanbul was Constantinople,
now it's Istanbul, not Constantinople
Been a long time gone, old Constantinople
Why did constantinople get the works
That's nobodys business but the Turks

Bridge 2:

Am Am Em

Am Am
Do do do do dodo do dododo, Do do do do dodo do dododo
E7 Am
Do do do do dodo do dododo, Do do do dodo dodo

Verse 2:

So take me back to Constantinople
No, You can't go back to Constantinople
Been a long time gone Constantinople
Why did Constantinople get the works?
That's nobodys business but the Turks.

ITSTANBUL!!!!

King Of The Road

|C |F |
 1,3. Trail - er__ for sale or rent,__
 2. Third box__ car mid - night train,__

|G7 |C |
 Rooms__ to let__ fif - ty cents.__
 Des - ti - na - tion: Ban - gor, Maine.__

|C |F |
 No phone,__ no pool, no pets;__
 Old worn__ out suit and shoes;_

|G7 |G7 |
 I ain't got no cig - a - rettes,_ Ah, but
 I don't pay no un - ion dues.__ I smoke

|C |F |
 two hours_ of push - ing broom__ buys a
 old sto - gies I have found,_

|G7 |C |
 eight__ by twelve four bit room.__ I'm a
 Short__ but not too big a - round.__ I'm a

|C7 |F |
 man of means by no means,
 man of means by no means,

|G7 |C |
 King__ Of The Road. (see note below)
 King__ Of The Road. I know

(Continuation of 2nd verse only)

|C |F |
 ev - er - y en - gi - neer on ev - er - y train,__

|G7 |C |
 all of the chil - dren and all of their names, and

|C |F |
 ev - er - y hand - out in ev - er - y town,__ and

|G7 |G7 |
 ev-'ry lock that ain't locked when no one's a-round. I sing
 (Go back to the top and do the 3rd verse)

Osama Bin Laden

F
What happened to that nasty man so pally with the Taliban?
C7 F
Oh, oh, oh, oh Osama Bin Laden
F
He had one big hit then he went away like a terrorism Macy
Gray
C7 F
Oh, oh, oh, oh Osama Bin Laden
Bb F
Every now and then he sends out a video tape
Bb C7
To say he's doing great and he's full of hate
F
Well if he's doing so great then please tell me, why a video
tape, not a DVD?
C7 F
Oh, oh, oh, oh Osama Bin Laden
Bb F
You might think that he's wicked and depraved
Bb C7
But think of him stuck in that fucking cave

F
He takes girls back there now and then, but the clerics just
throw stones at them
C7 F
Oh, oh, oh, oh Osama Bin Laden
F
Music's banned by the Taliban so he always misses the ice
cream van
C7 F
Oh, oh, oh, oh Osama Bin Laden
Bb F
Taliban TV ain't got a lot of laughs in
Bb C7
Their biggest show is called Strictly No Dancing
F
No one comes to his parties any more, it's like being Michael
Barrymore
C7 F
Oh, oh, oh, oh Osama Bin Laden
Bb F
Well Obama wanted him dead
Bb C7
So the Navy Seals shot him in the head
F
Why did we go to Afghanistan, when the old git was in Paki-
stan?

C7 F
Oh, oh, oh, oh Osama Bin Laden
C7 F
Oh, oh, oh, oh Osama Bin Laden

Rock The Casbah

Intro & Choruses:

|1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &|1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &|
 /// // // / / * * (* = clap, or strum)
 Dm Am Em7
 / / // / / //
 Em F Em Am

Verses:

|1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &|1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &|
 / / // / / //
 Am Em
 / / // / / * * (* = clap, or strum)
 G Dm
 Am Em
 G Dm
 Am Em
 / / // / //
 F F

That's it. Now over the lyrics...

Intro:

Dm |Am Em7 |
 Em F |Em Am |
 Dm |Am Em7 |

Em F |Em Am |
 Now the...

Verse 1:

Am |Em |
 King told the boogie men, "You have to
 G |Dm |
 let that raga drop." (clap,clap) The
 Am |Em |
 oil down the desert way has been
 G |Dm |
 shakin' to the top. (clap,clap) The
 Am |Em |
 Sheik he drove his Cadillac, he went a
 G |Dm |
 cruisin down the ville. (clap,clap) The
 Am |Em |
 Muezzin was a standing on the
 F |F |
 rad-i-a-tor grill-a-ill - a-ille. (Whoa!!!)

Chorus:

Dm |Am Em7 |
 Shareef don't like it! (clap,clap)
 Em F |Em Am |
 Rock the Casbah! Rock the Casbah!
 Dm |Am Em7 |
 Shareef don't like it! (clap,clap)

Em F | Em Am |
Rock the Casbah! Rock the Casbah!

Verse 2:

Am Em
By order of the prophet,
G Dm
"We ban that boogie sound! (clap,clap)
Am Em
Degenerate the faithful
G Dm
with that crazy Casbah sound." (clap,clap)
Am Em
But the Bedouin, they brought out the electric camel drum.
G Dm
The local guitar picker got his guitar picking thumb.
Am Em
As soon as the Shareef had cleared the square,
FF
They began to wail-a-ail-ail! (Ohhh!!!)

Chorus:

Dm Am Em7
Shareef don't like it!
Em F Em Am
Rock the Casbah! Rock the Casbah!
Dm Am Em7
Shareef don't like it!
Em F Em Am

Rock the Casbah! Rock the Casbah!

Verse 3:

Am Em
Now over at the temple
G Dm
Oh, they really pack em in.
Am Em
The in crowd say, "It's cool,
G Dm
to dig this chanting thing!"
Am Em
But as the wind changed direction
G Dm
and the temple band took five
Am Em
The crowd got a whiff
F F
of that crazy Casbah jive!!!

Chorus (Same as previous)

Verse 4:

Am Em
The King called up his jet fighters,
G Dm
He said, "You better earn your pay - ay.
Am Em
Drop your bombs down between the Minarets,

G Dm
down the Casbah way - yay."
Am Em
As soon as the Shareef was chauffeured out of there,
G Dm
the jet pilots tuned to the cockpit radio blare.
Am Em
As soon as the Shareef was outta their hair,
F F
The jet pilots wail – ail - ailed. (Ahhh!!!)

Outro Chorus:

Dm Am Em7
Shareef don't like it!
Em F Em Am
Rock the Casbah! Rock the Casbah!
(repeat, then...)

Dm Am Em7
Shareef don't like it! He thinks it's not kosher!
Em F Em Am
Rock the Casbah! Rock the Casbah!
Dm Am Em7
Shareef don't like it! Fundamentally he can't take it!
Em F Em Am
Rock the Casbah! Rock the Casbah!
Dm Am Em7
Shareef don't like it! You know he really hates it!
Em F Em Am

Rock the Casbah! Rock the Casbah!

(then, repeat following to fade...)

Dm Am Em7
Shareef don't like it!
Em F Em Am

Space Oddity

Intro. (fade in slowly)

Fmaj7 Em

C Em

Ground control to Major Tom,

C Em

Ground control to Major Tom,

Am C/G D7

take your protein pills and put your helmet on.

C Em

Ground control to Major Tom,

C Em

commencing countdown engines on.

Am C/G D7

Check ignition and may Gods love be with you.

(Sound f/x)

Verse 1

C E

This is ground control to major tom,

F

you've really made the grade.

Fm C F

and the papers want to know whose shirts you wear.

Fm C F

now it's time to leave the capsule if you dare.

Verse 2

C E7

This is major tom to ground control,

F

I'm stepping through the door

Fm C F

and i'm floating in the most peculiar way,

Fm C F

and the stars look very different today

Bridge 1

Fmaj7 Em7

for here am i sitting in a tin can,

Fmaj7 Em7

far above the world,

B(flat) Am

planet earth is blue,

G F

and theres nothing i can do...

Link 2

C F G A (x2) (the easiest way to do this is to use the F chord shape on frets 8, 1, 3, 5)

(solo 1)
over the chords Fmaj7, Em7, E, C, D7, E

Verse 3

C E
Though i'm past one hundred thousand miles,

F
i'm feeling very still.

Fm C F
and i think my spaceship knows which way to go.

Fm C F
tell my wife i love her very much - she knows!

Verse 4

G E
Ground control to major tom

Am C/G
your circuits dead, there's something wrong

D7
can you hear me, major tom?

C
can you hear me, major tom?

G

Can you hear me, major tom? can you...

Bridge 2

Fmaj7 Em7
here am i floating round my tin can,

Fmaj7 Em7
far above the moon.

B(flat) Am
planet earth is blue,

G F
and theres nothing i can do

Link

C F G A (x2)

(solo 2) over the chords Fmaj7, Em7, E, C, D7, E (fade out on E)

Swing Low Sweet Chariot

D G D
Swing low, sweet chariot,
A7
Comin' for to carry me home.
D7 G D
Swing low, sweet chariot,
A7 D
Comin' for to carry me home.

D G D
I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,
A7
Comin' for to carry me home.
D7 G D
A band of angels comin' after me,
A7 D
Comin' for to carry me home.

D G D
If you get there before I do,
A7
Comin' for to carry me home.

D7 G D
Just tell my friends that I'm a comin' too.
A7 D
Comin' for to carry me home.

D G D
I'm sometimes up and sometimes down,
A7
Comin' for to carry me home.
D7 G D
But still my soul feels heavenly bound.
A7 D
Comin' for to carry me home.

What's New Pussycat?



D G6 A6
What's new Pussycat? Whoa-oh
D G6 A6 D E
What's new Pussycat? Whoa-oh-oh
A
Pussycat, pussycat,
C Bb
I've got flowers and lots of hours to spend with you.
Bb F
So go and powder your cute little pussycat nose.
A D C#m Bm C#m
Pussycat, pussycat I love you, yes I do
Bm E A
You and your pussycat nose.
D G6 A6
What's new Pussycat? Whoa-oh
D G6 A6 D E
What's new Pussycat? Whoa-oh-oh
A
Pussycat, pussycat,
C Bb

You're so thrilling and I'm so willing to care for you.

Bb F
So go and make up your cute little pussycat eyes.
A D C#m Bm C#m
Pussycat, pussycat I love you, yes I do
Bm E A
You and your pussycat eyes.
D G6 A6
What's new Pussycat? Whoa-oh
D G6 A6 D E
What's new Pussycat? Whoa-oh-oh
A
Pussycat, pussycat,
C Bb
You're delicious and if my wishes can all come true.
Bb F
I'll soon be kissing your sweet little pussycat lips.
A D C#m Bm C#m
Pussycat, pussycat I love you, yes I do
Bm E A
You and your pussycat lips. Whoa-oh
Bm E A
You and your pussycat eyes. Whoa-oh
Bm E A
You and your pussycat nose.

Underneath The Mango Tree

D G A D
Underneath the mango tree, me honey and me, come watch for the moon,
 G A D
Underneath the mango tree, me honey and me, make bool'aloop soon.
 G A D
Underneath the moonlit sky, me honey and I, come sit hand in hand,
 G A D
Underneath the moonlit sky, me honey and I, come make fairy land.

(Chorus:)

D G A D
Mango, banana and tangerine, sugar, anaki, and cocoa bean,
 G A D
When we get married we make 'dem grow, and nine little child in a row.

D G A D
Underneath the mango tree, me honey and me, come watch for the moon,
 G A D
Underneath the mango tree, me honey and me, we plan marry soon.
 G A D
Underneath the moonlit sky, me honey and I, come sit hand in hand,
 G A D
Underneath the moonlit sky, me honey and I, come make fairy land.

(Chorus)

D G A D
Underneath the mango tree, me honey and me, come watch for the moon,

G A D
Underneath the mango tree, me honey and me, make bool'aloop soon.
G A D
Underneath the moonlit sky, me honey and I, come sit hand in hand,
G A D
Underneath the moonlit sky, me honey and I, come make fairy land.

(Chorus)

D G A D
Underneath the mango tree, me honey and me, come watch for the moon,
 G A D
Underneath the mango tree, me honey and me, make bool'aloop soon.
D G A D
Underneath the mango tree, underneath the mango tree.
D G A A7 D
Underneath the Mango tree, underneath the mango tree.

Original

Here are some of my original and re-worded songs.

They might be odd, a product of my twisted mind.

Doors

Doors are wonderful doors are fun,
Everyone has a door, we all have one.

Sometimes doors they come in twos
Like the doors in this pub, so difficult to use.

I like doors that slide open when you stride
They make it so easy to come inside.

Rotating doors, what is that all about?
Take too long, you go in and straight out!

Like the doors on Star Trek, they go shiddecuff
My favourite noise, you can't get enough.

Doors, doors doors, some swing both ways
Double hinged, they might be straight or gays!

If you didn't have a door, you wouldn't get out of the loo,
You'd have to sit there all day after going for a poo.

Doors on a washing machine, doors in the flat,
Doors for the shed, and one for the cat.

My car has five doors, but the salesman said
Less is more, get two doors instead.

Why is it when a door says pull,
I push instead like an illiterate fool?

Sesame, portal, trap or car
We love doors, wherever they are!
Finish on C

C G Am F

chorus

C G F

Chorus

Doors doors doors
Lovely doors
open or closed
Ajar or opposed.

Farnboroughfornication

(to the tune of Red Hot Chili Pepper's "Californication")

Intro:

Am F x4

Verse 1:

Am

Psychic spies from Rushmoor

F

Try to steal your mind's elation

Am

Little girls from Mychett

F

Dream of council house quotations

C G

And if you want these kind of dreams

F D

It's Farnboroughfornication

Am F x 2

Verse 2:

Am

It's the edge of the world

F

And all of western civilization

Am

The sun may rise in Woking's way

F

At least it settles in the Fleet's direction

C G

It's understood that North Camp shops

F D

sells Farnboroughfornication

Am F x 2

Pre Chorus:

Am

Pay your therapist very well

F

To break the spell of madness

Am

They say that Tiffanys

F

Is the centre of Aldershot's badness

Am F

The Hampshire Dawn

Am F

Brings more soft porn

Chorus:

C G D Am

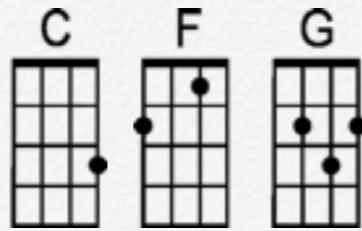
Dream of Farnboroughfornication

C G D

Dream of Farnboroughfornication

Am F x 2

Rugby Match



(Adapted from "The Football Song" by Iain Lee)

C
Here come the blues, Farnborough heroes
G C
It's a rugby match, it's a rugby match

C
He scored a try, he kicked the posts
G C
It's a rugby match, it's a rugby match

F C
Thin ones at the back, and the fat ones at the front
F G [stop]
The referee's in black and some say he's a character

C
Here come the blues, Farnborough heroes
G F G C FC
It's a rugby match, it's a rug---by match

Blogs

Extracts from my Ukulele
blogs

3

Ukulele Acquisition Syndrome

At the beginning of April, I stumbled across a Ukulele video on YouTube. It was The Vespers and “Power Flower“. As ever, I have no idea how I got there, but I did. It reminded me a little of Patrick & Eugene whose CD I bought some years ago. Light-hearted, easy on the ear and just good fun. Music should be fun, shouldn't it?

In my teens I learned a little guitar, and still had an acoustic classical guitar languishing in the garage, missing a string. I figured the Ukulele ('Uke' to its friends) was more portable, had a fun tone and was never taken seriously by anyone who played it! Plus, it has two strings less than a guitar, so it must be easier?

Off to the local music store (Stagebeat in Farnborough) to buy a cheap Uke then. I'd done some research and they were close to the bargain basement prices and even though I didn't



really know what I was looking for, I wanted to hold one before buying it. So, just under thirty quid allowed me to leave the store with a black 'Kauai' Soprano Uke.

Soprano is the smallest Uke, they then go up in size, Concert, Tenor and Baritone which is getting on for a small guitar size.

I quickly found a website – 'Ukulele Hunt' (which seems to make quiet fun of the abbreviation of its name! Lots of good stuff here, plus I discovered that in the last thirty years since I really took an interest in stringed instruments, something called 'Tabs' have appeared. These are simply a notation that gives chords and the fingering on the frets along with the words to make it much easier to play along. Our cat, Alfie seems to enjoy the noise I make, she keeps me company while I strum away in the conservatory. Must be a glutton for punishment!

More research (and a tuner gadget from eBay) and I discover that the Uke I have has some fairly cheap strings. They go out of tune quickly and seem to make strumming difficult. So, I buy some 'Aquila' strings – these absolutely transform the instrument, not just in tone, but somehow in playability too.

The following week, I find a group of enthusiasts (some would say musicians), calling themselves "The Happy Uke", who meet once a fortnight in a pub in Alton. I turn up, am made very welcome, light is made of my admission of incompetence and I find myself playing and singing along to Tabs provided



by Sarah the organiser. Incredible fun, almost three hours of playing (and importantly practice) and just enormous fun! Tip: don't worry if you can't get to certain chords, just duck out of the ones you can't play. I found playing and trying very beneficial, although my novice fingers were very sore the day after.

Trouble is, here you meet other people, and importantly see other instruments. My fingers aren't nimble enough yet for a few of the chords on the Soprano Uke (now named "Snowy", being black) – the Soprano fretboard is very small, half the size of regular guitar frets. While I can now make a D chord, that requires three fingers in the same fret, I couldn't before I met with the Happy Ukers. But, trying a Barnes & Mullins Concert Uke

that night – a beautiful instrument with a polished back – that made those chords so much easier with the slightly larger fretboard.

These Ukes then become instruments of desire (pun intended), the build on that Concert Ukulele was to die for, a highly polished spruce back, it was certainly nicer to look at than it was to listen to in my hands – although, I'm sure in the right hands it will be just fine!

More research and while looking for a Concert sized Uke, preferably electro-acoustic, I find Eleuke's "Peanut". This is a quirky looking instrument, fully electric, so almost silent in operation. Cleverly, as well as a normal guitar output, it has a headphone jack so you can listen without using an amplifier. Then, it has an MP3 player input, so you can plug your own backing, metronome, or other audio (such as the Ukulele for Dummies eBook which has interactive elements). I tweet, thinking about this Uke, and Omega Music jump in, helpfully answer a couple of questions I had about it, and before I know it, I've ordered one from their website! The local shop sadly, does not have much of a range to look at, so the internet wins again, certainly helped by Matt on Twitter.

Over the weekend, my new enthusiasm even rescues my old guitar from the garage and re-strings it. Although it's a bit beaten up, a good clean and polish does work wonders, and I'm playing some of the tunes from my teens again.

Monday arrives and so does the Eleuke Peanut. This one's going to be called "Snoopy" (obviously). I plug in my headphones and it's amazing. Lovely tone, actually sounds very natural, and a nicer, smoother tone than Snowy. The volume and tone are adjustable through two controls on the front of the Uke. The tone has a centre stop where it sounds natural, turn one way it becomes sharp sounding, the other dulls the tone down for a more bassy sound. The iRig has not arrived, so I can't really experiment with iPad Garageband just yet, but have plugged it into my iPod speaker. All works just fine. So, I can practice silently or up the volume to a level via an iPod speaker that will annoy the neighbours. Obviously, the former is more prudent, I think.

The Eleuke comes supplied with a decent quality padded gig bag, fitted with a battery, a shoulder strap (although I can't work out how to fit it!) and a cable to take audio from the peanut to your audio system.

So, that's less than a month and my stringed instrument collection has tripled already! I'm told by Sarah from "The Happy Uke" that I'm suffering from Ukulele Acquisition Syndrome, I don't think it's a terminal disease, but it's certainly something I've realised I'm suffering from. And Omega Music aren't helping!

When the iRig arrives, then I can add all those virtual effects pedals, multi-track recording, who knows?

First, more practice, and maybe, I'll order that Concert Uke...

And thanks to Omega Music for fuelling my affliction, I don't think there's a cure, but if you have the disease, you could do a lot worse than talk (or tweet) to them!

1st May 2012 update – It appears that Barnes & Mullins have stopped making their BMUK2C Concert Uke in favour of releasing production availability for a cheaper, less desirable (in my opinion) model. Omega Music snapped up the stock and have six in stock right now. Correction, five.



Barnes & Mullins BM2UKC ‘Review’

I'd like to attempt to review this Ukulele, but I have to admit I'm not proficient enough to do it justice. However, after a few weeks with a cheap soprano uke, upgraded with Aquila strings, even a novice like me can notice the difference. See my previous post for more on my new found ukulele addiction.



This Barnes & Mullins model is an end of range model made with “Spalt Maple”. I originally thought this was a typo, referring to the split pattern on the back of the instrument, but it's actually a natural discolouration of wood caused by fungi. It gives the wood an incredible pattern, used to great advantage by some woodworkers, including Barnes & Mullins who crafted this uke.

What gives it some advantage is no doubt the craftsmanship and materials, but this particular uke is a ‘Concert’ size, which gives my fingers a little more room on the fretboard, handy for practicing those awkward chords. Beginners ukes are normally soprano size, really tricky for beginners to get to grips with I reckon. The sound though is deep, clear and toneful, difficult to explain, but side by side with my cheap uke, there's simply no comparison.



Moving between chords is easier and slicker, so it's more rewarding to play not just in sound, but in movement as well.



Then, it is just incredible to look at. Everyone who sees it comments how beautiful it is. Highly polished, smooth to the touch, it's something to behold.

As far as I know, the company I bought this from (Omega Music) purchased the last remaining stock, so if you want one, be quick!

They do have this model in other sizes, Soprano, Concert, Tenor.

Even if you are a beginner, but you want to spend a little more money on something decent that will almost certainly make learning easier and certainly more rewarding, then one of these lovely instruments can't be a bad choice!



Five Months With A Ukulele

Or more accurately, Five Ukuleles!

From my previous posts, I thought it would be worth updating my thoughts since taking up the Ukulele at the beginning of April, together with a few hints for others starting out on the Uke path.

Since catching the bug in April, I have learned a lot, bought a few and enjoyed the whole process immensely. I have met a whole load of new people and had wonderful new experiences.

To recap, I first bought a cheap (<£30) ukulele from a local store and quickly discovered that one of the biggest factors making this difficult to play was actually the strings. So, for another £6 or so, I replaced them with Aquila strings.

So, that's the first thing I'd recommend. even though the Uke itself is a cheapie, it was transformed with the new strings.

At this point, I should 'fess up and admit that all of my Ukes have names. My first, being black was named 'Snowy'.

Now, I learn that Ukes come in different sizes, with the 'Soprano' size being the most common and almost always the size of the cheapest instruments. The next size up, the 'Concert' is easier to play, in



fact, for a beginner to stringed instruments, I'd probably suggest you start here. You'll need to spend about £60, but you will get a decent Uke from the start, and it is more forgiving as your fingers learn to become more dextrous on the fretboard. Some chords are tricky when you start, and can put you off, so why make it difficult and discouraging? The 'D' chord needs three fingers all in one fret and is the first 'Nemesis' chord as I call them. Once you have that one licked, another appears, currently 'B' for me, but they all get knocked down, one by one, trust me!

I got the Barnes & Mullins UK2C ('Woody') – now out of production, so the link is for the Tenor size, if you find one, you are lucky, don't hesitate, buy it. This has a sweet & bright tone and is easier to play than the Soprano by far. I wanted something electric too to satisfy the techie in me, so the Eleuke Peanut appeared ('Snoopy'). this is a Soprano size and has quite a high action – this is the amount you need to press the strings down on the fretboard – so is my trickiest Uke so far.

June came along, as did a trip to the Southern Ukulele Store, where I bought a Honu Mango Concert ('Alby'). This is the priciest Uke I own, but the most stunning and has a lovely mellow sound and a soft action.

I was still hankering for a better quality Soprano, so in August I bought a Brunswick BU5S, this in very light coloured maple and

so is called 'Chalky'. This would make a good starter Uke for anyone insisting on a Soprano size.

How to learn and practice? Well, books are fine, but are not very rewarding really. I'd recommend finding a local Uke 'Jam' or club. I used to go to one in Alton, but that closed after a few weeks, then I found a fantastic Acoustic Jam session in Ash, even nearer to my home. This had the added benefit of being every week and also has all sorts of instruments including Ukes, guitars, drums, double bass, accordion, violin, harmonicas, kazoos and even a didgeridoo! This is hosted in a local pub by a nice chap called Mike and called 'Unplug The Wood'.

From a beginner's point of view, it's been great, the variety of instruments means it's not just a load of Ukes strumming together (which can get a bit much to be honest), but a good variety of styles. The people are very tolerant of beginners, I think this is a trait you'll find anywhere as these people realise we all had to start somewhere, and offer advice and encouragement when needed. There's none of this snotty "I'm an expert, I know best" that you sometimes get at other clubs for other hobbies. We just have enormous fun, some songs seem to rock out, others we noisily murder, but we still have fun. Sometimes even applause from drinkers in the pub.

This particular session even has an (entirely optional) open mic section during the evening which allows anyone brave, or foolish enough to get up and play solo. I'm now in my 50th year

and have NEVER played an instrument or sung in front of an audience so this was a big step to take. But, I've done it now. There was (probably polite!) applause. Maybe I was good... , more likely some recognition of my first ever performance, but I've taken the challenge and done it a couple more times since. I'll get better. I've even written my own lyrics and performed those. Certainly the first performance was something to cross off of my 'Bucket List', and a personal achievement for me.

I even plucked up the courage to send in a little tune to a photography podcast I listen to.

I've learned to appreciate music a little more. Learning and hearing chord changes, creating tension in a chord change, stuff like that.

I've also realised how good it is as a release from my normal life. Since an early age, I've been into tech stuff. My day job is tech stuff, my photography passion is maybe 50% tech, 50% art – but involves a lot of staring at computer screens. Other demands on your life take their toll, but music, jam sessions are a complete release from all of that. Just 30 minutes sitting in another room, playing to Alfie the cat and I'm in a different world! (I think Alfie is too, for some reason she seems to enjoy the noise!).

One more recommendation – a good supplier you can trust. My local music shop is OK, but they have a limited range of instru-

ments and no real specialist Ukulele knowledge. I have found two retailers to be excellent. The first is Omega Music – (the Amazon links above are supplied by them) excellent for mail order, on Twitter as @omegamusicUK. Matt there is a good humoured, honest enthusiast. He tells it like it is and has even refused to ship me a Ukulele (I bought a pink one as a present – honest) because it had a slightly loose tuning peg. Advice from him on Twitter or the phone. Woody, Snoopy and Chalky all came from Omega Music.

If you want to rummage around and browse, then the Southern Ukulele Store is good, and where Alby originated from – although its location in Bournemouth on the south coast makes it a bit remote for many. But, sometimes, you want to compare a few Ukuleles, how they feel and sound. I fancied a thin 'travel Uke', but after picking one up, it was just too fiddly to play. So, it's good to go and handle them before buying anything a bit out of the ordinary (or probably the more expensive ones, say >£200).

But, a budget of £100 or even £50 will get you started on what can be a very rewarding experience. Just make sure you get out and meet other people with it, don't just try and learn by yourself. Take a look at the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain too, inspirational stuff!

So in five months, I've gone from complete beginner to audaciously calling myself a "Ukulele Player". I wouldn't call myself a

musician though, but any Ukulele Player will tell you that the Uke is all about having fun, and I'm doing just that.

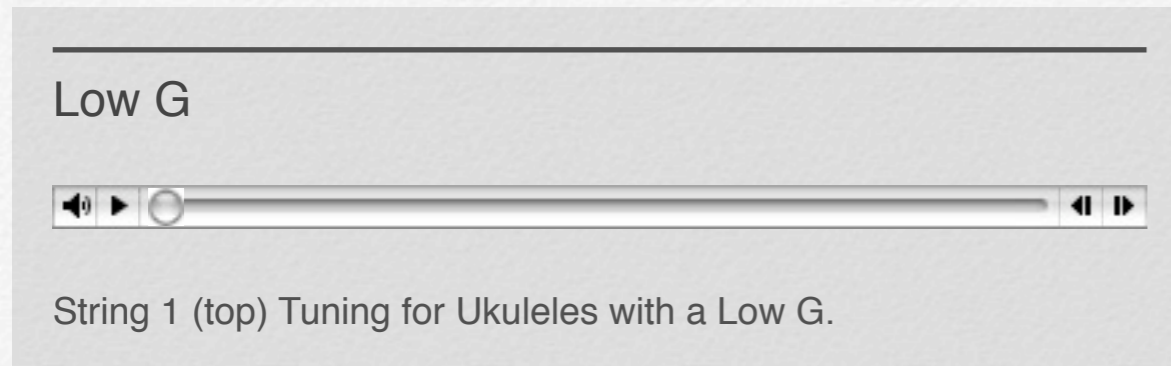
Other Stuff

Other things that don't fit
elsewhere...

4

Tuning

'Standard' tuning for a Ukulele is gCEA, with the top note being a high G. So, from the top of the ukulele, the top string (string 1) comes between string 3 and 4 in the scale.



Low G

String 1 (top) Tuning for Ukuleles with a Low G.

This block contains an audio player interface for a 'Low G' tuning. It features a horizontal progress bar with a play button on the left and a stop button on the right. The text 'Low G' is positioned above the player, and 'String 1 (top) Tuning for Ukuleles with a Low G.' is positioned below it.

Some prefer to have a low G for the top string, now the strings are in chromatic order. If you use the sound samples here, you can hear the difference and tune your ukulele by ear.

These low G strings are sometimes wound, making them feel very different to normal strings, but there are new red strings available from [Aquila \(link to soprano string\)](#) with a copper oxide treatment that have a similar feel to nylon strings.



G

String 1 (top) High G tuning

This block contains an audio player interface for a 'High G' tuning. It features a horizontal progress bar with a play button on the left and a stop button on the right. The text 'G' is positioned above the player, and 'String 1 (top) High G tuning' is positioned below it.



C

String 2 tuning

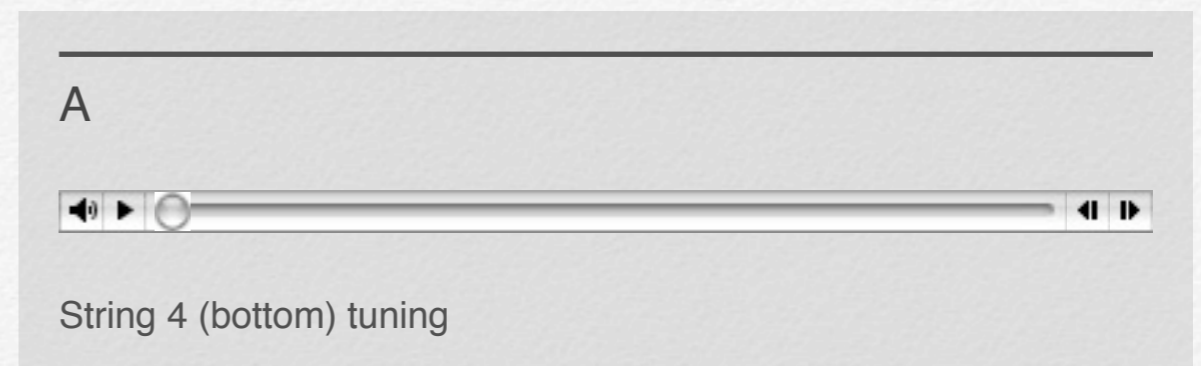
This block contains an audio player interface for a 'C' tuning. It features a horizontal progress bar with a play button on the left and a stop button on the right. The text 'C' is positioned above the player, and 'String 2 tuning' is positioned below it.



E

String 3 tuning

This block contains an audio player interface for an 'E' tuning. It features a horizontal progress bar with a play button on the left and a stop button on the right. The text 'E' is positioned above the player, and 'String 3 tuning' is positioned below it.



A

String 4 (bottom) tuning

This block contains an audio player interface for an 'A' tuning. It features a horizontal progress bar with a play button on the left and a stop button on the right. The text 'A' is positioned above the player, and 'String 4 (bottom) tuning' is positioned below it.