The Kiwi ukulele Teacher resource

MARIA WINDER
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About the author
Maria Winder works for Team Solutions, University of Auckland, as a music facilitator for primary and intermediate schools in Auckland and Northland. She is a founding trustee of the New Zealand Ukulele Festival Trust and has organised and co-presented many workshops for teachers. She coordinates the Kiwileles, a massed school orchestra of hundreds of students from over 30 schools who perform at the annual Ukulele Festival.
Ukuleles are rocking in New Zealand schools. Students are saying they love to play ukulele because it’s easy, fun, cool and portable, and you can also sing along. Teachers are learning to play, and to inspire their colleagues and students to try an instrument that they say is easy, encourages community music-making, and is relevant to a wide range of cultural backgrounds. The number of ukulele orchestras in schools has expanded rapidly since 2004.

**Kiwi ukulele: A companion for classroom teachers too!**

Teachers are ukulele players too and Mike Dickison’s book *Kiwi ukulele* is a wonderful companion for teachers who want to learn. The book contains lots of tips and great songs for beginners and more experienced players.

**Why the ukulele revival in schools?**

New Zealand is part of a resurgence of interest in the ukulele worldwide. Chuck Upu, The Wellington International Ukulele Orchestra, Waikato’s Big Muffin Serious Band and school music advisers are spreading the word at home and supporting ukulele education. There have been over twenty ukulele workshops for New Zealand teachers during 2007–2008, compared with one or two in 2006. Classroom teachers are getting children strumming and singing their way to lifelong participation in music.

Legendary steel guitar player Bill Sevesi, now in his eighties, had a vision that all New Zealand school children would have the chance to learn ukulele. Together with school music teacher and uke enthusiast Kevin Fogarty — songwriter and former lead singer of the 1980s band, The Knobz — they provided free tuition and instruments to students at Mt Roskill Intermediate School in Auckland, leading to their setting up a ukulele orchestra. With the support of Mike Chunn, CEO of Play It Strange Charitable Trust, sponsorship has been provided to fund ukulele orchestras in other schools. Within two years, the number of ukulele orchestras in Auckland schools alone had grown from no more than five to more than fifty.

**What about schools already teaching the ukulele successfully?**

Ukulele teaching is not new to New Zealand schools. Saturday morning music schools in the 1960s offered ukulele lessons to primary school children. A 1992 Ministry of Education handbook, *Music Education for Standard Two to Form Two*, suggested ukulele teaching for 8–12 year olds. Music educators like Mary Chetty have been writing songs and encouraging the playing of ukuleles in South Island schools for years.

**Do New Zealand Schools use C6 or D6 tuning?**

Today most ukulele players, including the author of *Kiwi ukulele* and the organisers of the New Zealand Ukulele Festival, use C6 tuning — tuning the four strings to the key of C, so “My Dog Has Fleas” is tuned to G-C-E-A.

Some music education specialists in the 1980s and 1990s designed programmes for ukulele teaching that preferred D6 tuning (A-D-F#-B). Many music teachers and ukulele players still use D6, and it is the traditional tuning for uke players in some Pacific Islands and parts of Europe.

*Ukulele in the Classroom* ([www.ukuleleintheclassroom.com](http://www.ukuleleintheclassroom.com)) is a new resource from Canadian ukulele virtuoso James Hill. The long-running Canadian schools ukulele programme uses D6 tuning, but the teaching resource and student book are available in both C6 and D6 tuning.
Music in the curriculum

The New Zealand Curriculum 2007 vision is for young people to be confident, connected, actively involved and lifelong learners:

By participating in the arts, students’ personal well-being is enhanced... students learn to work both independently and collaboratively... As students learn to communicate musically with increasing sophistication, they lay a foundation for lifelong enjoyment of and participation in music.

(The New Zealand Curriculum pp. 20–21.)

Learning ukulele helps children to develop values and key competencies for life. Values and Key Competencies are described fully in The New Zealand Curriculum pp. 10–13.

Music learning

Learning ukulele gives children opportunities to develop singing, playing and creative music skills, and to participate in authentic music-making communities. The following learning intentions for ukulele lessons are linked to The New Zealand Curriculum interrelated strands for learning in the arts: Understanding the arts in Context (UC), Developing Practical Knowledge in the arts (PK), Developing Ideas in the arts (DI), and Communicating and Interpreting in the arts (CI).

Music learning intentions

These intentions can be used as a guide for learning progress. Learning intentions for each lesson may be more specific, depending on student learning needs.

Students will be able to:

Levels 1–2

- Sing in tune with others and in time with an accompaniment (PK).
- Sing and play simple 2–3 chord songs in a range of styles and from a variety of contexts and start to reflect on performances (UC, PK, CI).
- Play in time with the beat and demonstrate an awareness of ukulele-playing techniques, e.g. posture, holding ukulele head up, correct chord fingering, starting and stopping with others, strumming from the wrist (PK, CI).
- Experiment with lyrics and sounds to create music (UC, PK, DI).

Levels 3–4

- Sing in tune and play in time with others using suitable ukulele-playing techniques (PK).
- Sing part songs and play chord progressions and simple harmonies to accompany performances (PK, DI, CI).
- Use suitable strumming techniques for a range of styles of music from different contexts (UC, PK, CI).
- Play familiar tunes by ear (PK).
- Rehearse and perform selected music from memory and from notation (PK, CI).
- Write and perform songs with simple accompaniment, and reflect on and improve original musical ideas (PK, DI, CI).
Teaching strategies

- Make it fun!

- Find out about the students’ backgrounds in music and talk about where and why ukulele is played. Perhaps there is a parent, grandparent, uncle or auntie who could help ukulele players at home or at school.

- Goal setting: share the learning intentions, e.g. strumming in time, finger placement for chords, changing chords in time, stopping and starting together, participating/leading group.

- Praise individuals regularly for achievements and give them constructive feedback regarding next learning steps, e.g. posture, strumming and picking techniques, singing, fingering, assisting others, participating, leading, smiling, concentrating, tuning, watching, listening, keeping in time, stopping and starting.

- Vary activities: group work, pairs, one-to-one with teacher, teacher-led instruction, games, practice and performance, playing and singing, playing from written notation, improvising and composing.

- Sing songs that are manageable and relevant to students. Introduce songs from ethnic backgrounds represented in the class.

- Have high expectations of what students can achieve. They will rise to the challenge of learning chords, playing techniques, songs, harmonies and performance skills. Plan for a balance of easy and more challenging activities, so students don’t get bored playing known songs and chords.

- Add bass guitar, drums and other percussion instruments to your ukulele orchestra and organise some performances in the community. People will love listening and singing along with your group!
Games and starters

Tune-up
Always start with tuned ukuleles. Right from the first lesson, get your class to listen to GCEA and sing it to “My Dog Has Fleas”, so-do-me-la, 5-1-3-6, or other made-up words. Encourage students to identify if a string is flat (too low) or sharp (too high), and not to touch the tuners themselves unless they know what they are doing!

Ukulele Anatomy
- Sing the following song to the tune of “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”:

Head, tuners, strings and frets, strings and frets
Head, tuners, strings and frets, strings and frets
And neck and sound hole and body and bridge
Head, tuners, strings and frets, strings and frets

- Echo these words (from teacher Sharon Kearney) pointing to the ukulele parts as the leader sings to a major scale.

This is the body
Here is the bridge
This is the sound hole
Here is the neck
These are the frets
Here are the strings—
("My Dog Has Fleas", so-do-me-la)
This is the nut
Here are the tuners—
don’t touch the tuners!

Simon Says
The leader plays a forbidden pattern, e.g. a 4- or 8-beat rhythmic or melodic pattern on the ukulele, which can be dubbed ‘Simon’. Teach the forbidden pattern by imitation and repetition so that students know it well. The leader then plays a variety of rhythmic or melodic patterns for students to imitate. If ‘Simon’ is played, students hold their ukuleles above their heads. Those who play the forbidden pattern are eliminated from the game.

Move to the Beat
The leader accompanies a song on the ukulele and the students use body percussion to play the beat, changing where they play the beat when the chord changes:

Two-chord song: pat your tummy for chord I/tonic/‘do’ note, and pat your head for chord V/dominant/’so’ note; e.g. pat tummy for the chord C and pat head for chord G.

Three-chord song: pat tummy for chord I, shoulders for chord IV and head for chord V; e.g. pat tummy for chord C, shoulders for chord F and head for chord G.

Stand Up, Sit Down
Each student is allocated a chord (give out cards with chord picture/name or just tell students which chord they are allocated). You can use this activity with the leader playing solo or with the whole group playing. Students stand up when their allocated chord is being played and sit down when any other chord is played. The number of chords allocated will depend on how many chords are used in the song; “Ma is White” has two chords, “Hoki Mai: (p. 41 of Kiwi ukulele) has three chords, “Ten Guitars” (p. 13) has four chords and “God Defend New Zealand” (p. 47) has eight chords. Use any song you want.

Speed Chord for Experts (from Chuck Upu)
The leader plays a variety of chords, depending on the group’s expertise. Start with easy chords like C, C7, Am, A7 and F. At first the leader waits for all players to play along with each chord change. Gradually start to change chords at a faster pace. Those who can’t keep up with the changes start to eliminate themselves and stop playing. Those who are keeping up by the end of the game are the class ‘experts’.

Ukulele Idol (from Kevin Fogarty)
Students work in groups to rehearse a song of their choice and perform for the class. A panel of judges gives positive and constructive feedback for each performance and the winning group is given a prize, e.g. stickers, badges or certificates.
Lesson samples

1. Lesson sequence for beginners

**Starter activity**

**Ukulele Anatomy**

Two big challenges for younger children are changing chord at the right time in a song, and relaxing the wrist to place fingers in correct chord positions.

- **Tip 1:** Draw a picture of a hand and identify fingers 1-2-3 or pointer-middle-ring.
- **Tip 2:** Use different coloured dots to show fingering for the chords C and G7 (stick dots on the ukulele or show large chart on the whiteboard).
- Learn basic C chord (ring finger on the C-dot) and play a steady four-beat strum as you sing.
- Try playing some one-chord songs. Children love to make up their own lyrics, too.
- Explore different ways of strumming and share ideas with a partner. To start with, aim for a relaxed wrist and strumming on the down beat.
- Practise starting and stopping, with teacher or other leader counting in “1-2-3-4”, or “1-2-3-and”, then stopping together, maybe counting “1-2-3-and stop”.

**Strategies for learning when to change chord**
(no ukuleles needed!)

- Play the Move to the Beat game as you sing some two-chord songs.
- Divide the class in two and play Stand Up, Sit Down while you sing two-chord songs. (Students can recognise chord changes by ear, or by watching teachers chord-fingering as they play, or by reading the song-sheet and seeing the chord letters written above the text.)

**Learn to play G7**

Position fingers 1-2-3 or pointer-middle-ring on the G7 coloured dots (lots of praise is needed to encourage little fingers to stay in the correct chord position).

**Expert groups**

Select students who can play G7 and divide them into two groups to be the ‘expert’ group teachers. The remaining students can choose which expert group they are going to join. Give them time to help each other find the correct fingering for C and G7 and practise changing from one chord to the other. If changing chords is too challenging, have one group play C and the other play G7 as you sing a song, then swap the chord each group plays. Finish by singing some favourite two-chord songs.

**Learning intentions**

We are learning to:

1. Identify parts of the ukulele.
2. Sit tall and hold the ukulele with its head above waist level.
3. Strum in time with the beat and sing with enthusiasm.
4. Play two chords with correct fingering.
2. Lesson sequence for more experienced players

**Starter activity**
Stand Up, Sit Down game

Select a familiar song first, e.g. “Ten Guitars” (p. 13 of *Kiwi ukulele*); then use a new song, e.g. “Kiwi Ukulele”. Discuss the learning intentions for the lesson.

- Listen to “Kiwi Ukulele” and ask students to work out the first five notes of the tune for verse one.

```
|   |   |   |
|___|___|___|
   1  0  0
```

I wanna take you...

- Practise playing the introduction with the following strum and start singing at the correct pitch. See p. 16 and p. 32 of *Kiwi ukulele* for strumming tips.

```
(4) 0 0 0 0 0
```

- Learn the fingering for Bb. Play through the whole song slowly and reflect on next learning steps.

**Learning intentions**

We are learning to:

1. Play in time with each other.
2. Find and sing the correct starting note at the beginning of a song.
3. Play the chord Bb (more than one fingering).
4. Strum a rhythm that includes a muted down stroke.

**Expert groups**

Play Speed Chord to establish who will be group leaders and give each leader a name or number. Allocate the remaining students, or let them self-select, to groups.

Group leaders help to teach the chord changes in the bridge of “Kiwi Ukulele” from Am-Bb-Am-Bb-G.

Ask students to work out the first five notes of the chorus. Groups could take turns to play and sing the chorus and give each other feedback; then sing the whole song as a class.

**Ukulele idol**

If time permits, groups could rehearse an item of their choice to perform. If time is short, ask for volunteers.

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**C major scale**

James Hill showed me an exercise for teaching a C major scale. Play each note of the C major scale 8 times, starting with minim beats, then crotchets, then quavers. As the students become more proficient, decrease the repetitions on each note e.g. play 4 crotchets beats on each note, then 2 minims, then 2 crotchets, then one minim, then one crotchet. Eventually, each note of the scale is played once.

```
(4) 0 0 1 3 0 2 3
```

There’s a long white cloud...
Easy ukulele songs

These songs can be taught for classroom use or for a ukulele orchestra.

One-chord songs
“'I Hear Thunder’/’Frère Jacques’/’Are You Sleeping?’
‘Three Blind Mice’
‘Row, Row, Row Your Boat’
‘'Ten in the Bed’
‘Old McDonald Had a Farm’

One-finger chords (C Am F)
“El Cóndor Pasa”

Two-chord songs (C & G7, or D & A7)
“Ma is White”
‘AEIOU’
“Me He Manu Rere”
“Pa Mai”
“O Le Pepe”
“Lily the Pink”
“Michael Finnegan”
“This Old Man”
“How Much is that Doggie in the Window?”
“’He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands’
“Rock My Soul”
“Shoo Fly, Don’t Bother Me”
“Polly Wolly Doodle”
“Skip to My Lou”
“My Hat, It Has Three Corners”
“Ten Green Bottles”

Three-chord songs (C-F-G7, or D-G-A7)
“The Lion Sleeps Tonight”
“You Are My Sunshine”/’One Day A Taniwha’
“Bye Bye Love”
“Sloop John B”
“Jamaica Farewell”
“Twist and Shout”
“Rock Around the Clock”
“Silent Night”
“Jingle Bells”
“’The Twelve Days of Christmas’”

(f, or technically Fadd9, can be played by just pressing the E string on the first fret)
MA IS WHITE

[Starting note C]
C
Ma is white
C
Kowhai yellow

Whereo is red
G7
Pango is black

Kakariki green
G7
Kikorangi blue

Parauri brown
Parakaraka

Mango is too
C
Is our orange
C
AEIOU

LE AUTE

Ester Temukisa Laban-Alama, 1989

[Starting note C]
C
Le ‘aute, le ‘aute, le ‘aute,
C
Lo’u sei, lo’u sei manaia.
C
La‘u ‘ula, la‘u ‘ula, la‘u ‘ula,
G7
Talofa mai Samoa.

C
Le pua, le pua, le pua,
C
Lo’u sei, lo’u sei manaia.
C
La‘u ‘ula, la‘u ‘ula, la‘u ‘ula,
G7
Talofa mai Samoa.

Instrumental
C-C-F-C-C-C-G7
C-C-F-C-G7-G7-C

[Repeat first verse]
**WAIATA MEDLEY: PA MAI & TUTIRA MAI**

“Pa Mai”: Composer unknown, Hawke’s Bay
“Tutira Mai”: Wi Huata • arranged for ukulele by Maria Winder.

**[Starting note E]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C</th>
<th>G7</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pa mai te reo aroha</td>
<td>Ki te pa o (name of school)</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G7</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E nga iwi o Aotearoa</td>
<td>Haere mai haere mai</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C</th>
<th>G7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Titiro ki nga hoia</td>
<td>Kua wehe nei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G7</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A7</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aue te aroha me te mamae</td>
<td>Tutira mai nga iwi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>E nga iwi o Aotearoa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G7</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>A7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haere mai Haere mai</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D</th>
<th>A7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutira mai nga iwi</td>
<td>Tutira mai nga iwi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tatou tatou e</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E7</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whaia te maramatanga</td>
<td>Tatou tatou e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>D</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<th>D</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Me te aroha</td>
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<tr>
<th>D7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kia tapatahi</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kia kotahi ra</td>
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<tr>
<th>D</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tatou tatou e</td>
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<tr>
<th>D7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tatou tatou e</td>
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</table>

| Hi aue hei! |

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**Pa Mai**
The voice of love is calling out
To the pa of (name of school)
To the people of New Zealand
Welcome, welcome

Look at the soldiers
Departed from us
Alas the love and the pain
To the people of New Zealand
Welcome, welcome.

**Tutira Mai**
Line up together people
All of us, all of us
Stand in rows, people
All of us, all of us
Seek after knowledge
And love of others—everybody!
Think as one,
Act as one
All of us.

The “Hawaiian” D7 is an alternative simple fingering with a mellow sound.
KIWI UKULELE

Kevin Fogarty • The official song of the 2007 New Zealand Ukulele Festival

[Starting note G]

C
I wanna take you to the islands of Aotearoa
G
I wanna strum a new song for you baby

And when the moonlight is a spotlight and there's warm breeze through the kauri
G7                  C
I'll sing you some Kiwi Ukulele

C
You can ski you can bungee, c'mon watch the whales
G
And see icebergs floating off Dunedin

We can buzz round in the Beehive, take a cruise ship or a train ride
G7                  C
To the festival of Kiwi Ukulele

Am                                                          Bb
There's a long white cloud upon the land, the islands where I was born
Am                                               Bb                     G
A trail of footprints in the sand, the warmth of a smile someone who understands

C
With four strings uke'n do it, the uke will take you to it
G
So write a song that's for your baby

If you're feeling down, turn yourself around
G7                  C
And sing me some Kiwi Ukulele
And sing me some Kiwi Ukulele
Resources for New Zealand schools

Recordings

“Ma is White” is recorded in H.T. Rikihana’s Waiata Maori; available from Kohia Teachers Centre, Auckland.

“Pa Mai” — Hei Waiata, Hei Whakakoakoa (Ministry of Education)

“Tutira Mai” — WWW.folksong.org.nz

“Le Aute” — Kiwi Kidsongs 101 (Ministry of Education)

“Kiwi Ukulele” — Kiwi Kidsongs 16 (Ministry of Education); MP3 recordings on www.kiwiukulele.com

Ministry of Education resources

The following resources have been issued by the Ministry of Education free to all New Zealand primary schools:


2–5 chord songs: most of the 46 songs have fewer than 5 chords, e.g. “E Toru Nga Mea”, “Tena Koutou”, “Tihe Mauri Ora”, “Hoki Hoki Tonu Mai”, “Whakarongo Ake Au”, “E Rere Taku Poi”, “Pa Mai”, “Nga Iwi E”.

Music Education for Standard Two to Form Two. Wellington, Learning Media (book and cassettes); ‘old’ handbook.


2–4 chord songs: “Malimali Mai”, “Ko e Faka-Tonga”, “Ko e Hiva a e Fangagae Manu”, “Oku Mo’ui a Hoku ‘Eiki, Fo’i To’i”, “Ko e Hiva ki he Sino”, “Ku Pusi”.


Fatuga Faka-Tokelau: Tokelauan Songs. Wellington, Learning Media (Book and CD).


Other resources


Ukulele in the Classroom, by James Hill and J. Chalmers Doane, Canada; www.ukuleleintheclassroom.com

Uke 4 U, Multimedia Ukulele Tutor, by Valentine Venimore, Two-Tix Education, New Zealand; www.two-tix-international.com

Useful New Zealand music websites

www.kiwiukulele.com (New Zealand Ukulele Festival)
www.kiwiukulele.co.nz (Kiwi ukulele book)
www.menza.org.nz
arts.unitec.ac.nz (Arts On Line/Teacher Resource Exchange/ Ukulele Songbook)
www.folksong.org.nz
www.maori.org.nz/waiata
www.sounz.org.nz
www.playitstrange.co.nz
www.nzmusic.org.nz

Ukulele songs and chords

www.chordie.com
www.alligatorboogaloo.com/uke/tabs.html
Mike Dickison’s *Kiwi ukulele* is the first-ever ukulele book written expressly for Kiwis. This accompanying Teacher Resource, compiled by schools music facilitator Maria Winder, provides teachers with the additional material they need for using *Kiwi ukulele* in the classroom:

- Background on ukuleles in New Zealand schools
- Music in the curriculum
- Teaching strategies
- Games and starters
- Easy ukulele songs
- Resources for New Zealand schools

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*Ukuleles have become an exciting, vibrant musical instrument for young and old, as Play It Strange has seen through its ukulele orchestra programme in primary and intermediate schools. [Kiwi ukulele] is a perfect resource to bring skills and repertoire to any ukulele player or group.*

— Mike Chunn, CEO, Play It Strange Trust

*Singing and playing music with others is one of the great pleasures in life. The ukulele is one of the easiest and most fun ways to access this magic.*

— Age Pryor, Wellington International Ukulele Orchestra

*Finally, a beginner’s ukulele book that I can wholeheartedly recommend.*