

UKULELE IS AN INTERESTING INSTRUMENT

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IS UKULELE A GUITAR?



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Ukulele is an unusual and an interesting musical instrument. People often associate it with Hawaiian music, but currently it is widely used for playing in any style of music. Ukulele earned its wide-scale popularity in the modern world due to its low cost, ease of manufacturing, and simple playing technique.

The first ukulele appeared in the 80's of the nineteenth century after the arrival of Portugal sailors to the Hawaiian Islands. According to one version, there were many woodworkers among them, who began to produce musical instruments akin to the miniature Portugal guitars kavakyno. They sold them among the local populace. Hawaiians called the miniature guitar "ukulele", which can be translated as a "jumping flea." Ukulele found its place among the Hawaiians and eventually became their national instrument. The people living on the islands played folklore music on the ukulele, but there were several musicians who developed their own style. After the Panama Pacific Exposition in San-Francisco, USA, where concerts featuring Hawaiian music were held, popularity of the ukulele rose sharply.

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The design of the ukulele is similar to that of the guitar. The main differences are the size of the frame and the fact that the ukulele has only four strings. Ukuleles come in four different variations: soprano, concert, tenor, and baritone. The first kind is the smallest among its kin, it's size measures up to 20 inches. Other kinds feature larger sizes and a lower musical range. The frame of the ukulele is not always like the "figure eight", they can also be triangular, square, oval, or even in the figure of a pineapple. An interesting fact is that the square instruments are often made from reused cigar boxes. Currently, some manufacturers offer unusual modifications of the instrument: a six-string "guitarlele", an ukulele with the balalaika frame, an electric guitar-shaped ukulele like the Stratocaster. All kinds of ukulele, except the baritone ones, are tuned in a similar way: So-Do-Mi-La. There is also an alternative way to tune an ukulele, one tonality higher than the usual tone, meaning La-Re-Fa-C Sharp. The baritone ukulele is set up as the first four strings of the standard guitars.

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The technique of playing an ukulele is simple and uncomplicated. For playing an ukulele as an accompanying instrument, the left hand holds the chords (which are much easier to grab than those of the guitar), while the index finger of the right hand makes rapid hits up-down. To play a solo part, a mediator is often needed. Jazz groups often used the ukulele in their music, where the fortepiano was underscored by light and high chords on the small guitar. One by one, the world stage started being captured by guitar groups that use electric mechanisms in their music – electric guitars, amplifiers, sound effects. Ukulele is used by many folk groups, country music performers, and more. Indie folk groups Sun Dali and The Retuses represent the ukulele on the Russian music scene.

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