

I try to establish a casual, comfortable, humorous vibe right away. It seems that the anticipation of the next silly remark or offhand comment helps to keep students plowing through the material. A cheap trick.

Aloha, Young Uker!

Welcome to my beginning ukulele book! I'm Bruce Emery, a lifelong and dedicated guitarist and author of various guitar, ukulele, mandolin and bass guitar method books that I offer through my company, *Skeptical Guitarist Publications*. I wrote my first book in 1996 after 10 years as a guitar teacher, and now I can't seem to stop.

While the majority of my books are, and always will be, for the guitar, I started my musical life of crime playing the **baritone ukulele** at the age of 9. The "bari-uke" is not a true Island creation, but rather a Mainland accommodation between the guitar and the ukulele, sort of a gateway instrument, and after several years I did in fact move on to guitar lessons. The regular uke is sufficiently different from both the guitar and the baritone uke that it requires its own course of study.

Despite the *hundreds* ukulele books already available for purchase, I am pumping out another one, and here is why. Most of those books either (1) try teach you how to read music for the ukulele (a largely useless skill), or (2) provide you with song after song after song (good) *without* explaining any of the simpler practical principles of music (bad).

So. Here we are.

How do you pronounce it? First things first, right? I grew up saying "Yoo-kuh-lay-lee." So I was shocked---shocked!---to discover that Hawaiians prefer to pronounce it their *own* way: "Oo-koo-leh-leh." Well, I'm trying to mend my ways, but it often slips out wrong.

I *do* find it interesting, as a result of surfing the Web, that the abbreviation "uke" is pronounced "yook" by some Hawaiians instead of the expected "ook." Anyway, if you catch me mispronouncing "ukulele" somewhere in the book, email me at bruceemery@mindspring.com. Seriously.

What does it mean? "Uku" means *louse, flea* or *small thing*. "Lele" is the verb *to fly*, so "ukulele" has come to mean *jumping flea*. Fun fact: In Swedish, "ukulele" translates as *lumbering water buffalo*. This may sound absurd, but only because it's clearly a lie.