

Dear Ukulele Parents,

I am delighted your child has indicated an interest in participating in Island Ukuleles! Included is a lot of information about this district music program. I hope you will find the material useful.

Island Ukuleles is an organization formed by Bonnie Smith forty-five years ago, to give an opportunity for students in Victoria who enjoy the ukulele, to work on more advanced skills and to perform throughout the year. It is a comprehensive music program, which includes instruction in music theory, history, voice, functional bass and drums. Students at the more advanced levels work on musical arranging, as well. The students are from elementary, middle, and high schools throughout School District 61. At the high school level, successful completion of required music skills leads to a high school music credit, and the students at this level travel to places such as Hawaii, Nova Scotia, Panama, Japan, and Cuba. The students at the elementary school (B Group) level do some traveling to destinations such as Vancouver and Campbell River. Every second year there is a mass ukulele concert called “Ukuleles Unlimited”. If you would like to hear a sample of Island Ukulele students’ music, there are audio samples available at www.islandukulele.org

Expectations

Although participation in Island Ukuleles is intended to be fun, it is also a commitment. This year the non-refundable fee is \$55 for the spring term, which runs from **April 8th through June 3rd** (an 8-week term culminating in our “Ukulele Graduation” Concert in the David Dunnet Community Theatre at Oak Bay High School. If your son/daughter was to continue in September, there will be an annual registration fee of approximately \$190 (\$285 for a family membership). Students are encouraged to do some fundraising. Yearly fees are collected in September and can be paid online or by e-transfer. Students have until the end of September to withdraw from the fall/winter term, in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Regular attendance is expected, and the students are encouraged to practice on a weekly basis. Without regular practice and regular attendance students quickly get behind and subsequently lose interest; therefore, parents are asked to encourage their child! There is a dress requirement for concerts. Students are asked to wear black pants, black socks and shoes, and a black shirt with a collar. Vests are distributed before each concert. The students are given the opportunity to earn a bronze, silver, and gold pin, as they pass certain skill requirements. Every year there are monthly parent meetings with the executive and Mrs. Tina Horwood, who is the musical director of “Island Ukuleles”, and parents are welcome to attend.

No Audition Required for the B ensembles

Any student who is currently taking ukulele in school is welcome to join our B level Ensembles. Students **do not** need to pass an audition to join. We ask that parents of interested children fill out the online registration form available at www.islandukulele.org Any interested students should then attend the first spring term rehearsal which will be held April 8th. There will be a brief **information meeting** for all **new parents** at the start of the first rehearsal. The B group rehearses every Monday night from 6:30-8:00pm at Oak Bay High School (students all start in the *Black Box*). If you are unable to attend either of the first two rehearsals and are interested in joining Island Ukuleles, please contact Tina Horwood at 250-589-3361. New members are also welcome to join in September.

Auditions for the A ensemble

If you are a very experienced ukulele player and are interested in joining the A ensemble, please call Tina Horwood for an audition time. The audition is a 20-minute time slot that is assigned ahead of time. Students should be prepared to sing and strum a piece of their choice, play a picking number, and do some sight-reading. Parents of advanced players are encouraged to contact Mrs. Tina Horwood at 250-589-3361.

Different Ensembles/Levels

“Island Ukuleles” is made up of five different ensembles for the 2024/2025 season. The following is a description of the different levels. *All groups meet at Oak Bay High School on Monday evenings.*

1). **Little Ukers** meet from 6:15 → 7:00pm.

*These students are in grades 2 and 3.

**No experience is necessary.

***The next term for “Little Ukers” will start in October 2024. **Register EARLY!**

2). **B-Bronze Players** rehearse from 6:30 → 8:00pm.

*These students have **beginner** through **novice** skill levels. (Little or no music reading skills)

**Some music reading ability (section 4 in the blue book is ideal) is an asset!

***The ability to strum a couple of chords (D, D⁷, G, A, A⁷) and pic a D scale are assets.

3). **B-Silver Crew** rehearse from 6:30 → 8:00pm.

*These students have **intermediate** skill levels.

(Typically, at least one year of classroom ukulele and often, one year of “Island Ukuleles”.)

**Some music reading ability (Section 6 in the blue book is ideal) & ability to change chords easily!

4). **Junior A Ensemble** rehearses from 7:00 → 8:30pm.

*These students have intermediate-advanced skill levels.

(At least two years of classroom ukulele and often, two years or more of “Island Ukuleles”.)

**Very good music reading ability (Section 8 in the blue book is ideal) & ability to change chords easily!

5). **A Group (The A’s)** rehearse from 7:00 → 9:00pm.

*These students have advanced skill levels.

**Excellent music reading ability (Section 9 in the blue book), a great strum & tremolo “experience” is a necessity.


***A high school Fine Arts’ credit!

Equipment

The “Island Ukuleles” teachers will be providing information about purchasing ukuleles at the first rehearsal (cost, before applicable taxes, is approximately \$80 for a good quality ukulele and \$12 for a carry case). Students will need a ukulele and often a sight-reading book (\$11 + GST) for this program. Sometimes second-hand ukuleles in excellent condition are available, or students may rent or borrow a ukulele from his/her school or “Island Ukuleles”, if money is a problem.

The “Island Ukuleles” teachers look forward to welcoming your child into this incredible program.

Sing-cerely,



Tina Horwood

For further information please contact the “Island Ukuleles” principal music director, Mrs. Tina Horwood, at 250-589-3361 or e-mail her at thorwood@sd61.bc.ca