



The Ukulele: A History

Jim Tranquada, John King

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Winner of the 2013 Ka Palapala Po'okela Award for Excellence in Special-Interest Books

Early praise: 'Here, at last, is the complete story of the 'ukulele. Thanks to the authors' years of tireless research, the instrument's incredible journey is brought vividly to life. This book is a labor of love and a gift of enduring scholarship.' --Jim Beloff, author of *The Ukulele: A Visual History*

Since its introduction to Hawaii in 1879, the 'ukulele has been many things: a symbol of an island paradise; a tool of political protest; an instrument central to a rich musical culture; a musical joke; a highly sought-after collectible; a cheap airport souvenir; a lucrative industry; and the product of a remarkable synthesis of western and Pacific cultures. *The 'Ukulele: A History* explores all of these facets, placing the instrument for the first time in a broad historical, cultural, and musical context.

Drawing on a wealth of previously untapped sources, Jim Tranquada and John King tell the surprising story of how an obscure four-string folk guitar from Portugal became the national instrument of Hawaii, of its subsequent rise and fall from international cultural phenomenon to 'the Dangerfield of instruments,'; and of the resurgence in popularity (and respect) it is currently enjoying among musicians from Thailand to Finland. The book shows how the technologies of successive generations (recorded music, radio, television, the Internet) have played critical roles in popularizing the 'ukulele. Famous composers and entertainers (Queen Liliuokalani, Irving Berlin, Arthur Godfrey, Paul McCartney, Jake Shimabukuro) and writers (Rudyard Kipling, Jack London, P. G. Wodehouse, Agatha Christie) wind their way through its history along with a host of outstanding Hawaiian musicians (Ernest Kaai, George Kia Nahaolelua, Samuel K. Kamakaia, Henry A. Peelua Bishaw). In telling the story of the 'ukulele, Tranquada and King also present a sweeping history of modern Hawaiian music that spans more than two centuries, beginning with the introduction of western melody and harmony by missionaries through the Hawaiian music renaissance of the 1970s and 1980s, to the contemporary stylings of today.

62 b&w illus.

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