

Arpeggio Meditations for Ukulele

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Video tutorials are available online. Each study has its own 5-7 minute lesson and concludes with a short performance of the song.

Find them at:

www.danielward.net

How to use this book

The studies in this book are written for C6 tuned, re-entrant ukulele. This tuning is often referred to as “high G”. Although these songs will not sound wrong with a linear tuned low G string, the right hand arpeggios are tailored to the high G tuning and create running scales, melodies and interesting dissonant harmonies that will be lost with the lower tuning. I welcome you to try both and hear the difference. These studies are arranged mostly in order of difficulty, but there is no set order in which they need to be approached, so feel free to jump around.

Before we get started, let’s talk about the fingers that do the plucking. Whether you play right handed or left handed, this is the hand that speaks. Although the hand doing the fretting takes care of a large part of the music, an instrument can only sing as well as the skill of the speaking hand’s touch. Here’s a quick way to get your fingers on the strings and get a feel for this. Play the open strings 4-3-2-1 with your thumb, index, middle, and ring fingers. Repeat this over and over. Notice in the example below that the right hand fingers are keyed as p-i-m-a. This comes from old Spanish notation and simply means pulgar, indicio, medio, and anular. This is still consistent with most modern classical guitar notation, and works quite well for ukulele too, so I use it throughout the book.

p = thumb
i = index
m = middle
a = ring

4-3-2-1 Pattern

The musical notation shows a four-line staff representing the strings of a ukulele, labeled from top to bottom as A (treble), E (treble), C (bass), and G (bass). The strings are tuned to open strings: A (T), E (A), C (B), and G (B). The notation is in 4/4 time. It consists of four measures, each containing a quarter note on each string. The notes are: A (T), E (A), C (B), and G (B). The notes are grouped by a slur, and the picking pattern is indicated by 'p' (thumb), 'i' (index), 'm' (middle), and 'a' (ring) under each note. The first two measures are followed by a repeat sign, and the last two measures are followed by a double bar line.

Each study concentrates on a specific picking pattern crafted into a song. Learning the right hand pattern on the open strings for each study is a great way to get the pattern moving smoothly before you put it to music.

Take a look at this sample staff with both music and tab. The music staff shows the notes, rhythms, and all of the right and left hand fingering. The tab staff shows all the fret numbers for every note on each string. The left hand fingering is shown as numbers on the staff. The fretting fingers are 1=index, 2=middle, 3=ring, and 4=pinky. Above the staff are chord boxes, which show the symbol, chord quality and shape of the chord.

chord boxes (symbol and shape)

5fr → fret numbers for chords up the neck

right hand fingers (p-i-m-a)

left hand fingers (1-2-3-4)

string numbers

fret numbers (0=open)

All the information we need to get both hands to the right places is given with the combination of chord boxes, staff and tab. The first chord here is a C major 7th which is played open, open, 3rd fret, and 2nd fret with left hand fingers 1 and 2. The strings of the ukulele are numbered 4-3-2-1 with string 4 being the one closest to your face.

The tab staff shows the sequence of notes and the exact string and frets that are played. Here we have open 4th string, open 3rd string, and then frets 2 and 3 together on strings 1 and 2, followed by the open 3rd again to complete the pattern. The music staff shows us with p-i-m-a that the right hand plays thumb, index, both middle and ring together, and then back to the index.

The right hand repeats over and over with the same pattern in all 16 studies, so you will only see the p-i-m-a markings in the first bar or two of each song, and in some cases in the end tag when the fingering changes as the song ends.

Finally, take a look at the second bar, where we see the fret number 5 next to the chord box. These are used when a chord is further up the neck. In this case, the C major 9th is played open, open, 7th fret, 5th fret with left hand fingers 1 and 3. With just a bit of practice, all this information will quickly make sense. If you are used to reading just tab or chords, that's fine too. The extra information is easy to put together once you look at it a few times.

Floating Loop

Daniel Ward

Cmaj⁷ Cmaj⁹ F

p i a m i p i a m i

Cmaj⁷ Cmaj⁹ F

Am Em F

Am Em F G C

Wren Ridge

High or Low G
Tuning

Duet with "Floating Loop" from
Arpeggio Meditations for Ukulele

Daniel Ward

Dreamy

Use p or alternate m and i

Cmaj⁷ Cmaj⁹ F

Original Floating Loop part

The first system consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. It contains a melodic line with various fingerings (1, 2, 4, 1, 2, 2, 1, 3, 1, 2, 2). The middle staff is a tenor/bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, showing fret numbers (2, 3, 5, 2, 3, 3, 0, 3, 2, 0, 3, 1, 0, 2, 0). The bottom staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, showing a bass line with chords Cmaj⁷, Cmaj⁹, and F.

Cmaj⁷ Cmaj⁹ F

The second system consists of three staves. The top staff continues the melodic line with fingerings (4, 2, 1, 3, 1, 2). The middle staff shows fret numbers (2, 3, 5, 2, 0, 0, 0, 5, 3, 2, 0, 3, 1, 0, 2). The bottom staff shows a bass line with chords Cmaj⁷, Cmaj⁹, and F.

Am Em F

The third system consists of three staves. The top staff continues the melodic line with fingerings (1, 2, 4, 2, 2, 3, 0, 3, 2, 0, 3, 1, 0, 2, 0). The middle staff shows fret numbers (0, 0, 2, 3, 2, 5, 3, 3, 0, 3, 2, 0, 3, 1, 0, 2, 0). The bottom staff shows a bass line with chords Am, Em, and F.

Am Em F G C

The fourth system consists of three staves. The top staff continues the melodic line with fingerings (2, 1, 4, 3, 1) and ends with a double bar line and repeat sign. The middle staff shows fret numbers (0, 0, 2, 3, 2, 3, 0, 3, 8, 7, 5, 3) and ends with a double bar line and repeat sign. The bottom staff shows a bass line with chords Am, Em, F, G, and C.