

# Play the Ukulele!

A course for older adults  
with Ross Malcolm Boyd



**Considering offering a ukulele class for older adults?** This program was first designed and tested with the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire and Grafton County Senior Citizens Council as part of their [Experience/Arts program](#). “Experience/Arts” was made possible through a grant – one of only 15 awarded nationally – from Aroha Philanthropies, through its Seeding Vitality Arts. It brought eight, eight-week classes to senior centers and community arts sites across northern New Hampshire in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.

Classes were offered on a donation basis, open to all those 55 and older. This program was designed by Ross and taught in Littleton (2017), Lebanon (2018) and Haverhill (2 classes, 2018) New Hampshire by him, assisted by his wife, Jamie Feinberg. Many of the students from both years continue to meet weekly to play, including as a band called Stay Tuned, and some of the students from Littleton met with Ross for additional classes in 2018.

**Contact:** [TinyVillageMusic@gmail.com](mailto:TinyVillageMusic@gmail.com) or call Ross at 603-674-8995

## About This Class:

The ukulele is easy to learn and fun to play – and it's a wonderful way for someone who has never played an instrument (or who has forgotten how) to become a musician! Join us for a class where we'll learn to make music on our own and as a group.

We'll explore a variety of songs and styles while learning proper technique and gaining the skills and self-confidence to continue playing in the future. All levels of experience are welcome for this introductory course with musician, educator and composer Ross Malcolm Boyd of Tiny Village Music.

## How And Why:

This is typically run as a weekly class, an 8-session introduction to the ukulele, designed specifically for older adults, with a final sharing open to friends, family and the community at the end. The benefits of this class will extend beyond learning to play music. Participants will meet new people, strengthen existing friendships and experience the satisfaction and challenge of learning a new skill in a fun, safe and supportive environment. We recommend a class size of 10-15 students, with a maximum of 20.

**Watch a [five minute video documentary of Ross' first ukulele class, in Littleton, NH: www.tinyvillagemusic.com/play-the-ukulele](http://www.tinyvillagemusic.com/play-the-ukulele)**

**Interested in this class, but not sure how your organization can afford it?** Ross & Jamie are full-time travelers (they live in an RV!) and passionate and dedicated teachers who would love to spend a month or two in your area teaching this class. Especially if they can find additional work near you, their rate may be more affordable than you'd think. Jamie's background is in arts administration, so if you need help finding sponsors for the program or writing grants, she'd love to work with you to make this program possible. [Contact them](mailto:tinyvillagemusic@gmail.com) at [tinyvillagemusic@gmail.com](mailto:tinyvillagemusic@gmail.com) to learn more!

**Material Requirements:** Students will need ukuleles (either borrowed or purchased ahead of time), tuners, a notebook and a writing implement as well as several handouts. We can provide up to five ukuleles as loaners if needed. Ross will provide a sheet of recommended materials in advance of the class to assist you.

**Student Requirements:** The ukulele is truly accessible for students of all ages! No prior experience is required or expected. Ross and Jamie have taught this class to students with a variety of abilities, including students with physical challenges as well as students with varying mental abilities, including earlier stages of dementia. (Please share any concerns prior to the class, if possible.)



Some students from the prior year's Littleton class reunited to learn more in 2018.

### **Testimonials:**

“Seeing and hearing this ukulele concert has encouraged me to get involved. I AM signing up for the next class!” – *Audience member, after watching the “final sharing” and performance by the 2018 older adult ukulele class in Lebanon, NH*

“Ross and Jamie were excellent. Ross had the patience of a saint. Jamie kept us on track. I thoroughly enjoyed the classes.” – *participant, 2018 older adult ukulele class in Lebanon, NH*

“Thank you for your fun and inspirational work with Experience/Arts’ participants!” – *Robert Berner, Grafton County Senior Citizens Council former ED & current volunteer*

“Thank you so much for a wonderful experience. I know you realize how happy everyone was to attend and learn from your classes, but they also built such a personal bond with you both! Hopefully we can continue on with some sort of peer-supported sessions, even if it’s just getting together to practice once a week and most importantly we are all hoping we’ll see you again next fall.” – *Wanda Sawyer, Activities Director, Horse Meadow Senior Center, Haverhill, NH*

### **Learn More:**

<http://www.tinyvillagemusic.com/play-the-ukulele> Visit our website.

<http://www.experiencearts.org/> This is the program that inspired this class.

<https://www.arohaphilanthropies.org/> Aroha Philanthropies is devoted to the transformative power of the arts and creativity, inspiring vitality in those over 55, joy in children and youth, and humanity in adults with mental illness.