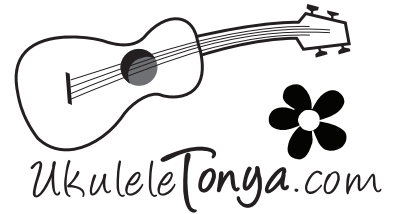


Beginner Lesson • Reading Tablature

REV: January 2016



Sometimes ukulele songs (and those of other stringed instruments) are shown in tablature. In ukulele tablature, the four lines each represent one of the ukulele's strings; I've included the string names to the left of the line to show you. Note that the "bottom" line, is the "G" string.

For many folks, tablature at first seems a bit "backwards" in where you'd guess the notes to be. It sometimes helps to think of holding up your ukulele to the tablature and you can "see" where the strings/notes are in relation to the lines.

The numbers on the line tell you which fret you need to press that string down. If there's a "0" it means you should pluck it as an open string (no fingers on any of the frets).

If you don't know how to read standard musical notation but you do learn to read tablature, you can quickly "teach" yourself to read simple musical notation by comparing the fingers you're using in the tablature to the note depicted directly above it in the standard notation. Then all you have to do is memorize the "letter name" of the fingers you're playing and you'll also learn to read the treble clef (no bass clef for ukulele--our instruments don't go that low).

Knowing how to read tablature allows you to venture into melody, not simply chords. You can also learn to play "chord-melody" style which blends playing melody with strumming chords; it's pretty impressive and not as difficult as it sounds.

When you see an "X" on one (or more) of the lines, or when you see nothing at all on it, that means not to play that string at all. This is very different than having a "0" on a string—which means that you play that string but you play it "open" (with no finger on the string).

A		3	3	5	5	3
E	1	1				
C						
G						



← Compare the two "views" →

Try it for yourself; pluck each note shown once. Do you recognize the song?

A		3	3	5	5	3	1	1	0	0			
E	1	1									3	3	1
C													
G													

Here's how to "translate" it:

Measure 1: For the first two notes, hold down the second string (E string) at the first fret. For the second two notes, hold down the first string (A string) at the third fret.

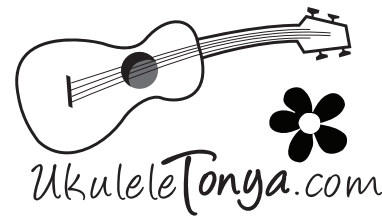
Measure 2: For the first two notes, hold down the first string (A string) at the fifth fret. The third and final note in the measure is on the first string, third fret.

Measure 3: For this measure, you're playing entirely on the first string (A string). The first two notes are on the first fret; the second two notes are "open" (no fingers) on that string.

Measure 4: This measure is played entirely on the second (E) string. The first two notes are on the third fret; the last note is on the first fret.

Beginner Lesson • Reading Tablature

Song: Red River Valley



This arrangement will give you practice at reading ukulele tablature in a song that you probably already know—so it's easier to tell if you're playing it right or not!

Ron Middlebrook included this in the book, "Ukulele Song Book in Notation and Tablature." Middlebrook does a variety of "simple" arrangement books, including "Ukulele for Cowboys," "Fun Songs for Ukulele" and "Aloha Collection of Hawaiian Songs." All are available from Amazon.com.

G C

Come and sit by my side if you love me, _____

TAB 2 3 2 2 0 3 0 3 0 3

B

Detailed description: This block shows the first line of the song. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff are three lines of tablature labeled T, A, and B. The lyrics are written below the staff. Chords G and C are indicated above the staff.

G A7

do not has - ten to bid me a - dieu. _____

TAB 3 2 3 2 3 2 5 3 2 0

B

Detailed description: This block shows the second line of the song. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff are three lines of tablature labeled T, A, and B. The lyrics are written below the staff. Chords G and A7 are indicated above the staff.

D7 G C

Just re - mem - ber the Red Riv - er Val - ley, _____

TAB 0 5 3 2 2 0 3 0 2 5 3

B

Detailed description: This block shows the third line of the song. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff are three lines of tablature labeled T, A, and B. The lyrics are written below the staff. Chords D7, G, and C are indicated above the staff.

D7 G

and one who has loved you so true. _____

TAB 3 0 2 2 3 0 2 0 3 3

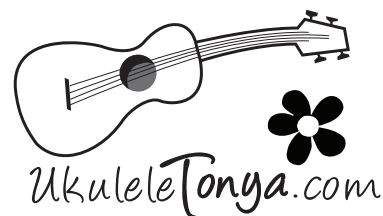
B

Detailed description: This block shows the fourth line of the song. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff are three lines of tablature labeled T, A, and B. The lyrics are written below the staff. Chords D7 and G are indicated above the staff.

- From this valley they say you are going,
I will miss your sweet face and your smile
Just because you are weary and tired,
You are changing your range for awhile.
Chorus

Beginner Lesson • Reading Tablature

Song: Joy to the World



EASY HOLIDAY UKULELE SONGBOOK, p. 4

Joy to the World

Words by Isaac Watts

Lowell Mason

Chord diagrams: C, G7, C, G7, C, F, G7, C

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -

ceive her King; let ev - 'ry heart pre -

pare Him room, and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture

sing, and hea - ven, and hea - ven, and na - ture sing.

Tablature (T, A, B strings):

3 2 0 | 3 1 0 | 0 2 0 | 3 0 3 | 0 0 |

2 2 3 | 3 3 2 0 3 | 3 1 0 3 | 3 1 0 3 | 3 1 0 3 |

3 2 0 3 | 3 1 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 1 | 3 1 0 | 2 2 2 2 0 |

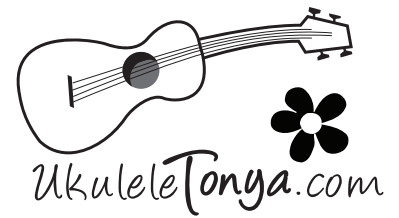
1 0 2 0 3 0 | 3 1 0 1 | 0 2 0 |

2. Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
 Let men their songs employ;
 while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
 repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
 repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

3. He rules the world with truth and grace,
 and makes the nations prove
 the glories of His righteousness,
 and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love,
 and wonders, wonders, of His love.

Beginner Lesson • Reading Tablature

Song: Ode to Joy



You've certainly heard this song before so that makes it easier to learn tab with (because you at least know what it's "supposed" to sound like!).

You'll notice that the start of many of the measures is more than one note being played--it's a combination of notes; to play those, only strum the strings indicated on the tablature, if there's a "0" listed, no fingers are touching the fretboard on that string. On the other hand, if you don't see any number at all on a string, don't play that string at all.

If you see just two strings being played, simply pluck those two strings--but don't forget to also finger the fretboard if needed (example: look at the second note played in the third line: it's a pluck of the first string--the A string--with a finger on the second fret, at the same time as an open string pluck of the fourth string (the G string)).

Quick quiz: Can you identify any chords you recognize? Tip: Make the shape indicated and then take a good look at it. Try it with the first note in the song.

Ode To Joy

Beethoven

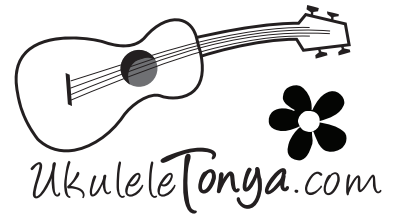
Ukulele

The image shows three systems of ukulele tablature for the song "Ode to Joy". Each system consists of three horizontal lines representing the strings: Treble (T), A, and Bass (B). The tablature uses numbers 0-5 to indicate fret positions and asterisks to indicate which strings to strum. The first system starts with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The second system starts with a 7/8 time signature. The third system starts with a 1/4 time signature. The tablature is written in a standard notation style with vertical stems and horizontal lines for the strings.

Arranged for Ukulele by Joseph Todaro 2005

Beginner Lesson • Reading Tablature

Song: Brother John



Brother John

Fingerpicking exercise

melody w/ chords

F C F C

A
B

Courtesy of Mark Nelson
www.Mark-O.com
Ukulele teacher/writer/performer

F C F

5

w/ double stops and chords

F C F F C7 F C7 F C7 F

9

C7 F F C7 F

13

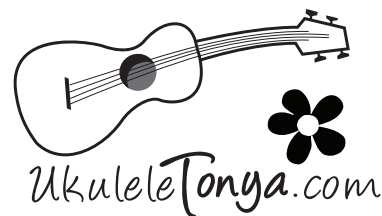
© 2004 Mark L. Nelson

Mark Nelson has an absolutely incredible book for developing your fingerpicking/chord soloing skills. Mark was kind enough to let our group use this this song to see if you might like this style of playing. Go to www.mark-o.com to find out about purchasing, "Learn to Play Fingerstyle Solos for Ukulele."

The book comes with a CD so you can hear what the songs "should" sound like—and play along!

Beginner Lesson • Reading Tablature

Song: What Child is This?



What Child is This?

Traditional
arr. by John King

Ukulele

Musical notation for measures 1-7. The top staff is a treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a four-line ukulele tablature. Measure 1 starts with a repeat sign. The tablature includes numbers 0, 5, 7, 7, 5, 7, 0, 7, 0, 0, 1, 4, 0.

Musical notation for measures 8-14. The top staff continues the melody. The tablature includes numbers 2, 0, 0, 0, 5, 7, 7, 5, 7, 0, 7, 0, 7, 0.

Musical notation for measures 15-22. The top staff continues the melody. The tablature includes numbers 0, 2, 2, 1, 0, 0, 10, 10, 9, 5, 7, 0, 7, 0, 0.

Musical notation for measures 23-29. The top staff continues the melody. The tablature includes numbers 1, 2, 4, 0, 2, 0, 10, 10, 9, 5, 7, 0, 7, 0.

Musical notation for measures 30-36. The top staff includes first and second endings. The tablature includes numbers 0, 7, 0, 0, 2, 1, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 0, 1.

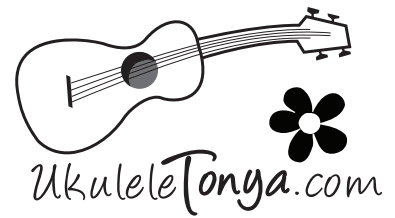
© 2002 by John King

Courtesy of John King
www.Nalu-Music.com
Ukulele teacher/writer/performer

John King specializes in classical and historic songs, arranged for ukulele. This song is available on his website: <http://www.Nalu-Music.com>. Go there to purchase "The Classical Ukulele"—with 21 ukulele arrangements that are unbelievable—as well as an accompanying CD. The CD is great just to listen to even if you don't think you're up to that level of playing yet! Also head over to John's site for well-researched and well-written history pertaining to the ukulele, its players and makers.

Beginner Lesson • Reading Tablature

Song: *Amazing Grace*

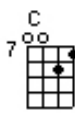


Amazing Grace

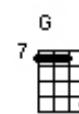
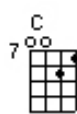
Ukulele Arrangement - EZ Chord Solo - Key of C

Arranged by Richard Hefner

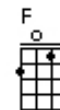
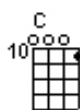
<http://www.Uke101.com>



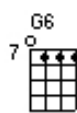
5



5



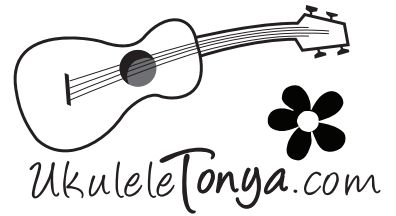
9



13

Beginner Lesson • Reading Tablature

Song: Alona Waltz



This is a fun song—it's written in tablature, but it's an "old-fashioned" type of tablature with a few differences. It sounds especially nice with a "roll" strum for the first beat. It can sound quite impressive, but it's pretty simple—really!

First, you need to know it's a waltz and that means it's 3/4 time (three beats to the measure, quarter note gets one beat). The way Ernest Kaai (one of Hawaii's earliest ukulele teachers) presents this song is that you'll see the tab, broken into measures, but when there's only one set of notes or chords (as in the first measure) you play that *three* times. When there are single notes spread across the measure, they play once each. When it simply says "one" play the chord and hold for a count of three.

The song is basically three sections, each repeated twice.

Whew! Now give it a try!

To Miss Maria Piikoi, Honolulu

ALONA WALTZ

Ukulele Solo

By ERNEST K. KAAI

DU DU DU

7	5	3	3 2 0	G7	5 3 2	C	C	1	2
0	0	0						3	2 1
0	0	0						0	0
0	0	0						0	0

F	5 3 0	C	3 2 0	G7	5 3 2	C	3 2 1	2
								one

10	7	10	7	F	G7	C	C	1	2
0	0	0	0					3	2 1
0	0	0	0					0	0
0	0	0	0					0	0