

2026 GMUG Workshop Descriptions

AARON BAER

Sheet to Song. We'll take a typical song sheet that most Uke clubs use (Hello Mary Lou or similar). We'll turn it inside out and upside down, changing tempo and time signature, writing intros and outros. Making crazy choices, good and bad, and diving into making the song a performance.

Chunky Chunk Chuck. Chucking (or chunking) is a percussive technique that mutes the strings simultaneously as you strum, creating a rhythmic, drum-like "chick" sound. It's easily mastered by executing a downward strum with your index finger while immediately planting the fleshy part of your palm or thumb across the strings. (1, 2, 3, 4)

We'll work on getting the rhythm train rolling. The goal of the class is to emphasize the backbeats (2, 4), while strumming to get that "chunk" sound that keeps the sound driving.

MIKE CRAMER

Playing Up the Neck. In this hands-on workshop, we're going to dig into playing chords beyond the first position. We'll take basic chord shapes and learn how to get the most out of them by converting them to moveable barre chords. By applying these moveable shapes along with strategies for learning notes up the neck, you'll be able to:

- Break out of the first position
- Easily play in different keys
- Connect chords smoothly
- Craft melodic accompaniment

Beyond Basic Strumming. Ready to go beyond basic down-up strums and add a little spice to your rhythmic playing? We'll explore different strumming patterns that will expand your accompaniment abilities and maybe even open the door to other rhythmic styles of playing.

We'll discuss the necessary right-hand techniques needed to play these patterns. The left hand will get a workout here as well, as we also explore how adding left-hand techniques like hammer-ons and pull-offs can add rhythmic variety to spice up even the most basic progressions. Along with all the above, we'll discuss counting strategies and practice tips to improve your rhythmic accuracy.

ANNIE LOCH

Smooth Chord Transitions for Beginners. Does transitioning from C to G (or G to D on the baritone) slow you down? This beginner-focused masterclass is specifically designed to eliminate the awkward gaps in your playing and build the muscle memory you need for smooth, continuous rhythm. Through targeted exercises and direct coaching, you will transform choppy chord changes into effortless music.

What You Will Master

- **The "Hover & Anchor" Method:** Learn to use pivot fingers to slide between shapes without losing your place.
- **Fretboard Mechanics:** Discover the precise finger anatomy needed to stop muting neighboring strings.
- **Sequential Placement:** Train your hand to drop the lead finger first so the rest fall into place naturally.

We'll have fun while we do it! Baritone ukuleles and standard tuning both welcomed!

CHRIS RUSSELL

Progressive Ukulele Lessons. These sessions are designed for beginning ukulele players—whether you are brand new to the instrument or have recently started playing. Participants will learn to use the ukulele as a harmonic accompaniment to singing through a progressive approach that introduces chords based on the number of fingers required to play them. Along the way, we'll cover the fundamentals of the instrument, including its history, parts, tuning, strumming, reading chord diagrams, and essential accessories.

Whether you want to play for your own enjoyment or teach others, this session will provide a solid foundation for continued growth. Participants will leave with practical teaching and playing strategies, recommended resources, and a clear roadmap for developing their ukulele skills with confidence.