



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Topanga Canyon Ukulele School Celebrates 2,000 Live Zoom Classes with Global Reunion Six Years After Pandemic Beginnings, “Get Started Playing Ukulele” Builds Worldwide Community of Daily Music and Joy**

Topanga Canyon, CA — April 23, 2026 — What began as a simple effort to combat isolation during the early days of the pandemic has grown into a global musical community celebrating a remarkable milestone: 2,000 live online ukulele classes. “Get Started Playing Ukulele,” founded by Melanie Lawson Kareem, will mark its 2,000th Zoom session with a worldwide reunion of classmates.

The first class took place March 16, 2020, when members of the Topanga Ukulele Revival performing group joined together online. Since then, participants from across the country — and around the world — have logged in nearly every day, creating a supportive community centered on music, laughter, and connection.

Additional waves of students soon followed, including folk dancers who joined during the summer of 2020 and beginners who discovered the program as it expanded into a structured “ukulele university for beginners” in 2021. Most participants joined having never played an instrument before, immediately jamming with the group and growing into confident performers. Others joined because of the mounting medical findings that playing an instrument keeps an aging mind healthy.

“Daily ukulele Zooming brought lighthearted fun during those dark days,” says Lawson Kareem. “We kept showing up for each other — and we kept counting every single day.”

The program has inspired adult players of all persuasions. During the 2,000th celebration, participants will take turns singing for one member’s 80th birthday — a tradition that has become a hallmark of the group’s camaraderie. Students credit the sessions with boosting confidence, creativity, and well-being.

The milestone event will feature group performances, shared memories, and participation from longtime members joining remotely from multiple time zones. The celebration highlights not only musical growth but also the enduring friendships formed through daily connection.

“Working with someone so committed to sharing ukulele joy makes a difference,” says participant Bobi Ashley. “My husband always notices when class starts because he knows it puts me in a good mood.”

Melanie originally began teaching ukulele as a tribute to her father, Charles Lawson, whom she describes as a “Johnny Appleseed of ukulele mirth,” spreading music and dance throughout his community.

Today, “Get Started Playing Ukulele” continues to welcome beginners and experienced players alike, emphasizing inclusivity, humor, and the simple joy of learning music together.

## **About Get Started Playing Ukulele**

Get Started Playing Ukulele is a virtual learning community founded in 2020 by Melanie Lawson Kareem. The program offers live online classes for adult beginners and enthusiasts, fostering a global network of musicians united by daily practice and shared joy.

**Media are invited to attend the Topanga Canyon broadcast and capture footage of lively, virtual bandleader, Melanie Lawson Kareem, orchestrating the Zoom celebration from her studio.**

**Journalists who are unable to attend at the studio, may contact the Get Started Playing Ukulele team at (310) 403-3159, to receive a Zoom link to attend the celebration virtually.**

WHEN: April 23, 2026 from 1:30pm - 3:00pm Pacific Time

WHERE: Topanga Canyon and on Zoom

WHO: Global students at Get Started Playing Ukulele on Zoom

WHY: Celebrating 2,000 days of music and community

**Call and/or text (310) 403-3159 for studio address or Zoom link.**

Interviews available with founder and participants.

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#UkuleleCommunity #TopangaCanyon #OnlineMusic #2000Days #UkuleleJoy