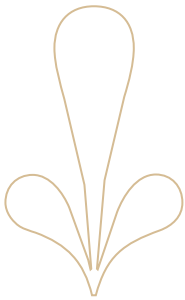


MY *first* INSTRUMENT



ANNE BOKMA

Hamilton, Ont.

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“I live in a house filled with music — my husband, Jeff, has been playing guitar for 40 years, and both my daughters play piano and clarinet. I had never played an instrument until last year when my husband bought me a ukulele for my 49th birthday. Jeff had been trying to teach me to play guitar and I wasn’t making much progress. He figured the uke would be easier, and he was right. Within 10 minutes, I could strum ‘You Are My Sunshine’ and was hooked. You don’t need any musical knowledge to learn the uke and since the songbooks have the chords written overtop of the words, you can pick things up in a snap. After learning a dozen more chords, I could play hundreds of songs with ease.

“I signed up for group lessons and play every Tuesday night with about 70 other mostly middle-aged women. We gather in a gym, our songbooks on music stands in front of us, and strum tunes together with two local ukulele pros. They also host a biannual Jam and Jug performance night where I made my public debut playing ‘Big Rock Candy Mountain’ in front of 100 people. I was as nervous as a schoolgirl at her first piano recital, but then I just let the music take over.

“I’ve collected a songbook with hundreds of selections and music is now a part of my everyday life. I recently treated myself to a \$400 banjo ukulele, which creates the perfect twang for those hurtin’ tunes such as Dolly Par-



ton’s ‘Jolene,’ Patsy Cline’s ‘Walkin’ After Midnight’ and Nancy Sinatra’s ‘These Boots Are Made for Walking.’ I’ve even joined in a few times (halt-ingly, I’ll admit) when my husband gets together with his guitar-playing pals.

“I pick up the ukulele every day — sometimes for 10 minutes, sometimes for an hour. It takes me out of my head and into my heart.”

“MUSIC IS NOW
A PART OF
my everyday life.”