

JAKE SHIMABUKURO

Though some still have trouble pronouncing his last name and the instrument he plays, **Jake Shimabukuro** (she-ma-BOO-koo-row) is recognized as one of the world's most exciting and innovative **ukulele** (oo-koo-LAY-lay) players and composers.

Jake's latest album is *Live*, his first full-length CD since 2006's best-selling *Gently Weeps*. After taping dozens of U.S. and overseas performances Jake chose these tracks as representing "the best of the best" of his live playing. Every track reveals a different side of the ukulele: soft and sensitive at times, other times cheery and playful, occasionally dramatic, and, once in a while, hard and aggressive. The 17-song CD, released in April 2009, includes 12 Shimabukuro originals (Nine versions of his best-known compositions, plus four brand-new tunes) and five covers (including a jaw-dropping version of **J.S. Bach's** "Two-Part Invention No. 4 in D Minor" and a memorable interpretation of "Thriller," the Rod Temperton song made famous by **Michael Jackson**). Of course there's a live version of **George Harrison's** "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" which might be Jake's best-recorded version yet!

Renowned for lightning-fast fingers and revolutionary playing techniques, Jake views the ukulele as an "untapped source of music with unlimited potential". His virtuosity defies label or category. Playing jazz, blues, funk, classical, bluegrass, folk, flamenco, and rock, Jake's mission is to show everyone that the ukulele is capable of so much more than the traditional Hawaiian music – or corny showbiz routines -- many associate it with.

Jake's mother gave him his first ukulele lesson when he was four years old. "When I played my first chord I was hooked," says Jake, "I fell in love with the instrument." That love grew into a deep passion to create and innovate. Experimenting with and inventing various techniques allows Jake to create sounds never thought possible on the tiny four-string, two-octave instrument. A true showman, his shows dazzle audiences with intricate strumming and plucking, electrifying high-energy grooves and deeply felt melodic ballads.

From a modest beginning performing at a local Honolulu café, Jake has gone on to play renowned and popular venues and festivals across the world. This past summer Jake added Sweden, Finland, France, Spain, and Brazil to the list of countries he's performed in. Occasional tours with **Jimmy Buffett & The Coral Reefer Band** have broadened Jake's experience, regularly exposing his virtuosity and charming stage presence to crowds of up to 50,000. Speaking of large audiences, Jake has also performed on national television shows such as NBC's *The Late Show with Conan O'Brien*, *The Today Show*, and *Last Call With Carson Daly*, as well been featured on NPR's *Morning Edition* and *World Café*, Public Radio International's *The World*, Sirius/XM's *The Bob Edwards Show*, and others.

Selection as the spokesman - three years in a row - for Hawaii Tourism Japan's (HTJ) campaign to market Hawaii to Japan, as well as his frequent tours of that island nation, has made Jake a

household name in Japan. "Rainbow," a track from *Walking Down Rainhill*, was selected as HTJ's theme song as well as the official **Honolulu Marathon** theme song in 2004. In 2006, the *Gently Weeps* track "Beyond the Break" was selected as the Marathon's theme song and was played as Jake crossed the finish line upon completion of his first marathon run.

In his spare time Jake often visits schools to talk with and play music for the children of Hawaii, hopefully inspiring thousands to put their energy into learning about and playing music. In fact, Jake is the key spokesman for the “**Music is Good Medicine**” organization, which uses community outreach programs – and visits to schools, senior centers, and hospitals – to emphasize the importance of a healthy life and mind as well as promoting music and the arts.

Jake’s collaborations and special projects are varied. He’s toured with **Bela Fleck & the Flecktones** and recorded on their *Little Worlds* (2003) album. Jake was also featured on **Ziggy Marley**’s Grammy-Award winning *Love is My Religion* (2006). Since Jimmy Buffet made Jake a semi-regular member of his Coral Reefers band Jake has appeared on three of their CDs as well as two DVDs. At the end of 2008, he was a guest artist on **Yo-Yo Ma**’s holiday album, *Songs of Joy and Peace*. Their collaboration on the John Lennon/Yoko Ono tune “Happy Xmas [War is Over]” is also part of Jake’s album of Beatles covers, *Across the Universe* (released in Japan only) that also featured a vocal by **Cyndi Lauper**.

Jake is also making a name for himself as a film composer. The association with Jimmy Buffett led to his contributions to the soundtrack of the Buffett-produced film, *Hoot*. Shortly afterward, Jake scored the hit Japanese independent film *Hula Girls* (the soundtrack album was released in the U.S. on Hitchhike Records in 2007). In 2009 Jake completed writing and recording the score for the Japanese version of the film *Sideways*, released as a soundtrack CD (another Japan-only release).

Another recent highlight was Jake’s recording and release of the “*Annon*” tune and EP. The **Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii** observed Shin Buddhism founder **Shinran Shonin**’s 750th Memorial Service in September 2009 in conjunction with the 120th Anniversary of the Mission’s establishment of 35 temples. To mark the occasion, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii asked **Jake Shimabukuro** to compose the song “Annon,” which means “May Peace and Tranquility prevail throughout the world.”

In December 2009 Jake was honored to perform with singer/actress **Bette Midler** in the presence of **Her Majesty The Queen** as part of a special fundraising concert in Blackpool, England.

Energy, imagination, and innovation have been Jake’s keys to success. He plans to continue recording, performing, collaborating, and staying happy. “I love what I do. I’m forever thankful for music.”

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