



A Short Bio

Melanie Lawson Kareem
Get Started Playing Ukulele,
Founder and Creative Director

Melanie Lawson Kareem grew up in a musical-loving, folk dancing family in Pasadena, California. While attending Humboldt State University, she established her first School of Middle Eastern Dance in the Arcata-Eureka area before the age of twenty. Melanie developed her school over decades into the legendary, inter-generational belly dance tradition based in Topanga Canyon.

Melanie's father, Chuck Lawson, PhD, author and head of the Math department at Jet Propulsion Laboratory, was known in his retirement years as the Johnny Appleseed of ukulele mirth. After Dr. Lawson passed away in 2015, Melanie answered the call to continue her father's legacy of teaching ukulele to friends and neighbors who had never before been musicians. Melanie's student following grew rapidly and led to a vintage 1920s-themed, family-style performance group called the "Topanga Ukulele Revival."

Adapting to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, Melanie's ukulele classes went virtual. Dedicated to uplifting the spirits of pandemic-weary shut-ins, Melanie mastered the role of remote teacher. She devised a proprietary teaching system, known as the "Melanie Method," in which colored sticker dots on the ukulele fretboard correspond to "Large Print" song sheets. Her students thrived, able to enjoy strumming and singing the beloved songs of the "leisure generation" right away. Get Started Playing Ukulele, an on-line ukulele program of daily, live

lessons, was born. Now Melanie's fun-loving community of strummers and singers stretches from coast to coast, and crosses international borders. As of November 2022, Melanie has broadcast 902 ukulele lessons.

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Please link to the Get Started Playing Ukulele [Press Kit](#) for videos, photos, and more.

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