

The 15th Annual 'Ukulele Picnic Presents

# International 'Ukulele Festival of Hawai'i 2024

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## The 15<sup>th</sup> 'Ukulele Picnic Presents International 'Ukulele Festival of Hawai'i

International 'Ukulele Event to be Held on July 27<sup>th</sup> at Kapi'olani Park

Honolulu, Hawai'i (July 17, 2024) – The 'Ukulele Foundation of Hawai'i presents the International 'Ukulele Festival of Hawai'i scheduled for Saturday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at Kapi'olani Park in Waikiki. Founded in 2009 as 'Ukulele Picnic in Hawai'i, the annual all-day 'ukulele event is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Pre-event festivities have just been announced on Friday, July 26<sup>th</sup>. Special sales booths include Kanilea 'Ukulele, and MUSE Kailua, featuring specialty Hawaiian goods. There will be entertainment by 'ukulele and Hula performance groups from Japan in the Hawaii Prince Waikiki Hotel lobby from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. There will also be an International 'Ukulele Festival of Hawai'i Special Concert at The Beach Bar at the Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa, Waikiki Beach from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. that day.

'Ukulele is considered a symbol of aloha and official musical instrument of Hawaii. Roy and Kathy Sakuma hosted the 'Ukulele Festival of Hawai'i for over 50 years, believing this tiny instrument possessed the power to bring the world together, and many fans solely missed them as they retired from hosting this event in 2022. With the support from Roy and Kathy, event organizer and chairman of 'Ukulele Foundation of Hawai'i Kazuyuki Sekiguchi was inspired to reimagine the event to form deeper connections to the Hawai'i 'ukulele community.

"We are so excited to celebrate our milestone 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to share our mission of fostering stronger ties to the local community, spreading a message of Aloha from Hawai'i to the world," said Sekiguchi. "Imagine the thousands of 'ukulele fans from around the world gathering in Kapi'olani Park with our local community, enjoying this festival together—it's truly a wonderful scene to behold. We eagerly anticipate this joyful event and all the smiles that the 'ukulele brings. See you on July 27th at Kapi'olani Park!"



Photo credit: Akari Nishi

The event will utilize the stage at the Kapi'olani Park bandstand and will also include a special second stage to be built in the park. The lineup includes renowned Hawai'i and international performers Raiatea Helm, Jake Shimabukuro, Kala'e Camarillo, Mika Kane, Jody Kamisato, Crossing Rain, Craig & Sarah, Cynthia Lin, Corey Fujimoto, Benny Chong, Byron Yasui, Honoka, Kalei Gamiao, Sho Humphries & Tyler Donkoh-Halm, 1933 Ukulele All Stars, Tomoki Suzuki, Dr. Trey, Flatnine Ukulele Jazz Orchestra, Keiki performances will include the Roy Sakuma Ukulele Studios, 'Ukulele Hale, and Kapālama Elementary School, and more. Additionally, there will be 'ukulele display booths by famous 'ukulele makers from Hawai'i and a special collection of vintage 'ukuleles from the Hawai'i State Archives.

**Event Overview:**

**Name:** The 15<sup>th</sup> 'Ukulele Picnic Presents International 'Ukulele Festival of Hawai'i

**Location:** Kapi'olani Park Bandstand, Waikiki

**Date & Time:** Saturday, July 27, 2024, from 9:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**Official URL:** [www.ukulelepicnicinhawaii.org](http://www.ukulelepicnicinhawaii.org)

**Social Media:**



Facebook ([www.facebook.com/ukupichawaii](http://www.facebook.com/ukupichawaii))



Instagram ([www.instagram.com/ukulelepicnichi](http://www.instagram.com/ukulelepicnichi))



Website ([www.ukulelepicnicinhawaii.org](http://www.ukulelepicnicinhawaii.org))



YouTube ([www.youtube.com/ukupichawaii](http://www.youtube.com/ukupichawaii))

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### **SUPPORT FROM HAWAII'S 'UKULELE COMMUNITY**

The event's transformation is made possible with the support and advise of Roy Sakuma, co-founder and host of 'Ukulele Festival Hawai'i for 52 consecutive years.

"On behalf of 'Ukulele Festival Hawai'i, we congratulate Kazuyuki and the 'Ukulele Foundation of Hawai'i on celebrating 15 years of sharing their love and passion for the 'ukulele with Hawai'i and the world," said Roy and Kathy Sakuma. "For 52 years, it has been our mission to spread laughter, love, and joy through the 'ukulele and we are thrilled that 'Ukulele Foundation of Hawai'i will perpetuate the 'ukulele through their newly named 'Ukulele Picnic Presents International 'Ukulele Festival of Hawai'i."

Through shared passion and respect, the friendship between Sekiguchi and Sakuma exemplifies the unifying power of music and their shared vision of bringing people together from all over the to celebrate Hawai'i's beloved instrument.

### **About Kazuyuki Sekiguchi and 'Ukulele Picnic in Hawai'i**

Kazuyuki Sekiguchi, a founding member of Japan's Southern All Stars, has left an indelible mark on the music scene, shaping the band's distinctive sound and captivating audiences across generations. While his contributions to Southern All Stars are legendary, Sekiguchi's musical journey took a new turn in 1991 after his fateful meeting 'ukulele master, Herb Ohta, sparking a deep passion for the 'ukulele.

Inspired by Ohta's mastery, Sekiguchi traveled from Japan to Hawai'i to see 'Ukulele Festival Hawai'i for the first time, setting the stage for his lifelong 'ukulele passion. It was there that he sought lessons from Sakuma, solidifying Sakuma's pivotal role as his mentor. Sekiguchi's deep respect for Sakuma's expertise has remained unwavering throughout his career.

In 2009, Sekiguchi's 'Ukulele Foundation of Hawai'i launched the free "**Ukulele Picnic in Hawai'i**," with its mission of "bringing people together through 'ukulele." This marked a significant milestone in his dedication to promoting 'ukulele culture. Annually attracting over 5,000 attendees from around the world, it was a celebration to appreciate the beauty of the 'ukulele and express gratitude and respect for all Hawaiian music.

In 2022, his commitment to spreading the joy of 'ukulele music culminated in the formation of the 1933 'Ukulele All Stars featuring esteemed artists such as Takagi Boo, Nomura Yoshio, Oginome Yoko, YANAGIMAN, Kimiko Wakiyama, and Yu Hatakeyama. Through his multifaceted career, Sekiguchi continues to inspire and influence musicians and fans alike, leaving an enduring legacy in the world of music.

### **About Ukulele Foundation of Hawai'i**

'Ukulele Foundation of Hawai'i is a non-profit organization that was created by members led by Kazuyuki Sekiguchi in October 2007 with the goals of building an 'Ukulele Museum where people can learn about the history of the 'ukulele and Hawaiian music. The foundation passionately hosts events like the International 'Ukulele contest and the International 'Ukulele Festival to promote the love for 'ukulele to the world and provide a place to bring people together from around the world.

### **About Roy Sakuma**

Innovative, inspirational, warm, funny, and kind are all words used to describe Roy. In over 55 years of teaching the 'ukulele, he has been all these things and more in his role as teacher, producer, promoter and inspiration to thousands of students and the island community.

In the 1960's, as America's youth latched onto the larger, louder, more swaggering guitar, the little instrument from Hawai'i was relegated to the attic. Roy knew the instrument's true worth. And so, for more than 50 years, with his wife Kathy, and their staff of instructors and supporters, his mission has been to spread the joy of the ukulele **teaching students** and promoting the annual **'Ukulele Festival Hawai'i**, the world's first and original 'ukulele festival.