

Ukulele Yes!

The Ukulele Teacher's **eZine**
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BE THOU MY VISION

Traditional, arr. Kevin Birkbeck

Teaching/Learning Notes (D6 Tuning: a, d, f#, b)

Focus On:

- Note Reading
- Ensemble Technique
- Harmonic Analysis

Key Points:

- Pick with the thumb to get a soft, warm sound. To create a sustained sound, use the tremolo flatpick technique (i.e. use a guitar pick to rapidly – and gently – repeat the note).
- Uke I is the most challenging part in this arrangement. Uke III requires a low-4th string and includes some double-stops (i.e. two-note chords). Uke II is the easiest part and may be used as a sight-reading exercise.
- When playing a double-stop (e.g. Uke III, measure 4), let the right-hand thumb fall through the 4th and 3rd strings and come to rest on the 2nd string. This, fittingly, is called a “rest stroke.”
- In a group performance/rehearsal, pay particular attention to m. 12 (marked “rit” for “ritardando, a sudden decrease in tempo), and m. 19, which features a large broken chord. To achieve the “broken chord” effect, think “musical dominoes”: Uke III starts, then Uke II and finally Uke I. It's like doing “the wave” at a sports game!

Suggestions for Extension and Enrichment:

- Notice that chord symbols are not given; this doesn't mean chords can't be played to accompany the picked parts. However, students are responsible for determining what chords are appropriate. Think of this like a “musical mystery game” where students are “detectives” who must figure out which chords to play based on musical “evidence.”

Steps for hands-on harmonic analysis (we'll use measure 1, beat 1 as an example):

1. **Find** and hold the Uke I, II and III notes. Can you hold them all down at the same time?
2. **Look** at your fingers: do they form a chord? If so, which chord? (In this case – measure 1, beat 1 – the notes in Uke I, II and III form a G chord.)
3. **Listen**: does it sound right?

Tip: If your fingers don't initially form a chord that you recognize, try transposing one or more notes by an octave (up or down) until you do. If you get stuck, move on and come back to it later.