



# Mighty Uke Day 4 Wrap-Up Friday, May 23, 2014

Well, it's been two weeks since the beginning of Mighty Uke Day 4 and I'm relaxing/working at the Ashokan Retreat in New York's Catskill Mountains with Gerald Ross, Sarah Maisel, Lil' Rev, and Jim D'Ville, still coming down from the buzz generated from the mightiest of all Mighty Uke Days. It really all came together for MUD 4: the weather was perfect (thank you WeatherDog™), the music was great, and the

"aloha vibe" was powerful throughout Old Town. You can check out videos from the weekend at: <http://bit.ly/1gmAu39> and see some great photos from Sara Wagner at: <http://bit.ly/1oorLxH> and Jon Benallack at: <http://bit.ly/SsmHoi>

I know I'm going to forget someone, but I'd like to try and give thanks to everyone who made the weekend so special.

Our Saturday night headliners, Sarah Maisel and Craig Chee were not only wonderful performers and effective teachers, but are officially the coolest people on the planet. I loved how they were everywhere, hanging out and taking selfies with so many of our attendees. They made many new fans and friends during their short stay and I hope to have them back in Michigan soon. A special thanks to Mitch Chang, Melanee Hirvela, and the Spirit of Aloha Entertainers for a great opening set. Our Friday night lineup truly showcased the talent we have here in the "Great Uke State"; big thanks to Gerald Ross, Magdalen Fossum, Brian and Lynn Hefferan, and Andy and Julianna Wilson. And, who but Strangers in the Night could do whatever it is that they did in such indescribable fashion?!

Along with our headlining acts, we had a variety of great music at our Featured Performer and Open Mic stages. Some of you are seasoned performers and some were playing in front of an audience for the first time, thank you so much for sharing your talents and tunes with all of us. Also, I was happy to see so many uke groups from around Michigan, neighboring states, and Canada come en masse to strum and sing with all of us. (And thanks, Dover Uke Heads, for that incredibly bright yellow D.U.H. shirt.)

Props to Dave Matchette for his good ears and technical expertise running sound Friday and Saturday nights. Thanks also to Ben Carr for assisting Dave, and to Mike Dyer for running sound at Featured Performer stage. Chuck Deyo did his always exceptional job organizing the open mic and had two of the finest emcees in the ukulele community helping him out: Marion (Mdiddy) Koleski and Cindy McElroy. Dave Pasant did a great job of running the group strum Saturday morning and Mike Hefferan's old school overhead projector made it much easier for the crowds at Sir Pizza to strum along on the songs.

Our sponsors donated instruments and other items for our silent auction along with stage and workshops sponsorships and helped us raise over \$3,000 to go towards our school and community music programs. (I'm still sorting the finances out, but this is at least twice as much as last year.) Thanks to Elderly Instruments for their Main Stage sponsorship, Mya-Moe for the Featured

Performer Stage, Nalu Ukuleles for the Open Mic sponsorship, MSU's Community Music School for the Children's Workshop, and GHS Strings for the Ukulele Care workshops. Silent auction instrument donations were provided by Elderly Instruments, Kala, Nalu, Lanikai, Leho, Ohana, Mainland, Druid Moon, Dave Birney, and Tiny Goat Films. A beautiful uke-themed quilt was stitched by Cindy Mielock and we also had donations of cutting boards, paintings, earrings, and other items from generous friends. New this year were fun, custom-decorated ukuleles by local artists: Dennis Preston, Kelly Boyle, Martha Spielman, Craig Horkey, Bill Snook, and Corey Marie. Rhea Van Atta and the Old Town General Store sponsored our Green Room for performers and volunteers.

Friends of MUD 4 included: Interlochen Center for the Arts, Preuss Pets, Slick Shirts, Capital City Reprographics, Guitars in the Classroom, MICA Gallery, the Magnusson Hotel, Cozy Koi B&B, and Sir Pizza. Mighty Uke Day has some strong supporters in the media including Anne Erickson and Dawn Parker from the Lansing State Journal, Karen Love and Jack Robbins from WLNZs "Coffee Break", and Mark Bashore and Joe Lindstroth from the WKAR "Current State" program - thanks for helping us get the word out.

We couldn't have put this all together without our volunteers, stationed at the workshops, various stages, MUD HQ, and other areas. Thanks for donating your time, I hope you had some fun during your shifts. A special thanks to the gang from Motor City Ukes for coming out in force to help out with the children's workshop.

Our MUD committee was a big help in making this year's festival work. Thank you to Mitch Chang for sharing his festival management experiences, Jon Benallack for his awesome graphic design skills (he designed our groovy new logo as well as our concert posters), Steve Szilagyi for proofreading our communications with the media and being a sounding board for ideas, Chuck Deyo for organizing the open mic and doing whatever needed to be done, Larry Cooley for his financial guidance and making connections with the business community, and Stan Werbin for helping get the word out via the Elderly email list. And, last but certainly not least, a huge thanks to Sara Wagner for doing pretty much everything: organizing the volunteer schedule, making sure the "trains were running on time", and being everywhere she needed to be. Sara was also responsible for getting Max the WeatherDog™ on board with Mighty Uke Day this year and he brought us the warmest and sunniest festival yet.

And, of course, we couldn't have a festival without the attendees. There's nothing better than seeing a few hundred people packing Sir Pizza and the Creole Gallery, walking around Old Town, jamming on street corners, and just having a great time overall. I hope you all had as much fun as it looked like!

We try our best to make Mighty Uke Day a little better every year, we need and value your input. Please take a couple of minutes to fill out our post-festival survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/L8Y96V8>, we truly appreciate it.

Make sure to mark you calendars for May 8 & 9, 2015 for Mighty Uke Day 5. We're going to be pulling out all the stops for this one and we'd love to have you there.

Keep on strummin' and I'll see you next year!



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