

'The 'Ukulele: a history' Jim Tranquada and John King (University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), paperback, 336 pages,

The ukulele was 'invented' in the late 19th century by Portuguese/Madeira migrants in Hawaii, who had travelled under labour contracts to seek fortune far away from their homeland's failing economy and social austerities. They brought the Portuguese *machete*, a small 4-stringed guitar which is the 'ukulele's immediate predecessor. This book traces and documents the connected social histories of the two distant countries and the rise of the ukulele as an instrument of such popularity that millions were made and sold around the world during the period 1879-1970.

The authors sift a vast corpus of social documentary material to give a picture of the instrument's origins, development and social context that has often been the subject of vague conjecture and repeated cliché.

The ukulele's historic musical origins have been enlightened by the discovery recently of a 19th C manuscript '*Colecção de Peças para Machete*' (Collection of Pieces for the Machete, 1846) which has over 40 beautiful solos, traditional dance pieces and accompanied music for the Portuguese instrument.

The 'ukulele is currently on another wave of popularity that has captured the attention of youngsters, serious and social musicians and emerging virtuosi of international acclaim. Luthiers' and manufacturers have difficulty keeping up with demand and historic vintage instruments are traded briskly on ebay.

'The 'Ukulele: a history' is a fascinating publication that is accessible to the historian, enthusiast and casual reader alike. The sources and academic referencing are of a high standard and will doubtless encourage and enable further research in other areas. The historical design and construction of the ukulele is one field that is only broadly covered here and which would benefit from future detailed investigation.

This publication by Jim Tranquada, a descendant of those original Portuguese migrants and John King a noted music teacher, researcher and scholar of the ukulele is a work that enlightens, fascinates and informs beyond expectation and it will become an invaluable reference work for generations to come.