



## Wolfelele Uke Kit

I am often contacted by people from the world of ukulele, but, when Wolf Kater contacted me regarding his ukulele kits, I had to take a closer look.

Wolf Kater is a world-famous harpsichord maker. He also makes boutique guitars— all custom-made acoustic instruments that collectors and virtuosos would want. In addition to guitars and harpsichords, Wolf has become pretty well known for his music workshops— but these are not your typical workshops. In Wolf Kater's workshops, you build your ukulele and then learn to play it.

The kits are listed on the "wolfelele" website as "soprano",

"alto" (concert), "tenor" and "baritone" kits. In addition, there is a three-string model.

Each kit contains the pre-cut top, back, and sides, a pre-fabricated neck, tuners, strings, some wood-screws, and the instruction sheet.

The kit is very cleverly designed. I put it together with only a screw-driver and a little bit of Elmer's "Craft Bond" glue. The whole thing actually took less than thirty minutes.

The neck assembly makes it virtually impossible to attach the sides and top at the wrong angle. You put a bead of glue on the top where the neck connects and then glue the



sides into position. The back-plate closes the triangle and is perfectly positioned without any measurements or hassles.

I glued the body together and laid a couple of books on it to dry over-night... I didn't even use any clamps. You might want to use them if you have them.

After drying over night, I sprayed the whole instrument with Krylon satin finish. I strung up the uke and made a video.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLhq9Loa5Fo>

After the kit had been sitting for a few days, I used blue acrylic paint and coated the sound-board and around the base of the bridge. That added a little bit of color.

I toyed with the idea of painting a tropical scene, maybe a tiki head, or something else, but in the end, I thought that a sky-blue would do nicely.



On this page you can see the kit before the back is glued into place. You can see the bridge plate, the dove-tail neck joint, the sides and butt-plate.

You can also see the fret-board with frets already in place. You don't have to assemble the fret-board, it comes pre-assembled in the kit and the intonation is good.

Every piece of wood that requires screwing into place is pre-drilled. The headstock, too.

Tuners are open gear and sport white buttons. They stick out farther near the tip of the headstock because it is tapered. They work well enough and don't slip.

The top and back of the Wolfelele are Baltic birch. The fret-board, and bridges are Canadian rock-maple. The neck-block is spruce or pine. The sides and butt-plate are Canadian cherry. The saddle is walnut.

The uke is designed with ecology in mind, hence the use of non-threatened woods. Since all the cutwork is done by laser, you can be assured that assembly is not a pain.

Wolf Kater is pretty sharp guy. This kit is clever. In the future, you might see some solid-wood tops and backs, neck refinements, and other things. We have kicked around a few ideas. I can't wait to see what the future will bring for the Wolfelele. Meanwhile, I'll be playing this one.



*The top image is the body assembled before the back is glued. The middle image is a neck block close-up. Bottom finished kit.*

