



Pacific Winds Life Measured in Music – Eugene’s Resource for ‘Ukuleles, Band Instruments, and Music Education

July 25, 2016

UkePrints – Gerald Ross – All of Me



Gerald Ross
PC: Peggy Brisbane



Ross playing lap steel.
PC: Michael Nepper

Today we are joined by the multi-instrumentalist and notable swing ‘ukulele player Gerald Ross. Starting guitar at the age of 14, Ross’ set his musical foundation by playing and imitating music he would hear on the radio, playing with other local kids, and checking out every guitar book at the local library. High school started his bass playing where he officially “caught the bug” for performing and playing music. In college and throughout his twenties Ross continued to perform and supplemented his income with teaching music lessons and working in music stores. His musical career led him to join The Lost World String band whom he toured with and even performed multiple times on *A Prairie Home Companion*. Seven solo ‘ukulele albums, published instructional materials, and a high demand for ‘ukulele festivals has kept Ross busy as he continues to sustain a lifelong musical career.

Though it was a hard choice to choose just one song, I finally decided on Ross’ rendition of the popular swing tune *All of Me*. Here Ross exhibits tastefulness, subtle embellishments, and masterful fingerpicking to bring this toetapping tune to life. Ross starts with a hook by interweaving a double stop and a single note line with a syncopated G7. The song launches into the melody as a background rhythm guitar enters into a swing rhythm. Ross focuses on chords to help not only articulate the melody but provide depth and texture to the chords played on the acoustic guitar. Seemingly effortless, Ross’ wrist almost never moves as his fingers do most of the work. Ross continues to slide into chords from both a half step down and a half step up, bouncing the listener back and forth creating more motion in his playing (0:29, 0:33, 0:36, etc.). Small embellishments to the melody (0:35) and varying tone (0:50-0:58) keep the listener interested as begins to carve his way into a solo. Ross makes his ‘ukulele sound like a big band horn section as moves between various inversions of chords adding in color tones with more syncopation. Pull-offs (1:16), his use of chromaticism (1:03), and staccato chords (1:31) create a fun and interesting solo to listen to (and also never leaving the foundational swing rhythm). Back into the melody for the last spin of the form, Ross continues to add variation to ceaselessly capture his listener’s attention. Tagging the last line once, Ross finishes cleanly with a simple but perfect ending for *All of Me*.

UkePrints (<https://pacificwindsukulele.wordpress.com/category/ukulele-2/ukeprints/>) is a curated playlist of some essential ukulele tracks that all ukulele player should listen to. These songs have left a legacy for future players and in essence, sound impressions of the ‘ukulele or what I like to call them: UkePrints

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