



Tablet Madness

Moving to digital music with Charles Finch & Chris Russell

Benefits of Using a Tablet:

- Compact and portable (compared to music folders and books). You can carry all of your music with you on one tablet using a minimal amount of storage space on your tablet.
- Can create set lists for performances and rehearsals. No searching or sorting of physical music to create set lists for a performance.
- Can use special stands to hold the tablet securely (beyond laying it on a standard music stand)
- Can use a foot turning device; not always necessary with ukulele music (compared to Piano music) unless you are playing multi-page songs.
- Can mark/annotate your music
- Can make “links” or jumps for repeats, D.S., D.C., Coda
- Have access to a metronome and tuners (See ClearTune and Tonal Harmony as other tuning options)
- Can easily “flag” a score or add it to a “practice” set list for music you want to practice and not forget/have trouble finding
- Can create collections or libraries of music to organize your music
- Can share set lists, collections, and libraries with others
- Can scan music (take pictures) in an emergency
- Can add audio tracks or record audio tracks and embed them in a score
- Can crop or rearrange pages (other apps may be better for this feature)
- No dark performance (lighting) limitations
- No more paper: wet, ripped, weight, printing, copying, three ring binders

Negatives:

- Cost
- Fragile; dropping, weather, etc.
- Batteries can run out, so charge it before any gigs or rehearsals
- In direct sunlight, it can overheat temporarily or be hard to see.
- Creating a searchable index in an existing PDF can be time consuming
- Not all eBooks are available as a PDF.
- Learning curve - can be confusing for the new user.

Best Options for Applications to Use for Music Reading:

These are PDF music readers; applications made for musicians to interact with PDFs with special features and tools for musicians. They are not meant to be a PDF editor or eBook reader.

iPad: forScore, MobileSheets, unrealBook

Android: MobileSheets

Windows: MobileSheets

Prices:

- forScore \$24.99
- MobileSheets: \$15.99

*****Some ukulele players with iPads like to use Apple Books or Kindle for their music; while some features of digital music work with these programs, many do not. The key benefit is buying a book, having access to the book, and being able to search for a song (Apple Books, not Amazon Kindle). See the link to Tony Anthonisen's reference (end of this handout) if you are interested in this approach.***

If I want to buy an iPad, what should I buy?

- Only for sheet music? Latest (M3) Wi-Fi iPad Air 13" 256GB (\$899 or less– check Costco & Sam's Club)
- For other purposes PLUS sheet music?: Latest Wi-Fi iPad Pro 13" (M4) \$1199
- If used, look at Apple Refurbished or Best Buy
- Be cautious about used purchases from private parties (device locking)
- Do not buy a used iPad older than the last generation (6th gen - 2022) with a 12.9" screen and 256GB of memory.
- Apple Care isn't a bad purchase (at a discount at Costco and Apple Education)
- iPads are a 4:3 format; fits a page more traditionally but page may be overlapped by open toolbar

If I want to buy an Android tablet, what should I buy?

- Buy the largest screen with the newest version of Android. I would highly recommend checking reviews and sticking to name brands that have been around for a while. Name brands continue to provide updates. Cheaper tablets may not (based on experience). Samsung Galaxy tablets and Lenovo tablets have been great.
- Android tablets are generally less expensive than iPads and offer more bang for the buck
- 16:9 or 16:10 format; may be ideal for two page music – scores can be cropped

If I want to buy a Windows Tablet, what should I buy?

- Larger screen size
- Fastest processor
- Latest version of Windows

General information on tablet size

- Screen size is diagonal
- The size of the screen you need depends on how far away you put the tablet from your face. It's all relative. The closer to your face, the smaller it can be. The further away from your face, the larger it needs to be.
- With some of the wonderful tablet mounts, which can be attached to a microphone stand, you can get the tablet fairly close to your face, so you could get by with a smaller size. Smaller tablet sizes are generally less expensive.
- Charles has a 13" tablet (diagonal measurement) and uses a tablet mount attached to my microphone stand and orient the tablet in landscape mode to view two pages side by side at the same time. The page height is a little less than 7 inches. When others flip a page in the middle of a two page song, he does not need to, and does not need a pedal.
- Chris uses a 12.9" iPad, with an AirTurn Tech Assist Stand. Most of the time, he uses the iPad in portrait mode, looking at one page a time in forScore; on a two page song, he will rotate the screen to landscape and turn on two-page view in forScore. He also rarely uses a page turning pedal for ukulele, conducting, or playing tuba. If he plays piano or has a multi-page work (e.g. ukulele tablature of many pages), he will use a pedal. He also uses his non-Apple Apple Pencil all the time. His tablet is his key piece of technology—his MacBook and his iPhone support the work (e.g. videos) he does on his iPad.

Recommended Skills to Learn:

- Importing new music into your tablet
- Updating existing music on your tablet with a more recent version (and replacing/deleting the current version so you don't have multiple copies)
- Create a set list
- Editing an existing set list
- Creating collections or libraries for organizing your music
- Learning how to name your files so you don't accidentally replace a file on your tablet with another that shares the same name
- Adding metadata to a piece of music (Composer, Genre, Instrumentation, etc.)
- Learning how to back up your files locally and to the cloud (so you don't lose anything)
- Learning how to restore your backed up files to your tablet
- Learning how to annotate your music with notes, highlighting, etc.
- Learn how to make links/jumps

- Learning how to create a chord chart on your tablet or computer using something like Microsoft Word or Song Book Pro, save it as a PDF file, and share it with others. This topic is a potential session of its own. Charles has developed a very effective format for what people erroneously call “Tabs,” which Petey Mack calls “Finchcized.” Chris does a lot of work in the app Notion Mobile with lead sheets (traditional notation and chords) and actual ukulele tablature.

Optional Accessories:

- Cases (to protect your tablet). Suggestion: find a case that has a zippered pouch for carrying your charger, cables, usb stick, etc.
- Apple Pencil
- Amazon Apple Pencils (Device Specific)
- Foot Pedals - Air Turn, PageFlip, Donner, Joyo, Lekato, etc.
- Stands - Air Turn Tech Assist (\$89), Other various tablet stands on Amazon
- Tablet Shades. Check Amazon.com. You could also make one out of foam core board, tape, and some velcro.

Where to Find Music

- Know the difference between chord charts, lead sheets, and tablature.
- Many ukulele resources are free and in PDF format
 - SCIUC materials
 - Local ukulele group shared folders (Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive),
 - Peteymack2.weebly.com
 - ukesterbrown.com
 - ozbcoz.com
 - ukulelehunt.com
 - ukestuff.info
 - ukeeducation.org
 - liveukulele.com (Dominator’s tabs)
 - theukulelereview.com,
 - thequietamericanmusic.com
 - Most ukulele creators on YouTube offer or sell PDFs with subscriptions (e.g. Sam Muir, Mat Dahlberg, Christopher Shannon-Davis, Craig Chee & Sarah Maisel, etc.).
- Some ukulele resources can be purchased from a publisher directly in PDF format, such as the Mel Bay “Favorite Old-Time American Songs for Ukulele” that is used by the TCUC.
<https://www.melbay.com/Products/30364BCDEB/favorite-oldtime-american-songs-for-ukulele.aspx>
- Some books are not directly available as PDF, such as the Jim Beloff Daily Ukulele Books. These are often available on Apple Books or Amazon Kindle (which have their own apps). Individual songs can be purchased as PDFs directly from Hal Leonard

(Sheet Music Direct). As these are copyright protected and important tools for ukulele groups, and your support of the artist is important! And please never share a scanned version with someone who hasn't already bought the book. Scanned versions of books 1 & 2 can be found online; you can buy a Apple Books or Amazon Kindle version, take screen shots, and add single songs to your PDF Music Reader (there are apps that take a photo and convert it to a PDF), or you can buy a physical book and scan the whole book, or have it scanned for you (1DollarScan—but this can take a while).

How to Get Music on your Device

forScore (iPad)

- Someone shares a file or complete setlist via AirDrop
- Individual files from Google Drive (Can be tricky, as you have to add a shared drive to “My Drive.” In general iPads do not work as smoothly with Google Services as Android Tablets)
- “Open In” (select forScore) from any application
- You can use the camera feature to add a page or a score
- You can attach an external drive to an iPad via a USB dongle

MobileSheets

- Individual Files from Google Drive, Dropbox, and OneDrive
- AirDrop (iPad)
- Android
- You can use the built in camera to take a photo of the music and add it to MobileSheets
- If you have an Android tablet, you can connect a usb stick to the tablet to copy music over. Great for backups, too.

Useful Tools

- You can make set lists from your libraries (excellent for performances and rehearsals)
- Links (Common Terminology for forScore and Mobile Sheets)
- Settings: Flip Between Scores (Setlists or Scores)
- Tuner (not a part of Mobile Sheets)
- Gestures: Swipe, Tap. etc.
- Metronome - for keeping a consistent tempo

Manuals

- forScore: <https://forscore.co/user-guides/>
- MobileSheets: <https://www.zubersoft.com/mobilesheets/MobileSheetsPro.pdf>
- MobileSheets YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@zubersoft/videos>
- YouTube videos can be helpful

More Reading

- <https://www.tablets-for-musicians.com/best-tablets/>
- <https://www.nodeadguys.com/a-piano-blog/the-paperless-pianist-transitioning-from-sheet-music-to-tablet>
- Tony Anthonisen's "Songs and Song Books on Your iPad"
https://www.bluegrassfun.com/uploads/4/2/6/7/4267517/songs_and_song_books_on_your_ipad.pdf