

Music Ability Guidelines for participating in a Jam Session

Hello All,

Playing with others (jamming) is totally different from playing alone. Likewise, it is also different from playing in a band where you got to rehearse the songs in advance. And it is different yet again from attending a band rehearsal. A certain level of musical proficiency is required to jam. You have to be on your toes.

Below is some info on partaking in a Jam Session. These guidelines are not only requested for NJ Jam Session and Music Fans jam sessions, but pretty much for any jam you attend where you see a certain level of musicianship. They are necessary to partake in any jam with this group.

Here are the guidelines according to instrument type:

• **Chorded, polyphonic instruments: (guitar, piano, keyboards, organ, harp, etc.):**

Ideally, you are able to read music, at least treble clef, as well as read/play chords.

Short of this, you will need to know all your chords, and follow a lead sheet.

If you do not know every chord, at the minimum know all your triads, and be able to play them at will, following the lead sheet. When you see a chord with a "7" (M7, 7, m7, °7, etc.) on it, just disregard the 7 and play the triad.

Know how to follow a lead sheet and play the chords according to the tempo of the song set forth by who ever counted off.

Know your basic I-IV-V Blues progression in every key.

• **Monophonic instruments (flute, sax, horns, violin, trombone, trumpet, etc.)**

Be able to read treble clef, as you will be playing the melody.

Ideally, you will also know how to improvise but this is not mandatory.

Bring with you a fake book (such as The Real Book 6) in the key of your instrument, i.e., a Bb book for tenor, trumpet, or Eb book for alto, etc. This is important!!

• **Vocalists, i.e., Singers**

Ideally, you would know how to read treble clef music.

Short of this, at least be able to read the beats of the music, if not the note.

The biggest challenge for the vocalist is knowing when to come in. If you cannot read at all, kindly consider learning how to read/follow the beats and rests.

Kindly read the Jam Session Guidelines, vocal section, for the format of performing a jazz format song, here

https://www.pianolessonsny.com/uploads/1/8/6/8/18685284/jam_session_guidelines.pdf

You will get a long break in the middle of the song while everyone is soloing. You also need to not come in too soon from line to line. Hence, being able to follow music eradicates these problems.

- **Bass**

Ideally, know how to read bass clef.

And/or, know how to form a bass walk up line using the chords in the lead sheet /music.

Short of the above, know both the basic jazz and rock rhythms, and play the bass, or alternate bass note, according to the of rhythm type of the song.

- **Drums and auxiliary percussion**

Know your rudiments.

Know how to follow printed sheet music for a song. (Ideal but not mandatory).

Be able to keep an even tempo, set forth by who ever counted off (it will not be you).

Be able to keep an even tempo without speeding up.

Be able to keep the volume way down. Not too loud! We need to hear ourselves and each other.

OK, I think I covered everyone.

If you are joining us in a jam for the first time and are uncertain if you meet the qualifications, please feel free to write me with your questions or concerns. We will do our best to accommodate you.

If you are still in the learning stages of your instrument, consider coming to a jam, and not necessarily playing. We always need an assistant to pass out sheet music and such. This is a great way to learn by observing, and see for yourself when you're ready to partake.

We also recommend doing some research on jam sessions in general to familiarize yourself with the process. This is a closed jam, with experienced players being welcome to lead , under my leadership.

If you do not meet the minium criteria for your instrument, or do not partake in normal jam session protocol (i.e., not following the chords of the song, not following the tempo, playing too loud, etc.) we will kindly ask you to lay out until you acquire more playing experience.

That's it! Thanks for listening.

Infinity

Organizer

NJ Jam Session and Music Fans