‘GOOD’ JAM ETIQUETTE FOR SYDNEY MUSIC JAM MEETUP

written for Robert I by a professional music educator and musician

We all want to enjoy a jam - especially when we pay for it. Whether we are an instrumentalist, a vocalist, a newbie or more experienced, a beginner or a virtuoso, a neuro typical or a neurodiverse with sensory issues (sensory hypersensitivity - This can manifest as increased stress, anxiety and difficulty concentrating in noisy environments)

The term ‘ jamming’ sounds like it is all about free form and ‘letting loose’ but actually ***without sticking to the rules of good music*** it can quickly turn into a cacophony of noise that assaults our ears and disturbs the soul. Noisy undisciplined ‘jamming’ just makes us feel tired and not uplifted as we should be.

When there are 8 people stuffed in an airless room there are some good manners that must be observed to make a song the best it can be.

1. One leader per song(s) - that leader does NOT have to know everything about the song. Just 3 things: **the key** and the number of vocalists. The leader nominates **who sings the melody, the harmonies or backing parts** (if the song has any) OR they can just sing it themselves. *They should not be lambasted if they only want one vocal in the song.* They should also **begin the song or nominate someone to begin it in <u>the tempo of their choosing.</u>** (Note: a considerate jammer will research the key before the jam OR before it officially begins)
2. Rotate leader every song so every participant gets the maximum number of turns to do the songs they want.
3. <u>A 60 second **rest break between songs where no-one plays**</u>**.** Verbal encouragement or appreciation is welcome in the rest break. Ear resting is also important for the level of sound being produced. This is also the appropriate time for a loo break, or quick checking of messages. Do not take a call inside the room please ,just go out the door.
4. Lead Vocal: Do **not** turn up your mic unnecessarily. Do **not** oversing - we are in a small space. If others say you are too loud, respect their eardrums.
5. Backing Vocal parts: If you are not the leader or lead vocalist , ask them what type of backing they prefer. Do **not** start singing before the leader has begun the song. Do **not** start singing when the instrumentalists are finding a key or testing out a chord progression. Do **not** sing in all the spaces between the lead vocal. Do **not** sing the melody line unless requested by the leader/lead vocalist. If you don’t know when you should sing, just ask the leader.
   If you do the aforementioned faux pas and you have been told that you are and you persist - you will not be popular.
6. Be on time or early (if possible) the earlier you arrive the more music we can make
7. Asking questions and listening to what other jammers are saying is just as important as playing.