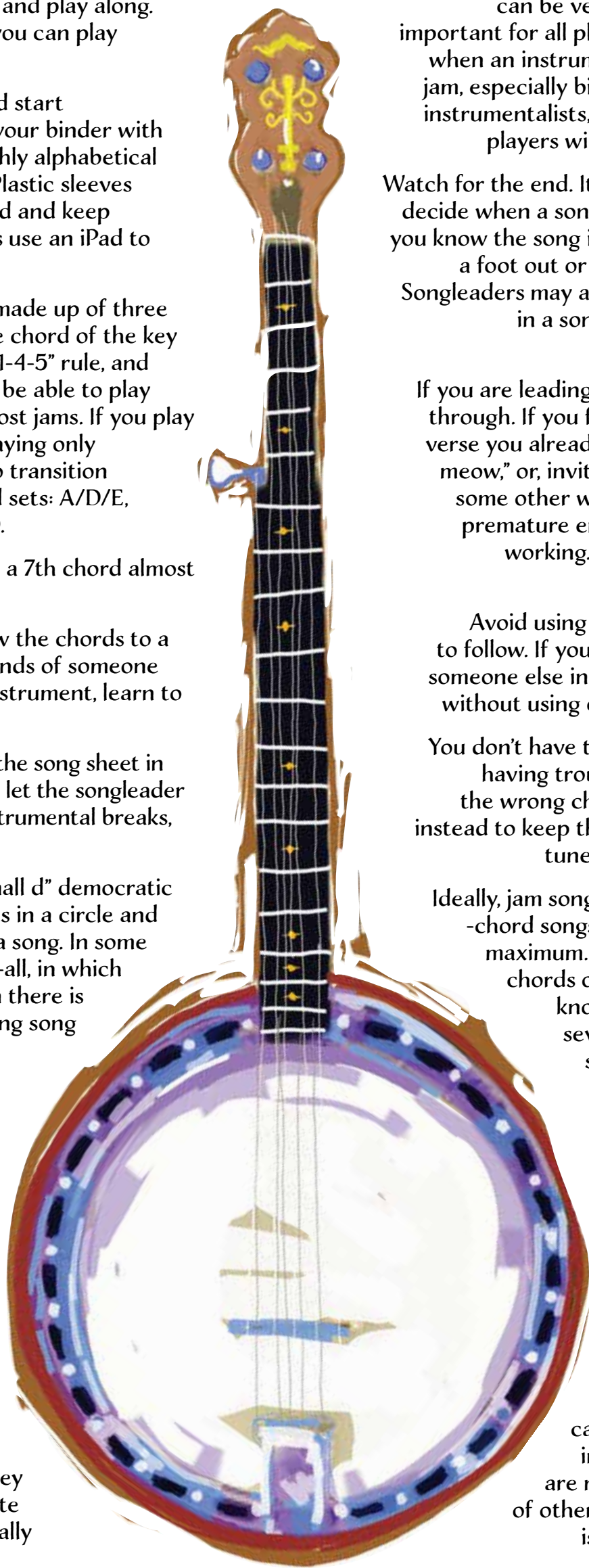




JAMIQUETTIE



20 TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN A MUSIC JAM



1 Always tune. Spend \$20 to get a good electronic tuner to clip on your instrument and use frequently.

2 Identify a few songs you want to play and learn them. Find the chords and lyrics online (Chordie.com is a great resource) and create songsheets. Find YouTube videos of people playing those songs and play along. Memorize the words and chords so you can play them without songsheets.

3 Make a binder of your songs and start building your repertoire. Bring your binder with you to jams. Keep your songs in roughly alphabetical order so you can find them quickly. Plastic sleeves make it easier to shuffle songs around and keep songsheets weatherproof. Some folks use an iPad to store and access songsheets.

4 Many songs played in jams are made up of three chords and usually begin on the chord of the key the song is in. Learn chord sets, the "1-4-5" rule, and practice chord changes, and you will be able to play 90 percent of the songs played in most jams. If you play guitar, learn "cheater" bar chords (playing only the bottom four strings) to be able to transition more quickly between chords. Chord sets: A/D/E, C/F/G, D/G/A, E/A/B, F/Bb/C, G/C/D.

5 A major chord works in place of a 7th chord almost always (i.e. G/G7, C/C7 etc.)

6 If you play guitar and don't know the chords to a song being played, watch the hands of someone who does. If you play another instrument, learn to recognize guitar chords.

7 Let the songleader lead. Even if the song sheet in front of you has different words, let the songleader lead it as he/she wishes, with instrumental breaks, changes in lyrics, etc.

8 Wait your turn. Jamming is a "small d" democratic pastime. Generally everyone sits in a circle and each person takes a turn to suggest a song. In some circles it might be more of a free-for-all, in which case feel free to call out a song when there is a lull. The idea is to avoid monopolizing song suggestions.

9 When it's your turn, it's your choice. Be ready to pick a song when it's your turn. You can lead the song, or suggest a song someone else can lead that you want to hear or play along with.

10 Play appropriate to the jam. Suggest songs that are in the style the jam group is playing (country, 70's rock, bluegrass etc.) and play appropriate instruments (i.e. don't bring electric guitars to an acoustic jam).

11 Say the name of the song, the key and the chords, and demonstrate the "A" and "B" parts before you actually start playing it.

12 Songleading is hard and requires multitasking: singing, playing, keeping the tempo steady, and watching for people who want to do instrumentals. If you are leading a song, take breaks for instrumentals if you have people who

want to play them. When it comes time to call them to play, call their name or instrument, or just make eye contact and nod your head or point your finger at them.

Get quiet for the instrumentals. The act of calling out an instrumental can be very subtle which is why it's important for all players to pay attention and notice when an instrumental is underway. In an acoustic jam, especially big ones, it can be hard to hear the instrumentalists, so to amplify these players other players will "get quiet" on their instruments. **13**

Watch for the end. It's up to the songleader to decide when a song ends, and he/she will let you know the song is wrapping up by sticking a foot out or calling out "Repeat that last line!" Songleaders may also suggest an "a capella" moment in a song when all instruments are silent. Be sure to watch for those too! **14**

If you are leading a song, play it all the way through. If you forget the words, repeat a verse you already sang, whistle, sing "meow meow meow," or, invite an instrumental or improvise in some other way. You can also bring a song to a premature end and skip verses if it's really not working. If you start out in the wrong key, change it at the beginning. **15**

Avoid using a capo, it makes you hard to follow. If you must use a capo, identify someone else in the group who knows the chords without using one who other players can watch. **16**

You don't have to play every song. If you're having trouble with a song, don't play the wrong chords. Use your instrument instead to keep the beat, or sing along, or sit it out, tune, refresh your drink, take a break. **17**

Ideally, jam songs are three-chord or four-chord songs. Five chords is about the maximum. Don't select songs with too many chords or unusual chords that few people know (unless you have songsheets or several people know the song). Such songs are affectionately known as "jambusters." **18**

Don't record or take pictures without permission. Jamming is not a performance, it's an interactive experience that can be deeply personal and emotional. Taking pictures or recording jammers can be distracting and change the nature of the jam if players feel they must perform for the camera. Many jammers are shy and inexperienced, and often feel they are not "good enough" to play in front of others, so taking pictures or recording is also discouraged for this reason. **19**

If you are sitting in the circle, you are in the jam. If you want to chat with someone, smoke, text or talk on the phone, respect other players and move out of the circle. **20**