

The 10 Commandments Of Jamming



JAMMING

Twelve years of festivals and other get-togethers have made it obvious that jams can become a cacophony of sounds instead of the sweet music we intend to make when we sit down with fellow musicians to play. This could be eliminated, or at least minimized, if each of us would observe some common sense guidelines rather than trying to outplay our neighbor in either speed or volume!

I came upon the following on the Internet. Smile as you read them, but pay attention also. I think you will agree that, if observed by jam participants, fewer frustrated players would walk out of a jam because of the lack of discipline.

The Ten Commandments of Jamming by L.P. via Nancy Shill

- I. Thou shalt not ever forsake the beat.
- II. Thou shalt arrange thyself in a small circle so that thou mayest hear and see the other musicians. Thou shalt listen with thine ears to the songs and attempt to play in accord with the group; also, open thine eyes betimes to look about thee, lest there be some visual sign someone is endeavoring to send thee. Thou shalt play softly when someone lifteth his voice in song, when playing harmony, and when thou knowest not what thou art doing.
- III. Thou shalt play in tune. Tune thine instrument well, and tune it often with thine electric tuner, lest the sounds emanating from thine instrument be

unclean.

IV. Thou shalt commence and cease playing each tune together as one, so that the noise ye make be a joyful noise, and not a heinous tinkling that goeth in fits and starts, for that is unclean, and is an abomination. Whensoever a musician sticketh forth his foot, as though he were afflicted with a cramp in the fatted calf, thou must complete the rest of that verse, and then cease.

V. Thou shalt stick out thine own foot or else lift up thy voice crying "This is it!" or "Last time!" if thou hast been the one to begin the song, and it has been played sufficient times over. If the one who began a tune endeth it not by one of these signs, then the tune will just go on and on, like the Old Testament, until the listeners say, "Hark! It all soundeth the same."

VI. Thou shalt concentrate and thou shalt not confound the music by mixing up the A part and the B part. Most songs, but not all, proceedeth according to the ancient law "AABB". But if thou sinneth in this regard, or make any mistake that is unclean, thou may atone - not by ceasing to play - but by reentering the tune in the proper place and playing on.

VII. Thou shalt be ever mindful of the key the banjo is tuned in, and play many tunes in that key, for the banjo is but a lowly instrument, which must needs be retuned each time there is a key change.

VIII. Thou shalt not speed up or slow down accidentally when playing a tune, for it is an abomination. (See commandment I)

IX. Thou shalt not, by thine own self, commence noodling off on a tune the other musicians know not, unless asked or unless thou art teaching that tune, for it is an abomination, and the other musicians will not hold thee guiltless, and shall take thee off their computer lists, yea, even unto the third and the fourth generation.

X. Thou shalt have fun and play well.