

# LOUISVILLE JAZZ SOCIETY

## Jam Session Guidelines

A jam is primarily about playing **TOGETHER** with others and building community with other players, the audience, and the venue. It is more about collaboration, respect, kindness, and generosity than about dazzling others with your amazing chops. This is a vibe free zone.

1. **Buy something!** The best way to sustain a jam session (or any gig) is to spend money at the host establishment. Also, **TIP THE SERVERS AND STAFF!** They can be your best allies and advocates.
2. **If you want to play on the jam, sign up!** Everyone who wants to play should put their name, instrument, and the title of a tune they would like to play. Groups of 6-7 musicians will be formed by the session leader. Vocalists should indicate key, tempo, etc. Before playing, vocalists should tell band desired format (intro, ending, scat vocal solo?, etc). Ballads are generally discouraged in jam sessions. For singers, verses are generally not played (with the exception of Stardust and Lush Life...but those are ballads). On tunes with a vocalist, try to have no more than two soloists.
3. The front line people should discuss **tune selection**, including key, tempo, style, etc. and be ready to step right up and instruct the rhythm section. Try to avoid playing consecutive tunes in the same tempo, style, or key. Generally, ballads are to be avoided in a jam session.
4. For tunes with various sets of common changes or form variations (like a vamp, interlude, or tag), be prepared to clearly and succinctly state what version you wish to play.
5. Every player plays one tune and then sits down to wait their turn for another tune if others are also waiting.
6. If you don't know a tune, take a seat and wait for a different tune. **Use of fakebooks, reading tunes off a phone or iPad, etc is not allowed** except in a rare case for pianist or bassist when no other RHYTHM SECTION players know a tune others wish to play.
7. Decide in advance who takes the first solo. Don't stretch out too much (each solo should be 1-2 minutes). Subsequent soloists should base the length of their solos on the first soloist.
8. Discuss in advance whether you will include a bass solo, drum solo, trading, shout choruses, etc.
9. **When in doubt, underplay.** Play less, play softer, etc. Serve the music and serve your collaborators.