

# JAM-ing WITH iPADS

*Presented by:*

**Adam Calus, MMEd, Music Director at New Mission School**



**LETS**

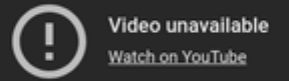
**JAM!**

# Introductions

*Who are we?*

**Activity:** Turn, Talk, Volunteer Share. (5mins)

1. Turn to someone sitting near you.
2. Share with your partner who you are, where you teach, and your familiarity / curiosity with getting students to improvise.
3. Volunteers can share out to the group.



# Introductions

*Who are we?*

**Adam Calus, Professional Musician and Educator**

- Charlestown High School
- Education Through Music - MA
- Berklee College of Music
- New England Conservatory
- New Mission School



# TODAY's SCHEDULE

1

Welcome,  
Warm-Ups,  
Jam

2

What is JAM?

3

Steps to JAMming,  
roles and ways to  
participate, learning  
objectives, what is  
needed to facilitate

4

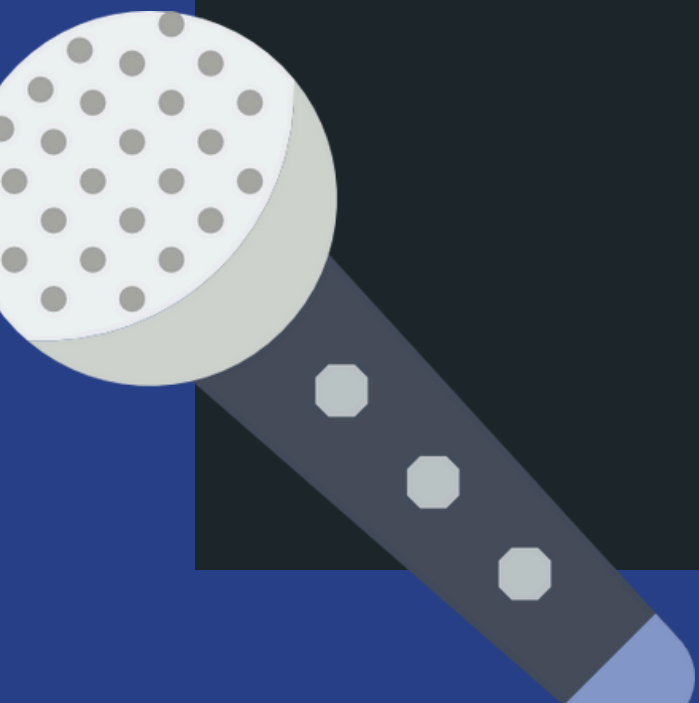
A closer look at  
a JAM

5

Creating a JAM

6

Application of JAM to iPad



# WHAT IS JAM?

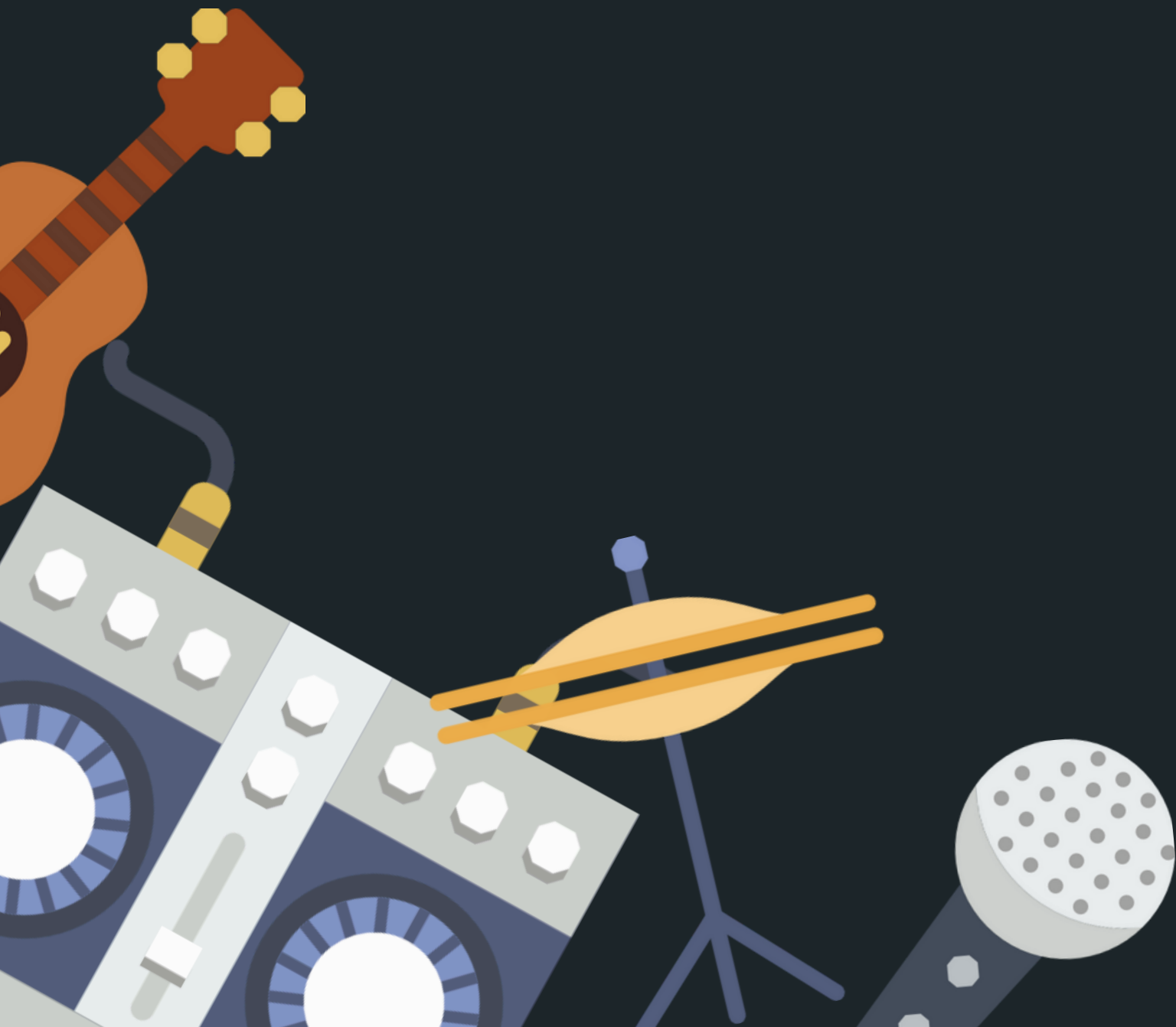
*Just Act Musically*

**A philosophy rooted in the idea that spontaneous musical creation and interaction can happen at any moment between teachers and students during music class. JAM aims to breakdown and codify these moments so that music teachers can implement these short, fun, and relevant interactions into any activity of music class in a variety of ways.**

# WHAT DOES A JAM LOOK LIKE?

- Music teacher is performing the "glue" that is holding together what the students are doing.\*
- Students are performing something simple and repetitive on their instrument with ease.
- Shifts (harmonically and melodically) happen through musical exploration and dialogue.
- Everyone is having fun!

\*Advanced students might not even need a "glue." or they might BE the GLUE!



# WHAT IS IT MUSICALLY?

- Short 4-8 bar composition.
- Has a recognizable chord progression.
- Has simple/short/repetitive melodic and harmonic opportunities (layers) for students to perform and explore during the JAM.
- Has a solid rhythm / beat played by a percussionist or a beat machine.
- Simple enough to be played by all.



# EXAMPLES

## OG CHS Drumline JAM



In this JAM, the drummer on the Bass Drum is the one who started and sort of became the GLUE. I then came in to assist with a chord progression on the piano and everyone else followed.

## CHS Music 3rd Period JAM



In this JAM, this class was given specific roles within the musical structure. Keyboards played something specific, basses played something specific, etc. etc. There were multiple parts to this JAM that we developed into this daily warm up.

## "Stay With Me" JAM



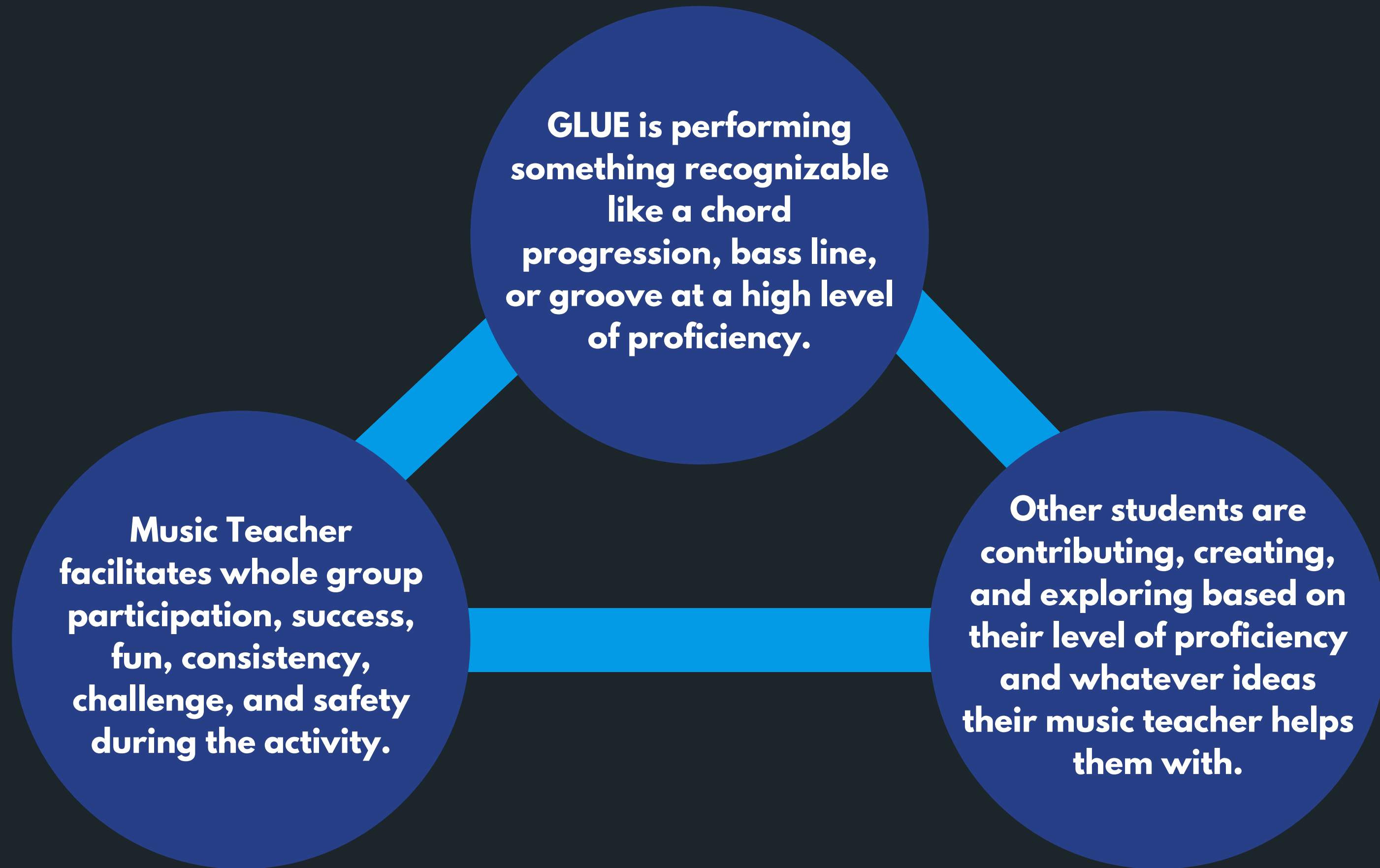
In this JAM, the students already knew how to play the chord progression to "Stay With Me" by Sam Smith. They decided to play it as a JAM one day as a part of their warm-up.

## Adele Summer Program JAM



During a Summer Program at CHS, we had a student who could play "Turning Tables" by Adele. I made this student be the GLUE, while I went around and then showed the other students what they could do to participate. The end result is what you see.

# CORE ELEMENTS OF JAM



# STEPS TO JAMMING

**Level 1 Jam** *Where every teacher should start*  
**Completely Planned out**

1

## Visualize

- Teacher thinks through the overall musical idea / vibe for the jam.

2

## Prepare

- Teacher composes the JAM.
- Teacher plans what the GLUE is.
- Teacher plans what students will be playing / ways to participate in the JAM based on their current musical proficiency.

3

## Execute

- Teacher shows the GLUE what to perform if they are a student.
- Teacher quickly shows students how they can participate / contribute during the JAM.

4

- GLUE initiates the JAM. Others engage slowly.
- Teacher encourages / facilitates participation from everyone in the group in a variety of ways.
- JAM continues for about 5 mins.
- Teacher or GLUE end the JAM.

5

- The group celebrates and briefly discusses the music that was made during the JAM.

# STEPS TO JAMMING

**Level 2 Jam** Once teachers are comfortable w / L1  
**Spontaneous & Structured**

1

## Visualize

- Teacher gets idea on the fly about an overall vibe / chord progression / key signature etc. for the JAM.
- Teacher might take 1-2 mins to brainstorm in front of students to quickly flesh out the inspiration.

2

## Execute

- Teacher instructs the GLUE first and then the GLUE begins the JAM.

3

- Teacher moves about the music space showing each student how they can participate / contribute in the JAM creating ideas for students on the fly based on their current level of proficiency.
- Teacher encourages / facilitates whole class participation.

4

- JAM continues for about 5 mins.
- Teacher or GLUE end the JAM.

5

- The group celebrates and briefly discusses the music that was made during the JAM.

# STEPS TO JAMMING

**Level 3 Jam** *The GOAL. What we hope all teachers and students can do*  
**Structureless Dialogue**

1

2

3

4

5

## Execute

- Someone starts the JAM. Maybe it is the teacher, maybe it is a student.
- Everyone else listens and slowly start to join in.
- Key signature, vibe, chord progression, beat, etc. are all established as other musicians join in.
- There is no real GLUE just listening and responding.
- Teacher encourages / facilitates whole class participation.
- Teacher supports students with WHAT to JAM only where it is needed.
- There is an emphasis here on independence during the JAM.
- JAM continues for about 5 mins.
- Teacher or even better a student, end the JAM.
- The group celebrates and briefly discusses the music that was made during the JAM.

# ROLES / WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

*During Level 1 and Level 2 JAMs*

## Role during the jam

### THE GLUE

- To hold the jam together with accurate and consistent performance rooted in listening to all.
- To make it "real" for the rest of the class by playing something recognizable and at a high level of proficiency.
- To switch it up, change things around during the JAM when they seem too repetitive.

### EVERYONE ELSE

- To follow the GLUE and what everyone else in the JAM is creating.
- To improvise and explore within some given structure.
- To try out as many different ways of participating as possible.

## Ways to participate

- Playing a chord progression on a harmonic instrument.
- Playing a solid groove on the drum set or other rhythm instrument.
- Performing some other repetitive ostinato that gives shape and harmonic progression like a bassline etc.

- Playing a short and repetitive melodic phrase that fits the key signature of the glue.
- Playing a short and repetitive harmonic phrase that fits the key signature of the glue.
- Playing a short and repetitive rhythmic phrase on a non-pitched instrument that fits the groove of the glue.
- Anything else composed by the teacher / facilitator that fits the overall vibe, groove, key signature, harmonic progression etc.

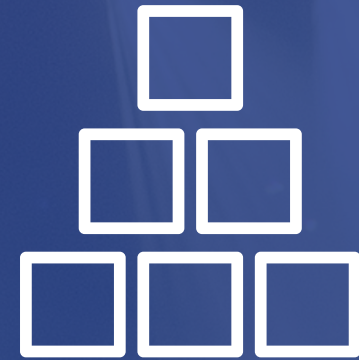
# STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*The sequence of learning / outcomes for JAM related activities*

**Exploring** —→ **Refining** —————→ **GOAL**



Students understand and explore the tools for the toolbox as they are related to JAMing (musical conversation) in an open setting structured for fun / success.



Students begin to understand and demonstrate successful JAMming within a structure.



Students are able to understand and demonstrate less dependency on the pre-planned structure for JAMming and are able to start coming up with musical dialogue on their own.



Students are able to openly initiate musical dialogue without pre-planned structure and facilitation. Students can listen to other musicians in a group setting and engage with musical dialogue appropriately.

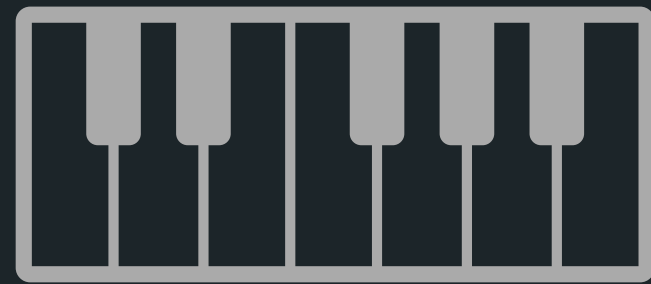
# WHAT IS NEEDED TO FACILITATE A JAM?



Some basic skills  
in composition



- Knowledge of simple harmonic progressions found in pop music.
- Knowledge of short ostinati found in pop music.
- Knowledge of how to take the notes "available" to students and combine them with the chord progressions you know about.
- Ability to make quick edits to what you are spontaneously composing.



Ability to play a  
harmonic  
instrument (guitar,  
piano, ukulele, etc.)



A high level  
understanding of the  
progression and  
regression of skills  
required to use the  
music making tools  
in the space



Knowing how to  
make the JAM  
sound "good."

# WHAT IS "good?"

*Subjective...let's break it down*

- The music being engaged with is manageable for all performers given their level of proficiency. Easy to perform and that is prevalent in the overall sound.
- The rhythm and timing of the music being performed is aligned across all performers. A groove can be identified. You can tap your foot to it...nod your head to it.
- The music is being performed with mostly accurate technique.
- The music is being performed with most notes in tune.

# WHAT IS "good?"

*(continued)*

- The music is being performed at a collaboratively appropriate dynamic. Blend. Nothing sticks out.
- Music is repetitive enough to be catchy, but has some variety (via the teacher-facilitator).
- Music is conventional - a non-musician could easily recognize the chord progression or the overall "vibe" of the music.

# A CLOSER LOOK AT A JAM

*How about the JAM that happened today?*

- What happened?
- What was the glue?
- How was everyone else asked to explore / participate?
- What type of planning do you think went into it?
- Anything else?

# CREATING A JAM

## 1. **Compose Your Glue**

- a. What key will it be in?
- b. Will you use a recording or play the glue yourself?
- c. Can a student perform it?

## 2. **Compose / Think Through: How you want to bring everyone into the JAM**

- a. What can your students play?
- b. What little snippets of music can they perform to contribute to the conversation.
- c. Who will need a lot of support to participate? What does that look like?

## 3. **Visualize it All Coming Together:** Imagine yourself in the space making it happen.

# PRACTICAL APPLICATION

- Activators to start the class
- Teaching students about improvisation
- Brain-breaks mid class
- Teaching any piece of music by rote
- A finisher for your class
- Show off improvisation mid-performance
- Attention getters

# APPLICATION to iPad

*PREPARE - USE OF THE iPad - iPad JAM*


# GET READY

*Using BandLab EDU to get ready for a JAM*

- Every good jam needs a glue. That glue can be you the teacher, a recording, a looper, a really good student in class, but someone has to hold it down.
- When working with students newer to JAM-ing, it is better if you use a recording. We will be using BandLab today.
- BandLab has a really cool feature called smart chords that will allow you to compose any chord progression easily in any key.
- Not sure what a good chord progression is? Don't have time to learn about pop-music composition using only diatonic harmony in accessible key signatures for new musicians? Ask an AI.





# GET SET


*Open up a new song in GarageBand on the iPad and choose one of the following:*



### KEYBOARD



Play an onscreen keyboard using piano, organ, synth and other sounds.


Smart PianoAlchemy SynthSamplerMore Sounds



### GUITAR


Play an onscreen guitar by strumming chords, or tapping and bending notes.


Smart GuitarNotesScalesMore Sounds



### BASS





Tap strings to play acoustic and electric bass lines.

Smart BassNotesScalesMore Sounds



### STRINGS

Tap to play orchestral or solo string parts.


Smart StringsNotesScalesMore Sounds



### DRUMS



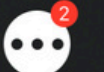
Create beats using a variety of acoustic and electronic drums.

Smart DrumsAcoustic DrumsBeat SequencerMore Sounds



### WORLD

Play different instruments from around the globe.

PipaErhuMore Sounds

# JAM!

*Band Lab Session Link*

# QUESTIONS

*About anything in the presentation or about  
how this could apply to your program*



*You can also use the QR code to submit feedback about this presentation, ask questions, and stay connected!*



# THANK YOU!

*I am happy to stay connected with any of you to support your music teaching, my info is below.*

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