

ABOUT THE JAMS



Each jam in *Just Jams* has at least three things in common:

1. A suggested instrumentation
2. Performance suggestions
3. An accompanying text

The suggested instrumentations are meant to be nothing more than *suggestions*. Do what works best for *your* setting. When playing world music the rhythms and the instruments can get a little exotic. You may not be able to walk down to the corner store and pick up a surdo. Be creative. Substitute suggested instruments with what you have. Aside from percussion instruments, you can also use body percussion or found objects. The possibilities are endless!

Each performance suggestion represents only one way of doing something. If you want to have your group play a jam for 24 measures but the performance suggestion calls for only 8 measures, for goodness sakes, do it *your* way. Don't worry, the Percussion Police aren't going to break down your door and confiscate your djembes. Besides, no one knows your particular setting better than you. Your way is most likely the best way for you and your students. You may also decide to take the performance suggestions from one jam and apply them to a different one. Go for it!

I like providing texts for all the rhythms. The words help make abstract rhythms more concrete for our students and, as a result, much easier to teach. But for me it isn't enough to put just any words with the

jams so long as they fit the rhythms. If the students are learning a rhythm from West Africa, why not learn a little about West African culture by chanting texts that actually teach something beyond the rhythm? Sure, my main goal is to get the students to learn and play the right rhythms, but if I can sneak in a Spanish language lesson, or a few facts about Hawaiian culture, why not?! Along these lines, I also encourage you to consider adding variety to a percussion program by having the students perform some of the jams as speech percussion pieces.

That's about it. You won't find a lot on the history of the instruments or specific playing techniques in *Just Jams*. The following short note about hand-drum basics is plenty to get you started:

There are two primary sounds for most hand drums. The *bass* is produced by bouncing the hand (fingers together) in the center of the drum head. The *tone* is produced by bouncing the pads of the fingers (fingers together) near the rim. B, for bass, or T, for tone, is indicated above most of the hand drum parts in *Just Jams*.

While the use of bass and tone timbres will help the jams sound more authentic, at the end of the day our students want to play. Part of the allure of percussion is its immediacy. My rule of thumb—as long as the students aren't hurting the instruments or themselves, let them play. Technique will come.

Jam on!

IPU JAM AND KĀHELA JAM

BASED ON TRADITIONAL HAWAIIAN RHYTHMS

An *ipu* (EE-poo) is a gourd drum used to accompany chant and dance. The drum is made by attaching two gourds of unequal size together at the necks. It is the only pre-European instrument still used today in Hawaii.

The *kāhela* (KAH-heh-lah) is the basic rhythm used to accompany the standing hula.



SUGGESTED INSTRUMENTS

Rhythm Sticks
Rattle
Small Hand Drum
Medium Hand Drum

PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS

FORM

- ▶ All play *Ipu Jam* for 8 measures.
- ▶ Continuing to play *Ipu Jam*, all play softly for 8 measures.
- ▶ All *crescendo* for 4 measures.
- ▶ All play loudly for 4 measures.
- ▶ All play *Kāhela Jam* for 16 measures, varying loud and soft as indicated by the conductor.
- ▶ All play *Ipu Jam* for 8 measures.
- ▶ End with a strong downbeat.

EXTRAS

- ▶ The unique rhythmic character of each jam may be found in the interplay between the small and medium hand drums.
- ▶ Consider adding a visual element to your performance: Have the percussionists perform the rhythms to either *Ipu Jam* or *Kāhela Jam* while student dancers perform a hula. Perhaps a teacher or parent in your school has the ability to teach a few basic hula moves. (Our P.E. teacher taught many traditional dances as part of her curriculum.)

ACCOMPANYING TEXTS

The texts for both jams are the names of traditional instruments and culture related to the hula.

Pu'ili	poo-EE-lee	Rhythm sticks made of split bamboo
Kahiko	kah-HEE-koh	Ancient hula
Ukulele	oo-koo-LEH-leh	A four-stringed instrument that is strummed or plucked
Mele	MEH-leh	Chant or song that accompanies the hula
Pā'ū	PAH-oo	A wrapped skirt
Lei	LAY	A wreath of flowers worn around the head or neck

IPI JAM

Rhythm Sticks

2/4

I - pu, Pu' - i - li. I - pu, Pu' i - li.

Rattle

2/4

Hu - la. Hu - la. Hu - la. Hu - la.

Small Hand Drum

2/4

Ka - hi - ko. Ka - hi - ko.

Medium Hand Drum

2/4

U - ku - le - le.

KĀHELA JAM

Rhythm Sticks

2/4

Me - le, Me - le, Pu' - i - li. Me - le, Me - le, Pu' - i - li.

Rattle

2/4

Hu - la. Hu - la. Hu - la. Hu - la.

Small Hand Drum

2/4

Pā' ū. Pā' ū. Pā' ū. Lei.

Medium Hand Drum

2/4

U - ku - le - le.