

Jim Jam Jug Band Workshop

Jan 2017, The Ark

What is a Jug Band?

A jug band is a band originally employing a Jug player and a mix of traditional and home-made instruments. These home-made instruments are ordinary objects adapted to or modified for making of sound, like the washtub bass, washboard, spoons and kazoo.

Jug bands originated in the early part of the 20th century coinciding with ragtime, blues and early jazz music. Jug Bands saw a revival in the late 50's and early 60's along with the New York folk and blues scene, when they were often referred to as Skiffle Bands. Fun fact: The Beatles started out as a Skiffle Band!

The *Jim Jam Jug Band* workshop is designed to bring parents and children together in a fun and creative setting, to learn how to sing and play simple traditional American folk music.

Here are some ideas for making your own instruments at home...



1. A Jug

In the early days of Jug bands, ceramic jugs were used. Glass versions of these jugs are the next best thing but large plastic milk or juice cartons will also work.

Really, any vessel can be used. The idea is to mimic the sound of a tuba by pursing your lips together and buzzing percussively into the jug.

It is not the easiest thing to get right at first but it is worth persevering with!



2. Washboard

Washboards are obviously not common household items these days but they do pop up in antique shops and flea markets a lot.

They can be scraped rhythmically with a steel brush, drummer's brushes and most commonly metal thimbles on the fingers.

Some people like to glue thimbles to the fingertips of a pair of gardening gloves or goal keeper gloves.



3. Cheese Grater

A large cheese grater can be used, scraping it with a stick. It gives a similar effect to a Washboard.



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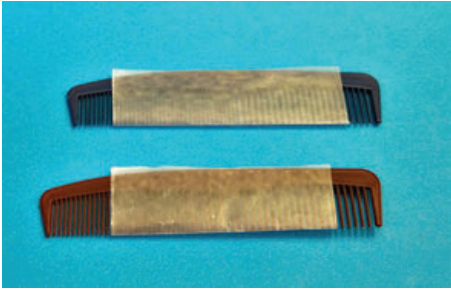


4. Suitcase Bass Drum

An old vintage suitcase is perfect for this and again antique shops and flea markets or charity shops often have them.

Ideally you should use a bass drum pedal, but you can also bang the case with a large drum mallet or place the case face down and stamp on top.

It's best to put some weight inside the case to stop it from toppling if it's on it's side.



5. Comb and Paper / Kazoo

A comb with a piece of paper wrapped around it makes a great humming/buzzing sound very like the sound a kazoo makes.

Both instruments can be used to make musical humming to mimic a trumpet solo for instance.



6. Spoons

You can use two domestic tea spoons. You place your middle finger between the spoons with the concave sides facing each other. Bang them using your free hand or on your knee.

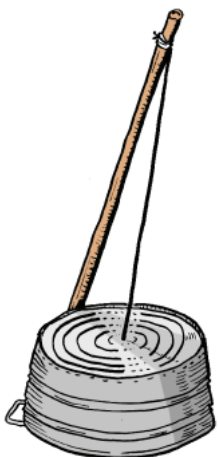
Using a hand above and the knee below is a great technique. It takes some practise.

You can buy musical spoons in a music shop. The spoons are joined together making them much easier to play.



7. Pizza Box Percussion

A regular cardboard pizza box makes a great snare drum stand in. They work very well with drum brushes.



8. Washtub Bass

This is a little trickier to build but well worth the effort!

You will need:

- A large tub - approx. 40 ltrs for a child sized instrument, or up to 90 ltrs for a larger one. A rubber tub creates a better sound than a plastic one but both work.
- A broom/sweeping brush stick. They come in two sizes typically matching the tub sizes.
- Electrical pull line wire or plastic clothes line attached at the top of the stick and the middle of the tub.

The following link is to a great blog entry instructing how to make you own Washtub. <http://arkly.ie/2jmkujuk>

If you do make any of these home, please send us a picture to **TheArkDublin@gmail.com** or via **@TheArkDublin** on social media.