

Highland 2024/2025 Jazz Band Auditions

Guitar

General Information

There are two jazz bands at Highland Middle School. These ensembles, Jazz 1 and Jazz 2, use “traditional” jazz band instruments (saxophones, trumpets, trombones, guitar, piano, bass, and drums). An audition is required in order to be considered for Jazz 1, and rhythm section instruments only in Jazz 2. Exact dates for the auditions and extra-help sessions will be posted outside the band room at the beginning of the year. They will also be available on the jazz audition website (<https://bit.ly/HMSjazz>).

Every seat in each jazz band is open at the start of the school year. Placement in either jazz band as a 6th or 7th grader does not guarantee placement in that same band or a higher band the following year.

Directions for the Music

Attached to this note is the audition material for next year’s jazz auditions. Included are portions of songs that Jazz 1 will be performing. Do not worry if some of it seems difficult. The audition material must challenge students from grades 6 through 8. The first selection is a ballad called, “Prayer Meetin’.” Play this selection with straight eighth notes. The second selection is a Latin tune called, “Children of Sanchez.” Play this selection with straight eighth notes and hard accents. Metronome markings are indicated for each selection. If these are too fast for you it is O.K. to audition at a slower tempo, but students performing well at the correct speed will score higher than students playing well at a slower speed.

Special Note to Guitar Players

Guitar is a difficult instrument and students often start learning guitar when they are older than students who start learning “regular” band instruments. While it is wonderful to have a guitar player in a middle school jazz band, it is not very common. Some years a student auditions well enough to be placed into a jazz band, but often guitar players do not yet have the skills necessary to have a positive experience in a school jazz band. The jazz teachers at Highland are glad to have guitar players in their ensembles, but none of us play guitar and are therefore unable to help the guitar players. Only students who come in with a strong understanding of note and chord reading will be placed into a jazz band.

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In order to be considered for a jazz band, guitarists need to be able do the following things:

1. Play in tune.
2. Tune their instrument themselves.
3. Read standard musical notation (not just tab).
4. Read chord symbols and play at least two different voicings for every chord in the audition materials (without the help of tab).
5. Provide a small and good-sounding amplifier for rehearsals and performances (It may be stored in the band room during the school day).

Listening to the Music

Recordings of this music are available online - See the jazz audition website (<https://bit.ly/HMSjazz>) for the link.

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Guitar

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

#1 "Prayer Meetin'"

Special Note

Below is the melody from "Prayer Meetin'". At your audition, you will play this first, showing off your ability to count various rhythmic patterns and read melodies.

Gospel/Pop Ballad ♩ = 69

mf

5

9

13

Special Note:

Below is the actual guitar part from "Prayer Meetin'" starting at measure 17 of the music. This part of the audition will show off your ability to play a typical guitar part on a jazz ballad. The chord symbols for this song are somewhat difficult. You may play simplified versions of these chords if you would like to. It would be good if you can show a different voicing for each chord as you play. Be prepared to answer questions about which notes you used in your voicings and why (even if you simplify the chords). Students who are able to voice chords successfully and keep a steady beat may be placed into a jazz band. Most students who have not had jazz training will not be able to do these things.

17

F C/E Bb/D F/A Bb2 F/C B13 Bb G/B

21

Bb F/C Bb/D Em7 A13 Dm7 Ab13 Gm7 Gm7/C F

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#2 "Children of Sanchez"

Guitar

Special Note

Below is part of the actual guitar part for "Children of Sanchez". This guitar part, like many jazz band guitar parts, combines printed notes and "comp" rhythms with chord symbols. Please observe the time signature and tempo marking. Play your own voicings for the chord symbols given. Be able to voice these measures with at least two different sets of chord voicings. At your audition, be prepared to explain which notes you chose in your voicings and why. Students who are able to voice chords successfully and keep a steady beat may be placed into a jazz band. Most students who have not had jazz training will not be able to do these things.

MEDIUM LATIN ♩ = 112

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). It begins with a treble clef and a dynamic marking of *f*. The first staff contains a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The subsequent staves are primarily accompaniment, featuring a consistent eighth-note rhythmic pattern with various chord voicings indicated above the staff. The chord symbols are: D^b, E^b, F^m, F^m, G^b, F^m, B^bmi7, F^m, G^b, F^m, B^bmi7, B^bmi7, C^mi7, D^b, E^b, and F^m. The piece concludes with a final melodic phrase and a double bar line.