

Highland 2026/2027 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 either band, with the exception that 6th grade saxophone, trumpet, and trombone students may be invited into Jazz 2 without an audition. 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 swing tune called, “May’s Way.” Play this selection in a swing style (uneven eighth notes and hard accents). The second selection is a Latin tune called, “Brazil Nuts.” 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.

(Continued on the back)

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.

Highland Jazz Auditions September 2026

Guitar

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

#1 "May's Way" - Jeff Jarvis

Special Note

Below is the guitar part to "May's Way" beginning in measure 15. This guitar part, like many jazz band guitar parts, combines printed notes and measures with slash marks. The measures with slash marks have chord symbols. Play your own voicings for the chord symbols given. In a swing jazz style the guitarist usually simply plays a chord on every pulse of the music. Be able to voice measures 40 - 51 with at least two different sets of chord voicings. 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 and may not be ready to participate in a jazz band.

♩ = 138 Swing Style

15 *mf*

20

25 1 2 *mp*

30

35

39 *mf* B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$ 7 B $\flat$ 7

47 F7 E $\flat$ 7 B $\flat$ 7

Highland Jazz Auditions September 2026

Guitar

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

#2 "Brazil Nuts" -- Melody

Special Note

Below is the actual guitar part for "Brazil Nuts" starting in measure 17. This guitar part, like many jazz band guitar parts, combines printed notes and "comp" rhythms with chord symbols. Play your own voicings for the chord symbols given starting in measure 27. During this comp section either play steady half notes, or create a Latin "Samba" Style rhythm of your own. Be able to voice chords measures 27 - 45 with at least two different sets of chord voicings. Students who are able to voice chords successfully and keep a steady beat may be placed into one of the upper two jazz bands. Most students who have not had jazz training will not be able to do these things.

$\text{♩} = 98$ Latin "Samba" Style

17 *mf*

22 1 2

27 $A^b m7$ D^b7 $A^b m7$ D^b7 $A^b m7$ D^b7

33 $D m7$ $G7$ $D^b m7$ G^b7 $A^b m7$ D^b7 $A^b m7$ D^b7

39 $A^b m7$ D^b7 $D m7$ $G7$ $D^b m7$ G^b7 $F^\sharp m7$ $B7$

44 $F m7$ $E7$ E^b7