

Highland 2026/2027 Jazz Band Auditions

Piano

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. If more than four students audition, not all of them will be placed into a jazz band. Each jazz band will take only up to two pianists. 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.

Listening to the Music

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

**** Special Piano Notes ****

1. Students who are comfortable with chord symbols and chord voicing are encouraged to try different voicing than the ones suggested in these selections. These students should make it clear to the band teachers that they are using their own voicing when they take their audition. Students unfamiliar with this technique should not worry about it, though it is an important skill to learn in the future.
2. Students who are unable to play both hands at the same time may audition one hand at a time. Students who are able to play both hands at once (well and at the correct tempo) will score higher than students who must play one hand at a time.

Highland Jazz Auditions September 2026

Piano Page #1 of 4

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

#1 "May's Way" -- Melody

Special Note

Below is the melody from "May's Way" starting in measure 15 of the music. At your audition you will first play this melody. This part of the audition will be used to show off your "swing style" and ability to play right hand melodies.

♩ = 138 Swing Style

15 *mf*

21

27 *mp*

33

38

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major (two flats). It begins at measure 15. The tempo is marked as 138 beats per minute, and the style is 'Swing Style'. The melody starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Measures 15-20 show a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, including a triplet in measure 19. Measures 21-26 continue the melody with eighth notes and quarter notes, featuring a first ending bracket over measures 25-26. Measures 27-32 show a more rhythmic section with eighth-note patterns and accents, marked mezzo-piano (*mp*). Measures 33-38 continue this rhythmic pattern. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 38.

Highland Jazz Auditions September 2026

Piano

Page #2 of 4

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

#1 "May's Way" -- Piano Part

Special Note

Below is the piano part to "May's Way" starting at the beginning of the song. This part of the audition will show off your ability to play a typical piano part on a swing tune. When you get to measure 15 of this piano part Mr. Swartzloff will begin playing the melody on his saxophone. You may simply play the whole notes (as marked), or you may make up your own rhythms. You may play the notes ("voicings") which are written out, or you may change these voicings. The voicings provided are in "root position." When you change rhythms and voicings to match the melody (or soloist) you are "comping". If this technique is unfamiliar to you that is O.K. Simply play some or all of the whole notes as marked. However, those students who show that they are successfully able to "comp" will score higher than those students who do not show off this skill.

♩ = 138 Swing Style

The musical score for the piano part of "May's Way" is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). It consists of three systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system (measures 1-4) features a melody in the treble staff with eighth and quarter notes, and a bass line in the bass staff with whole notes and eighth notes. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the melody and bass line. The third system (measures 9-12) shows the melody and bass line with some rests. The score includes various musical notations such as beams, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Comp. Rhythms and Voicings (Repeat 3 times to match melody on first page of packet.)

The musical score for comping rhythms and voicings is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats. It consists of two systems of staves, each with a treble clef. The first system (measures 15-18) shows a Bb7 chord in the first measure, followed by three measures of a slash indicating a repeat, and then another Bb7 chord in the fourth measure. The second system (measures 21-24) shows a Bb7 chord in the first measure, followed by a measure with a slash, then an F7 chord, an Eb7 chord, a Bb7 chord, and finally a measure with a slash and a double bar line. The score includes various musical notations such as chords, slashes, and dynamic markings.

Highland Jazz Auditions September 2026

Piano

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

#2 "Brazil Nuts" -- Melody

Special Note

Below is the melody from "Brazil Nuts" starting in measure 17 of the music. At your audition you will first play this melody. This part of the audition will be used to show off your ability to play melodies with "straight eighth notes" and right hand melodies with various articulations.

$\text{♩} = 98$ Latin "Samba" Style

17 *mf*

22 1 2

27 *mf*

33 *f*

39

44

Highland Jazz Auditions September 2026

Piano

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

#2 "Brazil Nuts"

Special Note

Below is a simplified version of the piano part to "Brazil Nuts" starting at measure 9. When you get to measure 17 of this piano part Mr. Swartzloff will begin playing the melody on his saxophone. You may simply play the notes and rhythms marked, or you may make up your own notes and rhythms. The voicings I have given you for this tune are not in "root position". They are simplified versions of the voicings in the actual piano part. Feel free to use these, or to use your own for "comping." If this technique is unfamiliar to you, that is O.K. Simply play the notes and rhythms as marked. However, those students who show that they are successfully able to "comp" will score higher than those students who do not show off this skill.

9 Eb7 Db7 Eb7 Db7 Eb7 Db7

15 Eb7 Db7 Eb7 Db7 Eb7 Db7

21 Eb7 Db7 1 F#m7 B7 Fm7 Bb7 2 Bm7 E7 Bbm7 Eb7

27 Abm7 Db7 Abm7 Db7 Abm7

32 Db7 Dm7 G7 Dbm7 Gb7 Abm7 Db7

37 Abm7 Db7 Abm7 Db7 Dm7 G7

42 Dbm7 Gb7 F#m7 B7 Fm7 E7 Eb7