

Highland 2026/2027 Jazz Band Auditions

Percussion (must include mallets & drum set)

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 drummers. The first selection is a swing tune called, “May’s Way.” Play this selection in a swing style, meaning that the eighth notes are swung and that the bass drum is very light. Feel free to make changes to the drum set part. Drum parts for jazz tunes are mere suggestions of what should happen. The hi-hat should be played on beats two and four throughout this selection. 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.

Bells - Xylophone - Vibes

All students auditioning to play drums in the Highland Jazz Bands are expected to audition on drum set and bells/xylophone/vibes. The music for these mallet instruments is included in the audition materials. Students may choose to perform the mallet portion of the audition on one of the large, school-owned instruments, or on their own bell kits. Students’ performances on these mallet selections are often what separates the good from the great players.

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

Percussion Page #1 of 4

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

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

Special Note

In the first part of the audition you will play the melody from this page on a mallet instrument, (either bells or xylophone -- your choice). This will show off your ability to play a mallet instrument and your ability to understand swing melodies. The melodies below are from two sections of the tune. (Measure numbers are indicated.)

Swing Style

$\bullet = 138$

The musical score is written for a mallet instrument in treble clef, key of B-flat major (two flats), and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte). The second staff starts at measure 5. The third staff starts at measure 10 and includes triplet markings (3) under measures 11 and 12. The fourth staff starts at measure 14, has a boxed measure number '15' above measure 15, and includes a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) below measure 15. The fifth staff starts at measure 19 and includes a triplet marking (3) under measure 20. The sixth staff starts at measure 23 and includes first and second endings, marked with '1' and '2' above the staff lines. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, and rests, along with accents and dynamic markings.

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Percussion Page #2 of 4

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

#1 "May's Way" -- Drum Set Part

Special Note

In this part of the audition you will play the drum set. What you see below is a typical middle school drum set part. It is actually the first 27 measures from "May's Way." The slash marks mean to play a swing-style beat. The little notes above the slashes indicate parts of the music which should be brought out. These are often referred to as "hits". Sometimes the hits are part of the melody and sometimes they are ideas of how to add to the melody. You are encouraged to set up and play these hits in ways you think are appropriate. During the drum set portion of your audition Mr. Swartzloff will play the melody starting at measure 15 on his saxophone. One of the things you will be evaluated on is how well you play with him.

Swing Style

• = 138

6

12

15

mf

18

24

1 2.

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Percussion Page #3 of 4

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

#2 "Brazil Nuts"

Special Note

In the first part of the audition you will play the melody on this page on a mallet instrument, (either bells or xylophone -- your choice). This will show off your ability to play a mallet instrument and your ability to understand cut-time melodies. This melody is from the same part of the music you will then play on the drum set.

$\text{♩} = 98$

17 *mf*

22 1. 2.

27 *mf*

31

35 *f*

39

43

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Percussion Page #4 of 4

There are two songs for this jazz audition.

#2 "Brazil Nuts"

Special Note

In this part of the audition you will play the drum set. What you see below is a typical middle school drum set part. It is actually from the drum set part to "Brazil Nuts" This is the same section you will play on a mallet instrument in your audition. The samba beat given is nearly a suggestion.

You may use this samba beat, or you may create your own. During this part of the audition you will play your samba beat on the drum set and Mr. Swartzloff will play the melodies on his saxophone. You will be evaluated on how well you are able to play with him.

$\text{♩} = 98$

Time (Samba)

Sim.

