

NCHS Jazz Ensemble Information

2009-10

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Introduction

The NCHS Jazz Ensemble rehearses and performs a diverse repertoire of music, ranging from Dixieland, swing, and bebop to Latin and fusion (rock/funk). The goals of the NCHS Jazz Ensemble are to help students develop:

- Instrumental technique
- Ensemble performance skills
- Creativity through improvisation
- Helpful knowledge of jazz theory
- Familiarity with the music's history and great recording artists, composers, and arrangers (listening)
- Sight-reading skills, a must for any musician wishing to continue playing after high school.

Ensemble Expectations

- Exhibit a positive attitude.
- Have courtesy for other ensemble members.
- Be organized and responsible.
- Be on time.
- Be prepared.
- Work to develop and refine a sense of ensemble.
- Receive instruction and constructive criticism with maturity.
- Take advantage of learning opportunities such as clinics, festivals, and concerts.
- Pitch in and help out when assistance is needed.
- Represent NCHS with class and dignity whenever the band travels.

Membership / Instrumentation

The Jazz Ensemble is open to any NCHS music student who plays a standard jazz instrument (saxophone, trombone, trumpet, piano, bass, drum set, vibraphone, and guitar). The band will have five saxophones (two altos, two tenors, and one baritone), four or five trombones, four or five trumpets, two pianos, two basses, two drum set players, and two vocalists.

- Saxophone players are highly encouraged to learn the flute and clarinet doubles.
- Flute and clarinet players wishing to audition for the jazz ensemble must learn the saxophone double and acquire/have access to an instrument.
- Trumpet players must own the following mutes: straight, Harmon, plunger (small), cup (hat mutes will be provided by the school)

Membership / Instrumentation (continued)

- Trombone players must own the following mutes: straight, plunger (large), cup, (hat mutes will be provided by the school)
- Euphonium players are highly encouraged to learn the trombone double so that the section can play with consistent blend and intonation. NCHS owns two valve trombones for student use in jazz ensembles if a student cannot play trombone or does not have access to one.
- Pianists should be able to read notated parts as well as interpret basic chord changes with appropriate voicings. Players with a deficiency in this skill (reading chord changes) should see Mr. Masterman for help in learning jazz chord symbols and voicings. Up to two (2) pianists will be accepted for the Jazz Ensemble.
- Guitarists must be able to read written music notation, chord changes, and understand basic jazz chord construction and voicings (at least up to 7th and 9th chords). Up to two (2) guitarists will be accepted for the Jazz Ensemble.
- Bassists must be able to read music notation and will be expected to learn to walk chord changes when there is no written bass part. Although players may audition on either acoustic or electric, they are highly encouraged to learn both. Up to two (2) bassists will be accepted for the Jazz Ensemble.
- Drum set players may also audition on vibraphone. Up to two (2) drum set players will be accepted for the Jazz Ensemble. Vibraphonists, like pianists, will need to develop the ability to read and interpret chord changes and become familiar with basic four-mallet technique.

Auditions

Jazz Ensemble auditions will be held at NCHS between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. on the following evenings:

Wednesday, October 28: Saxophones and Vocalists

Thursday, October 29: Trumpets and Trombones

Tuesday, November 3: Rhythm Section

Audition time slots will be posted in the band hallway soon. Sign up for the earliest available time that fits with your activity schedule.

Audition requirements for instrumentalists are as follows:

- Play excerpts from the required selection (*For Gil* by Tom Matta).
- Play a two-chorus improvised solo over F blues. A play-along accompaniment recording (piano, bass, and drums) will be provided for this part of the audition.
- Sight-reading

Audition requirements for vocalists are as follows:

- Sing "A Foggy Day" (memorized).
- Scat a two-chorus improvised solo over F blues
- A CD accompaniment will be provided upon request for use in preparing for the audition.

Drum set players should be prepared to demonstrate a knowledge of swing (medium and up-tempo), jazz waltz, latin (bossa, samba, etc.), funk-rock, and a slow ballad style (with brushes). The improvised solo will consist of "trading fours" with an imaginary soloist: four bars of "time" (swing) alternating with four bars of drum solo. Drum set players should also be prepared to sight-read a chart and set up figures written in the chart with short, improvised fills.

Rehearsals

Tuesdays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Thursdays from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Rehearsal attendance is mandatory. Excessive absences can result in dismissal from the organization. Please see the director if you have schedule issues/questions; there may be a way for you to participate in multiple activities. Vocalists' rehearsal schedules will be determined by the director.

Performances

The Jazz Ensemble usually performs once or twice a month at venues ranging from various school and community events to high school/college jazz festivals and clinics.

NCHS also hosts "Jazz Night" in May each year. A tentative performance schedule will be available at the first rehearsal.

Performance attendance is mandatory. An absence from a Jazz Ensemble performance can result in dismissal from the organization.

Activity Fees

The Jazz Ensemble activity fee is \$25.00 and is due at the first rehearsal (make checks payable to "NCHS Bands"). This fee helps defray the cost of music, festivals, and equipment for the jazz program. The fee must be paid before the student is allowed to perform with the band.

NCHS Jazz Blog: <http://nchs jazz.blogspot.com/>

The NCHS Jazz Blog is the place to go for up-to-date information concerning all aspects of the Jazz Ensemble. Rehearsal schedules, festival itineraries, and pictures from events can all be found there.

Contract

After reading this information, please sign the form on the back page and turn it in at your audition.

STUDENTS:

I have read the 2009-10 NCHS Jazz Ensemble information packet, and I understand the policies and expectations contained within.

Student Name

Date

PARENTS:

I have read the 2009-10 NCHS Jazz Ensemble information packet, and I understand all of the policies and expectations contained within. My student has my permission to audition and participate in the NCHS Jazz Ensemble.

Parent Name

Date