

CNY Jazz Arts Foundation

INSTRUMENTAL SCHOLASTIC JAZZ JAM GUIDELINES

Greetings, jazz students and teachers! If you're planning on taking advantage of the experience to be had at our Jazz Jams, here is everything you need to know about this unique opportunity.

Our Goals

1. To support young people interested in learning the jazz style
2. To create a supportive atmosphere in which students may perform with and be coached by professionals in a cabaret-style jam session environment
3. To support regional instrumental school jazz programs across Central New York
4. To increase knowledge and understanding of jazz history, literature and skills

The Event

Held at Jazz Central, our jazz arts and education center at 441 E. Washington St. in downtown Syracuse, the jams provide a professional rhythm section from the CNY Jazz Orchestra to accompany students. Although the format is not that of a clinic or master class, the trio may have time to do some coaching while the student is on the bandstand. Students must sign in and complete a form that includes the title and key of their selection or selections. All participants are encouraged to bring family and friends to cheer them on. Student groups of all kinds are also encouraged to prepare arrangements and perform as a group, either with our rhythm section or self-contained. However, the individuals in each group should also perform individually on at least one tune.

Preparation

To ensure a positive experience for all, first-time participants should consult with their jazz band director or private teacher to prepare material. Some guidelines for participants:

- Bring in three copies of the tunes you wish to play in "lead sheet" format, and one for you if you need it.
- Use the Real Book (your teacher will have one) as a source of material, or any tune from a Jamey Aebersold CD and book.
- Do NOT bring in a part to a jazz ensemble arrangement, or any other transposed music that does not show concert-pitch melody and chords to the complete form of the tune.
- Do not attempt to play a song that you have not thoroughly studied enough to try it in public. You will be nervous.

- Do not bring in pop or RnB/Hip-Hop titles. Concentrate on jazz standards and the Great American Songbook (tunes from shows or television that have been appropriated by jazz musicians).
- You will, in essence be the LEADER of the band when you perform. Be prepared to know how to briefly discuss the form (who solos and in what order, how many time to play the “head” (the melody) at the beginning and end, whether you want the drums to take breaks, etc. – AND, know how to count the tune off at the tempo you want. The rhythm section will help you with this if you need it.
- Note to teachers: use these events as opportunities to season your jazz ensemble soloists – help them prepare concert lead sheets of the tunes that they must solo in during your concerts and competitions!

We need the support of all instrumental music educators to make this series a successful ongoing resource to your programs, and most importantly to young individuals motivated to learn and perform. If you have additional questions, feel free to contact us at info@cnyjazz.org