

SFJAZZ High School All-Stars Audition & Enrollment Info

SFJAZZ ensembles are audition only.

1. Complete the audition form. You will be contacted by SFJAZZ staff with an audition time
2. If you cannot make any of the audition dates, we will consider video auditions
3. Musicians who have been accepted into the ensemble will be notified by the Education Department and given a private link to sign up for the band
4. To complete enrollment, the class must be purchased (\$700 one ensemble, \$1000 two ensembles)

What to Expect at Auditions

You will be given 10 minutes, though most auditions do not take that long. Judges will be evaluating you based on technique, musicality, familiarity with jazz language, improvisation, and sight-reading ability. Auditioners will perform two pieces: a standard and a blues.

Big Band

Musicians on all instruments will audition unaccompanied. Guitar and bass amps will be provided, along with a drum kit with cymbals (you do not need to bring your own).

Horns

Be prepared to improvise on both your standard and your blues. Doublers are encouraged to audition on multiple instruments. Trumpet Players: please inform adjudicators if you are auditioning for the lead trumpet chair. You will be asked to play one or two phrases in the extended range. Trombone Players: please inform the adjudicators if you are auditioning as bass trombonist.

Piano/Guitar

Be prepared to play the melody, improvise, and comp through the chord changes. Sight-reading will include melody and chord changes.

Bass

Have the melody prepared for the blues. If comfortable, the melody can be prepared for the standard as well. In addition, we will hear you walk bass lines through both forms, improvise, and demonstrate (separately) playing a Latin-style or straight-eighth figure. Sight-reading will include chord progressions and notated rhythmic figures. Please note: Drum and bass auditions all occur on the one day that drum and bass adjudicators are present; please see sign up form for more information..

Drums

Be prepared to play examples of the following feels: swing at different tempos (medium, very fast, and ballad), Latin, bossa, and funk. Sight-reading will include typical big band charts and a 32-bar standard and/or blues form. Please bring brushes. All drummers will play on the same drum and cymbal set-up. Please note: Drum and bass auditions all occur on the one day that drum and bass adjudicators are present; please see sign up form for more information.

Vocalists

You may sing with a backing track on an mp3 player (no CDs please). Vocalists are not required to take a solo chorus, but are encouraged to do so if they feel comfortable (if you are auditioning for the Combo you are required to solo). Be prepared to sing one or all of the following: chromatic scale, major scale, harmonic minor scale, mixolydian scale (major scale with lowered 7th degree).

Combo

The All-Stars Combo is a training and performance ensemble with an emphasis on composing and arranging. Students interested in the Combo must demonstrate proficient improvisational ability, as well as interest and ability in composing and arranging. The Combo meets weekly (separately from the Big Band) and requires time commitment for at-home arranging, rehearsal, and performances.

FAQ

Q: How do I know if I'm ready to audition for the All-Stars?

A: SFJAZZ High School All-Stars candidates have at least **4 years of experience with their instrument, and at least 2 years experience playing jazz.** Many of our members have also participated in Bay Area honors bands.

Q: When does the band rehearse?

A: The Big Band rehearses from 5:45 to 7:45 pm on Tuesday nights. The Combo rehearses afterward, from 8 to 9:30 pm on Tuesdays.

Q: Where is rehearsal?

A: Both bands rehearse in the Joe Henderson Lab at the SFJAZZ Center. The space is easily accessible by MUNI and BART. Street parking is available, however very limited.

Q: How much is tuition to be in the High School All-Stars program?

A: Tuition is \$700 to be a member of the Big Band or Combo, or \$1000 to be a member of both bands. There is no cost to be an Alternate or a Mentee.

Q: Are scholarships available?

A: Yes. Need-based scholarships are available by e-mailing SFJAZZ Education at scholarships@sfjazz.org.

Q: Does the band travel?

A: Yes. We aim to travel to at least one out-of-state festival per year. In previous years the band has been to New York City, New Orleans, Savannah, and Portland. SFJAZZ covers air travel and hotel costs in these cases; food, ground transportation, and incidentals are covered by band members. Both the Big Band and the Combo also aim to travel to local jazz festivals such as the NextGeneration and the Monterey Jazz Festival.

Q: What is an “alternate”?

A: An “alternate” is someone who is not a regular member of the band but will be called upon to sub for a band member at rehearsals, recordings, or performances. Benefits include free concert tickets to select SFJAZZ shows, and a standing invitation to observe rehearsals, clinics, and workshops. This program is free of charge.

Q: What is the Mentorship Program?

A: The Mentorship Program is designed to offer less experienced, yet enthusiastic young musicians in grades 8 - 12 the opportunity to be exposed to rehearsals, clinics, and concerts in order to encourage their interest in jazz music. Mentorship Program participants (AKA: “Mentees”) are welcome to attend all High School All-Stars rehearsals, and are offered free tickets to select SFJAZZ concerts and classes. This program is free of charge.