

2025 NYSBDA High School Honor Jazz Ensemble Preview

Austin Day, Chairperson



The 2025 NYSBDA High School Honor Jazz Ensemble will rehearse and perform during all three days of the Symposium to be held March 7, 8, and 9, 2025 in Syracuse, NY. Eighteen Grade 9-12 student jazz musicians from across New York State are expected to be selected for the Honor Jazz Ensemble, which will perform on Sunday 3/9/25 at 12:00 noon.

We are thrilled to announce that saxophonist and educator, **Steve Wilson**, has agreed to conduct the twentieth edition of our High School Honor Jazz Ensemble this coming March. Steve Wilson has brought his distinctive sound to more than 150 recordings and ensembles led by such celebrated artists as Chick Corea, Ron Carter, George Duke, Dave Holland, Michael Brecker, Dianne Reeves, Bill Bruford, Gerald Wilson, Joe Henderson, and Charlie Byrd among many others. He is regularly cited in the Downbeat Magazine Critics and Readers' Polls in the soprano and alto saxophone, and flute categories. Wilson is currently a touring member of Grammy-winning ensembles led by Christian McBride, Maria Schneider, Billy Childs, and Buster Williams. His work in film includes "Lulu On The Bridge" as artistic consultant to Harvey Keitel, and on soundtracks for the anime series "Cowboy Bebop." With nine recordings under his name, he leads two acclaimed quartets – Wilson's Grain and The Analog Band. Wilson is Professor of Music and Director of Jazz Studies at City College of New York, and co-director of the Ravinia Steans Music Institute Program for Jazz.

For more information and a full bio, check out:

www.stevewilsonmusic.com

Selection of the High School Honor Jazz Ensemble is decided upon by a committee of NYSBDA Board members after a careful review of submitted applications, resumes, and director recommendations. **NYSSMA Jazz Solo Evaluations** will be given preference in the selection of this ensemble. **Students who did not perform a NYSSMA Jazz solo are still eligible to be recommended.** Students may also submit a video-recorded jazz audition (optional) containing the student performing a prepared piece and/or improvisation from the Level 5 or 6 listings in the current NYSSMA Manual. Please include a list of doubling capabilities for reed players.

NEW THIS YEAR: NYSBDA Honor Band Nominations will now be completed through DaCapo. This process should be completed by the nominating Band Director. Links to all application materials can be found on the NYSBDA webpage (www.nysbda.org), on the Honor Bands subpage. As part of this year's nomination process, we are asking that our 2025 Commitment Form be completed and signed by the appropriate parties. This document must be uploaded to the online application for each student you nominate.

The 2025 Commitment Form can be found here:

[2025 NYSBDA Commitment Form.pdf](#)

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Only students who definitely plan to participate, if selected, should apply. 2024 Conference All-State Band, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, Vocal Jazz Ensemble Rhythm Section, or Orchestra participants are not eligible to apply, as one of the missions of the NYSBDA High School Honor Jazz Ensemble is to give more students an all-state quality performance experience. Students notified as “Alternate” for Conference All-State are eligible to apply. **Online application forms must be completed no later than October 25, 2024**, but directors are encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible. **Nominating Band Directors must be current or new members of NYSBDA in order to have students selected.**

Band directors will be mailed notification of students accepted for the High School Honor Jazz Ensemble by November 12, 2024. An all-inclusive, nonrefundable participation fee of \$375.00 per student and a signed commitment letter are due by December 15, 2024. The \$375.00 participation fee covers music, guest conductor, hotel room, meals, gratuities, and a digital download of the performance recording. All Honor Jazz Ensemble members will be expected to stay overnight in Syracuse on Friday and Saturday, March 7 and 8, regardless of the proximity of their home to the hotel. **Each school district with students participating in the Honor Jazz Ensemble is expected to have a teacher in attendance at the Symposium to provide chaperone and supervision coverage.**

The NYSBDA officers and executive board encourage NYSBDA High School Band Directors to submit applications of qualified and interested students for possible selection. We are confident that under the distinguished direction of Steve Wilson, the 2025 High School Honor Jazz Ensemble will prove highly memorable (and fun)!

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS: Questions or concerns about the NYSBDA Statewide High School Honor Jazz Ensemble should be directed to **Austin Day, High School Honor Jazz Ensemble Chairperson via email at jazzensemble@nysbda.org.**