



Student Jazz Combo Competition (SJCC)

Program Overview - The Student Jazz Combo Competition (SJCC), is a free program to empower Sonoma County musicians in grades 9-12 to explore their creativity by forming small groups for a juried competition. Working in collaboration with teachers and administrator, SJCC will recruit high school student musicians to form ensembles of up to six members to select and create material that reflects their personal vision of jazz. To support that creative process, SJCC will provide professional musicians to coach/mentor students. In the process, students will learn basic improvisation and small-combo dynamics and be encouraged to create a group, rehearse and compete. Each group/school will need a designated liaison with Healdsburg Jazz Festival staff.

SJCC addresses the goals of access, equity and opportunity by providing this region the incentive and encouragement students need to experience the exhilaration of improvising in a smaller ensemble. Small combos are singularly suited for experiencing the true spirit of jazz, to feel the excitement and fulfillment that accompanies the improvisation and collaboration that exists among groups of dedicated musicians.

The combo format will create opportunities for young musicians to perform solos and take risks that concert play or marching band membership seldom affords them. They can experiment with leadership while exploring what the music offers, and move beyond simply reading the notes on a piece of paper to experiencing the feeling of jazz, and playing from the heart. The combo is like a team that needs *both technique and spirit* to be successful.

Purpose/Goals

- To use music as a unifying force.
- To encourage young people to develop their own voices as musicians.
- To teach students to use these voices through the collaborative effort of jazz ensemble playing.
- To create a program to showcase the talents of the students to the wider community.
- To create a channel in which professional musicians can mentor young music students.
- To expand the audience for jazz music, the most highly-regarded art created in America.
- To reach into communities to find students with curiosity and talent and engage in a creative process.

Combos

- Eligibility: Sonoma County high school student musicians in grades 9-12.
- Combos are formed by students, up to six members per group. This is an instrumental program, and at this time does not include an individual vocalist.
- Students in the groups do not all have to come from the same school. If there is not a jazz band at an individual school, HJF can help find other musicians to play with. Contact HJF staff to facilitate this.
- Bands can evolve and change – they might start off applying with a given group of musicians, but change is allowed.
- Program is committed to expanding improvisational skills and small combo dynamics.
- Players select and/or compose their own music.

- Players receive mentorship from professional musicians.
- Players rehearse regularly during school, after school, or at other times and locations determined by the combo.
- Combos participate in competition in early in April 2017. Date TBD.
- Representative from the band will must stay in touch with HJF Staff and report progress and needs.

Competition

- Open to all high school students from Sonoma County.
- No entry fee.
- Scheduled for April, 2017, dates and location TBD.
- Juried by professional musicians.
- Repertoire criteria included in application.
- Audience composed of family, friends, and the community.
- Prizes: First Place - \$1,000 and opportunity to open for a headliner at the Healdsburg Jazz Festival in June, 2017; Second and Third Places - \$500 each.

Performance Requirements

- Upon check-in for the competition, the Band Leader or School Director shall provide the completed "Band Repertoire Form" that to be distributed later on. The form should include the names of the soloists, tunes, composers, etc.

The performance rules are as follows:

- On-stage time may not exceed 30 minutes including set-up, performance, breakdown and exit.
- The entire performance must be jazz-oriented. At least one tune must have a swing feel.
- Selections must be of contrasting styles (i.e., Swing Jazz, Bebop Jazz, Latin Jazz, or Funk Jazz, original compositions).
- Combos are encouraged to vary the tempo of the selections and demonstrate the use of dynamics.

School and Community Support

- Each combo will need to have a school sponsoring them. Band teachers, music teachers or administrators can be sponsors. Amount of involvement is voluntary.
- Schools can help by informing, supporting and encouraging students to participate, provide advice and guidance plus other resources to students as appropriate, (e.g., space for rehearsals).
- Administration may authorize use of school facilities and/or provide venue for the competition (Our grants require us to work closely with school administration and band directors.)
- Students can also choose to rehearse after school and weekends at offsite locations.
- Professional Musicians: serve as mentors to combos; attend combo rehearsals; develop judging criteria and procedures.

Program Impact & Evaluation

- The performances will be the primary evidence of program impact and effectiveness.
- Video recordings of performances and rehearsals will serve as evidence of program impact.
- All participants, including students and their families, band teachers, musician mentors and judges, and community members will be asked to take a survey to help evaluate the SJCC program's effectiveness and solicit general beneficial feedback.

Staffing

- Healdsburg Jazz acts as School Coordinator to communicate with band directors and administrators.

- Musician Coordinator serves as a liaison between the student combos and the mentoring musicians.
- The Healdsburg Jazz Artistic Director assumes overall administrative responsibility for the Program including event production, promotion, etc.

Funding

The program is funded by grants from the California Arts Council and the Sonoma County Community Foundation Arts and Education Fund.

Timeline Fall 2016 – Spring 2017

September–October, 2016 – Contact Schools and distribute application forms

October 14 – Application forms due

November, 2016 – March, 2017

Combo rehearsals – TBD

Music coaches assigned – TBD

Visits to rehearsals by staff – TBD

April, 2017 – Competition (Discuss with schools to set the date and location).