

Good Afternoon 2025 ETHS Jazz Festival Attendees,

We are really looking forward to hosting you in three weeks - Saturday February 8th, 2025 - at ETHS! We have an amazing day planned with an excellent panel of clinicians and performers and our students and parents are excited to welcome you into our facility. Please read below for a few final reminders. If you need to reach me at any point leading up to or on the day of the festival, my cell is (201) 264-2734.

Please also note that we had two schools/4 groups drop out, so there are now a few holes in the schedule. I moved some groups around, but only after speaking with specific directors to plug holes and maximize the experience for all. If I did not reach out to you, your group has the same time slot from Draft 1 back in early December. Thank you for supporting our festival - New Trier and ETHS will be back on separate weekends again next year.

Festival Philosophy

I am a big believer in the quote "If you don't bring Paris with you, you won't find it there." Framing this experience for your students in advance is going to be critically important to how they approach the day and what they take from it. In addition to coaching your students over the next few weeks and preparing them for a great performance and clinic, please admonish them to take advantage of this opportunity to see other groups perform throughout the day, attend the noontime concert with the Anthony Bruno Quartet, and attend the workshops and afternoon lecture with Tia Fuller. It is through these additional experiences that they will learn new literature, acquire some new skills, make friends from other schools, and be inspired by other performers. This festival has a great deal to offer and like my mother-in-law says every holiday meal, "If you leave hungry, it's your own fault." Let's work together to create a special learning environment and make it a great day for all of our students!

What we need from you

[Stage Plot Form](#)

[Equipment/Meals Form](#)

[Repertoire Form](#)

A Few Thoughts About Programming

Our festival is non-competitive in nature - please keep this in mind as you program music, adjust for unforeseen student absences, or process discomfort about the level of preparation your group has going into the event. At ETHS, we personally frame this as an opportunity to learn and grow from the clinicians - a similar but elevated experience to having clinicians out to work with our bands at a normal rehearsal. While our top ETHS Jazz Ensemble will be performing an opening set for the evening concert, we are performing a different set for the clinicians during our morning festival time slot to get feedback and coaching on tunes we will be just starting to work on for our March big band concert. They will be unrefined, but ready for our students to receive coaching that will help them work up their newer repertoire for an upcoming performance. Many groups use our festival to prepare for competitive venues later on in their jazz season, others use this as a big performance to shoot for. It is 100% up to you and how you frame it for your students.

We do not require music scores for the evaluators, though you can provide them if you wish. You have a 45 minute time slot to perform and receive a clinic in the same venue. The longer your set, the shorter your clinic, so plan accordingly. You are welcome to program whatever you wish! For those who are relatively new to jazz festivals, you might try programming 3 tunes - a swing chart, a Latin chart, and a ballad - or perhaps two swing charts and a Latin chart. Completely up to you!

Evening Concert Tickets

The evening concert is the capstone experience of the festival and one that I encourage you and your students to stay for, if you can spare the time and the fees involved. We have kept the evening concert tickets the same price for the first 20 years of the festival, but we did raise the price to \$20 for students and \$25 for adults this year in an effort to recalibrate our budget to keep the festival fiscally

viable for years to come. This will be Roxanne Stevenson's Chicago State University Community Jazz Band's second performance at our festival and I know it's going to be a high energy, impressive performance - made especially memorable by Tia Fuller's contributions (saxophonist for the Disney movie Soul and Berklee professor). ***If you are interested in purchasing/reserving tickets, please respond via email and I will have them waiting for you in your welcome envelope. Checks should be made out to ETHS and addressed to my attention on the envelope.*** If you would rather pay by card, our secretary can accept payment over the phone.

Registration/Home Rooms/Logistics

You will be given a homeroom assignment and key at the registration table. This homeroom will be yours for the day - please take care of this classroom and return your key at the registration table as you depart. Every school gets one room, regardless of how many groups you are bringing - this is because the homeroom is intended to store cases and coats, not to be a place to hang out. All homerooms must be emptied by 5:30p.m. when you leave for dinner (those returning for the evening concert).

If you are missing any forms, our volunteers will ask you to complete them on-site when you check in. We have two elevators, should you need them, however they are a considerable walk from our festival locations - please plan accordingly (bring a cart or ***consider using only our equipment***, see "Equipment" below).

All video/audio files and scans of evaluator notes will be shared with your email address via Google Drive following the festival. If we are able to issue certificates, we will place them in the mail in the week following our event.

Please be at your homeroom 15 minutes prior to warm-up. One of our student guides will meet you there and will escort you through the warmup-performance rotation. You do not need to bring scores for the clinicians, but you can if you wish.

Equipment

ETHS provides all standard equipment in performance AND warm-up rooms including everything below. You are responsible for bringing your own accessories (congas, bongos, tambourine, shakers, timbales, claves, go-go bells, cow bells, etc.) as well as a digital keyboard and amp if you prefer that to a piano. See below for what we provide:

Chairs/Stands

Drum Set/Cymbals/Drum Rugs

Guitar Amp (please bring your own patch cables as a backup)

Bass Amp (please bring your own patch cables as a backup)

Piano or Keyboard/Amp

PA for vocalist only (in performance venues only, not warmup areas - all soloists should be prepared to play acoustically, except for main auditorium, which has 4 solo mics plus piano and vibes)

Vibraphone (performance venues only, not in warmup areas)

Risers for Trumpet/Trombone (in Auditorium, Welcome Room E112, Academic Study Center E212)

We ask that you use our equipment not only for your convenience, but to keep the festival on time. If your drummers would like to swap out their own cymbals, this is fine - but please leave our hi-hat clutch with our hardware (we lose a few every year). Please also have your bass/guitar players bring their own patch cables - this is another item that tends to "walk" between groups.

Evaluators/Clinics/Schedule

Please see below for some helpful links. Paper copies will be provided in your welcome packets and additional handouts (maps/schedules) will be waiting for your students at the registration table. Your group will have 30

minutes to warm-up in the warm-up room, then 45 minutes in your performance/clinic space - use this time as you see fit.

[Adjudicators](#)

[Clinics and Workshops](#)

[ETHS Jazz Festival Map](#)

[Schedule on One Page](#)

[Master Schedule](#)

Media:

[2025 Press Release](#)

From last year as an FYI, if you want to share with your students about our festival's history:

[20th ETHS Jazz Festival Evanston RoundTable](#) news article

[20th Annual WDCB Interview](#) with Bufis/Fodor

We will be selling t-shirts and posters for the 21st annual, as well as commemorative "20th Annual" posters that contain the graphics from the last 20 years left over from last year's festival. These will be available at the registration table.

Bus/Parking

We are expecting 35 bands from 16 schools this year, so we plan to have buses drop you off in front of Auditorium Entrance #6 on Dodge Avenue (just before the main "castle" entrance). Our registration table will be in that hallway where you enter. Lot 1 and 1A on Dodge Avenue across from the school will be for spectators and mini bus parking. Please remember to get your bus driver's phone number when you pull up so that you can communicate pickup times. Buses will be instructed to park in the rear of the building and can simply pull back up to Auditorium Entrance #6 to get you at the end of your time with us. A crossing guard and several campus safety personnel will be on site to help you where you need to go.

Food (Click for Menu)

Please see the link above for a menu of food options that will be served in our cafeteria. In addition, we will have a bake sale going on all day near our registration table. We are set up to take cash or cards. With modern day dietary restrictions, it's best to share this menu with your students in advance of the festival so they can plan accordingly. If anyone needs dinner recommendations, there are many options in Evanston. Our personal favorites are Buffalo Joes (wings/burgers), La Principal (Mexican street food), or Prairie Moon (American).

Final Thoughts

ETHS is the largest public high school facility under one roof in the United States. Our festival is limited to the A and E wings. While your kids may want to explore our 3.5 miles of hallways, please limit them to our festival footprint. There will be other events going on throughout the building and each of these events is limited to their spaces to keep everyone safe.

You are welcomed to share digital copies of the schedule, map, adjudicators, clinics/workshops, etc. with your students. Hard copies of the schedules, maps, etc. will be waiting for you in your welcome packets when you arrive and many extra copies will be kept at the Registration table where you walk in. Travel safe everyone, and please reach out if you need anything.

Sincerely,
Matt Bufis