

A Parents' Overview of Vocal Jazz

Here is a look at an average year-in-the-life for a **Vocal Jazz Ensemble** student at Roosevelt High School. Participation in Vocal Jazz is **by audition** during the 1st week of June (see www.rooseveltjazz.org for the audition schedule and other information).

Vocal Jazz is a class taught by Scott Brown during the regular school day. Vocal Jazz generally consists of sixteen to twenty singers (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) and a rhythm section (drummer, bass, piano, and guitar). Given the exceptional performance level of Vocal Jazz, it is rare - but not impossible - for freshmen to qualify for the Vocal Jazz Ensemble. Any student admitted to Roosevelt Vocal Jazz must commit to both semesters.

Your child will likely need to increase their level of practicing and commit to performing music at the highest level at concerts and jazz festivals. All **Vocal Jazz** students are strongly encouraged, if not expected, to take solo parts throughout the year. Summer jazz camps and workshops are highly recommended, along with ongoing private instruction. Your child will miss school to attend jazz festivals and other performances. He/she will need to make up missed assignments and tests and keep school work current and in good standing. Your child will also be a representative of the school at various events and must exhibit exemplary behavior.

Parents are asked to support their student's activities through positive reinforcement, volunteering, and fundraising. There are fundraising activities all year long (bake sales at concerts, performances at retirement communities, etc.) but the biggest fundraiser is the **Big Band Dance & Auction** in March or April, which benefits Vocal Jazz and the jazz bands. Parents are requested to procure \$400 or more in donations for the auction, invite friends and family, and help with running this event.

Parents are expected to become actively involved in the **Jazz Boosters**, which is a volunteer organization that supports the jazz programs and organizes many jazz events and activities. A lot of information is disseminated by email and/or available on the Roosevelt Jazz web site but **monthly booster meetings** are the best place to hear from the directors, keep abreast of Vocal Jazz and band events and learn about the program. **Volunteering** is essential to the success of the program, whether it is chaperoning a trip to a jazz festival, helping with a fundraiser, or helping to lead by taking on a booster office such as secretary, treasurer, or chair. If parents are unsure of time commitments for various tasks, the Booster Chair is happy to answer questions.

Vocal Jazz girls typically wear nice black dresses (often \$150 or more, including shoes) and boys wear dress shirts and slacks (often \$100 or more, including shoes). Performance clothing has traditionally been black in the past but that is subject to change.

Vocal Jazz travels to jazz festivals and, despite fundraisers, parents pay for a substantial portion of the expenses. **Vocal Jazz** typically has annual dues of \$500, primarily to cover typical travel expenses, but may have a travel assessment (\$100 for Lionel Hampton and \$100 for Reno) depending on the success of fundraising. There is generally an additional cost of approximately \$50 for students performing in solo competitions.

In addition to dues and trip assessments (and private lessons), students will need spending money for food and incidentals while on trips of around \$25-50 per day, depending on the nature of the trip and whether some meals are included.

Since not every family can afford all of these expenses, parents can request **scholarship help** from the Roosevelt Jazz Boosters via a confidential meeting with the group Treasurer. Non-needs-based scholarships are also typically funded by the Jazz Boosters to help pay for summer jazz workshops and camps.

TYPICAL VOCAL JAZZ CALENDAR

Early June – Vocal Jazz Auditions

First Tuesday of each month (except July-September) - Jazz Booster Meeting, 7:30 PM in the Band Room

Every other month – Vocal Jazz Showcase (this is an opportunity for students to perform solos at local venues with a professional rhythm section).

September – First Jazz Booster Meeting, Tuesday, 7:30PM

Mid-November – **Vocal Jazz** to the Olympic College Jazz Festival (Saturday)

Mid-December – Jazz Night at Roosevelt (evening, all jazz groups)

Late-January - **Vocal Jazz** to Bellevue College Jazz Festival (attendance to this festival varies year-to-year, depending on other commitments).

Late February (often winter break) – **Vocal Jazz** and jazz bands to Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival in Moscow Idaho (travel by bus, leave Thursday, return Friday)

Late March or early April – Big Band Dance & Auction, all jazz groups perform (Saturday evening)

Late April - **Vocal Jazz** and jazz bands to Reno Jazz Festival (travel by air, leave Thursday night or Friday, return Sunday)

Early June – **Vocal Jazz** and jazz bands to The Triple Door (evening)

Mid-June – Jazz Bands II & III, **Vocal Jazz** Annual Concert

Note: This calendar does not show all Jazz Band or regular band and orchestra concerts, drama musicals, marching band performances and parades, and other events that may include Roosevelt jazz musicians!