

# Sierra Vista Middle School



## Jazz Ensemble

- I. Definitions
  - A. Jazz Band – Also called “stage band”, is a group of saxophones, trumpets, trombones and rhythm instruments (guitar, piano, bass, drums, vibraphone) that play jazz and big band style music.
  - B. Jazz is an original form of American music that is rhythmically syncopated in nature and highly improvised.
  - C. Improvisation is the act of composing a piece of music while it is being performed. In our band, improvisation will occur during solos and it is my goal that each student will have opportunities for improvisation.
  
- II. Class Meetings  
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 7:00 a.m. – 7:50 a.m.
  
- III. Registration  
Done on the ACE (After Class Enrichment) website: <https://www.ipsfacademy.org/>  
It is also linked to the SVMS Jazz Website: <http://sierravistams.org/miller/jazz.htm>  
Please register as soon as possible.
  
- IV. Performances
  - A. Jazz Winter Concert – Friday, December 11, 6:30 p.m. at SVMS  
Combined concert with Venado Middle School
  - B. Band Concert – Tuesday, March 15  
We will perform after the Concert and Symphonic Bands play (approximately 8:15 p.m.)
  - C. Jazz Festival – Saturday, March 19 at IHS  
Students will need to arrange for their own transportation to Irvine High School.  
Performance time is TBA.
  - D. Jazz at the Palms – Saturday, May 7  
Jazz Festival at the Great Park, time TBA
  - E. Jazz at the Oak – Friday, May 13, 5:30 p.m.  
Evening performance at NHS with their jazz bands
  - F. Jazz on the Grass (SVMS pep rally) – During school, TBA
  
- V. Other possible performances
  - A. Irvine Jazz Workshop – Extended afternoon rehearsal, TBA
  - B. Field trip to local elementary schools.
  - C. SVMS Cultural Festival
  - D. Art show at City Hall

VI. Literature and method book

A. Method book – Essential Elements for Jazz Ensemble by Mike Steinel

1. We will use this book daily to help teach jazz style and improvisation.
2. Each book contains play-along tracks which are on the website
3. I have one class set of these books – students can take turns taking the books home. Please use them responsibly and replace them if necessary.

B. Literature – Provided by me which can be downloaded on the website.

VII. Listening

There will be no formal listening assignments, however, I believe that it is important for students to understand the “vocabulary” of jazz. We are fortunate in Southern California to have one of the best jazz radio stations in the country: kjazz – fm 88.1 ([www.kkjz.org](http://www.kkjz.org)). I highly encourage students to begin listening to jazz music so that they can obtain a better understanding of jazz style.

VIII. Commitment

I know it is difficult to make a year-long commitment and I do recognize that unforeseeable events occur, but I am hoping that the students who sign up stay committed to our ensemble for the entire year and are willing to attend all rehearsals. Because we are a small group and many students will be the only ones playing their part, regular attendance becomes essential. Thank you for your understanding.

IX. Communication

Since this class meets before school, I would like to have the ability to communicate to everyone in the class if I am going to be absent or late so that students are not waiting around my room unsupervised. I have found an app that will allow me to send out notices via either text or email. Directions on how to enroll are attached.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I am looking forward to a great year of jazz music.

Henry Miller, Director of Instrumental Music  
Sierra Vista Middle School  
Irvine, California