

Ridgewood High School Bands

Quality People...In Quality Performance



The Ridgewood High School Band Program is renowned as one of New Jersey's top comprehensive music programs, and is Bergen County's largest band program with over 200 students involved each year. The impressive array of curricular and co-curricular ensembles is organized in a logical sequence of instruction, which helps each student develop his or her talent and ability while maintaining the highest standards of performance. Each of our performing ensembles and related groups has received superior ratings at festivals and competitions around the country in all areas of band performance, from concert band to jazz ensemble, and chamber music to marching band. Our reputation for quality music performances is second only to the reputation we enjoy for the outstanding quality of young adults who pass through our ensembles.

While the band enjoys a history nearly a century old, the past decade has seen Ridgewood High School band students perform in major venues ranging from Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, one of the world's most prestigious concert halls, to the famed Jack Morton Auditorium in Washington, DC and New York City's Madison Square Garden. Our groups have appeared at colleges and universities including Harvard University, George Mason University, and the University of Southern California, and have worked with some of the music world's greatest composers, conductors, and solo performers.

Curricular Bands - The Heart of our Program

The Ridgewood High School Band Program offers a wide variety of musical activities and opportunities for students at all grade and ability levels. At the core of our program are the curricular bands – those ensembles that meet during the school day and for which students receive grades and academic credit. Each curricular band meets for three 60-minute periods over the four-day rotation of classes, just as all academic classes at RHS, and each group fulfills the Ridgewood High School credit requirement for visual/practical arts as well as the careers and life skills. Membership in a curricular ensemble is required in order for students to participate in any co-curricular music activity, including the Maroon and White Recital Series and all-county or regional bands.

All students who wish to participate in a curricular band must complete a brief placement assessment in January so that he or she may be placed in the ensemble that best fits his or her ability level, regardless of grade. Any student with previous experience in a middle school or high school band is eligible to participate in a curricular ensemble. Beginners must receive prior permission from the instructor. All of the curricular bands perform at three evening concerts during the school year.

Symphonic Band

The Symphonic Band represents the next logical step in the band program sequence following the middle school band experience. This course emphasizes the development of skills in rhythm, pitch, tone, intonation and balance while introducing and reinforcing the techniques and strategies necessary to read and perform music written using traditional notation. Students study music through the use of method books, exercises and appropriate concert selections up to level 3.



Concert Band

The Concert Band represents the next logical step in the band program sequence following the Symphonic Band experience at RHS. This course emphasizes the development of technical ability, characteristic tonality, and knowledge of phrasing, and provides exposure to more complex rhythms and harmonies. Pitch, tone, intonation and balance remain important areas of study. Students study music through the use of exercises and appropriate concert selections up to level 4.5.



Wind Ensemble

The Wind Ensemble is the most advanced performing ensemble in the band program. In this ensemble, emphasis is placed on developing musical maturity appropriate to college and professional music literature (Level 5 and 6). All students in the Wind Ensemble are typically involved in private lessons. As advanced performers, Wind Ensemble members are encouraged to audition for Maroon and White Recitals and County/Regional Bands. Members may also audition for the Chamber Orchestra.



Opportunities for Everyone

Unforgettable Experiences Are What We Do Best

Co-Curricular Activities

While the curricular bands at Ridgewood High School provide excellent foundations in music education, our co-curricular ensembles and related groups provide numerous opportunities and experiences that are unique and inventive. While these programs all take different shapes and sizes, one thing remains constant – outstanding students performing in outstanding ensembles. Musically, we offer programs in jazz, chamber music, ethnic and concert percussion, as well as our highly acclaimed 100+ member marching band. Members of the band can also audition for parts in the New Players Company pit orchestra. For students who enjoy adding a visual flair, we offer winter color guard as an outgrowth of our marching program.

The Ridgewood High School Marching Band

With about 100 members, the Marching Band is one of the largest co-curricular activities at Ridgewood High School, and has a well earned reputation as one of the tri-state areas finest marching bands. Students develop aspects of leadership, discipline, and musicianship in a large group setting while performing at all home football games and at several competitions throughout the tri-state region, including annual performances at Met Life Stadium and Rutgers University.



Students of all grade levels participate together in this activity, but freshmen receive the greatest benefit of membership. Unlike other programs at RHS, our newest members participate immediately to the same degree as veteran members. “Playing time” is not dependent upon ability or grade level - there is no “bench.” All marching band members receive a varsity letter in their first year of participation...and EVERYBODY plays in every performance. No audition is required, and members of any curricular music ensemble may participate.

Freshmen often comment on how the Marching Band helps the transition into high school both socially and academically, by providing a comfortable environment in which new friendships can be made and by providing positive junior and senior role models with whom they interact regularly.

Jazz Ensembles

If jazz is your passion, look no further than our two jazz ensembles - the Big Band, for advanced students, and the Jazz Lab, for less experienced players. Membership in the jazz ensembles is through selective auditions held in November. Each band uses standard instrumentation and performs literature ranging from swing to contemporary compositions. Both ensembles rehearse one evening per week, and perform at two concerts at RHS, regional jazz festivals, and the annual *Jazz in the Wood* concert in May, featuring world-renowned jazz performers as guest soloists.



Chamber Music

The chamber music program at RHS is a special source of pride for the band program. Each year, our students are offered the opportunity to participate in a variety of small ensembles including percussion ensembles, saxophone quartets, brass ensembles, woodwind quartets and quintets, flute ensembles, and virtually any instrumental combination imaginable. While our exceptional staff coaches all ensembles regularly, the end results are groups that are self sufficient and can communicate, rehearse, and perform on the highest level without conductors. Chamber ensembles perform on two concerts and at various community locations and events including nursing homes, elementary schools, and Downtown for the Holidays. Several of our advanced chamber ensembles have performed at the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society’s Young Musician’s Concert and other special events.

Extra Benefits of Band Membership

Membership in the RHS Band Program comes with many special privileges. While the large number of our diverse performance options goes well beyond those of most high school programs, the opportunities for musical and personal growth within each of these groups are truly remarkable. Listed below are some benefits that our members enjoy:

Travel Opportunities

Each year, the entire RHS Band Program is involved in a performance experience outside of Ridgewood. During each student's four-year band experience, he or she can expect to participate in an extended major concert/clinic tour, a weekend concert/clinic tour, and two regional day trips. For the past twenty years, our major tour destination has been southern California, where our bands have performed at such venues as Disneyland, Universal Studios, and Catalina's Jazz Club in Hollywood, with clinics at USC, UCLA and San Diego State University. Weekend tours have included such destinations as Boston, Virginia, and Washington, DC. Day trips often include performances in New York City.



Guest Artists

There is no better way to learn about music education than from some of the best musicians in the world. Ridgewood's proximity to New York City makes that possibility a reality with our Guest Artist program. Members of the curricular bands have gotten to work with musicians from the New York Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and faculty members from the Juilliard School and the Manhattan School of Music, to name a few. Jazz ensemble members have performed with such artists as Grammy Award winners Darmon Meader of New York Voices and trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, four-time Grammy nominee Conrad Herwig, and legendary LA trumpeter Wayne Bergeron.

Honors Ensembles

Each year, students who play at an advanced level are encouraged to audition for membership in the All County, Regional, and All State Bands and each year our members are chosen to participate in these groups. Since 1996, RHS has had more students accepted into the All County Band than any other Bergen County school.

Scholarships

Each year the RHS Band Association, Inc., awards scholarships to senior band members in gratitude for their years of service to the school music program. Recognition is given for outstanding contributions in the areas of musicianship, leadership, service, and visual performance. All senior members are encouraged to apply.

"The College Resume"

The value of an outstanding music education cannot be overstated as students consider the college application process. Membership in the RHS Band Program shows more than just a student who has a "well rounded education" or the ability to participate in one activity for four years. A student's progression through our sequential music program shows a commitment to respecting and preserving our musical culture, a desire to experience and appreciate works of artistic beauty, and the ability to think and act creatively, thoughtfully, passionately, and with disciplined attention to detail on the highest levels of abstract thought. Ridgewood High School places a high value on student participation in music classes, and awards those students who participate for all four years with a transcript designation of "Honors in Music Performance." Our graduates are accepted to the most prestigious colleges and universities around the country, choosing majors in all academic fields. Many receive scholarships to participate in college bands and orchestras.

Our Staff

The resident and adjunct faculty members who make up the Ridgewood High School band staff are highly qualified teachers and active professional performers. Faculty members hold advanced degrees and have received awards and national recognition for excellence in their areas of specialty.

For More Information

For additional information about the Ridgewood High School Band Program, contact Mr. Jeffrey Haas, Director of Bands at 201-670-2800 ext. 20639 / jhaas@ridgewood.k12.nj.us or Mr. John Luckenbill, Associate Director of Bands and Director of the RHS Marching Band at 201-670-2800 ext. 20744 / jluckenbill@ridgewood.k12.nj.us. Visit our website at www.rhsbands.org and follow us on Instagram: @ridgewoodhsband.