

EL CERRITO HIGH SCHOOL BANDS

WINTER JAZZ CONCERT

Featuring the
JAZZ ENSEMBLE
& JAZZ WORKSHOP

with Special Guests
FOLSOM HIGH SCHOOL
JAZZ BAND A
& JAZZ BAND B

1 | 21 | 2026

PROGRAM

FOLSOM HS JAZZ BAND B

Gaw Vang Williams, *Director*

Elenor Rigby

Lennon & McCarthy, Arr. Jeff Jarvis

"Mas" Production

Matt Harris

Fierce

Amlison Miller, Arr. Noriko Ueda

EL CERRITO HS JAZZ WORKSHOP

Keith Johnson, *Director*

Hardly

Mike Dana

Easy Money

Benny Carter

Sofrito

Mongo Santamaria, Arr. Michael Phillip Mossman

FOLSOM HS JAZZ BAND A

Gaw Vang Williams, *Director*

Three and One

Thad Jones

Honeymooners

Remy Le Boeuf

I Got it Bad

Duke Ellington, Arr. Billy Strayhorn

Goombay Smash

Steve Owen

EL CERRITO HS JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Keith Johnson, *Director*

Kemet (The Black Land)

Javier Nero

4 B.C.

Rob McConnell

Off the Cuff

Jim McNeely

ABOUT THE BANDS

Folsom High School Jazz Band A has earned national recognition, being named Best High School Jazz Band by DownBeat Magazine 17 times since 1993, including 16 of the last 18 years. The band has won Sweepstakes as the top instrumental group at the Reno Jazz Festival seven times—six of those consecutively—and has twice been awarded top honors at the Monterey Next Generation Jazz Festival, in 2013 and 2020. Since 1990, they've been finalists at Monterey thirteen times and performed as featured artists at the Monterey Jazz Festival 13 times since 1992.

Participation in these prestigious jazz festivals has played a vital role in preparing Folsom High School Jazz students for the demands of college-level auditions, interviews, and artistic challenges. These experiences cultivate discipline, resilience, and creativity—essential skills for students aspiring to pursue music beyond high school. In addition to national success, the jazz ensembles have expanded their artistic horizons internationally, performing throughout Europe on five tours since 1997. These high-level opportunities continue to inspire students to push their craft and pursue excellence at the next level.

Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, the award-winning **El Cerrito High School Jazz Ensemble** is part of a dynamic band program that holds a long tradition of excellence. In its over 50-year history, the El Cerrito Jazz Ensemble has been recognized as one of California's top high school jazz bands and has performed in venues throughout the United States and abroad. Led by El Cerrito alumnus, Keith Johnson, the El Cerrito Jazz Ensemble has earned top ratings and first place awards at numerous jazz festivals across the west coast.

Over the past 10 years the group has hosted and performed alongside prominent jazz artists that include Chris Potter, Wycliffe Gordon, Alan Ferber, John Daversa, Donny McCaslin, Eric Harland, and Terell Stafford, among others. Notable performances include appearances at the Monterey Jazz Festival, North Sea Jazz Festival, Montreux Jazz Festival, Jazz à Vienne, and the Umbria Jazz Festival. The El Cerrito Jazz Ensemble has twice been selected as featured performers for both the CMEA Bay Section Winter Conference (2020 and 2024) and California All-State Music Education Conference (2014 and 2024) and were recently invited to perform at the 2024 Midwest International Clinic. The El Cerrito Jazz Ensemble are two-time winners of the California Jazz Championships (2024 and 2025).

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

Gaw Vang Williams is a vocalist and educator native to Sacramento, California. She is the new band director at Folsom High School and teaches marching band, Jazz Band A and Jazz Band B, Jazz Choir, and Orchestra.

She became the director of the vocal jazz program at Sacramento State in 2014, where she earned her Bachelor of Music in jazz studies and Master of Music. She began teaching in 2004, serving as a music instructor at various high schools and music organizations. Williams is an active private music instructor, and she is sought after as a clinician and adjudicator for festivals and workshops throughout the United States. She was the president of CAJ (California Alliance for Jazz) and is the vocal jazz clinician for the Monterey Jazz Festival.

Williams was a member of the Sacramento Mandarins from 2004-2006, and she was a member of the 2007 world-champion Blue Devils Drum and Bugle Corps. She performs at numerous venues throughout Northern California. Professional appearances as an assisting artist include live performances with Nancy King, New York Voices, Ben Folds, and the San Francisco Symphony.

Ensembles under Gaw have won over 13 Downbeat Magazine Student Awards. In addition, her ensembles took first multiple times at the Next Generation Monterey Jazz Festival and were invited to perform at the world-renowned Monterey Jazz Festival, JEN (Jazz Education Network) National Conference, ACDA National Conference, CCDA Conference, and CASMEC. Williams was recently awarded the 2025 California State Jazz Educator Award and the CMEA Choral Director Award.

Williams co-founded Live Performing Arts Academy, a non-profit music organization providing music education and experiences for students in need.

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

Keith Johnson serves as Director of Bands at El Cerrito High School and lecturer of music at California State University, East Bay. A San Francisco Bay Area native, his career as a music educator spans two decades with experience at the middle school, high school, and collegiate levels. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in music and a Master of Arts degree in music education with an emphasis in wind conducting from San José State University.

Keith has been the recipient of various teaching honors that include the CMEA Paul Shaghoian State Jazz Educator Award (2026), El Cerrito High School Teacher of the Year (2020), CMEA Bay Section's Outstanding Jazz Educator Award (2018), KRON 4 Teacher of the Week (2016), CMEA Bay Section's Outstanding Music Educator Award (2014), the West County Ed Fund's Teaching Excellence Award (2014), and recognized as the West Contra Costa Teacher of the Year in 2014. Groups under his direction have received multiple awards and performed across the United States and Europe in venues that include Carnegie Hall in New York, Chicago's Orchestra Hall, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., and at several international jazz festivals including Jazz à Vienne and the Montroux, North Sea, Umbria, Victoria, and Monterey jazz festivals.

Since arriving to El Cerrito High School in 2009, the ECHS Wind Ensemble and Jazz Ensemble have been featured ensembles at local, state, and national conferences including the California All-State Music Education Conference (CASMEC) in 2014, 2018, and 2024 as well as the 2024 Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago. Prior to joining ECHS, Keith held positions as jazz director at Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, CA and later director of the Jazzschool Young Musicians Program at the Jazzschool in Berkeley. As program director, Keith founded and directed the award-winning Jazzschool Studio Band, recipient of four national Downbeat Magazine Student Music Awards and winner of the "Large Jazz Ensemble" category in 2011.

In addition to his teaching commitments Keith works frequently as an adjudicator, clinician, and guest conductor throughout Northern California and has served on the boards of several professional music education organizations including the California Music Educators Association (CMEA), California Alliance for Jazz (CAJ), and is a Past President of CMEA Bay Section.

FOLSOM HIGH SCHOOL PERSONNEL

JAZZ BAND B

FLUTE

Maya Lawler

SAXOPHONES

Achintya Krishnan *

Riley Wallace

Ethan Shirkey

Nathaniel Duquette

Athina Toeniskoetter

TRUMPETS

Tyler Porterfield *

Shawn Welton

Stephen Medina

Ryan Kim

TROMBONES

Mykyta Pometnov *

Rylan Branham

Paige Fulton

Tenu Sainbuyan

DRUMS

Sou Furuta

BASS

Jake Ferht

Megan Munz

PIANO

Jessie Cheng

Edward Youn

JAZZ BAND A

FLUTE

Yeeann Lin

SAXOPHONES

Alexandria Van Kirk *

Maya Lavery

Nikhil Shirodkar

Derek Nguyen

Ethan Shirkey

Chloé Fonseca

TRUMPETS

Nathan Hager *

Ashish Karmacharya

Mateo

Lauren Hamilton

TROMBONES

Declan Gilmore *

Rishi Grandhi

Edem Dzandzi

Landon Branham

DRUMS

Gavin Diffley

BASS

Aditi Routray

PIANO

Sam Ahmadi

GUITAR

Ivan Yap

* *Lead*

EL CERRITO HIGH SCHOOL PERSONNEL

JAZZ WORKSHOP

SAXOPHONES

Isaac Pletcher *
Jackson Austin
Rafael Brenman
Tetsuya Shiozaki
Laertes Brard

TRUMPETS

Yahir Gomez-Porres *
Adam Feiszli
Evan Toth
Rommel Ampie
Lawrence Wong

TROMBONES

Curtis Beh *
Ailyn Arias Sanchez
Marco Ivicic
Penelope Ayala

DRUMS

Sevan Markarian

BASS

Henry Clason

PIANO

Winn Cheng

GUITAR

Ronan Wynden

PERCUSSION

Nessa Eisen

JAZZ ENSEMBLE

FLUTE

Corwin Gauna

SAXOPHONES

Sean Fivian *
Isaac Pletcher
Alexander Jacox
Javier Gutierrez
Thomas Connor

TRUMPETS

Matteo Diaco *
Mimi Odyniec
Andrew Ybarra
Stewart Parkinson

TROMBONES

William Bowden *
Neil Cooney
Matthew D'Amato
Aidan Herp

DRUMS

Rani Millstein

BASS

Leo Szarke

PIANO

Zeke Vlahos

GUITAR

Jack Huie

PERCUSSION

Sevan Markarian

* *Lead*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WCCUSD School Board Members
Cheryl Cotton, Superintendent of Schools
Stacy Wayne, ECHS Principal
Kate Bloomer, ECHS Assistant Principal
Monica Eng, ECHS Assistant Principal
Nancy Flocchini, ECHS Assistant Principal
ECHS Counseling Department
Chris Read, WCCUSD VAPA Coordinator
El Cerrito Band Association Committee Members
Folsom High School Music Boosters
Tiffany Carrico, Director of Bands, Korematsu Middle School
ECHS Performing Arts Department Faculty
Jessi Olwell, ECHS Theater Manager
ECHS Student Theater Staff
ECHS Custodial Staff