CLASS GOT BRASS

A School Brass Band Competition • 2027 Guidelines

Application deadline: Sunday, February 28, 2027, at 10:00 p.m. Central Time
Competition: Sunday, April 4, 2027 | Louis Armstrong Park, 701 N. Rampart Street, New Orleans
Check-in: 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. | Competition begins at 2:00 p.m.

Class Got Brass, presented by the Gia Maione Prima Foundation, is a program of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation that supports music education in Louisiana schools and promotes the New Orleans brass band tradition. The competition welcomes eligible public and non-public middle and high schools from across Louisiana and takes place during the 2027 Congo Square Rhythms Festival.

All applications must be received by the stated deadline. Schools without completed, timely registrations will not be permitted to compete.

Awards and Use of Funds

All qualifying bands that perform in the competition will receive support for their school music programs. Awards may be used for instruments, instrument repairs, music clinicians, equipment, sheet music, and other eligible program supplies.

Placement	Advanced Category	Beginner Category
First place	$10,000	$5,000
Second place	$7,000	$4,000
Third place	$5,000	$3,000

Schools that compete but do not place in either division will receive a participation stipend of up to $1,000.

Grant Redemption Period. All Class Got Brass grant awards must be fully expended by **Monday, August 16, 2027**. All invoices and other required documentation must be submitted to programs@jazzandheritage.org with sufficient time for the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation to review, approve, and process payments. Grant funds will be paid directly to approved vendors and will not be distributed to schools as cash payments or reimbursements.

Any grant funds remaining unused after August 16, 2027, will be forfeited and may not be carried forward to a future year. Requests for extensions may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Extensions should not be presumed and must receive written approval from the Foundation before the redemption deadline.

Louisiana vendor requirement. All grant-funded purchases and services must be obtained through Louisiana-based vendors. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis when an item is unavailable from Louisiana vendors, is out of stock locally, or is a specialty item that cannot reasonably be sourced in Louisiana. Schools must request and receive written approval from the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation before purchasing from an out-of-state vendor. The request should identify the item or service, proposed vendor, and reason a Louisiana vendor cannot be used. **Exceptions are not considered approved unless written communication has been provided to you by the Foundation.**

Competition Rules

1. Eligibility

Accredited public and non-public middle schools (grades 5–8) and high schools (grades 9–12) in Louisiana may apply.

A complete application must be authorized by both the school's band director and principal.

The Foundation does not provide travel, lodging, or reimbursement for other participation-related expenses.

2. Band Size

Each competing brass band must have at least five and no more than 12 student instrumentalists. Permitted dancers/steppers and the grand marshal do not count toward the 12-instrumentalist maximum.

3. Competition Division

Each school must select either the Beginner or Advanced division when applying. Questions about appropriate placement should be directed to the Foundation before the application deadline.

4. Permitted Instrumentation

- Bass drum: one maximum
- Snare drum: one maximum
- Sousaphone (tuba): two maximum
- Saxophone(s), trumpet(s), trombone(s), and clarinet(s)
- Other instruments must be recognized as part of the traditional New Orleans brass band tradition (for example, banjo).

5. Extra Credit

Bands may be accompanied by up to six (6) student dancers or "steppers" and/or one (1) student grand marshal. These elements may be considered for extra credit as described in the judging criteria.

6. Student Participation

All performers - including instrumentalists, dancers/steppers, and the grand marshal - must be students currently enrolled at the participating school. Band directors may accompany their students during the performance but may not perform with them.

7. Dress Code

- School uniforms and school band uniforms are not permitted.
- Blue, black, or khaki pants; jeans are acceptable.
- White shirt; hat and black necktie are optional.
- The grand marshal may wear a black suit and/or sash.
- Dancers' outfits must coordinate with the band's required attire.

8. Props and Accessories

Props, including mock coffins, banners, and flags, are not allowed in the performance area.

Exceptions: the grand marshal may carry a baton or umbrella; dancers may carry umbrellas and/or handkerchiefs.

9. Required Repertoire

Each band must perform three songs selected from the 2027 Approved Song List, in the following order:

- First: a dirge.
- Second: a traditional song.
- Third: a contemporary song.

All competing bands must perform three musical selections: one dirge, one traditional song, and one contemporary song, and must keep their performance within the five-minute limit. Participating bands are required to select their dirge and traditional jazz selections from the provided song list.

The 2027 Approved Song List can be found HERE. It's also on https://www.jazzandheritage.org/class-got-brass/.

For **contemporary selections**, bands may choose from the recommended song list or perform a song of their own choosing. All selections must remain true to the musical traditions and characteristics of their respective categories.

10. Pre-Competition Coaching and Educational Resources

Through a partnership with the Preservation Hall Foundation, participating schools will have access to pre-competition coaching opportunities designed to strengthen participants' traditional New Orleans brass band performance. Coaching may address repertoire, style, improvisation, ensemble cohesion, and performance preparation. Schools may indicate their interest during registration; session formats and scheduling will be communicated based on availability.

Band directors and students may also use the Preservation Hall Foundation's free Brass Bandbook and Preservation Hall Lessons, which feature sheet music, recordings, historical background, and instructional resources. These resources supplement, but do not replace, the official 2027 Approved Song List.

Brass Bandbook: https://www.preshallfoundation.org/brassbandbook
Preservation Hall Lessons: https://lessons.preshallfoundation.org/

11. Competition Date, Location, and Schedule

The competition will take place on Sunday, April 4, 2027, at Louis Armstrong Park, 701 N. Rampart Street, New Orleans, during the Congo Square Rhythms Festival.

- Check-in: 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. All bands must complete check-in by 1:00 p.m.
- Competition begins promptly at 2:00 p.m. and is expected to conclude at approximately 4:30 p.m., subject to the number of participating bands.

12. Performance Timing and Judging Interval

Each band has a maximum of five minutes to complete its performance. The five-minute performance clock begins when the band plays its first musical note.

Following each band's performance, judges will be given up to two minutes to record their scores before the next band begins. This judging interval is separate from the five-minute performance limit and does not count against a band's allotted performance time.

13. Judging Criteria

Judges will evaluate each band on the following criteria:

- Adherence to New Orleans brass band tradition
- Originality
- Group cohesion
- Improvisation, especially collective improvisation
- Energy
- Technical merit
- Artistic merit
- Entertainment value
- Compliance with competition guidelines, including repertoire, and presentation
- Extra credit: student dancers/steppers and/or a student grand marshal

14. How to Apply

The school's band director and principal must authorize the completed application. Applications must be received no later than 10:00 p.m. Central Time on Sunday, February 28, 2027. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Online application: [https://www.jazzandheritage.org/2027-class-got-brass-registration-2/]

Questions: New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation • (504) 558-6100 • kia@jazzandheritage.org • www.classgotbrass.com