

Announcing the NYSSMA 2025 Modern Band Showcase Pilot!

Lindsey Williams: Emerging Ensembles Chair



NYSSMA is thrilled to present our Modern Band Showcase pilot. The showcase pilot is an opportunity for distinguished modern band students from across New York state to collaborate with each other, and elite modern band coaches, for a three day period in preparation for performance. Their performance will be a featured event of the 2025 NYSSMA Winter Conference on Saturday afternoon, December 6, 2025, at the Lilac Ballroom.

Eligibility

Interested students must attend a NYSSMA Participating School and be a part of their school's music program. Students interested in auditioning must do so in their Sophomore or Junior year for participation in their Junior or Senior year of High School. All students must demonstrate their abilities in a variety of styles, including but not limited to: Rock, Pop, Hip-Hop, R&B, Country, Metal or other emerging commercial genres.

Singing is not mandatory for instrumental auditionees, however preparation of a short excerpt demonstrating singing ability is encouraged. If you have an original song you would like to submit for consideration please include it in your audition submission.

Video Submission Requirements for all auditioning students

- The auditionee should introduce themselves and their pieces as they would in a live performance.
- The auditionee's playing or singing position must be visible at all times during the video.
- Each video recording must be continuous. No edits are allowed. Any edited submissions will be disqualified.
- A clock that visually accounts for each second must be visible in the recording at all times.
- Backtracks must be audible for all submissions, except the drumset groove requirement
- ****Optional:** Submissions can be recorded live, with other musicians in the room.

Specific audition requirements

Vocals

Prepare two songs of contrasting style, performed with instrumental or an ensemble track (no sing-alongs).

- The first song should be a lead piece that showcases your vocal range (Your voice part and range should also be indicated on the written application).
- One song can be an original, however at least one must be a cover.
- Rapping as a cover or original is acceptable.
- The following must also be demonstrated:
 - Riffing (melodic and/or lyrical)
 - Singing harmonies and background vocals

Guitar

Prepare two songs of contrasting style.

- Prepared songs must demonstrate diversity of both rhythmic (strumming) and melodic playing (riffing).
- The following must also be demonstrated:
 - Lead soloing
 - Comping
- Songs should demonstrate a variety of chordal usage including open chords, barre chords, power chords, triads, etc.

Keyboard

Prepare two songs of contrasting style.

- Prepared song must demonstrate diversity in both rhythm section playing and melodic playing.
- One song must include a solo.
- One song must demonstrate comping with a variety of voicings and harmonizations.

Bass

Prepare two songs of contrasting style.

- Prepared pieces must demonstrate versatility of techniques (Slap etc..)
- One song must include a drum track and/or ensemble accompaniment but a bassline must not be present on the track.
- One song can be original. The other must be a cover.
- ****Optional and encouraged:** One piece can include a solo.

Drums

Prepare two recordings.

- One recording must include a demonstration of 3 contrasting grooves, each with the following form:
 - 8 bars groove, 4 bars solo, 8 bars groove, and a final downbeat.
- The other recording must demonstrate ability to play along with a song and must include set ups, fills, alternating grooves, and rhythmic variations.

Other Instruments (Ukulele, Brass, Strings, Winds)

Prepare two songs of contrasting styles.

- One song must include a solo, improvised is encouraged.
- For brass, woodwinds, strings: One piece should demonstrate your ability to create and play background lines/riffs. This can be recorded multi-track, live with a recording of your choice, or with an ensemble rhythm section.
- ****Optional and encouraged:** A third song may be included to demonstrate your singing abilities (lead and/or background vocals/harmony singing)

Selection Process

Students wishing to audition for the NYSSMA Modern Band must complete the application and submit TWO one-three minute videos demonstrating their playing ability. Submissions will be accepted from January 15, 2025 through April 1, 2025 and will be uploaded to a submission portal which will be accessible from the homepage of the NYSSMA website.

Repertoire Selection

Selected students are required to attend three ZOOM sessions prior to the festival weekend to discuss musical ideas and pieces to be performed. Zoom sessions will take place in the fall, 2025, the weeks and months prior to the Conference performance. Original compositions that may be selected for performance will also require learning materials to be distributed. The program will be balanced including consideration given to diversity of genres, artists, time period, and style of performance.

Winter Conference Rehearsal and Performance Details

Students will arrive at the Conference in Rochester on Thursday, December 4, 2025.

A hotel rehearsal space and housing/meals will be provided, and registration and housing fees will apply.

Rehearsals will take place Thursday afternoon through Saturday morning.

The performance will be Saturday afternoon at the Lilac Ballroom.