



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 20, 2019

Seattle JazzED's Girls Ellington Project has been accepted to the Swing Central Jazz Festival – an historic first.

Drumroll please...

Seattle JazzED's Girls Ellington Project has been accepted to the Swing Central Jazz Festival, the national high-school jazz festival to be held April 3-5 in Savannah, Georgia. This marks JazzED's first national festival appearance in its 9-year history—but that's not the only headline it represents.

Seattle JazzED's Girls Ellington Project is the first all-girl jazz band in the country to advance to the finals of a national high-school band festival—ever.

"It's a really big deal," says Kelly Clingan, the education director of JazzED who launched the Girls Ellington Project seven years ago. "This was a blind audition, meaning judges didn't know it was an all-female band, and they only accepted 12 bands from around the country for the festival. *We did it!*"

For the past six years, Girls Ellington Project has submitted audition tapes to Swing Central and the New York City Jazz at Lincoln Center Essentially Ellington Festival, the latter well known around here for the Seattle area high school bands (Garfield, Roosevelt, Mountlake Terrace, and Mt Si) that have frequently taken top honors. Though young women have appeared in those bands, the preponderance of band members are typically male—an imbalance which has characterized jazz bands since the dawn of the art form in the early 20th century American South.

"That gender imbalance is what Girls Ellington Project was specifically created to redress," explains Clingan. "There's nothing inherently male about jazz—these young women bring artistry, grace, and thoughtfulness. They are phenomenal!"

The group of 19 young women from 14 local high schools will leave with Clingan April 2, to perform April 4 and 5. Winners will be announced April 5, with livestreamed finals performances.

Seattle JazzED was founded in 2010 with one simple mission: to make sure every young person who comes through our doors gets an excellent music education. The goal? That every JazzED student experience the life-changing magic of teamwork, accountability, and confidence that comes from a dedicated education in jazz, a quintessentially Black-American art form. We serve over 1,000 students annually across 20+ programs, with participants from over 100 different schools around the Seattle area. Over 40 percent of our students receive tuition support and/or a free loaner instrument. All levels are welcome.

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