

# Swing into Jazz Fest



Each year, the Clark College Jazz Festival brings young musicians from throughout the region to Clark.

The 56th Annual Clark College Jazz Festival presents three full days of exhilarating big band jazz on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, January 25-27, 2018 in Gaiser Student Center on Clark College's main campus. Admission is \$5 per day. Clark College students and children under 12 accompanied by an adult will be admitted free of charge.

Sixty middle and high school jazz ensembles from throughout Washington and Oregon are scheduled to perform in this year's competition with trophies presented to the top three jazz ensembles for middle schools and A through AAAA division high schools. Individual outstanding musician awards will also be presented at the end of each division's preliminary competitions. At the end of Saturday evening, the Dale

Beacock Memorial Sweepstakes Award will be presented to one outstanding band selected from the entire festival.

Preliminary competitions for the 2018 festival will start on Thursday with middle schools from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with middle school finals starting at 5:30 p.m. On Friday and Saturday, competition will begin at 8:00 a.m. with the A and AA division jazz bands performing on Friday and AAA and AAAA jazz bands taking the stage on Saturday. Finals competitions will begin at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings ending with the trophies presentation.

The Clark College Jazz Ensemble, under the direction of Festival Director Richard Inouye, will perform at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, noon and 8:30 p.m. on Friday, and at 12:20 p.m. on Saturday. The 2017 Sweepstakes Band, Garfield High School Jazz Band (Seattle, WA), under the direction of Clarence Acox, will hold the spotlight on Saturday evening at 8:30 p.m.

For complete information about the Clark College Music Department concerts featuring the orchestra, band, jazz ensemble, and choirs, please see <http://www.clark.edu/campus-life/arts-events/music/index.php>.

## **The History of the Clark College Jazz Festival**

The heritage of the Clark College Jazz Festival dates back to 1962 when Hudson's Bay H.S. band director, Don Cammack, began organizing a one-day high school stage band invitational for schools from Clark and Skamania counties. Organized by the Vancouver and Evergreen public schools, Fort Vancouver H.S. and Evergreen H.S. took turns hosting the festival each year. Sponsors of the festival included Southwest Washington Music Association and Lower Columbia River Music Educators Association. In the early years, the trophies were made by middle school band director, Jack Ager, creatively constructing musician figures from miscellaneous hardware and car

parts! In 1970, Dale Beacock, then the band director at both Fort Vancouver H.S. and Clark College, held the invitational "Clark Stage Band Contest" for the first time at its current home, Clark College. This inaugural event hosted 17 high school jazz bands with preliminary competitions held in what was then known as the Gaiser Hall dining area, with finals in the gymnasium. Dale's vision of a competitive jazz showcase for schools throughout Washington and greater Portland promoted the growth of the festival and in 1971 the festival grew to 32 bands held over two days on Friday and Saturday. In 1976 the number of participating bands grew to 52, welcoming bands from Oregon and Idaho. In 1985, Chuck Ramsey took over the reigns as Festival Coordinator successfully organizing the festival for the next 22 years. Chuck's achievements bringing consistency in the operations of the festival and increased student involvement set the groundwork for the educational enhancement, leadership, teamwork, and a sense of ownership the Clark student volunteers experience today. In 2008, Richard Inouye came onboard as Festival Director. His professional and educational experience has brought a new dynamic to the festival by encouraging a focus on jazz education and utilizing technology to promote community awareness, public support, and streamline festival operations. In 2012, the Clark College Jazz Festival celebrated its 50th Golden Anniversary. Highlights of this milestone included the Clark College Alumni Band directed by Chuck Ramsey which featured Clark band alumni from three generations of Clark band directors. Dale Beacock and Chuck were also presented Legacy Sweepstakes Awards for their historic contributions to the festival. Today the Annual Clark College Jazz Festival welcomes 60 middle and high school jazz ensembles, over 1,200 student jazz musicians to the campus, and over 3,000 people to the Vancouver community throughout the three-day event. In 2013, the festival went international welcoming two bands from Tsawwassen, British Columbia!

## **About the Clark College Music Department**

Clark College offers a two-year Associate in Music Degree (DTA/MRP) that includes music theory/ear training, instrumental and vocal performance training, and ensemble experience. Classes are designed to prepare the music major for advanced studies at a four-year institution while providing the non-major with the skills and background to fully enjoy music as a cultural pursuit. Ensembles on campus include three choral groups, orchestra, concert band, and jazz ensemble. Three tenured and several adjunct faculty, provide professional instruction to the 500+ students that pass through Beacock Music Hall each year.