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## **SPIVEY HALL CHILDREN'S CHOIR PROGRAM CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF MUSIC EDUCATION**

**MORROW GA (February 7, 2019)** – The critically acclaimed [Spivey Hall Children's Choir Program](#) (SHCC) celebrates its silver anniversary year in 2019, its calendar of events spotlighting 25 years of outstanding music education for Atlanta area youth ages 10 to 18. The program's anniversary season began with its Holiday concerts in December 2018 and culminates with the upcoming Spring recitals, scheduled for **Friday, May 17; Saturday, May 18; and Sunday, May 19, 2019**, and including performances by SHCC alumnae. The Silver Anniversary Season will also include the annual open house, auditions for the 2019-2020 season, and a preview of the program for the choir's traditional "Give Back Tour" scheduled for June 2019 in Chattanooga and Nashville, Tennessee.

"Under the expert professional care and guidance of founding artistic director and conductor Dr. Martha Shaw, and assistant director and accompanist Judy Mason, participation in the Spivey Hall Children's Choir Program has enriched the lives of generations of its dedicated and accomplished singers," said Spivey Hall Executive and Artistic Director Samuel C. Dixon. "As well, through tour performances, radio broadcasts, and commercial recordings, their music-making has touched untold thousands of listeners internationally who have been inspired by their artistry. For this, I am immensely proud and grateful."

Over the past twenty-five years, SHCC has guided over 1,000 student singers through a rigorous program of music enlightenment and training. Founded three years after the opening of Spivey Hall, the Children's Choir program was from the start an integral part of the strategic plan of the Hall's founders, Atlanta real estate developers Emilie and Walter Spivey, who sought to make Spivey Hall a center for music education to serve community children.

"The Spivey Hall Children's Choir program is not solely about the beautiful music made by its singers," said Dr. Martha Shaw, director of the Children's Choir since it was founded. "From its inception, the choir was designed to care more about their character than the sound they produce. I would tell them that I was more interested in who they would become as a person than how they sang, and that was saying a lot! As a result, we have sought to develop the whole musician and prepare them for success, no matter what they pursued in life."

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Shaw sets a high standard of excellence for the students from the start. Students are expected to push themselves both academically and musically. She keeps in touch with many former members, and often hears stories of their continuing success as adults – dedicated doctors, non-profit leaders, or teachers working with at-risk youth. Some have pursued a career in music, and have degrees in music education, sacred music or performance. The one thing they all have in common: attributing their individual success to the experience gained as a member of a successful children’s choir. Shaw, who is also professor of music and director of choirs at Reinhardt University, stresses hard work on the music side, but wants her students to develop character that will serve them in college and beyond.

“Each year there are 170 students in the program,” said Shaw, “all with different social experiences, different family backgrounds, different life goals. They have to learn to be unified in their diversity, and work together as a team, to deliver the highest standard of performance. For the Tour Choir, these singers also have to travel together, inseparable for 10 to 14 days, sometimes in a foreign country. They have to learn to get along, to depend on one another as they work towards a common goal. Those are life skills that translate to more than just a choir.”

SHCC students traditionally enter the program between 10 and 13 years of age; entrance into the program is contingent upon an audition and teacher recommendations. Upon acceptance, choir members may continue in the program until their high school graduation. Most will attend college when they leave the choir program. While there is an annual tuition, need-based assistance is available to those who qualify.

The 170-member Children’s Choir Program singers perform in three choirs, including the **Spivey Hall Young Artists**, the preparatory choir, conducted by Craig Hurley, created as an entry point for enthusiastic but musically inexperienced students. The fifty most advanced singers are the **Spivey Hall Tour Choir**, conducted by Dr. Shaw; SHCC members have to be in the choir for at least one year before they can audition for the Tour Choir. All three choirs perform twice annually at Spivey Hall. At the Holiday Concert in December, the choir performs with the Albert Schweitzer Memorial Organ, and its Holiday program includes music for the season and a Christmas cookie reception. At the Spring Concert in May, the Tour Choir performs selections from its upcoming summer tour. In between the December and May recitals, the Choir performs in various metro Atlanta locations.

The Tour Choir travels each summer, undertaking a ten- to twelve-day international tour every third year; highlights over its 25-year history include concert tours of Spain, Italy, China, England, Sweden and Norway. In between international tour years, the Tour Choir has performed domestically, in noted venues including Carnegie Hall in New York and the Salt Lake City Tabernacle in Temple Square (home to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir). The Tour Choir also undertakes “Give Back Tours,” travelling in the Southeast to where they perform recitals in smaller community centers like assisted living complexes, school auditoriums and senior centers. For the summer of 2019, the Tour Choir has scheduled concerts in Chattanooga and Nashville, Tennessee

## Open house and auditions

Students and parents interested in learning more about the SHCC Program can attend an [Open House and Preview Night](#) at Spivey Hall on **Monday, March 11, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.** This annual event is a great opportunity to experience what the Spivey Hall Children's Choir Program is all about. Visitors will be able to hear all three choirs perform and meet the conductors, singers, alumnae and parents associated with the program. In addition, young singers will be invited to join the Young Artists on the Spivey Hall stage.

At the Open House, young singers can ask questions about and register for the [SHCC 26<sup>th</sup> Season Auditions](#), scheduled for **Saturday, April 27, 2019**. Singers must be between the ages of 10 and 13 on September 1 of the audition year, in order to audition. Full details and registration forms can be found at [clayton.edu/spiveyhall/shccprogram](http://clayton.edu/spiveyhall/shccprogram).

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## About Spivey Hall Children's Choir Program

Now celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Spivey Hall Children's Choir Program consists of three choirs and draws from 17 metro-Atlanta counties. Membership and placement in the choirs is by audition, based on artistic merit and teacher recommendations, with need-based financial assistance available.

Under the direction of Dr. Martha Shaw, all of these outstanding young musicians proudly represent Spivey Hall's dedication to music education and commitment to artistic excellence.

For more information, or to learn about the spring auditions, visit [clayton.edu/spiveyhall/shccprogram](http://clayton.edu/spiveyhall/shccprogram). Follow SHCC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

The program gratefully acknowledges the support of Clayton State University, the Spivey Education Committee, The Walter and Emilie Spivey Foundation and the surrounding arts community. The foundation laid by area music specialists, choral directors, church music programs, and other organizations is a large part of the success of this choral program.

## About Spivey Hall

Now celebrating its 28th season, **Spivey Hall** is the South's most acoustically superior recital hall, presenting the best in classical, jazz and world music. Located on the picturesque campus of Clayton State University in Morrow, Georgia, just fifteen miles southeast of Atlanta, the Hall wins accolades from artists, patrons and journalists alike. An intimate venue with just 390 seats, Spivey Hall promotes for the concert-goer a personal connection with the artist both during and after the performance. Spivey's extraordinary acoustics and reputation for distinguished programming attract outstanding international musicians who regularly perform at the nation's

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major concert venues such as Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. Spivey Hall also presents regular performances on its magnificent 4,413-pipe Albert Schweitzer Memorial Organ, custom-built in Italy by Fratelli Ruffatti. Clayton State University's Spivey Hall gratefully acknowledges support received for the 2018-2019 concert season from the Walter and Emilie Spivey Foundation, the Chaparral Foundation, and the Spivey Hall Friends, as well as from media partners [WABE 90.1 FM](#) and [Jazz 91.9 WCLK](#).

For more information, visit [clayton.edu/spiveyhall](http://clayton.edu/spiveyhall), and follow Spivey Hall on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

### **About Clayton State University**

A unit of the University System of Georgia, **Clayton State University** is an outstanding comprehensive metropolitan university located 15 miles southeast of downtown Atlanta. For more information, visit [clayton.edu](http://clayton.edu).

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