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### Savannah Winds to Perform at the Savannah Music Festival

(December 21, 2011) Armstrong's own Savannah Winds community wind symphony will take center stage at the 2012 Savannah Music Festival.

Savannah Winds will headline a live performance dedicated to American Band Classics on Monday, March 26, at 7 p.m. at the Lucas Theatre for the Arts in Savannah. The concert will feature a wide range of music, from original symphonic compositions to traditional marches.

Savannah Winds, an ensemble in residence at Armstrong Atlantic State University, has earned critical acclaim for its high-quality performances. This all-volunteer group features a number of accomplished professional musicians, as well as talented young artists.

"We're excited to be part of the Savannah Music Festival and to perform at the Lucas Theatre downtown," said Mark Johnson, Savannah Winds principal conductor and musical director. "We'll do an eclectic and exciting program that represents a variety of musical periods. There will be something for everyone."

The highlight of the American Band Classics performance will be a reprise of internationally renowned composer Philip Sparke's *A Savannah Symphony*, which he wrote in honor of Armstrong Atlantic State University's 75th anniversary in 2010. The symphonic tone poem chronicles three centuries of Savannah history in an engaging original wind band composition, weaving together elements of the city's past into a dense auditory tapestry.

The opening movement, "Yamacraw Bluff, February 12th, 1733," alludes to the settlers' arduous sea journey, the enlightened spirit of the city's foundation and the formation of a successful colony. The second movement opens with the sound of the cotton gin at work and includes references to spirituals that once sustained slaves and provided hope for freedom. The final movement, "A City Born and Reborn," recounts Union General William T. Sherman's march into Savannah in 1864, and celebrates the lively spirit of the city since the Civil War.

"*A Savannah Symphony* will be the cornerstone of the concert," Johnson explained. "The rest of the selections will be original compositions written for concert bands, as well as marches and featured solo performances."

Rob Gibson, the executive and artistic director of the Savannah Music Festival, is delighted to welcome Savannah Winds onstage for its festival debut.

“After hearing Donald Hunsberger and the Eastman Wind Ensemble back in college, and later collecting most of their early recordings under the great Frederick Fennell, I was hooked on wind band music,” he said. “This rich American tradition continues to be vibrant, and we are fortunate to have Mark Johnson and the Savannah Winds in this community through the support of Armstrong Atlantic State University. Mark and I met and agreed on a musical concept, and he has programmed a terrific concert, which we’re delighted to include in our 2012 festival.”

Tickets are now available for the Savannah Winds performance, which will showcase the remarkable talent of this local wind ensemble with strong ties to Armstrong.

“Savannah Winds has earned a reputation in the community for performing high-quality concerts for the past 25 years,” said Johnson. “It’s a hometown group. It’s important to let Savannah Music Festival attendees from out-of-town know that there are many fine musicians here in Savannah.”

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*Tickets are currently available for “American Band Classics: Savannah Winds Symphony,” which takes place Monday, March 26, at 7 p.m. at the Lucas Theatre for the Arts, 32 Abercorn Street. Tickets are \$18. To purchase tickets, please call 912.525.5050 or visit <http://www.savannahboxoffice.com> online.*

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