

INTERVIEW WITH SHELLY FAIRCHILD



Shelly Fairchild, a famous Show Choir alum, takes some time out of her busy schedule to talk about how Show Choir has helped her develop as a singer, performer and person. Currently, Show Choirs across the country are using some of Shelly's amazing songs in their own performances.

Among Shelly's songs from *Ruby's Money* that have been featured by Show Choirs recently are "Love Revelation," "Try the Truth," "Love Everybody," "Baby Love" and "I'm Just Sayin."

RJC: During your rising fame, several interviewers have mentioned your connection to Show Choir, and you credited Attaché in an interview with *Country Music News* with helping you get started—since you learned how to audition and work in the theatre through Show Choir. Obviously, you are a phenomenal singer—but were there any other qualities that you developed or honed from your time in Show Choir?

SF: ARE YOU KIDDING?!? I absolutely give 95% of the credit for my successes to my experience with show choir. First of all, I really believe that you are either born with the gift to entertain or you aren't. However, having said that, I was a hard nut to crack when I entered my sophomore year of high school (my first year of show choir).

I remember very clearly sitting in my chair, singing along with whatever song we were learning at the time, when my Attaché Show Choir director Mr. Fehr came right up to me and very poignantly demanded that I OPEN MY MOUTH WHEN I SING!

More than a few times, I was told to pay attention to the words that I was saying and singing and make my emotions match that. I learned how to tell stories with my face and my body. I learned so much about communication, trust, camaraderie, over my three years in show choir. I literally believe that anyone who wants to be a performer of some kind should have to experience show choir or something equivalent to it.

RJC: What information could you share with Show Choir directors about assisting their students who have dreams to be the next Shelly Fairchild? Should directors give "tough love" if they think the students aren't up for the challenge?

SF: Hmmm...it's interesting. I will never forget my senior year, when my Show Choir director impressed upon me the idea that I might need to drop a few pounds. He said, "If this is the business that you want to be in...if you want to be competitive in the entertainment world, you have to be and look your absolute best. Period." I remember making up my mind, at that moment, that I was going to LOSE WEIGHT.

Now, I know that is such a touchy subject, but I will tell you I have run into that same conversation at least 300 times since my senior year of high school. There are some things that are valuable to know and some things that can and should be ignored. Being and looking your best is just what you do when you want to win at something—whatever that is. If you aren't willing to do that, there are millions of others who are.

To address your "tough love" question, I have to say that since entering the music business I have had countless disappointments. The way of a true artist is NOT easy. I believe that any and all preparation that you can give a young artist is well worth it. However, if it leans towards discouragement I believe that has everything to do with the person handing out the advice. I believe that everyone has to experience all that they can to know what they choose—to know what they need to know to make a good choice about what they really want to do in their life. So, with that in mind, yes—the truth

about the entertainment business is that it can be a very harsh and unforgiving place to be. But it can also be as glorious and magical as you imagined! So, I say uplift and encourage but always tell the truth, even if it hurts.

RJC: What advice would you give that student about what it takes? Is talent enough? Would hard work combined with talent be enough?

SF: To make it in anything in life, you have to combine your talents with extremely hard work. There are countless numbers of people in the entertainment business that might not be as talented as the next person, but they have an undeniable work ethic and that is what has gotten them to the top. There is a big underlying theme among artist managers and others in charge of artists' careers that goes like this, "I can't want it more than you want it." Meaning...if anyone that works with or for you spends more time "wanting" your career to be on top than YOU actually spend "wanting" your career to be on top, then quit.

It is never going to work in your favor to NOT work for what you want. If you decide that it's all too hard to figure out...then move on to something else. IT IS very hard to figure out, but it is doable. And, in fact, more and more people are finding their success without the help of major corporations to back them and such. We live in a wide world of endless possibilities. You just have to work really hard to figure out how you fit in that big space. Oh, plus you MUST have some sort of talent...even if it's the talent of faking it. ;-)

RJC: What memories come up as you watch Show Choirs dance to Shelly Fairchild songs? Is that surreal for you? Why do you think your songs work so well in that venue?

SF: Funny that you ask that question. I almost DIED the first time I got a call from my friend April James about a show choir performing one of my songs. I have always, always had the dream that one day my own Attaché would perform something that I have written. There's just something indescribable about my feelings towards my time in show choir and how I felt learning all of the songs that we sang and the dances that we danced.

I KNOW that helped to mold me into who I am today; it shaped how I write songs, hear music, perform. I hope that my music is inspiring to the people that listen to it, sing it, dance to it. There is really no other reason to be doing what I do. I want everyone to experience the music that I make, and when they do I want them to have some sort of tie to it.

With the kids that are performing my songs, I know they will NEVER forget them. They will never forget their time in show choir and all of their friends. I just write songs from my own experiences, and I write with the intention of being able to perform them. I am beyond honored and grateful that my friend April shared my music with a few show choir directors around this country. She, the directors, and each of the students on the stages across America that perform one or more of my songs have literally helped make one of my biggest dreams come true! 