

MUSEUM EVENT CELEBRATES CHARLOTTE'S MILL VILLAGE PAST

Free multimedia event features the Charlotte Symphony

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Sept. 18, 2018 – The Charlotte Symphony and The Charlotte Museum of History will present a free performance of *Mill Village: A Piedmont Rhapsody* on Thursday, Sept. 27, at the museum. This multimedia experience uses music, words and images to depict the textile mill culture that dominated the Carolina Piedmont starting in the late 1800s.

The 30-minute performance pays homage to the people of the mill villages and their experiences – their transition from rural farm communities to mill village life, their deeply felt ties to family and community, and their fight against oppression.

“This piece speaks to the historical importance of the textile industry in shaping the Carolina Piedmont, both culturally and economically,” said Adria Focht, president and CEO of The Charlotte Museum of History. “It illustrates the contrast between the quaint mill villages of the last century and our region’s sprawling, gleaming cities of today.”

The work, composed by David Crowe and commissioned by the Charlotte Symphony, features a 16-member chamber ensemble of CSO musicians and incorporates live storytelling by narrator Frank Dominguez of WDAV. It integrates images and sounds from mill village life, including factories, rivers and trains.

“We are thrilled to share the musical story of those who helped shaped our region with our partners at The Charlotte Museum of History, especially as the Symphony looks to celebrate 250 years since the founding of our city,” says Charlotte Symphony president and CEO Mary A. Deissler. “We look forward to many more collaborations to come.”



Following the performance, the audience will hear from two speakers about mill village history and how we can preserve it today.

Kristina Horton, the great-granddaughter of union organizer and North Carolina folk heroine Ella May Wiggins, will speak about how she found her own family story in the mill village narrative and why she is working to memorialize this history. Ella May was perhaps best known for her ballad "The Mill Mother's Lament." She was killed in 1929 during the Loray Mill Strike in Gastonia. Horton, an elementary school teacher in Asheville, is author of "Martyr of Loray Mill: Ella May and the 1929 Textile Workers' Strike in Gastonia, North Carolina."

Stewart Gray, preservation planner for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, will speak about the rapid disappearance of Charlotte's mill villages in the face of development and what can be done to sustainably preserve these historic neighborhoods and the stories they tell for future generations.

This free program is made possible by a Culture Block grant from ASC.

How to Go

This free event takes place Thursday, September 27, at 7 p.m. at The Charlotte Museum of History, 3500 Shamrock Drive. Admission is free. Registration is required, as seating is limited. More information and registration at charlottemuseum.org/events.

About The Charlotte Museum of History

The Charlotte Museum of History engages a broad audience in the history of the Charlotte region through the stories of its people, places and events to promote dialogue and historical perspective. The museum is the steward of the Hezekiah Alexander House (ca. 1774) and home site, a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. To learn more, visit charlottemuseum.org and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).



About the Charlotte Symphony

Founded in 1932, the Charlotte Symphony is a longstanding nonprofit organization committed to delivering exceptional musical experiences that connect and strengthen the Charlotte community. Led by internationally renowned Music Director Christopher Warren-Green, the Symphony upholds the highest artistic integrity and takes bold steps to engage the community through music that enriches the human spirit. We employ professional full-time orchestra musicians, support two youth orchestras and a volunteer chorus, and offer significant educational programming aimed at improving underserved sections of our community. The Charlotte Symphony is integral to the Charlotte area, serving its community through music that connects and inspires. charlottesymphony.org

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