

Jazz Vocalist Lenora Helm Hammonds to Perform in Concert with Durham Symphony Orchestra under Direction of Maestro William Henry Curry

DURHAM, N.C., Feb. 13, 2014 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Stunningly gifted vocalist, educator and founder of the progressive programs [Vocal Musicianship Academy](#) and [Vocal Jazz Online](#), [Lenora Helm Hammonds](#) has received the coup honor of an invitation to be a featured singer in the program “Durham Symphony Orchestra and All That Jazz.”

The symphonic jazz concert will feature Helm singing the Benny Golson jazz standard “I Remember Clifford” (with strings) and a salute to Hamlet, N.C.-born John Coltrane via Rodgers & Hammerstein’s “My Favorite Things” joined by Brian Horton (also a native of North Carolina) who wrote the arrangement.

The afternoon community event, which will showcase the works of historical North Carolina musicians and the state’s Composer-of-the-Year Steven Bryant, takes place Sunday, March 2, 2014 at the Carolina Theater in Durham. This is quite an honor for Helm to be selected.

“I am beyond ecstatic for the opportunity to work with Maestro Curry and the DSO. And, the icing on the cake is the privilege to sing an arrangement written for me by the very talented saxophonist/composer, Brian Horton. Wow! Pinch me, so I know I’m not dreaming!” says Helm.

Though Helm has been a vocal professor at North Carolina Central University for several years, the lady actually hails from Chicago, Illinois. She is also currently working on her doctorate from Boston University.

[Maestro William Henry Curry](#), Principal Conductor of the 68-member [Durham Symphony Orchestra](#) and a prominent African-American in this country’s classical music realm, states, “Lenora Helm is a local treasure as an educator, artist and inspirational person. She introduced herself to me a year or so ago. I enjoyed two of her jazz recordings and have just been waiting for the perfect opportunity to feature her with the symphony. I’m thrilled she was willing and available for this.”

Now celebrating his fifth year with the DSO and his 18th season with the North Carolina Symphony, Curry continues, “One of my missions on every program is to play at least one piece by an American composer. American audiences love American music even if you pair it with Beethoven. I’ve been a performer for more than 45 years so I know what the audience likes. I exhibited this kind of Third Stream fusion at my very first concert here as Musical Director in a program that featured Gershwin as well as Louis Moreau Gottschalk whose music used melodic cells from plantation music and spirituals alongside Chopin and Schuman – a sensation in Europe. American

symphony orchestras should feature American composers. When audiences have an opportunity to witness it, they love it.”

DSO Executive Director Mary Sherk details, “The genesis of this concert came a year ago. We realized the incredible connections between orchestras and jazz composed of people here in N.C. This concert will illuminate that for the public. It is important to note we could not have done this without a grant from the North Carolina State Arts Council to which we are grateful and indebted. Arts councils have been cutting back on the state level so this is great. It’s a competitive process but they evaluated this as worthy.”

Noting the escalation of the event, Brett Chambers, Board of Directors President of the Durham Symphony Orchestra enthuses, “This has turned into a bigger thing than was first pitched. The idea is to create community engagement with the orchestra instead of just giving a concert. People love the arts here so there will be a pre-concert chat and a meet and greet afterward. We are shooting for this to become a signature annual event.”

Speaking on the participation of Lenora Helm, Chambers concludes, “I’ve seen her perform a number of times and also appreciate the way she works with students. I brought her in, Maestro Curry was impressed, Lenora suggested Brian Horton as an arranger and now he is on the program. She is a wonderful artist and human being whose sincerity and passion for all she does shines through in her music.”

Durham Symphony Orchestra and All That Jazz also features singers Lois Deloatch and Rozlyn Sorrell, saxophonist Greg Gelb, jazz/classical bassist John Brown and his trio.

The Carolina Theatre is located at 309 West Morgan Street Durham, North Carolina.

Concert begins at 3 p.m. Sunday March 2 with a pre-concert chat at 2:30 p.m. with “Composer-of-the-Year” Steve Bryant. A meet and greet with Maestro Curry and other musicians will take place following the concert.

More Information: <http://www.lenorahelm.com/> and <http://www.durhamsymphony.org/>.

To view Lenora Helm Hammonds’ EPK check out: <http://youtu.be/7zJkdS4I-Ns>.

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