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Charlotte Symphony to Receive \$15,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

January 15, 2020 | Charlotte, NC—The Charlotte Symphony has been approved for a \$15,000 Art Works grant to support their Copland *Appalachian Spring* concert on January 31 and February 1, 2020. This grant will support the Cherokee Chamber Singers' performance of William Britton's 2018 composition of *Si Otsedoha (We're Still Here)*. Overall, the National Endowment for the Arts has approved 1,187 grants totaling \$27.3 million in the first round of fiscal year 2020 funding to support arts projects in every state in the nation, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

The Art Works funding category supports projects that focus on public engagement with, and access to, various forms of excellent art across the nation; the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence; learning in the arts at all stages of life; and the integration of the arts into the fabric of community life.

"The arts are at the heart of our communities, connecting people through shared experiences and artistic expression," said Arts Endowment chairman Mary Anne Carter. "The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support projects like the Charlotte Symphony's Copland *Appalachian Spring* concert with the Cherokee Chamber Singers."

The Charlotte Symphony will perform Britton's *Si Otsedoha (We're Still Here)*, as part of their main stage Classical Series. This concert serves as a continuation of the CSO's commitment to use music to both explore issues of systematic injustice, and to look to a more equitable future for all people.

"*Si Otsedoha (We're Still Here)* is not only an artistically excellent work that shines a light on North Carolina music and composers, but it also gives voice to a group of people in our home state who feel forgotten," says Michelle Hamilton, Charlotte Symphony Interim President and CEO. "The Charlotte Symphony is proud to provide their voice a platform, and we're thrilled that the NEA supports and recognizes the importance of this work."

The program features the Cherokee Chamber Singers as guest artists, performing Britton's poignant Cherokee musical journey, composed in 2018. *Si Otsedoha (We're Still Here)* sprang

from the minds and hearts of students of Cherokee Middle and High Schools, under the guidance of the Cherokee Chamber Singers participants. Brittelle based this student-driven piece on responses to a questionnaire asking students what aspects of being Cherokee make them feel most proud, and what they want people to know about them. That history books barely mention the Cherokee nation, and most people are not aware they are still here today, troubled the students.

Si Otsedoha (We're Still Here) documents musically the past, present, and future of the Cherokee people who have lived in the mountains of Western Carolina for several thousand years. The singers perform the work in the Cherokee language. The weekend's program will also include Copland's *Appalachian Spring* and Barber's *Adagio for Strings*. Nestled in a Classical program of American composers, *Si Otsedoha (We're Still Here)* offers audiences the opportunity to celebrate the creativity and cultural heritage of the original citizens of North Carolina. This concert has the capacity to portray the Cherokee experience and the views of today's Cherokee youth through the power of music.

For more information on projects included in the Arts Endowment grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

For more information about the Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 concert at Belk Theater, visit charlottesymphony.org.

About the Cherokee Chamber Singers

The Cherokee Chamber Singers vocal group was formed in 2016 as the advanced vocal group from the Performing Arts Department at Cherokee High School, the Native American high school in the Qualla Boundary in Cherokee, NC (also known as the Cherokee Indian Reservation). Under the direction of Michael Yannette, the singers' unique and varied repertoire offers audiences both traditional and modern Native American music, as well as choral, classical, musical theater, and pop/rock genres.

About the Charlotte Symphony

Founded in 1932, the Charlotte Symphony is a longstanding nonprofit organization committed to connecting and strengthening the community through exceptional musical experiences. 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. We employ professional full-time orchestra musicians, support two youth orchestras, 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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