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CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY, QUEENS UNIVERSITY AND SOUTHMINSTER PARTNER FOR NEW ALZHEIMER'S STUDY

January 9, 2018 | CHARLOTTE, NC—The Charlotte Symphony has partnered with Queens University and Southminster for an exciting new study examining how those with dementia and Alzheimer's respond to live orchestral music.

Formed on the belief in the restorative power of music, this partnership is an expansion of the Symphony's umbrella Healing Hand program, which has sent professional orchestra musicians into Charlotte and surrounding area hospitals, nursing homes, and senior care centers for nearly 20 years.

"We all know how powerful music can be in our own lives in recalling specific memories," says Mary A. Deissler, Charlotte Symphony President and CEO. "We are honored to partner with Queens' Music Therapy department and Southminster for this very important study."

The partnership uses intentional musical selections to determine levels of audience engagement. Queens University Music Therapy students will conduct the intensive study, designed for mid- to late-stage patients, consisting of 10 performances by former Charlotte Symphony cellist Deborah Mishoe and current flutist Amy Orsinger Whitehead, at low and high socio-economic senior care centers.

The purpose of the diverse socio-economic study is to determine whether music has a universal impact on memory recall or if having had previous exposure to orchestral music makes a difference in recognition.

Five performances each will take place at Complete Care Management Myers Park and Southminster. Residents from the host facilities will make up the study participant group.

"The Music Therapy Program at Queens has a long history of community partnerships and their work with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra exemplifies Queens' vision of transforming the lives of its students and enhancing the intellectual and cultural fabric of its community," says Siu Challons-Lipton, Executive Director of the Department of Art, Design and Music at Queens University.

The study has been formally vetted by an Institutional Review Board to ensure that ethical practices are being followed and no known harm will come from participation in the study.

Components of the study are graciously funded by Southminster, which has long been a Symphony supporter and partner for mainstage concerts, on-location ensemble performances, and continuing education opportunities.

“Southminster is proud to partner with the Charlotte Symphony to connect quality arts programming and elders in our community,” says Tracy McGinnis, Southminster’s Director of Philanthropy. “We’re honored to provide support in order to help Healing Hand expand into communities of greatest need.”

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

About Queens University of Charlotte

Nestled in a historic neighborhood just minutes from Uptown Charlotte, Queens has been providing students with transformational experiences for more than 160 years. A private, masters-level university, Queens serves more than 2,500 students in academic programs across the liberal arts and sciences as well as the professional fields of business, communication, nursing, health and education. With the city of Charlotte as an extended campus, students have the opportunity to launch into abundant internships, community service and academic partnerships. The majority of undergraduates also study internationally during their time at Queens. Queens is a unique learning environment that doesn’t ask students to choose between ideals and interests. Students are invited to be both, be more—and in so doing, leave their own mark on history.

About Southminster

A leader in the field of aging, Southminster is a non-profit, charitable lifeplan community, providing innovative living solutions to aging across a full continuum of care. Dedicated to overall well-being, Southminster embraces living life with purpose by valuing independence and privacy, inspiring creative passions, encouraging lifelong learning, and motivating each individual’s plan for wellness to its highest potential. For more information on Southminster, please visit www.southminster.org.

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