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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Athenaeum Press at Coastal Carolina University sponsors Gullah music concert

The Freedom Readers Children's Choir will perform as part of the 2015 Lowcountry Rice Culture Forum Sept. 19 in Georgetown

CONWAY, S.C. – The Athenaeum Press at Coastal Carolina University will sponsor a free performance of Gullah music featuring the Freedom Readers Children's Choir Saturday, Sept. 19, at 4 p.m. on the Kaminski House Museum lawn in Georgetown.

Concert attendees may bring lawn chairs, blankets and refreshments to the free, hour-long program.

The event is part of the 2015 Lowcountry Rice Culture Forum, a project designed to discover and revive the significance of rice cultivation and its legacies. The forum, co-hosted by the Georgetown Library and the Athenaeum Press, will focus on the effects of South Carolina's former rice industry on the arts and culture of the state. Events will take place at locations throughout Georgetown from Sept. 17 to 19.

Eric Crawford, assistant professor of musicology at CCU, will direct the 60-member children's choir comprised of middle school children from both Georgetown and Horry counties who participate in the Freedom Readers program.

"This is a great opportunity to involve young people in discovering the music of their parents and grandparents — their musical legacy," Crawford said.

The choir will perform readings paired with songs and dances that represent the historical development of African American musical styles. Selections include "Wait in the Field," Aunt Pearl Sue's "Shake 'em Song" and "The Gullah Gullah TV Show Theme Song" among others, and will incorporate the unique hand clapping, stomping, dancing, singing and even moaning of slaves as they once expressed themselves through work songs and late night prayer services.

Crawford's research on the history of praise houses and song leaders on St. Helena Island, S.C., led to the highly acclaimed Athenaeum Press publication *Gullah: the Voice of an Island* in 2014. The CD box set is available online at theathenaempres.com.

Crawford credits Tracy Bailey, founder of the Freedom Readers organization, as the motivating factor behind this collaboration. Freedom Readers Inc. works with K-8 students in Georgetown and Horry counties to improve reading skills in low income communities by providing one-to-one literacy tutoring, free books for home libraries and a high-energy learning environment.

The collaboration of the Athenaeum Press, Crawford and the Freedom Readers students in creating this singular performance of culturally rich music continues the Press mission of telling the stories unique to the heritage of our region in innovative ways.

The Kaminski House Museum is located at 1003 Front St., Georgetown.

For more information and the full schedule of 2015 Lowcountry Rice Culture Forum events, see <http://georgetowncountylibrary.sc.gov/programs/Pages/RiceForum2015>.

About The Athenaeum Press

The Athenaeum Press is a student-centered laboratory for document design, editing, publishing, and new media development and dissemination. The educational mission of the Athenaeum Press requires that every step of each publication project—from research to writing, conception to design, production to promotion—be taken with an eye toward enhancing undergraduate and graduate student skills. Located in the Thomas W. and Robin W. Edwards College of Humanities and Fine Arts at Coastal Carolina, the Athenaeum Press works with students and community members to develop projects that tell regional stories in ways relatable to a larger audience.

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