

CMW NEWS

April 20, 2017
Winston-Salem, NC—

Carolina Live!—A Musical History Takes to the Road 8th Season Reaches 4 Counties

This spring, *Carolina Live!—Our Musical History* delighted over 4,250 students. Most were low-income children with little exposure to live shows.

We did six shows in our home base of Forsyth County and one in neighboring Greensboro. We also brought the show to rural students in Stokes and Sampson counties. For each location, the show was customized to fit the locale.

Eddy McGee, NC Arts Council board member and head of the Stokes County Arts Council, was a super host. He gave us the ultimate compliment when he said, **“Every school in North Carolina should see this show.”** A few days later, Eddy called us to say he’d already begun raising funds to have us back next year.



Stokes County 4th–7th graders were welcoming and eager.

Chestnut Grove Middle School principal David Durham rolled out the red carpet. He seemed like a tame guy until he got up on stage and danced in our blues number. His crazy dance moves surprised and delighted students. And our cast really delivered. Unfazed by the acoustics of bleachers and basketball hoops, cast members captured students’ hearts and minds with their engaging narration and great music.

At Greensboro’s Sedgefield Elementary, 300 well-prepared 3rd–5th graders saw the show as part of their unit on NC folktales, art and music. Music teacher Stephanie Bartis, who raised half the funds, summed up the show this way: **“phenomenal.”**

Mel Jones, one of NC’s most popular bluesmen, came to see the Greensboro show and had this to say: **“The show was wonderful. The kids were riveted, involved and excited.”** Another visitor, a music teacher and member of the local church that provided

some funds, also offered high praise: **“I go to many performances in Greensboro—the symphony, the opera—and the music in this show was as good as I’ve heard.”**

Sampson County was a blast—our first road trip! At 5:15 am, the cast piled into a van and drove three hours east to North Carolina’s agricultural heartland. Ray Jordan graciously welcomed us to the cultural center he runs, the Sampson County Exposition Center.

Ray, a veteran arts leader who books some of the top touring acts coming through the southeast, loved the show. In his review he sent to NC venue operators, he wrote, **“[It’s] a great educational performance that any school or NC presenter...would benefit from...From the feedback from teachers, I know that they found the performance to be fun, entertaining and extremely educational for their students.”**

For the morning show, 1,000 3rd graders came on busses from around Sampson County, and in the afternoon, 1,000 4th graders piled into the large venue. It was a lively and diverse group from many backgrounds, including Native American. Fourth grader Mirabella summed up the time she had: **“It was very inspiring. I play guitar myself, so it taught me more about music. I’d like to come to this show again!”**

###