

Media Release

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**The Storyweavers Hold CD Release Party at Hampton History Museum
August 15**

Hampton, Virginia- The Storyweavers will release their first full-length album “Fallen Sparrow” as part of the Hampton History Museum’s monthly music series on Wednesday, August 15, 6:00 p.m. -8:00 p.m.

The Storyweavers perform all original Americana, folk and blues music. The making of the album, “Fallen Sparrow” has been a call back to the band’s roots. “Fallen Sparrow” is a collection of the five-member band’s love of sharing stories through songs to connect with their audience. Songs such as the title cut, "Fallen Sparrow/Can't Let Go" is the remembering of wise words given from grandparents, to love lessons learned from past mistakes in "Show You Love." The 12 songs on the album speak of reflection and hope, and of regret as in "I'm Sorry," or hopeful reminders in "Life Matters." To ensure that all can enjoy the stories that the music conveys, the band members include a deaf performance artist and an American Sign Language interpreter as an integral part of their performance.

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Upon reflection of The Storyweavers' music, songwriter Sheela Fortner says, "My Appalachian influences are clear in "Wait" and "Natures Revival." The first speaks of the incredible love shared by my grandparents of Scot-Irish descent, having raised 13 children in the Great Smoky Mountains of Western North Carolina, and my grandfather's promise that he would love my grandmother "til the rocking chair." The second, "Nature's Revival" speaks of the richness of talent and love of family gatherings as relatives would reach for their instruments after supper and gather on the tin roofed front porch. The creek that cut through the property was so loud that you had to sing loud to be heard and you could hear the music echo off the mountains all the way to Kudzu Hollow mixed the thunder of the creek. There they would play and sing gospel to country to folk from sunset until the break of morning. This is the melody of my heart."

The band has a faithful following of folks who have dubbed themselves "The Weavers." The Weavers play an important part in each performance as they have their own shout outs during songs and break into dance and joyous abandon. The band's followers have formed a tribe of folks that relish gathering, singing and dancing.

The Storyweavers began their journey in January of 2016, after what some would call the winter of discontent.

Sheela Fortner, vocalist/songwriter and former lead vocalist of Mermaids in the Basement (MITB) for over 2 decades had become disenchanted with late-night performances in smoky bar rooms; wailing her soul out over the clanging of beer bottles and, for the most part, to rowdy, half-listening audiences.

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Linda Gale Poole, singer, songwriter and guitarist had played “the beach circuit” with a band called Minus Me for many years. She, too, had stepped away from her music when an injury to her wrist left her not knowing if she could ever play again.

When these two women met at a local jam session of mutual friends, they realized they had something sacred in common; the love of music and the need to create. Soon after, they were cranking out songs in the parlor of Linda's Ghent home.

Meanwhile, **Beth Whyte, bassist, backup vocals and sound engineer** had hung up her bass. She'd bought her dream home on the beach and was seemingly happy to have a break after 23 years of performing as drummer and then bassist for MITB. A couple of years went by before she realized something was missing. When she got the call from Sheela and Linda to sit in on a 'jam,' she never looked back. Music is simply part of who she is.

Jennifer McLaughlin, Deaf Performance Artist, also formerly of MITB, had spent 15 plus years performing on stages all across Coastal Virginia and has performed the National Anthem for the Norfolk Tides and Hampton Roads Pride Festival. Jennifer's powerful delivery of visual music had rightfully garnered her quite a large following so when The Storyweavers began creating music the next natural step was to invite Jennifer to join the new musical tribe.

Bringing in **Annie James as the American Sign Language** interpreter to assist in translating between the two languages, the group was set to move forward with their vision of telling stories through song to audiences ready to look, listen, and feel.

With everyone on board, they took off and haven't looked back. The first year saw them perform 34 gigs. So far, in 2018, they have won FM's Battle of the Bands, been a nominee for Best in Americana from Veer Magazine and are releasing their first full length album entitled Fallen Sparrow. Busier than ever, you can find them on most weekends performing somewhere in

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Hampton Roads; whether it be a coffee shop, festival, or fundraiser.

“Fallen Sparrow” can be purchased on CDBaby, iTunes and will be available at the museum event.

Beer and wine will be available for purchase. Proceeds benefit the museum’s educational programs.

Hampton History Museum

Held in the museum’s Great Hall on the third Wednesday of the month, the “Front Porch” Music Series presents different genres of music that have shaped the American soundscape and influenced talent in Hampton Roads’ vibrant music scene. Admission is free to museum members, \$5.00 for non-members. Doors open at 5:30 pm. Seating and capacity are limited.

The Hampton History Museum is located at 120 Old Hampton Lane in Downtown Hampton. There is free parking in the garage across the street from the museum. For more information call 757-727-1102 or visit www.HamptonHistoryMuseum.org.

Upcoming shows:

Aug. 18: Starving Artist Café, 7:00 p.m. -9:00 p.m. Norfolk, VA

Aug. 31: The Grey Goose 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Hampton, VA

Partially bordered by the Hampton Roads harbor and Chesapeake Bay, Hampton, with the 344,000 sq. ft. Hampton Roads Convention Center and the award-winning Hampton Coliseum, is located in the center of Coastal Virginia and the Hampton Roads metropolitan area. Hampton is the site of America's first continuous English-speaking settlement, the site of the first arrival of Africans in English North America, and is home to such visitor attractions as the Virginia Air & Space Center, Fort Monroe National Monument, Hampton History Museum, harbor tours and cruises, Hampton University Museum, The American Theatre, among others. ###