

Songwriter & Photographer Couple are November's NPAF Gettysburg Military Park Artists-in-Residence

Couple are residents at Gettysburg National Military Park, thanks to the National Parks Arts Foundation

GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA, USA, November 15, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- GETTYSBURG, PA — Gettysburg National Military Park's Artists-in-Residence for the month of November will be singer and songwriter, and author Michela Miller Ferree and her husband George, a photographer and video artist.

Michela and George Ferree will spend mid-November through mid-December at the park, working and interacting with Gettysburg visitors. Michela has experience as a music teacher as well as an environmental educator at the Cincinnati Zoo, so she enjoys public interaction. The Ferrees will meet with park visitors on December 10 in the Refreshment Saloon at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center, for a fireside performance of songs inspired by the Civil War. The free program will be from 1 to 2 p.m.

Michela will be writing songs about the human stories inspired by the hallowed ground of Gettysburg. "Gettysburg is full of thousands of stories. As a songwriter, I want to

attempt to tell some of those stories, to give a voice to some of the people on both sides who were affected by the battle and aftermath. There are so many themes to choose from when thinking about creating songs. Leaving home, brother against brother, loss, hope, unity, divisiveness, giving up your life for a cause, realizing that you don't even know why you're fighting, young, poor men as pawns for old, rich men... it's endless. The stories already exist, I just have to find them and translate them into song."

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Michela Ferree, NPAF Resident for November

George plans to photograph a variety of the more than 1300 monuments to soldiers who fought on both sides of the battle, using the ultra-low light capability of his camera to catch time and starlight on the wing. "Storytelling and emotion are what I love about photography; video is composed of thousands of photos, each adding its own element to the emotion and story. In my photography, I want to tell stories at night."



Michela grew up in neighboring Ohio, in President Grant's hometown. In fact, her father often played

the legendary union General at schools and other events. "He portrayed Grant, to whom he bore an uncanny resemblance. As a result of his participation, I had "forced" participation of my own. Imagine the horror of a 13-year-old girl when her teacher gets her dad to present a lecture to her seventh grade history class, dressed in Union blues. I spent all of Jr. High as 'the general's daughter'."

But she also sang and performed in period costume at events where her family was often drafted into action. "Most of my family lives in my home town, and most of them are very musically gifted, so music has always

been encouraged. I cut my musical teeth singing at churches and on stages in my hometown. My hometown gave me strong roots, and moving away was difficult, but I feel like I've blossomed by foraging out of my comfort zone." Michela upped roots and headed to Fairbanks, Alaska, where she met her husband, and together they moved to Nashville, before setting in Seattle.



George, an Alaska native, has often been inspired by the amazing vistas and light of his native state, and is curious to use his spirit of wonder on the landscapes of the park at night. "I was born and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska. Alaska is a never ending flow of artistic inspiration. It was the northern lights that really struck a chord inside me; being able to capture a natural event of that caliber gave me fulfillment that no other medium of art ever had. Ultimately, seeing events and places through a viewfinder allows me a deeper connection with them."

The National Parks Arts Foundation (NPAF), a 501(c)3 non-profit, is excited to continue and expand this program with the National Park Service at Gettysburg National Military Park and the Gettysburg Foundation to provide the Gettysburg National Military Park Artist-in-Residence program. This is the last residency program at Gettysburg National Military Park this year. In 2017, the NPAF residency program is growing to 12 AiRs in four categories: Electronic New Media, Word/Sound/Song, Open Media, and an innovative & brand new program for Artists who are Armed Forces Veterans.

The program is offered thanks to the input and support of the National Park Service and the Gettysburg Foundation whose joint efforts make the park the foremost visitor destination for those interested in the epic history of the American Civil War.

"Gettysburg's monuments and memorials, and the battlefield landscapes inspire so much passion in our visitors today, and the Artists-in-Residence really highlight that passion," said Ed W. Clark, superintendent of Gettysburg National Military Park. "The Artist-in-Residence programs are engaging new audiences and making deeper connections with our visitors through the power and the passion of art."

"The Artist-in-Residence program is a refreshing way to make the stories from Gettysburg's rich history come to life," said Barbara Sardella, Interim President of the Gettysburg Foundation. "Integrating art into the Gettysburg experience is a long-term Foundation goal. At the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center, we use the magnificent Cyclorama painting and our new Civil War Art Exhibit to depict the courageous soldiers and civilians, ordinary people, caught up in extraordinary situations. The talented artists of this program like Michela and George Ferree,

who interact with our visitors and local residents create a spark when they offer a very different lens through which to view war, people, and the power of this place called Gettysburg."

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