



DE CODA

OFFENDERS MAKE MUSIC WITH NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

The South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) is proud to host Decoda chamber music ensemble to create and perform original songs with inmates in the Better Living Incentive Community (BLIC) at Lee Correctional Institution (LCI). This transformative music program has been in residence at the maximum-security state prison in Bishopville, S.C. since 2014, cultivating a weeklong creative songwriting project for members each year.

This February 8 - 13, 2016, Decoda returns to Lee Correctional Institution to work with 35 inmates from the BLIC to create a new program of original music called *Seasons of Life*, inspired by popular baroque composer Antonio Vivaldi's classical work, the *Four Seasons*. Following the 5-day songwriting workshop, inmate musicians and Decoda will present a final performance for the larger incarcerated community, staff, officers, and local and state officials. The project is funded by the Fine Arts Center of Kershaw County and the Hootie and the Blowfish Foundation.

"Hootie and the Blowfish recognizes the importance of music not only as a teaching tool but as a way to transform people's lives. The partnership between Decoda and The Hootie and the Blowfish Foundation provides a unique opportunity for both. The positive and compelling results of this program prove that sharing the gift of music is a worthy endeavor," said Jim Sonefeld, musician and founding member of Hootie and the Blowfish.

Decoda is a chamber music ensemble with a unique vision: to bring together virtuoso musicians in performances that expand beyond the borders of the traditional concert hall. Since its inception in 2011, Decoda's concerts and programs have touched audiences in schools, hospitals, and prisons, as well as in renowned concert halls across the globe. Recognized equally for their artistry and arts advocacy, Decoda was recently named the first ever Affiliate Ensemble of Carnegie Hall.

"The infusion of the arts within the justice system plays a vital role for prevention, incarceration, and reentry. The arts reawaken the humanity inside us all," stated Claire Bryant, cellist and Director of the Criminal Justice Initiative for the Decoda chamber music ensemble.

To listen to some of the music from the correctional institution, go to <http://wapo.st/decoda>.

Decoda's criminal justice work is widely recognized, on December 17th, 2015, the NYC-based ensemble performed at the White House as part of an event dedicated to *Innovation & the Arts: Prison Reform and Reentry in the 21st Century*. Decoda performed original music written by inmates at LCI and Claire Bryant, cellist and South Carolina native, spoke on a panel with other arts leaders about criminal justice reform.

"Providing programs and services behind the wire is proven to drive change and ensure safety and security in prisons across the country, we see the difference they make in our institutions every day," said South Carolina Department of Corrections Director, Bryan Stirling.

For more about Decoda chamber music ensemble visit <http://decodamusic.org>.



