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***Beach Music: Making Waves in the Carolinas* exhibit  
to open at NC Museum of History**

*Take a fresh look at the cross-racial dynamics that formed beach music,  
a defining sound of the Carolinas.*



**September 15, 2020 (RALEIGH, N.C.) —**

Beach music is the defining sound of the Carolinas. Propelled by African American rhythm and blues, boundary-crossing teens in the late 1950s and early 1960s created a culture with its own signature dance (the shag), its own beloved stars (the Embers, the Catalinas, Chairmen of the Board, and the Tams, to name just a few), and its own rich memories that have endured across the decades. The North Carolina Museum of History’s newest exhibit, *Beach Music: Making Waves in the Carolinas* – opening September 18, 2020 – shares not only the hits and the dance moves but also the fascinating stories behind the music. The gallery is rich in sound, alive with color, and interactive for all ages.

Visitors to the exhibition will hear familiar sounds and music, as well as gain new insights into the history that created the scene. Newcomers to the genre will discover a core element of Carolina culture and identity.

The exhibit offers museumgoers a cross-generational experience, including an interactive instructional video on the basics of shag dancing. They can listen to their beach music favorites, selected on a vintage 1965 Wurlitzer jukebox playing 45s (no quarters needed!). Visitors can also view the flashy costumes worn by some of the stars of the scene, including Band of Oz, the Embers, and Chairmen of the Board.

Visitors can also take a seat by the in-gallery dance floor and listen to original interview excerpts in which fans reflect on how the music has shaped their lives.

And what is an exhibit about beach music without the beach? Daydream of being at the coast in front of a large-screen live feed of Carolina Beach.

## **CLICK HERE FOR ALL EXPANDED IMAGES**

### **Image Descriptions and Credits Below:**



**Image:** Band of Oz (shown here, ca. the 1970s) formed in Greenville, North Carolina, in the mid-1960s. They continue to perform to enthusiastic audiences today.

**Credit:** Band of Oz.



**Image:** The Embers (shown here, ca. 2017) formed in Raleigh in 1958 and have been a Carolina beach music institution ever since.

**Credit:** The Embers.



**Image:** These young women enjoy an evening out at the Chowan Beach resort in North Carolina, ca. mid- to late 1950s. Segregated Black beach clubs fostered the musical sound that became known by White audiences as beach music.

**Credit:** Terry Hall via Chowan Discovery Group.



**Image:** The shag is the State Dance of both North Carolina and South Carolina.

**Credit:** North Carolina Museum of History.



**Image:** Yes, you can shag! Prepare to learn basic shag steps from our virtual instructors when you visit *Beach Music: Making Waves in the Carolinas*.

**Credit:** North Carolina Museum of History.



**Image:** Chairmen of the Board (shown here, ca.1980) moved south from Detroit in the 1970s and helped shape the Carolina beach music scene.

**Credit:** North Carolina Museum of History.



**Image:** Songs by nationally known rhythm-and-blues groups – like Billy Ward and the Dominoes, shown here in the early 1950s – formed the core of what some Carolinians would later call “beach music.”

**Credit:** North Carolina Museum of History.

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**For information about the NC Museum of History**, a Smithsonian Affiliate museum, call 919-814-7000 or access [ncmuseumofhistory.org](http://ncmuseumofhistory.org) or follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), or [YouTube](#).

### **About the NC Museum of History**

The North Carolina Museum of History, a Smithsonian Affiliate, fosters a passion for North Carolina history. This museum collects and preserves artifacts of state history and educates the public on the

history of the state and the nation through exhibits and educational programs. **Admission is free.** Last year, more than 465,000 people visited the museum to see some of the 150,000 artifacts in the museum collection. The Museum of History, within the Division of State History Museums, is part of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

#### **About the Smithsonian Affiliations Network**

Since 2006, the North Carolina Museum of History has been a Smithsonian Affiliate, part of a select group of museums, cultural, educational, and arts organizations that share Smithsonian resources with the nation. The Smithsonian Affiliations network is a national outreach program that develops long-term collaborative partnerships with museums, educational, and cultural organizations to enrich communities with Smithsonian resources. More information is available at [affiliations.si.edu](http://affiliations.si.edu).

#### **About the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**

The North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state's natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational, and economic future of North Carolina. NCDNCR's mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries, and natural assets in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state's history, conserving the state's natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, two science museums, three aquariums, and Jennette's Pier, as well as 39 state parks and recreation areas, the North Carolina Zoo, the nation's first state-supported symphonic orchestra, the State Library of North Carolina, the State Archives of North Carolina, the North Carolina Arts Council, the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, and the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, along with the state Division of Land and Water Stewardship. For more information, call 919-814-6800 or visit [DNCR.nc.gov](http://DNCR.nc.gov).

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