

THE PATCH WORKS ART & HISTORY CENTER REVIVES *CABBAGETOWN: 3 WOMEN... AN ORAL HISTORY PLAY WITH MUSIC*

For Immediate Release
September 5th , 2019

CABBAGETOWN, ATLANTA -

The Patch Works Art & History Center (The Patch Works) — in collaboration with the Cabbagetown Neighborhood Improvement Association (CNIA) and the Cabbagetown Initiative Community Development Corporation (CICDC) — revives *Cabbagetown: 3 Women... an Oral History Play With Music*, 41 years after its premiere at Atlanta's Academy Theatre on May 21st, 1978. This production is funded in part by a grant from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta.

Cabbagetown: 3 Women was written in 1977-1978 by R. Cary Bynum, shortly after his wife Brenda had presented him with an obscure cookbook entitled *Cabbagetown Families, Cabbagetown Food*. The cookbook was published in 1976 by Patch, Inc. (edited by Pam Durban, who went on to become an award-winning novelist) and contained oral-history transcripts of several Cabbagetown “Original” residents, three of whom Mr. Bynum chose for his play. *Cabbagetown: 3 Women* places the spotlight on the lives of three, real-life women: Lila Mae Brookshire (Joyce Brookshire’s mother), Effie Dodd Gray, and Beatrice “Aunt Beadie” Dalton. As Mr. Bynum writes in Foxfire Press’ 1984 edition of the play, he took the words of Lila, Effie, and Aunt Beadie “and arranged them into a dramatic format, careful to preserve as much of the original language as possible.”

Throughout the show, the three women talk about their backgrounds, daily routines, working at the mill, feeding their families, and dealing with life in the mill-village streets. As they explain early in the show, Cabbagetown (or Cabbage Town) was not the neighborhood’s true name, but instead a somewhat offensive nickname given to the inner-city community by outsiders for various different reasons.

In 1881, a new and eager workforce — many of Scotch-Irish descent — came down from the North Georgia Mountains and Piedmont to work at Atlanta’s recently opened Fulton Cotton Spinning Company, which was founded by a German-Jewish immigrant named Jacob Elsas. In order to house the workers, Jacob constructed rows of mill homes, originally known as Factory Lot. Years later, as the mill prospered and changed its name to Fulton Bag & Cotton Mills, the community also grew and became Fulton Mill Village. According to today’s Originals, the nickname of Cabbagetown didn’t gain widespread popularity until the 1940s or even 1950s, and even then, quite a number of local residents refused to use the name.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Patch, Inc. was a Cabbagetown-based, nonprofit organization that provided socioeconomic support, creative outlets, and educational opportunities for the residents. It had a core staff of nine people and a Board that included founder Esther Peachey Lefever, Joyce Brookshire, Leon Little, Robert Price, and Dr. Louis Jacob (“Skip”) Elsas. Publishing *Cabbagetown Families, Cabbagetown Food* was the Patch’s way of preserving some of the unwritten tales about Cabbagetown, and when Mr. Bynum approached the organization with the concept for his play, the Patch warmly received the idea. Joyce Brookshire, a singer/songwriter and long-time resident of Cabbagetown, offered some of her songs to the production.

The original cast included: Doris Bucher, Annette Coleman, and Brenda Bynum. Joyce herself performed the music. As the Alliance Theatre wrote in its program for the 1979 presentation of the play, “Live music is movingly woven into the performance by Joyce Brookshire, accompanied by Fritz Rauschenberg, with songs she wrote about the families with whom she grew up, and originally were published in Foxfire Records premiere album, North Georgia Mountains.”

Cabbagetown: 3 Women is a heartfelt, sometimes comical, anecdotal play that celebrates the identities of a people in a tightly woven community.

JACOB ELSAS DIRECTS THE REVIVAL OF CABBAGETOWN: 3 WOMEN... AN ORAL HISTORY PLAY WITH MUSIC

Jacob (“Jake”) Elsas is the co-founder of The Patch Works Art & History Center and is the great-great grandson of Jacob Elsas, the founder of Fulton Cotton Spinning Company (later renamed as Fulton Bag & Cotton Mills). When he was 11 years old, Jake began acting on stages around Atlanta and has subsequently performed and directed professionally in New York City, Portland (Oregon), and Los Angeles. He has been writing, producing, and directing films since the early 1990s. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Russian Language and Literature from Oberlin College, and in 2000, he received a Master of Fine Arts degree in Film/Video from California Institute of the Arts.

Throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s, Jake would visit Cabbagetown and Fulton Bag & Cotton Mills, usually with his father Skip Elsas, who worked alongside Esther Lefever at the Patch. Jake has fond childhood memories of the area while it was still very much a mill town, especially of the Cabbagetown Reunion, which was always his favorite event.

After college and for over twenty years, Jake traveled the world and lived in different states and cities across the country. It was not until 2012, while taking care of his sick father, that he decided to return to Atlanta and settle permanently in... Cabbagetown. During his father’s illness, Jake had begun to visit, after those many years, the mill village; he was shocked by how vastly it had changed. Although the bones of a mill village remained visually, Jake felt that its history was fading from existence. For the next four years, Jake formed a plan to open a history center. In 2016, his wife Nina joined him in organizing The Patch Works Art & History Center — to tell the tale of Cabbagetown and Fulton Bag & Cotton Mills, not only to the current residents but to the public at large. *Cabbagetown: 3 Women* is the perfect way to get to know the story of the original people, who for over a century put down their roots on this land during its years as Fulton Mill Village.

What

Cabbagetown: 3 Women... an Oral History Play With Music

Who

Written by R. Cary Bynum (1977)

Music by Joyce Brookshire

Directed by Jacob Elsas (2019)

Featuring

Sarah Kinney Knight as Aunt Beadie

Karen Tanner as Lila

Kim Cohran as Effie

Barbara Panter-Connah as First Musician

Walter Harris as Second Musician

When

[September 13th, 14th, and 15th](#)

[September 20th, 21st, and 22nd](#)

PERFORMANCES

[FINAL DRESS REHEARSAL \(Open to the Public\): Thursday, September 12th, 8:00PM](#)

[OPENING NIGHT: Friday, September 13th, 8:00PM](#)

Evenings

[Friday, September 13th, 8:00PM](#)

[Saturday, September 14th, 8:00PM](#)

[Friday, September 20th, 8:00PM](#)

[Saturday, September 21st, 8:00PM](#)

Matinees

[Sunday, September 15th, 2:00PM](#)

[Sunday, September 22nd, 2:00PM](#)

Where

[Joyce Brookshire Amphitheater](#)

[Cabbagetown Park](#)

[170 Kirkwood Ave SE, Atlanta GA 30316](#)

Cost

[Free to the public \(up to 100 people per performance\)](#)

PARKING

[There is street parking on Kirkwood Ave., Short St., Tye St., and other neighboring streets, but we highly encourage ride-sharing, walking, biking, or scooting.](#)

CONTACT

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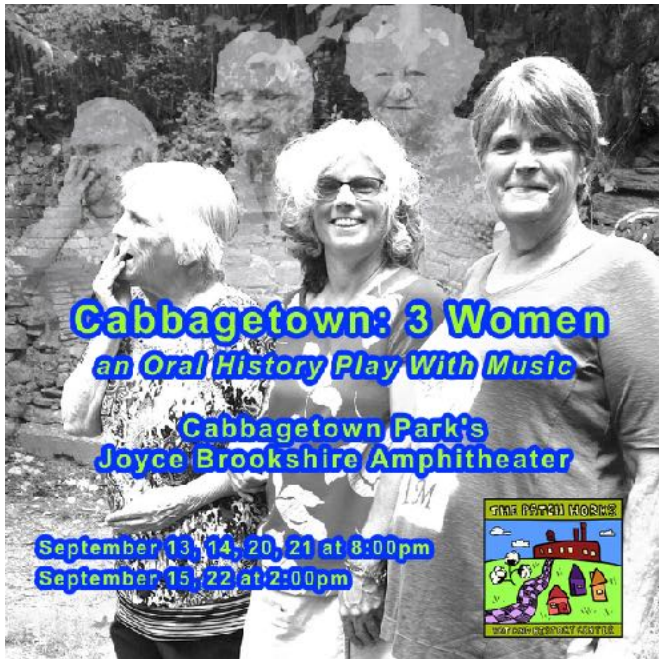
ABOUT THE PATCH WORKS

The Patch Works Art & History Center is a 501(c)(3) community museum located at 593 Gaskill Street SE, Atlanta GA 30316, in the heart of Cabbagetown.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR GREATER ATLANTA

The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta connects donors, nonprofits and community leaders to strengthen the Atlanta region through philanthropy. The Community Foundation does this by providing quality services to donors and innovative leadership on community issues. Please visit the Foundation's website at www.cfgreateratlanta.org for more information.

If you would like to support the Joyce Brookshire Amphitheater or The Patch Works, please inquire about our [sponsorship package](#).



THE PATCH WORKS ART & HISTORY CENTER PRESENTS

In collaboration with the Cabbagetown Neighborhood Improvement Association
and the Cabbagetown Initiative CDC

CABBAGETOWN:

3 Women



...AN ORAL HISTORY PLAY WITH MUSIC

SCRIPT BY R. CARY BYNUM

(Adapted from *Cabbagetown Families, Cabbagetown Food*)

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY JOYCE BROOKSHIRE

AT THE JOYCE BROOKSHIRE AMPHITHEATER
in Cabbagetown Park

ADMISSION IS FREE • GENERAL SEATING

Funded in part by a grant from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

- SEPTEMBER 13 & 14 — 8PM
- SEPTEMBER 15 — 2PM
- SEPTEMBER 20 & 21 — 8PM
- SEPTEMBER 22 — 2PM



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