



# NEWS FROM THE SEA ISLAND SUMMIT PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## **Marelena Smalls, Hallelujah Singers**

Marlena Smalls organized the Hallelujah Singers in 1990 to preserve the melodies and storytelling unique to the South Carolina Sea Islands. Within a short time, this ensemble has become a national art provider, offering cultural enrichment by preserving and celebrating the heritage of the Gullah culture, whose language and traditions have been indelibly linked to Western African heritage.

Through their performances, interwoven with music and narration, the Hallelujah Singers present a miniature dramatization of some of the unique personages, rituals and ceremonial dimension that played an important part in shaping the Gullah culture and how its influence has lived on in the broader music and culture today.