

the CenterStage



An Evening with Nnenna Freelon,
TS Monk and guests.

Music in Community

Friday, September 30

8:00 p.m.

2011-2012
Professional Touring Artist Series



Enriching Lives. Building Community®

MUSIC IN COMMUNITY PANELIST

Christian Donlon

Nnenna Freelon

T.S. Monk

Sue Rarus

Davey Yarborough - Moderator

Christian Donlon

Christian holds a Bachelor's Degree (Magna Cum Laude) and a Master's Degree in Music Education from George Mason University. He worked as an elementary school band director for Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia in many communities including Reston, Falls Church, Annandale, and Alexandria from 2004 to 2011. He is currently a band director at Carl Sandburg Middle School in Alexandria, Virginia. Mr. Donlon has been active in helping to preserve local arts programs in Fairfax County since 2009. In 2010 he began his work as the co-chair of the Fairfax Arts Coalition for Education, or FACE.

Nnenna Freelon

Six-time GRAMMY Award-nominee Nnenna Freelon has earned a well-deserved reputation as a compelling and captivating live performer. Recently, Nnenna Freelon triumphed in two productions: first, with Opera superstar Jessye Norman and the Indie phenom band The Roots in composer Laura Karpman's undertaking of Langston Hughes' *Ask Your Mama* at The Hollywood Bowl and second, in SRO-shows at the Tanglewood Jazz Festival with the Duke Ellington-inspired *Dreaming The Duke* with classical star Harolyn Blackwell and pop-jazz-crossover pianist Mike Garson. The versatile songstress quickly followed that with notable turns with a featured song on TV's # 1 cable hit *Mad Men* and with The World Famous Count Basie Orchestra to celebrate their new Mack Avenue recording on which she can be heard.

Freelon's seventh Concord Records release, *Homefree* (April 2010), led to appearances on PBS's *The Charlie Rose Show*, NBC's *Weekend Today* and a six-night SOLD OUT run in New York City and a four-night SOLD OUT run in London! *Homefree* is mix of tunes that Freelon

identifies as *feeling at home in your own skin*. *Homefree* bubbles with the energy and creativeness that are hallmarks of Freelon's recordings.

Honors and awards in 2010 have brought Freelon a broad mix of recognition: she was named a 2010 *Woman of Substance* by Bennett College for Women, and she delivered the Keynote Address for the 2010 Arts Midwest Conference and more.

With her TV appearance on *In Performance At The White House* to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, TV called again for her voice in the Emmy-winning show *Mad Men*.

In 2009, Freelon made a special guest appearance on Mack Avenue's recording of The Count Basie Orchestra while in 2008 Concord released two Freelon-centered recordings, the first entitled *Better Than Anything: The Quintessential Nnenna Freelon* celebrating her ever-expanding appeal and artistry; and the second recording *The Monterey Jazz Festival 50th Anniversary All Stars*, featuring Freelon in spectacular duets and group performances with Terrence Blanchard and James Moody.

At the 43rd annual GRAMMY Awards telecast from Los Angeles, she inspired an enthusiastic standing ovation from 20,000 music-industry insiders and celebrities when she took to the stage. Prior to that stirring appearance, Freelon's performances for the legendary Julie Andrews at the Society of Singers' *Ella Awards*, *Variety's* The Children's Charity (as a featured vocalist at the Stephen Sondheim Tribute at Carnegie Hall), *Jerry Lewis' Labor Day Muscular Dystrophy Telethon* and at the most famous jazz festivals around the globe have all been rousing successes. No wonder, for anyone who has heard and seen Freelon sing knows she is a skillful interpreter of even the most familiar chestnuts. This reputation has brought her another command performance: headline spot for *ActionAID*, the International AIDS fundraiser with Sir Elton John, Andrea Bocelli and many others attending.

On her GRAMMY-nominated (for Best Jazz Vocal Performance) release, *Blueprint Of A Lady: Sketches of Billie Holiday* (2005), Freelon paid tribute to the quintessential jazz vocalist Billie Holiday. As inventive as ever, Freelon turned these Holiday-associated songs and fulfilled Billie Holiday's message to all artists: *No two people on earth are alike, and it's got to be that way with music or it isn't music*. With her own band, and with Ronald K. Brown & his dance troupe EVIDENCE, Freelon turned this into a multi-media music and dance offering unlike any show previously seen! Freelon is a winner of both the Billie Holiday Award from the prestigious Academie du Jazz and the Eubie Blake Award from the Cultural Crossroads Center in New York City.

On her fifth Concord Records release, *Live* (2003), Nnenna Freelon brought all of her alluring talents to bear. The result is a beguiling and intimate achievement. Recorded at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, on February 21 and 22, 2003, *Live* marked a decade-long recording career for Freelon, as well as 20 years on the road.

It has certainly been a heady decade for Freelon. In addition to six GRAMMY nominations, Freelon also made her feature film debut in the Mel Gibson hit, *What Women Want* and sang a remake of Sinatra's classic, *Fly Me To The Moon* for *The Visit*, starring Billy Dee Williams. She has twice been nominated for the *Lady of Soul*, Soul Train Award. What's more, Freelon has performed and toured with a veritable who's who in jazz, from Ray Charles and Ellis Marsalis to Al Jarreau and George Benson, among many others.

Born and raised in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Freelon received her undergraduate degree from Simmons College in Boston. Her parents and singing in the church gave the singer her first exposure to the arts – especially to the art of jazz. Her father's playing Count Basie recordings and her mother's active involvement in their church led Freelon to an appreciation of all music and she eventually pursued a career in jazz. All the while, Freelon has cherished and held dear her two most important lifetime roles – wife and mother. Her husband Phil Freelon is an award-winning architect with his North Carolina-based firm The Freelon Group. As a mother of three, Freelon has led by example – follow your dreams, dedicate yourself and work hard in all you do.

Freelon explored the roles of vocalist, entertainer, composer, educator, arranger and producer. "We continue to evolve—artists have hungry minds and hearts, so we're always working on the next thing—but I felt it was just time to stop, take a breath and enjoy! I've grown a lot, both musically and spiritually, on this journey. Before, many things were 'first' experiences, but now I'm going back to some of the same festivals and clubs, and realizing I am happy and content where I am. It's great to see all the awards and career milestones building up," she admits, "but it's even nicer to realize people are coming to the shows and saying, 'I saw you back in '95! I've made a lot of friends on the road.'"

An accomplished singer, composer, producer and arranger (as well as budding actress), Freelon has dedicated herself to educating young people, both musicians and non-musicians. She toured the United States for four years as the National Spokesperson for Partners In Education. Her master classes and workshops, from *Sound Sculpture* to the ground-breaking *Babysong*, teach adults and children that you too can change the world – even one person at a time – but it takes dedication and perseverance, the substance of Nnenna's educational activities. The messages in Nnenna's activities go far beyond technique. Her messages reach into the very soul of the person listening, encouraging and motivating them toward constructive change and the creation of positive energy.

With her anthem *One Child At A Time* found on her *Soulcall* recording, Freelon took on the task of fund-raising and bringing greater attention to the needs of children in education through mentoring and the arts. It has become one of the most sought-after songs for its lyrics to its music and has been used by countless organizations including local, regional and national groups such as the United Way.

Earning consistently rave reviews from even the toughest of jazz critics and with her global fan base growing, Freelon is far from done, however. In fact, as she enters a new recording decade, one thing is certain—Nnenna Freelon is a true original!

T. S. Monk

T.S. has received the New York Jazz Awards' *Recording of the Year* and *Downbeat's* prestigious *Reader's Poll Award* among numerous other awards. Rave reviews in the *Hollywood Reporter*, *Variety*, the *L.A. Times* and others echoed the public sentiment of the sold out concert hall shows across the United States, Europe, South America and the Middle East.

With the release of the *Billboard* Pop-chart-topping Thelonious Records/Blue Note jazz release *Monk and Coltrane at Carnegie Hall*, Thelonious guides his father's legacy to additional heights. With his own recording company, T.S. added founder of Thelonious Records to his list of accomplishments. Thelonious Records has released *Monk In Paris: Live At The Olympia*, a stellar concert by the legendary pianist/composer.

He seamlessly bridges musical worlds, adding vocals and special percussion for the first time in more than fifteen years. One of the most unique groups on today's circuit, the NEW T. S. Monk Sextet's cohesive and driving style has been heard at the premier festivals and venues throughout the world. T. S. Monk continues to display his leadership and artistry through his recordings and live performances worldwide, on television and in concert.

T. S. Monk was first drawn to the drums before the age of ten, and his destiny was sealed when mentor Max Roach gave him his first drum set. After graduating from school with a reputation as a rabble-rouser, the young Monk joined his father's trio and toured with his dad until the elder Monk's retirement in 1975. T. S. then launched into the music that had captivated him and his generation, R&B. He first toured with a group called Natural Essence and afterward, with his sister Barbara, formed his own band with which he had hits on two recordings, *House Of Music* and *More Of The Good Life*, where he played drums, arranged and sang.

Shortly after, his father passed away leaving a rich and legendary legacy and tragically, his sister died of cancer. To honor his father's legacy and support the efforts of education, Thelonious turned his attention toward forming the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. As Chairman, Thelonious has been at the forefront of helping to create a number of programs that range from sponsoring music education for students in the form of full scholarships to funding and supporting after-school athletic programs. The Institute's activities reach across international borders and the institute recently celebrated its 20th anniversary with a special *In Performance at the White House* on PBS.

In 1992, Thelonious formed his jazz sextet and received raves from the moment they hit the stage and the studio. For his special 80th Anniversary Birthday Tribute to his father *Monk on Monk*, the sextet formed the core of the eleven-musician, pulsating and dynamic show. With GRAMMY award-winning producer Don Sickler (for Joe Henderson's *Lush Life*, among others) on trumpet, the duo has carved an innovative and dynamic approach to crafting the T. S. Monk Sextet sound; this band soars and sizzles. In the studio the sextet recorded with twenty guest artists including Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Arturo Sandoval, Dianne Reeves, Nnenna Freelon and Howard Johnson among others.

As Founder of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, T. S. has dedicated himself to honoring the musical legacy of his legendary father, Thelonious Sphere Monk, and building the pre-eminent jazz musical educational institution in the world. As he prepares to celebrate the Institute's 25th Anniversary, it boasts a cadre of jazz talent discovered under its aegis including Jacky Terrasson, Joshua Redman, Jane Monheit, and many more! For two consecutive seasons on ABC, jazz returned to network television after a twenty-five year absence. Sponsored by Nissan and The Thelonious Monk Institute, an historic assemblage of artists gathered for *A Celebration Of America's Music* hosted by Bill Cosby and featuring Natalie Cole, Jon Secada, Tony Bennett, K.D. Lang, as well as Thelonious performing his father's signature tune, *Round Midnight*, with Herbie Hancock, Pat Metheny and Nnenna Freelon. Al Jarreau, Dave Brubeck and Aretha Franklin also performed for this annual special.

Sue Rarus

Sue has worked at the National Association for Music Education (NAfME, formerly MENC; www.nafme.org) since 1999. Throughout, she has served as information resources director, with a two year stint as director of publications and information resources. Currently director of advocacy research and resources, Sue helps to create materials for advocacy, and continues to assist constituents, staff, leadership and the public with music education needs.

Sue was an avid participant in school music and drama from early grades through college and was fortunate to study as a preparatory student at the New England Conservatory of Music. Working at NAfME has been a way to thank the profession, helping to ensure music education opportunities for students today and into the future.

Sue has a B.A. in Theater Arts from Brandeis University and a M.Ed. from Harvard University. She also worked for 11 years at the Harvard Institute for International Development (education) and one year at the World Bank in D.C.

Davey Yarborough

Davey is a native of the District of Columbia who has been performing and teaching for over 30 years. He is a fine flautist and saxophonist as well as a distinguished composer, arranger, bandleader and teacher. Davey has served as president of the D.C. unit of the International Association of Jazz Educators, and chaired the Instrumental music department for 14 of his 29 years at The Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, D.C. He is the co-founder and artistic director of the Washington Jazz Arts Institute. Mr. Yarborough is a NAfME "Lowell Mason Fellow," has received the *Mayors' Arts Award* for contributions to jazz education and was nominated *CNN Hero* by trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. A graduate of Federal City College, UDC and Howard University, he also studied with flute master Frank Wess and saxophone with the great Sonny Stitt. These intensive and challenging experiences have served him well not only as a performer but also as a composer and teacher. Davey has produced and performed on several recordings including *Stellar Award* nominated *IN The Spirit* featuring Vocalist Esther Williams, *Royal Essence*, a collaborative tribute with Sir Roland Hannah to Duke Ellington celebrating his 100th birthday and *Collaboration* with Hilton Felton to name a few.

Throughout his career, Yarborough has performed with some of America's most notable artists in the jazz genre, including Wynton Marsalis, Dr. Billy Taylor, Dizzy Gillespie, Lena Horne, Clark Terry, Benny Carter, James Moody and Joe Williams.

In addition to leading his own quintet, he created The New Washingtonians Jazz Orchestra with satellite orchestras at The Duke Ellington School of the Arts and The Washington Jazz Arts Institute. His versatility as a performer, composer and arranger propelled him to such interesting projects as performing the background music for *The Cosby Show*, writing the musical soundtrack for the movie *Uptown Angel*, and writing and arranging musical tributes to Sonny Stitt and John Malachi. Besides playing at clubs and concert halls, Yarborough has also played at major jazz festivals, including the East Coast Jazz Festival, the Blues/Jazz Festival of San Remo, Italy, and *Jazz Under The Stars* in Nassau, The Bahamas.

Yarborough is married to the famed vocalist and entrepreneur Esther Williams and has one daughter, Davie, who is a devoted and enthusiastic English instructor at Duke Ellington.

Next on Stage



Leon Bates

We are thrilled to have this amazing pianist back in the CenterStage for an intimate afternoon piano recital. Leon will perform pieces by Sergei Rachmaninoff, Maurice Ravel and Sergei Prokofiev.

Saturday, October 29 • 3:00 p.m.

Tickets available online at:

www.restoncommunitycenter.com

\$15(Reston)/\$30(Non-Reston)

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