

Saturday, February 16, 2019 at 8pm
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

JAZZ
at **PRINCETON**
UNIVERSITY

presents

Nnenna Freelon

with

JAZZ VOCAL COLLECTIVE
Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin, Director

Jazz Vocal Collective Ensemble

Danielle Stephenson '20, *Voice*

Sara Miller '22, *Voice*

William Steidl '20, *Voice and Trombone*

Alec Israeli '21, *Piano*

Noah McGuinness '22, *Piano*

Stella Sokolowski '21, *Guitar*

Simon Rosen '22, *Bass*

Sean Ichiro Wang '22, *Drum*

Alexander Laurenzi '20, *Saxophone*

PROGRAM TO BE ANNOUNCED FROM THE STAGE

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Six-time GRAMMY® Award nominee **Nnenna Freelon** has earned a well-deserved reputation as a compelling and captivating live performer. In 2014 Nnenna starred in the critically acclaimed show *Georgia on My Mind: Celebrating the Music of Ray Charles* at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas. Nnenna is no stranger to the music of the master singer — she toured with Ray Charles, as well as many other greatest jazz artists including Ellis Marsalis, Al Jarreau, George Benson, and others.

She is particularly excited about her recent venture as the writer, composer, and producer of the original theatrical presentation of *The Clothesline Muse*, a devised theatrical work of dance, music, spoken word, vibrant art, and projections. She is also one of the stars of this musical theater piece. *The Clothesline Muse* premiered at the Painted Bride Arts Center in Philadelphia in 2013, followed by a national tour.

Nnenna has always been respected as an artist and for her passion for education. In November 2011 The White House asked Freelon to headline the Asia Pacific Economic Summit for 300 Presidents, Premiers, and Heads of State from around the world. This was on the heels of receiving the YWCA of North Carolina’s inaugural “Legend Award” for her outstanding artistry and her dedication to education. 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 – one person at a time.

Nnenna triumphed in composer Laura Karpman’s undertaking of Langston Hughes’ *Ask Your Mama* at The Apollo Theater and at an astounding Hollywood Bowl concert with opera superstar Jessye Norman and the indie phenom band The Roots. She also wowed audiences at 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.

Nnenna’s talent is not limited to performing. Her television appearance on *In Performance at the White House*, celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, led to the versatile songstress/composer having a featured song on the hit TV show *Mad Men*. That was followed by a new collaboration on tour with legendary guitarist Earl Klugh. In 2012 she had her first collaboration with legendary pianist Ramsey Lewis. Freelon made her feature film debut in *What Women Want* starring Mel Gibson.

Honors and awards are nothing new for Nnenna. She was named a 2010 “Woman of Substance” by Bennett College for Women, delivered the Keynote Address for the 2010 Arts Midwest Conference, and much more. Freelon is a winner of both the Billie Holiday Award from the prestigious Académie du Jazz and the Eubie Blake Award from the Cultural Crossroads Center in New York City. She was nominated twice as “Lady of Soul” by the Soul Train Awards. At the 43rd annual GRAMMY Awards telecast from Los Angeles, she inspired an enthusiastic standing ovation from 20,000 music industry insiders and other celebrities when she took to the stage. She receives similar reaction for her ongoing concert, television, and special event performances, such as the prestigious headline spot for ActionAID, Sir Elton John’s International AIDS fundraiser.

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 played Count Basie recordings and her mother’s active involvement in their church led Freelon to an appreciation of all music. Ultimately she pursued a career in jazz in which she has excelled. 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 based in North Carolina. As the mother of three, Freelon has led by example — follow your dreams, dedicate yourself, and work hard in all you do.

Her recording career has brought consistent respect for the artist both for her solo albums and those on which she collaborates or is featured in duets. Nnenna Freelon has created a diverse and outstanding legacy from her creativity to her performances that have garnered an ever-growing fan base from audiences to leaders worldwide.

JAZZ VOCAL COLLECTIVE (JVC) is a small jazz ensemble that features solo voice and a rhythm section (i.e. piano, guitar, bass, and drums) to create a collaborative musical experience. In JVC, vocalists are responsible for selecting repertoire, creating and notating their own musical arrangements of jazz standards and popular songs, and developing and performing those arrangements in class throughout the semester. JVC meets on Wednesday night from 8:00-10:00pm in the Lee Music Room in the New Music Building, and holds auditions during the first week of the fall semester. If you are interested in auditioning for JVC next year or any other of the ensembles offered in the Jazz Program, please contact the Jazz program director, Rudresh Mahanthappa, at rudreshm@princeton.edu.

Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin serves as the private voice instructor in jazz and the Jazz Vocal Collective Ensemble director. In addition to working at Princeton University, Dr. Robinson-Martin runs a private voice studio in Lawrenceville, NJ, serves as the Creative Arts Director at Turning Point United Methodist Church in Trenton, NJ, and performs regularly in the tri-state area.

As an internationally recognized voice pedagogue in contemporary music, Dr. Robinson-Martin has dedicated her career to performing and developing resources for teaching jazz, gospel, and R&B singing styles. Dr. Robinson-Martin is also a certified instructor in Somatic Voicework™ The Lovetri Method, a national faculty member of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, Inc., the executive director of the African American Jazz Caucus, Inc., a founding and executive board member of the Donald Meade Legacy Jazz Griot Award, and an active member of the Jazz Education Network. Based on her graduate research, Dr. Robinson-Martin designed Soul Ingredients®, a teaching methodology for developing a singer's musical style/interpretation in African-American folk based music styles (i.e., jazz, gospel, R&B, blues, etc.). This methodology shows students how to take their personal experiences, musical influences, and models, and execute the various components in a manner that is personal to the singer/performer's own expression.

Dr. Robinson-Martin has authored and produced peer-reviewed and self-published works. Her most recent publication is *So You Want To Sing Gospel*, as part of the *So You Want to Sing* book series sponsored by the National Association of Teachers of Singing. Forthcoming publications include *Voice Training for the Gospel Soloist* book and CD, which encompasses her complete method and experience of training, and upcoming album *My Shining Hour*. More information on Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin and Soul Ingredients® methodology can be found at www.DrTrineice.com.

JAZZ AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY serves to promote this uniquely American music as a contemporary and relevant art form. Our goals are to convey the vast musical and social history of jazz, establish a strong theoretical and stylistic foundation with regard to improvisation and composition, and emphasize the development of individual expression and creativity. Offerings of this program include academic course work, performing ensembles, master classes, private study, and independent projects. We thank you for joining us on this evening's journey of beauty, exploration, discovery, and hope.