



## **MEDIA RELATIONS CONTACT**

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## **FULL SCHEDULE AND IMAGES**

<http://mondaviarts.org/press>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Feb. 4, 2009

### **The Mondavi Center Presents Jazz Vocalist Nnenna Freelon**

**Davis, Calif.**—Jazz vocalist **Nnenna Freelon** returns to the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts**, UC Davis, to perform **mellow jazz standards** and **original compositions** with her **five-piece band** in the **cabaret setting** of the center's **Studio Theatre Jazz Series**. Performances take place nightly at **8 p.m., Tuesday–Saturday, March 3–7**.

Says **Jeremy Ganter**, Mondavi Center associate executive director, “Nnenna Freelon embodies the spirit of the Studio Jazz Series. Her performances are elegant, fearless, and always as thrilling as they are intimate.”

**Pricing** is \$40 for regular tickets and \$20 for students and children. Purchase tickets for **March 3–5** online at [MondaviArts.org](http://MondaviArts.org), through the Mondavi Center box office at 530-754-2787 or 866-754-2787 (toll-free), or at the door. Call the box office regarding tickets for **March 6–7**, which are limited in availability.

Vocalist **Nnenna Freelon** truly needs no introduction to Mondavi Center audiences: **The six-time GRAMMY nominee** will be well-remembered for her spectacular run of **sold-out performances** in the Studio Theatre during September 2004, as well as her appearance in “**Blueprint of a Lady**,” choreographer Ronald K. Brown’s tribute to **Billie Holiday**, in Jackson Hall in 2005. This season, Freelon returns to do what she does best, singing jazz standards and her own compositions with her quintet, which includes **pianist Joel Holmes**, **bass player Wayne Batchelor**, **drummer Kinah Ayah** and **percussionist Beverly Botsford**.

Freelon has earned a well-deserved reputation as a compelling and captivating live performer, most recently in 2007 on “**In Performance at the White House**” to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz**. At the 43<sup>rd</sup> annual GRAMMY 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 appearance, Freelon’s performances at the Society of Singers’ ELLA Awards, the Variety Children’s Charity (as a featured vocalist at the Stephen Sondheim Tribute at Carnegie Hall) and the Labor Day Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, as well as the most famous jazz festivals around the globe, all have been rousing successes.

On her GRAMMY-nominated release, **“Blueprint of a Lady: Sketches of Billie Holiday”** (2005), Freelon paid tribute to jazz vocalist Billie Holiday. With her own band, and with **Ronald K. Brown** and his dance troupe **Evidence**, Freelon turned this into a multimedia music and dance offering unlike any show previously seen.

Concord Records released two Freelon-centered recordings in 2008, the first entitled **“Better Than Anything: The Quintessential Nnenna Freelon,”** celebrating her ever-expanding appeal and artistry; the second, **“The Monterey Jazz Festival 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary All Stars,”** featuring Freelon in spectacular duets and group performances with **Terrence Blanchard** and **James Moody**.

Born and raised in Cambridge and educated in Boston at Simmons College, Freelon grew up on the sounds of music in the church and of jazz, especially big band music, courtesy of her father. Recently, Freelon has teamed up with the **World Famous Count Basie Orchestra**, creating new music, new arrangements and a new standard of big band vocalizing. 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.

Freelon is a leader in the education and healthcare fields, has served as National Spokesperson for Partners in Education, and conducts workshops, clinics and master classes. Her workshops, from “Sound Sculpture” to the groundbreaking “Babysong,” teach adults and children that with dedication and perseverance, anyone can change the world. The messages in Freelon’s activities go far beyond technique; Freelon strives to reach into the soul of the participant to motivate constructive change and the creation of positive energy. Read more at [nnenafreelon.com](http://nnenafreelon.com).

- **Nnenna Freelon Quintet**
- **Tue.–Sat., Mar. 3–7, 8 p.m.**
- **Mondavi Center, Studio Theatre**
- **9399 Old Davis Road, Davis, CA 95616 (GPS)**
- **\$40 regular; \$20 students, children**
- **530-754-2787**  
**866-754-2787 (toll-free)**  
**530-754-5402 (TDD)**  
[MondaviArts.org](http://MondaviArts.org)

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