

## ***JUST ANNOUNCED: GRAMMY-winning Samara Joy adds second show to The Soraya's Holiday Series***

*Bridging the jazz and gospel gap, Joy brings her multi-generational family act to Northridge following the release of her latest album "A Joyful Holiday."*

**Weds, Dec. 6 at 8pm**

**Thurs, Dec. 7 at 8pm**

*Tickets start at \$39 and are available now at [www.TheSoraya.org](http://www.TheSoraya.org).*

(Los Angeles, CA) November 7, 2023—**Samara Joy** will return to The Soraya for two nights this December—this time with her multi-generational musical family to fuse her jazz and gospel talents for a soulful holiday concert. The two-night run follows Joy's sold-out Soraya debut in the [2023 Jazz at Naz Festival](#) (her first performance post two GRAMMY win!) and follows the Oct. 27 release of her latest EP "[A Joyful Holiday](#)."

In high demand for her Dec. 7 concert at The Soraya, the young jazz artist with a "majestic stage presence" and "agile upper range like that of Ella Fitzgerald" ([SF Classical Voice](#)) has agreed to a second show at The Soraya on Dec. 6, also at 8 p.m. After each show Joy will meet with fans and sign merchandise purchased at the events.

For her performances Joy will be joined onstage by members of her talented musical family "The McLendons" — including her father, uncle, and cousins — to deliver a sparkling evening brimming with the most time-honored songs of the season.

With her effortless grace and style, the 23-year-old became the second jazz performer in GRAMMY history to win the award for Best New Artist earlier this year. She also won for Best Jazz

Vocal Album which combines her eclectic musical influences with her experiences growing up in a family whose gospel, Motown, and jazz legacy reaches back several generations.

Music has always been a guiding light in the Bronx native's life, and she got her start at home with grandfather and grandmother Elder Goldwire and Ruth McLendon, gospel singers who led the well-known Philadelphia based The Savettes. Joy's father, Antonio Charles McLendon—is also a talented bassist and vocalist who toured with the renowned Andraé Crouch.

“There's nothing like family. Your vibratos match. Your tones match,” Joy explained to [NPR Jazz Night in America](#) about singing with her family. “We're connected in a way that nobody else... spiritually and creatively, it's totally fulfilling.”

Ms. Joy and the McLendon family will perform in [a series of concerts](#) together this December—but The Soraya's two December concerts will be the only chance for fans to see the family magic onstage in the Greater Los Angeles region.

“This won't be like what (Soraya) audiences saw earlier in 2023 — there's jazz but there's also gospel...it's kind of a jazz-gospel extravaganza,” said Joy's Manager Matt Pierson, explaining that the family will sing duets, have background, and group vocals, and will be on stage with piano, organ, base, and drums.

“(Samara's) father, uncle, and two cousins all were part of McLendon tradition of singing gospel as a family. This is Samara bridging the jazz and gospel genres with her family.”

### **About Samara Joy**

With her GRAMMY-Award winning and chart-topping album, *Linger Awhile*, Samara Joy makes her case to join the likes of Sarah, Ella, and Billie as the next mononymous jazz singing sensation recorded by the venerable Verve Records. Her voice, rich and velvety yet precociously refined, has already earned her fans like Anita Baker and Regina King and appearances on the “TODAY Show,” “The Tonight Show w/Jimmy Fallon,” “The Late Show w/Stephen Colbert,” “CBS Mornings,” “The Kelly Clarkson Show,” “The Jennifer Hudson Show,” and more, in addition to millions of likes on TikTok — cementing her status as perhaps the first Gen Z jazz singing star. *The New York Times* praised the “silky-voiced rising star” for “helping jazz take a youthful turn” while NPR's *All Things Considered* named her a “classic jazz singer from a new generation.” In February 2023, Samara Joy took home two GRAMMYS - Best Jazz Vocal Album and the auspicious Best New Artist award.

Samara is still relatively new to jazz. Growing up in the Bronx, it was music of the past — the music of her parent's childhoods, as she put it — that she listened to most. She treasures her musical lineage, which stretches back to her grandparents **Elder Goldwire** and **Ruth McLendon**,

both of whom performed with Philadelphia gospel group the Savettes, and runs through her father, who is a singer, songwriter and producer who toured with gospel artist Andraé Crouch. “Sometimes I catch myself when I’m singing — I’m like, ‘Whoa, that was a dad moment,’” Samara quips. Eventually, she did follow in the family tradition, singing in church and then with the jazz band at Fordham High School for the Arts, with whom she won Best Vocalist at JALC’s Essentially Ellington competition. That led to her enrolling in SUNY Purchase’s jazz studies program, where she fell deeply in love with the music.

Though she’s young, she relishes the process of digging through the music’s history. “I think maybe people connect with the fact that I’m not faking it, that I already feel embedded in it,” Samara says. “Maybe I’m able to reach people in person and on social media because it’s real.” The gatekeepers of the jazz world tend to agree: in 2019, she won the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, and she’s since performed with legends like Christian McBride and Bill Charlap. Legendary late pianist Barry Harris was a particularly important influence and mentor. “You inspired me as well as many others with this fire for teaching and playing that couldn’t be dimmed by anything or anyone,” Samara writes in *Linger Awhile’s* liner notes, dedicating the project in part to Harris’ memory. [Read Samara Joy’s full bio here.](#)

### **About the McLendon Family**

While the family has a long musical history, their most recent recording together was released at the end of 2022 — just before Ms. Joy won two GRAMMY Awards at the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual ceremony.

The holiday single titled, “O Holy Night (feat. The McLendon Family)” features Joy’s:

- Grandfather Elder Goldwire McLendon — a 92-year-old gospel singer who led the well-known Philadelphia-based The Savettes.
- Father Antonio McLendon — a gifted bassist and vocalist who toured with the renowned Andraé Crouch.
- Uncle Laurone McLendon
- Cousins Tiera Lovell Rowe and Alana Alexander

The track, which was recorded by Christopher Allen and produced by Matt Pierson, also features Sullivan Fortner on Hammond B3. Listen to “O Holy Night (feat. The McLendon Family)” [here.](#)

### **About “A Joyful Holiday” EP**

Samara Joy has released “A Joyful Holiday” EP via Verve. The six-song collection of seasonal favorites is an extension of her latest album *Linger Awhile* and features a similar cast of jazz musicians — Pasquale Grasso on guitar, David Wong on bass and Kenny Washington on drums - plus Sullivan Fortner on piano. Produced by Matt Pierson, the tracklist includes previously-released singles “O Holy Night” (performed with multiple generations of her family) and “Warm

in December,” in addition to a new recording of Stevie Wonder’s “Twinkle Twinkle Little Me” and both a studio and live version of “The Christmas Song.”

**For tickets and interview requests regarding The Soraya’s Dec. 2023 concert, please contact:**

- The Soraya Communications Associate [Marie Estrada \(marie.estrada@csun.edu\)](mailto:marie.estrada@csun.edu)
- PR Consultant [Gary Murphy \(garymurphypr@garymurphypr.com\)](mailto:garymurphypr@garymurphypr.com)
- [ACCESS YOUR PRESS KIT HERE.](#)

*For questions or ticket information, visit [www.TheSoraya.org](http://www.TheSoraya.org) or call the Ticket Office at (818) 677-3000. Office hours are 11a-4p, Tuesday through Saturday.*

### **About the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)**

The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for The Performing Arts (The Soraya) is an award-winning, state-of-the-art 1,700-seat theatre designed and built by HGA Architects and Engineers and opened in January 2011 as the Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC). Through a transformative gift by Younes and Soraya Nazarian the venue was renamed as The Soraya in 2017. Vibrant programming has served to establish The Soraya as the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley and its 1.8 million residents, and as one of the top arts and culture venues in Southern California. Since its inaugural season, The Soraya has presented over 500 artists and companies across the genres of music, dance, theater and film and is a highly in demand location for filming and rental events.

The Soraya’s 2023/2024 Season boldly advances the expansive sound of orchestras both traditional and contemporary; the freestyle vibe of jazz; an array of dance luminaries, and a cultural bounty drawn from the musical well of global voices. The Soraya continues its vigorous commitment to innovating, excelling, and amplifying access by offering a wide variety of performances that reflect Los Angeles’ many distinctive communities and featuring new and original work and artists from the local region as well as nationally and around the world.

Located on the vibrant campus of California State University Northridge (CSUN), The Soraya and the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication share an integral link that enhances student access and opportunities in the arts and performing arts. A \$5 million contribution from record producer and former California Lieutenant Governor Mike Curb was pivotal in ensuring the completion and opening of The Soraya in 2011. For his founding support and in acknowledgment of the integral relationship between the Mike Curb College and The Soraya, Mike Curb is recognized as one of The Soraya’s Cornerstone Benefactors. This partnership fosters academic and artistic excellence, elevating the talents and the future growth of CSUN’s students through master classes, student tickets, concerts of student ensembles, and students appearing alongside renowned artists such as Wynton Marsalis, Aida Cuevas, and Martha Graham Dance Company.

### **For Calendar Listing**

**What:** **Samara Joy**  
*A Joyful Holiday*  
*featuring The McLendon Family*

Samara Joy returns to The Soraya for an all-new soulful holiday concert following her sold-out Soraya debut in the 2023 Jazz at Naz Festival. With her effortless grace and style, the 23-year-old GRAMMY Award winner for Best New Artist and Best Jazz Vocal Album combines her eclectic musical influences with her experiences growing up in a

family whose gospel, Motown, and jazz legacy reaches back several generations. This winter, she takes the stage with members of her multi-talented musical family including her father, uncle, and cousins, to deliver a sparkling evening brimming with the most time-honored songs of the season.

**When:** Wed, Dec 6 | 8pm  
&  
Thu, Dec 7, 2023 | 8pm

**Tickets:** \$39-89

**Where:** Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)  
18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330

**Website:** [www.TheSoraya.org](http://www.TheSoraya.org)

**Phone:** 818-677-3000

**Contact:** **Marie Estrada, Communication Associate**  
P: 818-677-6691 | E: [marie.estrada@csun.edu](mailto:marie.estrada@csun.edu)

**Gary W. Murphy, Public Relations Consultant**  
P: 213-700-9645 | E: [gmurphypr@gmail.com](mailto:gmurphypr@gmail.com)

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