

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Marie Estrada | (818) 677-6691
marie.estrada@csun.edu

Gary Murphy | (213) 700-9645
gmurphypr@gmail.com

"One of the world's great jazz venues," – Downbeat Magazine

The Soraya Celebrates Fifth Annual Jazz at Naz Festival

**Gerald Clayton's *Sacredness*, a tribute to
Duke Ellington's legendary *Concerts of Sacred Music*
Opens Jazz at Naz on Saturday, Jan. 31**

**Seven events from Jan. 31 to Feb. 21; Tickets start at \$46; Livestream
Passes start at \$19.99 and are now available at TheSoraya.org.**



(Los Angeles, CA) Jan. 12, 2025 — The fifth annual **Jazz at Naz festival** begins at The Soraya on Jan. 31 with *Sacredness*, led by 2026 GRAMMY® nominated Musical Director Gerald Clayton, choral ensemble Tonality, and vocalists Michael Mayo and Christie Dashiell. Internationally acclaimed and much sought-after educator, choreographer, and performer, Josette Wiggan rounds out the principal cast to bring dance into this celebration of Duke Ellington's *Concerts of Sacred Music*. Less than 24 hours after their *Sacredness* performance, on Feb. 1, the principal cast will find out if they've won a GRAMMY in their nominated categories.

A jazz epicenter in Los Angeles, Jazz at Naz has showcased major debuts for emerging artists such as two-time GRAMMY®-winner Samara Joy and created a home for the world's jazz legends such as John Pizzarelli, Branford Marsalis, Dianne Reeves, Chucho Valdés, and Charles Lloyd, and turned the spotlight on influential crossover artists such as Bobby and Taylor McFerrin, Diana Krall, Jon Batiste, Gregory Porter, and Herb Alpert and Lani Hall. It's now recognized as one of the best winter jazz festivals on the West Coast and The Soraya is recognized by *DownBeat Magazine* as one of the top jazz venues in the world and a "jazz destination for performers and Southern Californian audience members alike since its opening."

"Ellington's *Concerts of Sacred Music* have inspired me for many years, and I have been seeking the right opportunity and the ideal artist to lead this important work," said Thor Steingraber, The Soraya's Executive and Artistic Director. "Gerald Clayton is the perfect artist for this large collaborative endeavor. He brings a mix of respect for Ellington's original and a vision to expand and embellish, bringing the work into our morning era. This is a monumental project with a group of generational artists."

The Soraya's Great Hall, with 1,700 seats, hosts larger events in the festival and in the past has presented the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Christian McBride, The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Maria Schneider Orchestra, Vince Giordano & The Nighthawks, Buena Vista Social Club, Delfeayo Marsalis' Uptown Orchestra, and more. For opening night of the 2026 festival, **Gerald Clayton** and the cast of ***Sacredness*** will perform in the Great Hall on Jan. 31. Additional events in the Great Hall include ***Love Inside Out: Valentine's Day with Veronica Swift with the Pacific Jazz Orchestra*** (Feb. 14), ***Preservation Hall Jazz Band*** (Feb. 18), and ***Alonzo King LINES Ballet: Ode to Alice Coltrane*** (Feb. 21).

The pioneering **Jazz Club**, a unique setting for jazz performances complete with food and drink, offers a special experience to audiences and artists alike. Built on The Soraya's main stage, the Jazz Club offers standing sections, riser seating, and table seating with the option to pre-order a curated dinner crafted by local Chef Jim Bonnano, the owner of Humble Bee Bakery and Cafe. The Jazz Club has featured a wide breadth of talent, including Terence Blanchard, Gerald Clayton, Luciana Souza, Antonio Sánchez, Lisa Fischer with Ranky Tanky, Booker T. Jones with Matthew Whitaker, and more. The **Arturo O'Farrill Trio** opens the Jazz Club on Feb. 5 followed by **Cécile McLorin Salvant** (Feb. 6-7), and the **Anat Cohen Quartetinho** (Feb. 11-12).

Livestream Select Jazz at Naz Events

The Soraya's Jazz at Naz festival offers viewing opportunities for those who may not be able to enjoy the events in person. Since the inception of the festival The Soraya's multi-camera livestreaming and on demand playback has expanded availability for audiences around the world.

Livestreams feature behind-the-scenes content and backstage interviews with the artists before and after the show and at intermission — in addition to the complete concert.

Livestream passes are available for \$19.99 per concert or \$59 for a streaming package to enjoy all six streamed performances (Alonzo King LINES Ballet will not be livestreamed). Following the live event, on demand viewing is also available for 48 hours. All in-person ticket holders to Jazz at Naz events will automatically receive a link to access the Jazz at Naz livestream for the concert(s) they attended.

FOR CALENDAR LISTINGS

Great Hall Events (1,700 seats): Jan. 31 | Feb. 14 | Feb. 18 | Feb. 21

- ***Sacredness (Jan. 31)*** — The Soraya has assembled a company of musicians who are entirely 2026 GRAMMY® nominees — pianist and music director Gerald Clayton, L.A.-based vocal ensemble Tonality, and jazz vocalists Christie Dashiell, and Michael Mayo. Opening The Soraya's 5th-annual Jazz at Naz festival, Clayton brings us *Sacredness*, his rendering of the work Duke Ellington considered his most important, the three Sacred Concerts that were performed between 1965 and 1973 in cathedrals and churches in San Francisco and New York City. Ellington evoked a Cotton Club revue meets the African American Church that has endured as nondenominational and universal. Clayton brings Ellington's daring masterpiece into the present day with original arrangements, tapper/choreographer Josette Wiggan, an all-star jazz big band, and new spoken word creations. [Tickets \\$59-\\$117; 15th Anniversary Closing Party + concert ticket \\$300](#)
- ***Love Inside Out, Valentine's Day with Veronica Swift (Feb. 14)*** — There's nothing Veronica Swift can't do — pop, rock, soul, jazz, Broadway, and more. *DownBeat* magazine concurs, "Veronica Swift is a woman of many voices, and she uses every one of them to refract a dizzying kaleidoscope of moods." Her first Soraya solo concert pairs her with the Pacific Jazz Orchestra, magnifying the scope of her powers. Torch songs, anthems, ballads, new love and heartbreak alike — Swift will pierce hearts of every type on Valentine's Day. [Tickets \\$59-\\$117](#)
- ***Preservation Hall Jazz Band (Feb. 18)*** — Mardi Gras returns to The Soraya with one of the most authentic of New Orleans ensembles. Steeped in the history and musical traditions of the French Quarter for more than 60 years, Preservation Hall Jazz Band taps into a musical continuum that stretches back to the city's roots. As their name implies, the group is living history. [Tickets \\$46-\\$94](#)
- ***Alonzo King LINES Ballet (Feb. 21)*** — Alonzo King is one of America's most decorated choreographers, and his San Francisco-based company has stood at the forefront of bold work both on the West Coast and in their global touring for more than four decades. King has been captivated by jazz legend Alice Coltrane for much of his life, and his 2024 creation to her music is not his first. For this recent piece, he chose Coltrane's 1971 album, *Journey in Satchidananda*. King was drawn to Coltrane for the marrying of East and West in her music, teachings, and life, something that resonates in his own work. The evening opens with Alonzo King's *The Collective Agreement*, which he investigates the delicate balance between the individual and the community. With an innovative light installation by Jim Campbell. [Tickets \\$46-\\$94](#)

Jazz Club Events (234 seats): Feb. 5 | Feb. 6-7 | Feb. 11-12

You'll be right in the middle of the action in The Soraya's Jazz Club, an immersive experience, just feet away from some of the most innovative artists in their fields. Premium seating is available at tables near the stage with the opportunity to pre-order dinner (available for purchase now with discounts to all Jazz, Silver, Gold, or Platinum Members; below ticket prices do not include dinner service). Jazz at Naz 2025 features a new menu by chef **Jim Bonanno of Humble Bee Cafe** with dinner and bar service beginning at 6:30 p.m. before every Jazz Club concert. Dinner must be pre-ordered to partake. For those not ordering dinner, or who are sitting in the risers, the bar will open at 7 p.m. before each Jazz Club concert, offering a menu of drinks, light bites, and dessert.

- **Arturo O'Farrill Trio (Feb. 5)** — Arturo O'Farrill returns to The Soraya with a small combo to perform a concert that brings the straight-ahead dimensions of O'Farrill's jazz chops to Soraya audiences. While known for his Afro-Cuban roots and big band, O'Farrill is equally one of the most masterful and versatile jazz pianists with extensive command and stylistic range. [Tickets \\$55-\\$84](#)
- **Cécile McLorin Salvant (Feb. 6-7)** Cécile McLorin Salvant returns to the Jazz Club stage from Friday, Feb. 6 through Saturday, Feb. 7. A storyteller who mines connections between vaudeville, blues, jazz, theater, and Baroque music, the three-time Grammy Award-winner for Best Jazz Album, and MacArthur "Genius" is known for being an eclectic curator, unearthing forgotten songs with strong narratives, unexpected twists, and humor. [Tickets \\$55-\\$84](#)
- **Anat Cohen Quartetinho (Feb. 11-12)** — For the last two nights of Jazz Club, festival goers will enjoy the Anat Cohen Quartetinho. Widely considered one of the best clarinet players in the jazz world, Anat Cohen brings to The Soraya her vibrant Quartetinho (Portuguese for "little quartet") equipped with vibraphone, accordion, piano, bass, and percussion. With two albums under the quartet's belt, the Israeli artist leads the group in an eclectic mix of originals, Brazilian classics, and more. [Tickets \\$55-\\$84](#)

Notes for Jazz Club: The pre-order dinner menu will be different between the three shows. To see the menu items for each night, [click here](#). Jazz club ticketing is available in two options. Premium tickets (table seating) are located near the front, just feet from the stage, and have the option to pre-order dinner for an additional \$60. Early access for table seating begins at 6:30 p.m. for meal and bar service. Non-table seating begins at 7:00 p.m.

For story development and interview requests:

- Marie Estrada – Soraya Marketing & Communications Specialist (marie.estrada@csun.edu)
- Gary Murphy – Soraya PR Consultant (garymurphypr@garymurphypr.com)
- Click [HERE](#) for your press kit, complete with photos, and press releases.

About Jazz at Naz

Long before the 2011 opening of The Soraya, CSUN Jazz Studies was a national standard bearer—winning awards and training the next generation of artists. Since opening its doors, The Soraya has furthered CSUN's profile with a nonstop procession of jazz greats performing in both The

Soraya's Great Hall and its innovative Jazz Club. Now, the annual Jazz at Naz festival has been recognized as one of the best winter jazz festivals on the West Coast and The Soraya is the only L.A.-area performing arts center to be recognized by *DownBeat Magazine in 2025* as one of the top jazz venues in the world and a "jazz destination for performers and Southern Californian audience members alike since its opening."

A jazz epicenter in Los Angeles, Jazz at Naz has showcased major debuts for emerging artists such as two-time GRAMMY®-winner Samara Joy and created a home for the world's jazz legends such as John Pizzarelli, Branford Marsalis, Dianne Reeves, Chucho Valdés, and Charles Lloyd, and turned the spotlight on influential crossover artists such as Bobby and Taylor McFerrin, Diana Krall, Jon Batiste, Gregory Porter, and Herb Alpert and Lani Hall.

The Soraya's Great Hall, with 1,700 seats, has become home to the Big Band sound with Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra featuring Wynton Marsalis, Christian McBride, The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Maria Schneider Orchestra, Vince Giordano & The Nighthawks, Buena Vista Social Club, and Delfeayo Marsalis' Uptown Orchestra. Its pioneering Jazz Club, a unique and intimate setting for jazz performances complete with food and drink, is built on The Soraya's main stage and has featured a wide breadth of talent, including Terence Blanchard, Gerald Clayton, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Luciana Souza, Antonio Sánchez, Lisa Fischer, Booker T. Jones, and Vijay Iyer.

Since the inception of the festival The Soraya's multi-camera livestreaming has expanded availability for audiences around the world. The virtual streams feature behind-the-scenes content and backstage interviews with the artists, in addition to the complete concert.

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 that opened in 2011 as the Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC). Through a transformative gift by Younes and Soraya Nazarian, the venue was renamed The Soraya in 2017. The Soraya is located on the campus of California State University Northridge, the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley.

Executive and Artistic Director Thor Steingraber, in his 12th year leading the organization, sums up what makes The Soraya a central piece of Los Angeles arts and culture. "At The Soraya, we hold a high standard of excellence for every performance from a vast array of artistic disciplines, and we hold steadfast to our commitment to the value and impact of the performing arts in community-building, for the Valley's 1.8 million residents and beyond."

The Soraya's 2025-26 Season is a journey through the expansive sounds of orchestras, the freestyle vibes of jazz, the innovations of dance luminaries, and a vast array of global voices. The Soraya continues its vigorous commitment to excelling, innovating, and amplifying access for Valley residents, students, and arts lovers across Southern California.

What: Fifth annual Jazz at Naz festival

When: Jan. 31 – Feb. 21

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

Website: www.TheSoraya.org

Ticket Office: 818-677-3000

Soraya Press Contacts

Marie Estrada, Marketing & Communications Specialist

P: 818-677-6691 | E: marie.estrada@csun.edu

Gary W. Murphy, PR Consultant

P: 213-700-9645 | E: gmurphypr@gmail.com

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