**SAMARA JOY**

***About the Artist***

Bronx-born **Samara Joy** burst onto the New York jazz scene in 2019 when she won the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition. Following the 2021 release of her self-titled debut album *Downbeat* called the 22-year-old artist a “deeply emotive vocalist, with power that usually takes a lot of living to master.”

Growing up, music was a pervasive presence, due to the inspiration of her paternal grandparents, Elder Goldwire and Ruth McLendon, who led the well-known Philadelphia-based gospel group, The Savettes. Her father toured with the renowned gospel artist Andrae Crouch, and her home was filled with the sounds of not only her father’s songs and songwriting process, but the inspiration of many gospel and R&B artists, including Stevie Wonder, Lalah Hathaway, George Duke, Kim Burrell, and many others. She was a participant in the Weill Music Institute Count Me In program, which provides high-quality vocal training and audition preparation for eighth-grade students in New York City auditioning for performing arts high schools.

Joy’s first exposure to jazz was while attending Fordham High School for the Arts, where she performed regularly with the jazz band, eventually winning Best Vocalist at the Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Essentially Ellington competition. However, jazz wasn’t her focus until the time came to select a college. Wanting to attend a state school close to home, she picked the State University of New York at Purchase, gaining acceptance into their acclaimed jazz program with a faculty that includes many jazz masters (including Pasquale Grasso and drummer Kenny Washington, who both appear on her debut recording.) From this point, she began to pursue her jazz studies with an intense passion, eventually being named the Ella Fitzgerald Scholar.

Her self-titled debut recording was released in July of 2021 on Whirlwind Recordings. Within the album liner notes, veteran writer Will Friedwald comments that *Samara Joy is* “a fantastic collection of highly original new arrangements, beautifully sung by a rising talent, and a very impressive first album. People are forever using the word 'timeless' as if it were the greatest praise ever, but in a way, Samara’s voice and her music seem to belong to all time, like she’s connected to the entire history of jazz all at once - as if she were existing in every era simultaneously, she sounds both classic and contemporary.”

Winning the Vaughan competition was transformational for Joy, and the release of her debut recording has brought her instantly recognizable sound to the jazz world. Moving forward, Joy will continue to dig deep to further find inspiration without losing sight of the innate simplicity that makes her sound shine.

**CONTACT**

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