



MAYERS CONSULTING

MOTHER & SON, NNENNA AND PIERCE FREELON PRESENT *ANCESTARS* A FAMILY ALBUM EXPLORING OUR CONNECTION TO ANCESTORS AND EACH OTHER- MAY 19, 2023

This spring comes ***AnceStars***, a family-focused album by Grammy nominated, mother-and-son Nnenna and Pierce Freelon. *AnceStars* is a unique recording that explores the wonder and mystery of the ancestral spirit world. It features 13 gently woven original songs created for all ages to nurture a healthy curiosity about life, afterlife, transformation, healing and legacy.

The Freelons enjoy a thriving and deep connection to their ancestors and seek to awaken authentic connection in others through their music, which is rooted in their family's journey as well as African American folklore and tradition. This artful production brings a softness to this concept that is touching, soothing, celebratory and beautiful.

The passing of Pierce's father and Nnenna's husband, Phil Freelon in 2019 greatly impacted the lives and creative paths of these two passionate talents. Phil Freelon was the great architect of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, who passed away after a battle with ALS. In 2021 both Pierce and Nnenna were individually nominated for Grammys for their album releases that year which each paid tribute to the family patriarch- Pierce's 'Black to the Future' and Nnenna's 'Time Traveler'. *AnceStars* is the next artistic step on the deeply spiritual journey this mother and son have embarked on together.

"Making music with my son has been a dream come true. I had no idea how much I needed this healing" said Nnenna, "There are times in your life when you know your ancestors are holding you up. This recording is one of them."

"I've felt generations of ancestors pouring through me as we worked on this album. My ancestors are always with me, offering guidance, love and protection. I'm grateful to give them the offering of music as a way to celebrate our sacred relationship." added Pierce.

The title track "AnceStars" warmly welcomes listeners to the album and is an ancestral call back to the homeland of the spirit world. The Land of Love, which is what Queen Mother Frances Pierce (Nnenna's mom) called "Heaven", is the cosmic place from which we all come before birth and return to after death. "ABC You a G" spells out all the reasons Pierce loves his daughter Stella, in alphabetical order and "CelebraShine" is an Afrobeat call-and-response party-song, encouraging families to get up and dance. "Build an Altar" makes reference to ancestral veneration in the African American and Mexican and Indigenous traditions. This collaboration features Las Cafeteras to speak from a Chicano perspective, while Pierce's verse speaks from the African American perspective. "Sing Me Down" is an original lullaby from Nnenna's 1998 jazz album Maiden Voyage. After the death of Pierce's nephew/Nnenna's grandson Wonderful, the lyrics took on new meaning for the family. Wonderful, who passed at just 3 days old is

one of the family's most beloved ancestors and this lullaby for him is both a metaphor for death, and a meditation on transformation. Grammy-nominated vocalist Jarrett Johnson and 10x Grammy Award winner Alvin Chea of Take 6 accompany.

"Side by Side" is an interlude featuring Nnenna and grand-daughter Stella singing a "round" about always being close to your ancestors. The title is inspired by Pierce's picture book *Daddy & Me: Side by Side*. "You Live in my Memories" is about how our ancestors who have left us physically still remain in our minds, hearts and dreams even after their physical bodies have departed. On "Cry a Rainbow" Nnenna sings about accepting tears and feelings in all of their forms. Self care and healing lead the charge on "Help You Do The Work" which again features Jarrett Johnson. Sometimes friends need help but don't know how to ask for it, so they are offering someone to lean on, and breathe with. "Little Mushroom" shows gratitude to the fungi out there who help make the cycle of life on this planet possible by breaking down dead things and transforming them into new living things and "Everything Comes and Goes" is a jam about the coming and going of life via the metaphor of the seasons. "SonShine" is a result of a unique collaboration between close friends - producer Omari "Hir-O" Hall and Pierce who lost their father's around the same time. It honors the legacy of light that their fathers embodied and is for all the shining sons out there, and their fathers who love them. "Not So Far Away (interlude)" closes out of the album with a gentle reminder that your AnceStars are not so far away.

All songs written and produced in the family's hometown of Durham, North Carolina by Nnenna Freelon and Pierce Freelon. Mixed by Steve McKie and mastered by Jason Richmond.

AnceStars releases everywhere on May 19. Pierce Freelon's new children's picture book about his late father Phil Freelon titled "[Daddy & Me: Side by Side](#)" releases in May as does a new PBS Documentary featuring their family's journey with ALS titled: "[Matter of Mind: My ALS](#)" during this year's ALS awareness month. Nnenna's award winning podcast '[Great Grief](#)' also just launched an impressive second season.

ABOUT THE FREELONS

Dynamic mother-and-son duo Nnenna Freelon and Pierce Freelon are national treasures. Nnenna is a multi GRAMMY® Award nominee and creator of the award-winning podcast *Great Grief*, known worldwide for her compelling storytelling and captivating live performances. Pierce Freelon is a GRAMMY® nominated musician, author and educator. Accolades have abounded for the Freelons - with performances at The White House and induction into the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame for Nnenna and appearances on *Today Show* and *Rolling Stone* and an Emmy-award for Pierce's PBS web-series *Beat Making Lab*.

The Freelons made Recording Academy history in 2022. When Pierce's album '*Black to the Future*' was nominated for Best Children's Music Album and Nnenna's album '*Time Traveler*' was nominated for Best Jazz Vocal Album they became the first mother-and-son to be nominated for golden gramophones in different fields at the same GRAMMY

Awards. Together, Nnenna and Pierce are a tour de force, combining story, voice and music for a transformative and electrifying live experience.

Pierce: [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Spotify](#), [Apple Music](#)

Nnenna: [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Spotify](#), [Apple Music](#)

ANCESTARS TRACKLISTING

1. AnceStars
2. ABC You a G feat. Stella Freelon
3. CelebraShine
4. Build an Altar feat. Las Cafeteras
5. Sing Me Down feat. Jarrett Johnson & Alvin Chea
6. Side by Side (interlude)
7. You Live in my Memories
8. Cry a Rainbow
9. Help You Do The Work feat. Jarrett Johnson
10. Little Mushroom
11. Everything Comes and Goes
12. SonShine feat. DL Zene
13. Not So Far Away (interlude)

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