

The Clothesline Muse



Singer/actress Nnenna Freelon as Grandma Blu, "The Clothesline Muse"

The Clothesline Muse

R.J. Reynolds Memorial Auditorium

Fri, Aug. 7	3 p.m.
Fri, Aug. 7	8 p.m.
Sat. Aug. 8	3 p.m.
Sat. Aug. 8	8 p.m.

\$41

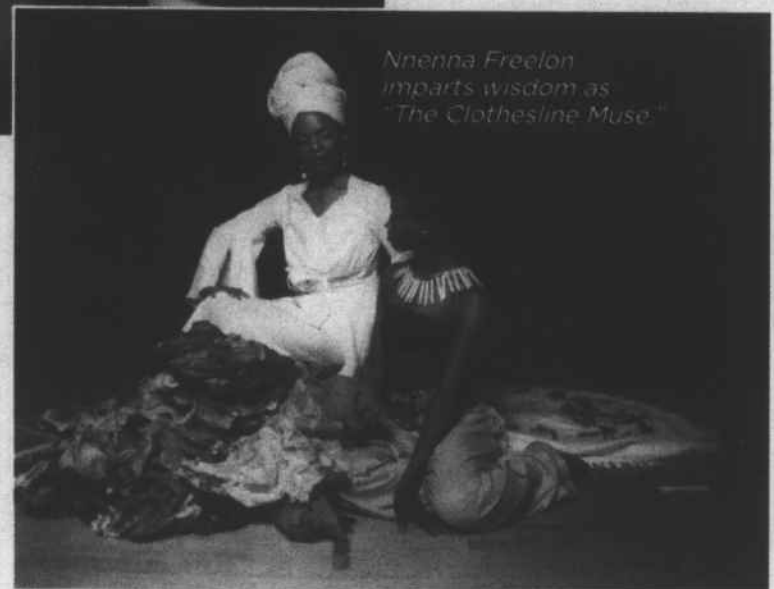
The complex relationship between an old-school grandma and her "new-cool" granddaughter is told in "The Clothesline Muse," an acclaimed and moving production that effortlessly blends original live music, emotive dance and visual art and projections.

Grandma Blu is a Southern washerwoman longing to share her "clothesline legacy" with granddaughter Mary Mack, an emerging screenwriter who is more interested in being online than thinking about a clothesline. Through their relationship, "The Clothesline Muse" celebrates African-American culture, women's history and the struggles of the Civil Rights and Labor movements.

Grammy-nominated jazz vocalist Nnenna Freelon plays the role of Grandma Blu, bringing her unique and stirring vocals to the original music she created for the production. Freelon, who has called the Durham, N.C., area home for many years, was a working wife and mother when she began her professional singing career in 1992. Columbia Records released her self-titled debut to great acclaim. She has released close to a dozen discs since and has worked and/or toured with notables like Anita Baker, Aretha Franklin and Ray Charles. Freelon co-wrote "The Clothesline Muse" with her daughter, Maya Freelon Asante, and Dr. Kariamu Welsh, Maya's mother-in-law.

"This is my passion project. This is my baby," Freelon recently told the publication *TheaterJones*. "I wanted to be on Broadway and perform in a play. The Lord spoke to me and said, 'If you want to be in a play – be in a play. You have many plays in you.'"

Cloteal Horne plays the role of Mary Mack. Her long list of stage credits includes the Classic Repertory Company's "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "Romeo and Juliet" and the Actors' Shakespeare Project's "Othello." Several talented dancers round out the cast.



Nnenna Freelon imparts wisdom as "The Clothesline Muse"

Dr. Welsh, a noted scholar who heads the Institute for African Dance Research and Performance at Temple University and the creator of the African dance technique Umfundalai (um-foon-duh-luh), conceived the theatrical production and choreographs the show's poetic dances. Rebecca Holderness, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, directs.

"The Clothesline Muse" was made possible with funding by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Theater Project, with lead funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It began a national tour on Jan. 6, 2015, at the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach, Fla. ■