



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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NEWS RELEASE

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ARTS COMMISSION NAMES TAMMI BROWN ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Profile Performance to be held June 22 at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center

The Santa Cruz County Arts Commission is pleased to announce vocalist Tammi Brown has been named 2024 Santa Cruz County Artist of the Year.

The Artist of the Year award is presented to local artists for outstanding achievement in the discipline of performing, visual, or literary arts who have also made a substantial contribution to the cultural enrichment of Santa Cruz County. A Profile Performance will be held at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center on June 22, from 7-9 p.m. Admission is FREE to the public; seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis the night of the event. To learn more about the award and previous recipients visit www.scparks.com.

Drenched in the uplifting and sultry sounds of gospel and jazz music, Tammi's voice is filled with rich tones, elegant phrasing, and vocal versatility, giving it a unique flavor. Influenced at the tender age of four, Tammi quickly found her musical roots in the soulfulness of gospel music while singing, playing organ, and directing the choir in church. Her musical roots blossomed when she discovered the vocal gracefulness of Ella Fitzgerald, the rawness of Aretha Franklin, and the power of Chaka Khan.

In 2008, Tammi received an invitation by renowned jazz guitarist Stanley Jordan to sing background vocals for the tune "Steppin' Out" on his record "State of Nature," which received a Grammy Award nomination. In addition, she was selected to perform in the tribute to Quincy Jones at the 59th Monterey Jazz Festival and at the Hollywood Bowl, backing the legendary Valerie Simpson.

Tammi had the honor of singing an opening song for the legendary poet Dr. Maya Angelou at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium in 2011. She was asked to be the opening act for prominent folk singer Joan Baez at the Esalen Institute's 50th Anniversary Celebration concert. That same year, she provided vocals for blues great Eric Bibb's "Jericho Road" album. To add to her impressive musical accomplishments, Tammi co-produced her single "That's How it Goes" with 13-time Grammy-nominated jazz fusion artist, Tom Schuman of Spyro Gyra.

Tammi's musical journey has placed her on several stages in more than ten countries worldwide including the famous Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York, The Monterey Jazz and Blues Festivals, and various prestigious venues throughout Europe and abroad. She has performed with some of the world's most notable music industry icons, including Quincy Jones, Alan Parsons, Bobby McFerrin, Dr. Maya Angelou, Joan Baez, and Spyro Gyra. She is currently a vocalist in the two-time Grammy-nominated vocal ensemble The Cultural Heritage Choir, led by the legendary musicologist Linda Tillery. Recently, her performance on the award-winning Lost American JazzBook won the Best Jazz with Vocals Album in the 18th Independent Music Awards.

She is the vocal instructor at the Music School, as well as founder and director of the Santa Cruz Gospel Choir. She has performed for many benefits, including the annual Prostate Cancer Benefit, the NAACP Gospel Night, The Youth Resource Bank, Red Cross's Heroes Breakfast, as well as several benefits presented by the Resource Center for Non-Violence. In addition, she's supported and performed for every Martin Luther King Jr. and Women's marches held within Santa Cruz County.

Over the last 40 years, the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission has selected outstanding artists nominated by the public and has honored them through the Artist of the Year Award. Nominees must be a resident of Santa Cruz County, must have a national or international reputation, must have contributed to the cultural enrichment of the local community, and must have created or presented work in Santa Cruz County.

For more information, including how to nominate an artist for the award, please visit <https://www.scparks.com>.