



# News Release

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**A NIGHT OF HOLIDAY SOUL  
FEATURING WILL DOWNING, LEELA JAMES AND AVERY\*Sunshine  
AT THE PLAYHOUSE SQUARE  
ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2025**

*Tickets on sale now at [playhousesquare.org](http://playhousesquare.org)*

CLEVELAND, OH – A Night of Holiday Soul featuring Will Downing, Leela James and Avery\*Sunshine will perform at Playhouse Square in Cleveland, OH on Sunday, December 28 at 7 p.m.

Tickets are on sale now at [playhousesquare.org](http://playhousesquare.org) and by phone at 216-241-6000.

With a career that spans over 38 years and 28 albums, Will Downing is one of the most versatile and loved voices of our time. Known as The Prince of Sophisticated Soul, his repertoire consists of signature interpretations of R&B classics like “I Go Crazy,” “Wishing On A Star” and “I Try,” with original hits “A Million Ways,” “Sorry I” and the show-stopping duet with Rachelle Ferrell, “Nothing Has Ever Felt Like This.”

His distinctive baritone voice has resonated in the hearts of women world-wide and carved a unique niche in the music marketplace. With fresh melodies and lush arrangements that satisfy all musical palates, Downing continues to serve his fan base through his own Sophisticated Soul record label and sold-out tour dates across the country. His latest release entitled *Luscious* was released on November 29, 2024. He also hosts his weekly radio show *The Wind Down* which is aired on this site and over 20 stations around the world in the USA, UK, Japan, and Spain.

R&B and soul singer-songwriter, Leela James’ successful career first began when she burst onto the scene in 2006 with her debut album, *A Change is Gonna Come*. The songbird has earned countless spots on the *Billboard* charts, including No. 1 on Adult R&B Airplay Charts and No. 8 on Urban Adult song of the year for hit single “Complicated” from her latest album *See Me*. Leela’s classic albums have also earned nominations for Outstanding New Artist at the NAACP Image Awards (2008), Best R&B/Soul or Rap New Artist at the Soul Train Music Awards (2008) and scoring her first award from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) for her 2014 single “Fall for You,” now certified gold, selling more than 500,000 equivalent units. The songstress continues to rock crowds performing an array of classics and new hits, including the single, “Right Back In It”

She has toured successfully across the US and Europe with some of the biggest names in R&B, performed on the ABC hit show, *Dancing with the Stars*, and starred on TV One’s *R&B Divas: Los Angeles*, amongst different guest appearances on a host of shows.

Avery\*Sunshine has established herself as a musical powerhouse, seamlessly blending her roles as a pianist, singer, songwriter and producer. A proud graduate of Spelman College, her journey from the academic halls to

the global stage is a testament to her talent, dedication, and passion for music. Avery's career is marked by significant achievements, including four top 20 hits on the *Billboard* charts. Her song "Call My Name" reached the coveted #1 spot, affirming her place in the music industry. Beyond her personal successes, Avery is a committed advocate for artists, serving as a Board Governor for the Atlanta Chapter of the Recording Academy, where she contributes to shaping the music landscape.

Together with her husband and Grammy-nominated partner, Dana Johnson, Avery has made Atlanta her stronghold, where they nurture and expand their creative and entrepreneurial ventures. Her entrepreneurial spirit shines through her co-founding and partnership in BigShine Recordings, a label dedicated to empowering independent artists.

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Playhouse Square, the nation's premier home for touring Broadway, is a globally recognized arts district. A not-for-profit presenter and producer of performing arts experiences, Playhouse Square is a champion of arts education and the vitality of downtown Cleveland. It proudly serves as home to eight resident companies: The City Club of Cleveland, Cleveland Ballet, Cleveland International Film Festival, Cleveland Play House, Cleveland State University Department of Theatre and Dance, DANCE Cleveland, Great Lakes Theater, and Tri-C JazzFest.