

Kurt Elling is the preeminent young male jazz singer today. NIGHTMOVES, Elling's first recording for Concord/Universal will propel his career to new heights. This follows a ten-year stretch that saw Elling earn seven GRAMMY nominations for six Blue Note albums, six consecutive years at the top of the Down Beat Critics and Jazz Times Readers' polls, three Jazz Journalists' Association Awards for Best Male Vocalist and the Prix Billie Holiday from the Academie du Jazz in Paris. His quartet has toured the world, performing to critical acclaim in Europe, the Middle East, South America, Asia and Australia, and at jazz festivals and concert halls across the North America.

In addition to working with his own quartet, Kurt Elling has spent recording and/or performing time with an array of artists that includes Terrence Blanchard, Dave Brubeck, The Clayton/Hamilton Orchestra, Benny Golson, Jon Hendricks, Fred Hersch, Charlie Hunter, Al Jarreau, David Liebman, Joe Lovano, Christian McBride, Marian McPartland, The Bob Mintzer Big Band, Mark Murphy, John Pizzarelli, Kurt Rosenwinkel, and The Yellowjackets. He has written multidisciplinary works of art for The Steppenwolf Theater and for the City Of Chicago. Moreover, Kurt Elling is a former National Trustee and National Vice Chair of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (The GRAMMYS) and was artist-in-residence for the Monterey Jazz Festival's 2006 season.

Kurt Elling's rich baritone voice spans four octaves and displays an astonishing technical facility and emotional depth. Elling has an awesome command of rhythm, texture, phrasing, and dynamics, often sounding more like a virtuoso jazz musician than a mere singer. His repertoire ranges from his own compositions to modern interpretations of standards, both of which can be the springboard for free form improvisation, scatting, spoken word and poetry. As composer and lyricist, Elling has written scores of his own compositions and set lyrics to the songs and improvised solos of many jazz masters. In addition to the compositional work he has done with collaborator-in-chief, Laurence Hobgood, Elling has collaborated in the creation of new pieces with Jon Clayton, Fred Hersch, Bob Mintzer, Charlie Hunter and Orbert Davis, among others.

One of Kurt Elling's major contributions is as a writer and performer of vocalese, the art of putting words to improvised solos of jazz artists. The natural heir to jazz pioneers Eddie Jefferson, King Pleasure, and Jon Hendricks, Elling is *the* contemporary voice in vocalese, setting the solos of Wayne Shorter, Keith Jarrett, Dexter Gordon, Pat Metheny, and others to his own deeply spiritual and compelling lyrics, an approach that reminds us of the beauty of the original music and opens us up to a fresh vision. Elling infuses his lyrics with passion, humor, and a startling intellectual depth, often incorporating images and references from writers such as Rilke, Proust, Kerouac, Rumi, Neruda and Kenneth Rexroth into his work.

Kurt Elling has been featured in profiles for CBS Sunday Morning, for CNN, and in hundreds of newspaper and magazine reviews and articles. The New York Times called his shows at Birdland “good, battering entertainment.”(1/99) Said the Chicago Tribune, “Kurt Elling is going to change many listeners’ minds on the meaning and purpose of Jazz singing.”(1/96) Playboy Magazine named Elling “the male Jazz vocalist of the Nineties.” (10/98) More recently, The Guardian (UK) declared, “Elling is an omnicompetent artist of almost ruthless efficiency ... (He) is truly a musical phenomenon.” (2/02) And Jazz Review (UK) raised the possibility that “Elling may be the greatest male Jazz singer of all time.” (1/02)

In responding to such critical adulation, Kurt Elling says, “I know the places where I need to work to get better. What’s really working for me is the fact that I have tried to learn from the great masters of jazz singing. If I can digest what people like Mark Murphy, Jon Hendricks, Betty Carter, Joe Williams and Eddie Jefferson have done and can contribute something valuable to the tradition then that will be reward enough.”

Gordon Drummond January 15, 2007

Contact: The Jazz Tree - 212.475.0415