

Kurt Elling is “the standout male jazz vocalist of our time.” – The New York Times

DEDICATED TO YOU, Kurt Elling’s second recording for Concord/Universal, will propel his career to new heights. Elling is an **eight-time** GRAMMY nominee who has spent the last *nine consecutive years* at the top of the Down Beat Critics poll and the last *four consecutive years* topping the Jazz Time Readers’ poll. He has won *five* Jazz Journalists Association Awards for Best Male Vocalist and the Prix Billie Holiday from the Academie du Jazz in Paris. His quartet tours the world continually, performing to critical acclaim in Europe, the Middle East, South America, Asia and Australia, and at jazz festivals and concert halls across North America.

In addition to leading a regular quartet that features collaborator Laurence Hobgood, Kurt Elling has spent recording and/or performing time with an array of artists that includes Terence 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 multi-disciplinary works of art for The Steppenwolf Theater and by commission for the City of Chicago. Kurt Elling is a former National Trustee and National Vice Chairman of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (The GRAMMYS) and has been artist-in-residence for the Monterey Jazz and the Singapore Music Festivals.

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 John 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 writing and performing words over the recorded improvised solos of jazz artists. Elling often incorporates images and references from writers such as Rilke, Proust, Kerouac, Rumi, Neruda and Kenneth Rexroth into his work. The natural heir to jazz pioneers Eddie Jefferson, King Pleasure, and Jon Hendricks, Elling is the contemporary voice of *vocalese*, setting his own deeply spiritual and compelling lyrics to the solos of Wayne Shorter, Keith Jarrett, Dexter Gordon, Pat Metheny, and others. Responding to the work, no less a poet than the late Robert Creeley wrote, “*Kurt Elling takes us into a world of sacred particulars. His words are informed by a powerful poetic spirit.*” Elling’s lyrics were published in a book entitled LYRICS by Circumstantial Press in 2007.

Kurt Elling has been featured in profiles for CBS Sunday Morning, for CNN, and in hundreds of newspaper and magazine reviews and articles. The Washington Post declared, “*Since the mid- 1990s, no singer in jazz has been as daring, dynamic or interesting as Kurt Elling. With his soaring vocal flights, his edgy lyrics and sense of being on a musical mission, he has come to embody the creative spirit in jazz.*” Said Jazzreview.com, “*This is a singer of supreme confidence, a vocalist at the top of his game and a true master of jazz vocalese.*” The Chicago Tribune decided that “*Kurt Elling is going to change many listeners’ minds on the meaning and purpose of Jazz singing.*” The Guardian (UK) declared, “*Elling is an omniscient artist of almost ruthless efficiency ... (He) is truly a musical phenomenon.*” And Jazz Review (UK) raised the possibility that “*Elling may be the greatest male Jazz singer of all time.*”

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.”

Kurt Elling’s most recent recording, **DEDICATED TO YOU: Kurt Elling Sings the Music of Coltrane and Hartman**, sets the bar still higher. Recorded live at Lincoln Center’s American Songbook Series, the recording is a showcase for Elling at his most expansive and emotional. The concert is built on arrangements created by long-time collaborator Laurence Hobgood for voice, rhythm section, the string quartet known as ETHEL and master tenor saxophonist Ernie Watts. Look for the release of DEDICATED TO YOU on June 23, 2009.

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