



On February 8, Grammy Winning Vocalist Kurt Elling Releases *The Gate*

**Produced by legendary Don Was, featuring songs by artists including
King Crimson, Herbie Hancock, The Beatles, and Stevie Wonder**

The New York Times is one of numerous publications to declare that Kurt Elling is the “standout male vocalist of our time,” and *The Gate* (Concord Records – 2/08/2011), Elling’s follow-up to his Grammy-winning *Dedicated to You*, is among his strongest albums—and perhaps the finest of his career.

Produced by Don Was (Rolling Stones, Bonnie Raitt, Bob Dylan), *The Gate* is a musical collection in which boundaries cease to exist, a sensibility enhanced by producer Don Was, who had expressed the desire to work with Elling—an opportunity which Elling found irresistible.

“I first heard Kurt on the local jazz station and was knocked out by his exotic blend of soul, technique, intelligence and charismatic hipness,” Was recalls. “He made this diverse collection of songs his own—and we had a blast.”

“What Don brought to this project,” said Elling, “was his love of music and musicians, and a confidence that liberated us from all concern. He is the consummate producer and this was an extraordinary experience—my favorite in a studio.”

The Gate points Elling in a new and satisfyingly emotional direction. He has somehow found a way to make a deeply personal statement out of the music of King Crimson, Joe Jackson, Stevie Wonder and the Beatles—in addition to providing a new and vibrant understanding of Miles Davis, Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock.

That Elling is first and foremost a jazz singer makes the work searching and enthralling. His phrasing is cool and meditative as he ventures into areas usually reserved for instrumentalists. As a lyricist, Elling breathes new life into gems previously known only for their melodies. “His words are informed by a powerful poetic spirit,” said poet and Bollingen Prize winner Robert Creeley. “Kurt Elling takes us into a world of sacred particulars.”

The Gate features longtime associate Laurence Hobgood on piano, Bob Mintzer on sax, John McLean on guitar, John Patitucci on bass, and two drummers, Terreon Gulley and Kobie Watkins—in addition to percussionist Lenny Castro. Said Elling, “The musicians on this recording inspired me to be...better.”

Elling developed his four-octave baritone in church choirs and later emerged on the national jazz scene in 1995 when Blue Note released *Close Your Eyes*. He made his Concord Records debut in 2007 with *Nightmoves*. All eight of his albums have been nominated for Grammys.

The Gate closes with a song that represents Elling's continued dedication to exploring jazz's past and blazing a trail for its future. Composed by the late Don Grolnick, "Nighttown, Lady Bright" features spoken words written by Duke Ellington and additional lyrics by Elling, who wished to close the album with a cinematic depiction of a jazz musician's life.

Said *The Washington Post*, "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."

That spirit is in rich evidence on *The Gate*—and a musical feast awaits those who pass through.

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