



KENDRA SHANK

Effervescence...depth...integrity...
-NEW YORK TIMES

Kendra Shank's delectable voice – warm-toned, fine-grained, quietly sexy – sets her well apart from the crowd, as does her knack for picking unhackneyed, slightly off-center material.
-TIME MAGAZINE

...a unique and immediately identifiable sound and style...she disassembled phrases, then reassembled them in her own imaginative fashion...the results were remarkable...
-LOS ANGELES TIMES

Kendra Shank is "a superbly skilled vocalist" (*New York Times*) with a "delectable voice" (*Time* magazine) and "breathtakingly original concept" (*Boston Globe*). Her inventive phrasing, soulful storytelling, and spontaneous ensemble interplay, make each performance a creative, in-the-moment experience that entrances and inspires audiences. Headlining at festivals, concerts, and clubs across the U.S. and internationally, Shank combines jazz originals, standards, world music, French chansons, folk/pop songs, and open improvisation in an adventurous, genre-bending style that inspired Abbey Lincoln to call her "an original; a singer with a sound."

Kendra Shank's five critically acclaimed CDs have garnered numerous "Best of the Year" awards, *DownBeat* poll recognition, and international airplay. *Afterglow* (Mapleshade Records, 1994), was co-produced by jazz legend Shirley Horn, who presented Shank at the Village Vanguard for her New York debut. Her second album, *Wish* (Jazz Focus Records, 1998), received a *Time* magazine rave, declaring: "Get in on the ground floor: this lady is going up." *Reflections* (Jazz Focus Records, 1998) debuted her current working band, an ensemble of New York all-stars with pianist **Frank Kimbrough** (Maria Schneider Orchestra), bassist **Dean Johnson** (Gerry Mulligan), and drummer **Tony Moreno** (Dave Liebman), who are featured on her subsequent recordings. Shank's ground-breaking *A Spirit Free: Abbey Lincoln Songbook* (Challenge Records, 2007) pays tribute to that legendary singer's importance as a songwriter. *Mosaic* (Challenge Records, 2009), is credited to the "Kendra Shank Quartet" in recognition of the collaborative nature of her band who "have spent [over] a decade tightening their exemplary unit, and the triumph of their solidity is evident throughout this stunningly inventive pastiche of covers and originals" (*Jazz Times*).

A prominent figure on New York's jazz scene, Shank has headlined at the city's premier venues, including: Blue Note, Birdland, Jazz Standard, Iridium, Kitano, and a 12-year residency at the historic 55 Bar. She has toured across the U.S. and in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Canada, with festival performances at Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz, JVC Jazz, Jazz Port Townsend, Bumbershoot, Calgary Jazz, Edmonton Jazz, Wangaratta Jazz, Jazz in Marciac, Jazz à Vienne, and Jazz is Toulon, among many others. She has been featured on National Public Radio's *JazzSet* and *Piano Jazz with Marian McPartland*, and Radio France's *Transcontinentales* (with a college degree in French and Art, Kendra is bilingual and Paris was her second home for several years).

Kendra Shank's "unique and immediately identifiable sound and style" (*LA Times*) is partly due to her eclectic background: she has been a theatre actress, a visual artist, and began her music career as a singer-guitarist performing folk, country, bluegrass, and French chansons before her passion turned to jazz. Fueled by curiosity and the thrill of exploration, she approaches music as "sound painting," using her voice to create colors, shapes, and textures, always pushing her art forward. She has performed and/or recorded with a host of renowned artists, including: Abbey Lincoln (as guitarist on her *Over the Years* CD), Bob Dorough, Jay Clayton, Fred Hersch, Kenny Werner, Geoffrey Keezer, Larry Willis, Bobby Watson, Gary Bartz, Steve Wilson, Billy Drewes, Victor Lewis, Billy Hart, Matt Wilson, Ben Allison, Ben Monder, Peter Leitch, and Mark Lamb Dance. She has taught clinics at University of North Carolina, The New School, Brooklyn-Queens Conservatory of Music, McNally Smith College of Music, Seasons Performance Hall, and Jazz in Marciac Festival.

PRESS QUOTES

Kendra Shank's delectable voice – warm-toned, fine-grained, quietly sexy – sets her well apart from the crowd, as does her knack for picking unhackneyed, slightly off-center material.

TIME MAGAZINE

A superbly skilled vocalist, Ms. Shank interprets jazz and pop liberally but with an abiding respect for melody.

NEW YORK TIMES

...the immediacy of her musicianship is powerful.

WALL STREET JOURNAL

...a standout...a unique and immediately identifiable sound and style...she disassembled phrases, then reassembled them in her own imaginative fashion...the results were remarkable...

LOS ANGELES TIMES

...she takes the old folkie "Black Is the Color of My True Love's Hair" and gradually whips it into a Coltrane-esque emotional frenzy...Shank is supremely talented, innovative and at the same time readily accessible. There's no one else quite like her.

VILLAGE VOICE

This vocalist makes lyrics believable, invents like an instrumentalist and has an ear second to none for little-known and unknown tunes...She also functions like a true equal with her excellent rhythm section.

BOSTON GLOBE

Working her voice like a horn, she phrases inventively, whether crisp and sizzling or sensuously smoky. She's definitely an original.

JAZZ TIMES

...an adventurous and innovative artist who commands attention...

VARIETY

...she knows how to extract the maximum drama from a lyric with precisely calibrated phrasing and a rich, polychromatic tone, at turns ebullient and vulnerable.

DOWNBEAT MAGAZINE

...uniquely seductive and captivating...her voice envelopes you like cool, soft sheets.

WASHINGTON POST

...she intoxicates with a combination of power and perfume...Her bounding, courageous solos sometimes bring to mind Kurt Elling (though she started her career first), bridging the gap between singing and speaking...

CHICAGO READER

Shank is among the most interesting and imaginative vocalists in all of jazz right now.

ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS

How does she do it? Simple. Shank, who started out as a folk singer before coming to jazz, has obviously picked up on what both mentor Shirley Horn and close associate Abbey Lincoln have always known: As long as you locate a song's essential core, its emotional truth – which Shank does unfailingly – you can go just about anywhere you want with it. Add a warm, supple voice, an expert lyrical sense and a terrific ear for obscure and unusual material, and well, it's a lock.

LA WEEKLY

"The antithesis of the cookie-cutter female jazz singer, Kendra Shank is a constant revelation...riveting..."

MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE

Ms. Shank is a risk taker who ventures fearlessly onto the high wire...Her jagged phrasing, willingness to stretch and manipulate time and her refusal to resolve phrases in conventional ways give her singing genuine originality.

ALL ABOUT JAZZ