

For Immediate Release



Kendra Shank Quartet - *Mosaic* Available April 14 on Challenge Records

**Featuring Frank Kimbrough, Dean Johnson, Tony Moreno,
with special guests Billy Drewes and Ben Monder**

Kendra Shank embarks on national tour this Spring in support of *Mosaic*
(see tour dates at www.kendrashank.com)

**Press/media *Mosaic* page, featuring streaming audio -
<http://www.geodesicmanagement.com/kendrashank>**

"Kendra is Kendra, and there's no one else quite like her" – Will Friedwald, *The Village Voice*

"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. The up-tempo tunes swing hard; the ballads shimmer and shine. Get in on the ground floor: this lady is going up."
– Terry Teachout, *Time Magazine*

"This vocalist makes lyrics believable, invents like an instrumentalist, and has an ear second to none for little-known and unknown tunes. ...Shank is that rarity among jazz vocalists, a risk taker who stays in tune. Her voice is dark and haunting, and she prefers subtle variations to overly demonstrative embellishments. She also functions like a true equal with her excellent rhythm section..."
– Bob Blumenthal, *The Boston Globe*

Kendra Shank is a jazz vocalist that has been described by *The Village Voice* as "entrancing", and hailed by *The New York Times* as an artist with "effervescence, depth" and "integrity". On **April 14, 2009** Kendra Shank reveals her most personal recording to date, ***Mosaic*** (on Challenge Records), the vocalist's fifth recording as a leader and the gripping follow up to *A Spirit Free-Abbey Lincoln Songbook*.

Mosaic reflects Kendra's experiences, relationships, stories, emotions and personality, in music and in life. From her early acting career, her deep immersion in the visual arts, to her singer/guitarist years in the cafes and clubs of Seattle; from the streets and subways of Paris to the most prestigious venues in New York City and around the world, Kendra Shank brilliantly "embodies all that a true jazz singer once was and is now" (Tom Terrell, *JazzTimes*).

Mosaic features a compelling book of songs from a diverse group of composers, from Carole King to Irving Berlin to Cedar Walton, with originals by Kimbrough, Shank and long-time friend and collaborator Kirk Nurock; all of the music unified by the highly unique approach Kendra and her

quartet take in allowing the songs to unfold with joy, curiosity and spontaneity. Shank has always had a penchant for choosing off-the-beaten-path songs, in large part written by modern day jazz instrumentalists, intent on following her heart instead of trends. On *Mosaic* she follows this path once again, and the album offers a mini-tribute to pianists, with songs by Cedar Walton (“Life’s Mosaic”, also giving Kendra the album title), Frank Kimbrough (“For Duke”, with lyrics by his wife, Maryanne de Prophetis), Bill Evans (“Time Remembered”) and Kirk Nurock (“I’m Movin’ On” and “I’ll Meet You There” – written for Kendra specifically with texts adapted from the writings of Rumi).

The Kendra Shank Quartet, Kendra Shank (voice), Frank Kimbrough (piano), Dean Johnson (bass) and Tony Moreno (drums), is a working band that achieves a level of interaction and expressiveness unparalleled in the world of jazz vocalists. They are joined on *Mosaic* by special guests Billy Drewes (soprano & tenor saxophones, clarinet) and Ben Monder (guitar). *Mosaic* is the first CD to be released under the name, “Kendra Shank Quartet,” indicative of the fact that these four musicians have had a significant impact and influence on each other’s development. Together, through countless hours in the studio and on stage, they have created a unique group sound that is a “Mosaic” of their unique personalities, on and off the bandstand. “*Mosaic* is the culmination of the band’s 10-year evolution into a high level of interplay, spontaneity, openness and creativity,” said Kendra.

In addition to listening to the music thoroughly, the anatomy of *Mosaic* can be found in Kendra’s own words (from the album’s liner notes): “Mosaics . . . our experiences, relationships, choices, forming a lifetime . . . individuals joining in community – each person part of a larger whole, both locally and globally . . . in improvised music, each musician contributing her/his unique personality of textures, colors, stories, emotions, to create a work of art greater than the sum of its parts – a paradigm for a way of living, of embracing our diversity and coming together in unity.”

More on Kendra Shank and *Mosaic*:

Kendra Shank’s 2007 release, *A Spirit Free: Abbey Lincoln Songbook*, received “Best of the Year” citations in *Downbeat*, *Jazz Times*, *Newsday*, *Jazz Improv NY*, *Slate*, and others. Her critically acclaimed debut recording, *Afterglow* (1994), was co-produced by Shirley Horn for Mapleshade Records. After forging successful careers in Paris, France and Seattle, WA, Shank moved to New York in 1997 where she recorded two albums for Jazz Focus Records, *Wish* (1998) and *Reflections* (2000). During this time she played with a host of stellar musicians such as Fred Hersch, Jaki Byard, Bruce Barth and Larry Willis, and was mentored by jazz greats Jay Clayton, Shirley Horn, Abbey Lincoln, Bob Dorough, Nancy King and Sheila Jordan. Hailed by *Downbeat* as a top female vocalist (1999, 2006, 2007), Shank headlines at major venues across the U.S. and internationally. She has been featured on NPR’s *JazzSet* and *Marian McPartland’s Piano Jazz*, was guest guitarist on Abbey Lincoln’s *Over The Years* CD, and has been a vocal guest with Bob Dorough, Jay Clayton, Bud Shank, Randy Halberstadt and Peter Leitch.

Kendra’s varied musical background and experiences unify into the single entity that is her new recording, *Mosaic*. On a journey from folk music to jazz, with stops at the stations of pop, country, bluegrass, French chansons, world, and “free” improv, Kendra has emerged as an adventurous, genre-bending vocalist that Gary Giddins calls “one of New York’s most original performers” (*Jazz Times*). Shank’s music is also informed by her diverse background in the arts: she was a theatre actor as a child (by the age of 5 she could sing Kurt Weil’s entire score to *The Threepenny Opera*), and a visual artist from childhood through college (earned a double B.A. in Art & French). As a young woman she essentially became French, living in Paris, speaking fluent French by 19, and performing French popular music in the subways, street cafes and clubs of Paris. In 1989, splitting her time between Seattle & Paris, Shank developed into a full-fledged jazz singer and began touring major clubs & festivals. Her NYC debut was as auspicious as it gets, taking place at The Village Vanguard in 1992 in a showcase presented by Shirley Horn, as part of Horn’s own engagement (this is also the night Kendra met her pianist Frank Kimbrough).

In addition to touring extensively in support of *Mosaic*, the “mosaic” of the artist’s eclectic interests extends to other endeavors in her career: Shank is in the beginning stages of a collaboration with the Mark Lamb Dance company which will encompass improvised dance and improvised music (along with vocalist Kyoko Kitamura). She is also exploring completely improvised a cappella music with a group of five vocalists.

***Mosaic* will be available on April 14, 2009 on Challenge Records.**

For more information on Kendra Shank and the *Mosaic* Tour please visit www.Kendrashank.com and contact:

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