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## THE VERVEMUSICGROUP

### Kurt Rosenwinkel *Deep Song*

Following a string of three acclaimed recordings for Verve Records that firmly established him as one of the most strikingly original new voices in jazz as both guitarist and composer (2000's *The Enemies of Energy*, 2001's *The Next Step* and 2003's *Heartcore*), Kurt Rosenwinkel returns with an all-star outing that is perhaps his most luminous and accessible to date. Joined by his high-profile colleagues Brad Mehldau on piano and Joshua Redman on tenor sax, along with Larry Grenadier on bass and either Ali Jackson or longtime associate Jeff Ballard on drums, Rosenwinkel plumbs the depths of emotion and lyricism on *Deep Song*.

From dynamic new renditions of older compositions like the chops-busting "Synthetics" (from *The Enemies of Energy*) or the gentle and evocative "Use of Light" (from *The Next Step*) to hauntingly beautiful interpretations of the standard "If I Should Lose You" and the melancholy Billie Holiday vehicle "Deep Song," Rosenwinkel unleashes his typically cascading, sonorous guitar lines with newfound authority. "I feel like as a guitarist I really got to a place of expressive maturity on this record," says the Philadelphia native, who currently resides in Zurich, Switzerland, "so I'm really happy about that."

Also included in the 74-minute program are new or previously unissued Rosenwinkel originals like "Cake" (based on George Gershwin's "Let Them Eat Cake"), "Gesture Lester" (an homage to his pianist father), "The Cloister," "Brooklyn Sometimes" and "The Cross," each rendered with masterful aplomb by Kurt and company. "The title of this album perfectly expresses where I'm coming from in my approach to jazz," says the guitarist-composer-bandleader. "The music that I love always had that quality to it. From Billie Holiday to Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry, Miles Davis and Bill Evans...there's always a deep sense of song to it. That's a quality that I feel can be very lacking in today's jazz that's being made. But the music on this album was approached from those aesthetic values of deep song that we all share in the band. And that's why I called the record *Deep Song*. Because that concept, that approach to music is the most basic, fundamental place from which I feel we're all playing music."

While Rosenwinkel had talked in the past about forming a band with Mehldau and Redman, all the pieces didn't fall into place until last summer when they finally went out on a European tour in preparation for a studio recording. As Kurt explains, "We've all been close musical friends for over a decade and there's always been an understanding and an appreciation for each other's music. So when I was thinking of what to do next after *Heartcore*, I immediately thought of Brad and Josh. These guys, of course, are leaders of their own bands and have very busy schedules, but it just so happened that neither of them was touring this last summer. It turned out to be the perfect time to do what we had always talked about doing. So we all got together and had a great time on the tour, and then making the record was a deep pleasure."



While Mehldau and Rosenwinkel had played together on various sessions and isolated gigs around New York, Redman and Kurt had not previously collaborated. But Josh had been a keen observer (and great fan) of Kurt's music for years. As he wrote in his insightful liner notes to Rosenwinkel's Verve debut, *The Enemies of Energy*: "Kurt is a man of many musical virtues. His technique is prodigious. His ears are huge. His time is solid. His groove is ferocious. His articulation is precise. His tone is penetrating but warm. His narrative flow is relaxed yet dynamic. His ideas are often surprising, sometimes shocking. But always compelling and inevitably satisfying. He is an adventurous soloist, an empathic accompanist and a poetic composer...He navigates the jazz idiom with fluidity and grace. He is an uninhibited, uncompromising and uncommonly inspired artistic voice. He is an organic, intuitive innovator...a natural original."

Born in 1970, Rosenwinkel attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston and later apprenticed with Gary Burton (1991-1992) and Paul Motian's Electric Bebop Band (1992-94) before branching out as a leader in his own right. An adventurous, searching artist whose playing is marked by a kind of kinetic melodicism, darkly delicate lyricism and cascading, horn-like lines, Rosenwinkel has, over the course of four brilliant recordings for Verve, established an instantly recognizable voice on the guitar -- warm and fluid with a tinge of overdrive, a touch of sustain and echo with a penchant for dissonance. His singing quality on the instrument is all the more enhanced by the fact that he is often literally singing in unison with his single note lines. Through his first three albums, Rosenwinkel forged a tight alliance on the frontline with tenor saxophonist Mark Turner. The world renowned Joshua Redman fills that role on *Deep Song* and together with Mehldau, Grenadier, Jackson and Ballard, they all strike an uncanny chemistry on Rosenwinkel's sixth album overall as a leader (he had previously recorded two albums in the '90s for the Fresh Sound and Criss Cross labels).

Of the transcendent title track to *Deep Song*, Rosenwinkel says: "It's one of the most beautiful pieces of music I've ever heard. I've been playing that song for many years and I tried to record it a few times, but this time I really felt that we lived up to the spirit of the original. It's a song that I always play the same way. There's no solos, it's all parts. I might improvise a little bit and embellish the parts but basically I'm trying to remain true to the arrangement. That is really the idea and the ideal of playing this song. It's such a beautiful piece of music that you don't need to do much else with it other than just play it. As a musician, if the piece of music that I'm playing is inspiring to me, then it's not like I, by definition, need to solo. I want to make music come alive, but I don't necessarily need to solo in order to do that. Often times in jazz today people think that it's just about just taking a solo. And for me, if there's a beautiful piece of music, I don't mind playing a part at all."

Regarding his strikingly original voice on guitar, Rosenwinkel (who also plays piano) is striving for a legato connectivity to the notes in the left hand while retaining a sense of rhythmic syncopation in the right hand. As he told *Jazziz* magazine: "Basically, I want a cross between Allan Holdsworth and Grant Green, in a sense, but I also want the chordal approach of Keith Jarrett; that pianistic quality of creating harmonic space even as you're soloing. Of course, Holdsworth does that too with single-note lines, but the integration of chords and melody is something that I really hear in my head now. And Keith is a master of that, as is Bud Powell or Elmo Hope. So you might say that I'm trying to combine aspects of Allan Holdsworth, Grant Green, Keith Jarrett, Bud Powell,

and Elmo Hope on the guitar. And I'm making progress little by little in incremental steps. First there's visualization and then there's manifestation. And along the way you have to take chances and stay true to your intuition."