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For more information, please contact:

Mike Wilpizeski at 718-459-2117

email: [HYPERLINK "mailto:MikeW@telarc.com"](mailto:MikeW@telarc.com) mikew@heads-up.com

Tour Publicity: Kelly Johanns-DiCillo at 216-765-7381 ext. 247

email: [HYPERLINK "mailto:kjohanns@heads-up.com"](mailto:kjohanns@heads-up.com) kjohanns@heads-up.com

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GUITARIST MIKE STERN MAKES THE FRENCH CONNECTION ON NEW HEADS UP DVD

***New Morning: The Paris Concert* is due at retail on March 24, 2009**

Guitarist Mike Stern, a five-time GRAMMY[®] nominee and a pivotal figure in the later years of the Miles Davis saga, is regarded as one of the most innovative jazz musicians on any continent in the past three decades. A frequent world traveler, Stern took his trio to Europe, Asia and elsewhere throughout much of 2008 – an ambitious itinerary that included a memorable one-nighter at the New Morning, the longstanding and highly celebrated club in Paris, France.

This electrifying show in front of a capacity-plus crowd in May 2008 was captured on film for posterity, and is presented in *New Morning: The Paris Concert* (HUDV 7166), a live DVD scheduled for worldwide release on March 24, 2009, on Heads Up International, a division of Concord Music Group, Inc.

Filmed in high-definition TV, the DVD captures nearly two hours of riveting performance footage, as well as clips from the soundcheck and an interview with Stern about the trio, the performance, the celebrated French club and the passionate audience on hand for the show. Backing Stern on this gig is the expert crew of saxophonist Bob Franceschini, bassist Tom Kennedy and incredible world renowned drummer Dave Weckl (who also mixed the DVD) – all of whom take the viewer on what DVD producer/director Daniel Farhi calls “a journey of pure musical delight.”

Kennedy and Weckl – both St. Louis natives – have been working on and off as a unit since their teenage years, which makes for a seamless groove throughout the *New Morning* performance. “There’s an incredible chemistry between those two,” says Stern. “You can’t recreate that by putting any two guys together. Just based on the number of years they’ve played together, what they are as a whole is bigger than the two of them individually.”

Likewise, a similar chemistry among all five musicians in the current Stern lineup had emerged

by the time cameras were rolling in Paris. “We had been playing together so much on that tour, it just seemed like there was always something cool happening at every gig,” says Stern. “We knew the music very well, so it was pretty much a given that we’d be able to play the stuff without any confusion. But whether or not it will be inspired is something you never know until the night of the performance. But it seemed like this particular gig had some cool stuff happening that everyone got into spontaneously.”

The eight-song set opens with “Tumble Home,” a minor blues piece that runs the gamut of dynamics and emotions. “It starts out with Dave on brushes,” says Stern. “He knows I really like that, and I love the way he plays brushes. He brings it way down. It gets kind of lyrical, and there are plenty of places to go. And then he picks up the sticks and we start swinging for a while, and by the end of it, it’s pretty rocking. It goes to a lot of places in a single song, which I like, and it’s very spontaneous. I like a lot of dynamics, and the song definitely has that.”

“Tumble Home” is immediately followed by “KT,” a song written for drummer Kim Thompson, who appeared on Stern’s 2006 Heads Up debut, *Who Let the Cats Out?* “Actually, I had already written the song before we made that record, but I didn’t have a title for it,” says Stern. “Kim said, ‘I want that tune to be for me.’ So I said, ‘Okay, I’ll call it KT.’”

“That’s All It Is” is a brand new song that is as simple and direct as the title implies. “Miles used to say that about some of his tunes,” says Stern. “He’d come up with something very short and very simple and then he’d say in his usual raspy voice, ‘That’s all it is,’ and we were supposed to make something out of it. But it was usually pretty clear what he wanted. This tune is like that. It’s a simple, fun tune.”

In the home stretch, Stern and company serve up energized renditions of two songs that predate the Heads Up era, yet merge seamlessly with the material from *Who Let the Cats Out?* earlier in the set: “Wing and a Prayer,” from *Between the Lines* (1996), and “Chromazone,” from *Time In Place* (1988). Both tracks serve to balance the equation that defines the live Stern experience: a masterful guitarist, a top-shelf crew of musicians and an audience in perfect tune with the music.

“It was just one night – the only night we played there,” says Stern. “But the crowd was really responsive. It was a special night, one of those moments when the band and the audience connect on a level that you can’t even explain. The best part is that, with this DVD, we’re able to capture that moment and bring it to an even bigger audience.”

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