PRESS RELEASE

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Mark McKnight Organ Quartet

National Touring

The above band has received a Jazz Services National Touring Support Scheme grant for their new tour.

Mark McKnight - guitar

Seamus Blake - saxophone

Ross Stanley - organ

James Maddren - drums

Since the 2009 release of his acclaimed debut Overnight, Mark McKnight has emerged as a significant new voice of European jazz guitar. Having recorded Overnight in NYC with a band comprising some of the city's finest jazz musicians, the intervening two years have seen McKnight focus primarily on the development of his own UK based organ trio.
McKnight features this regular trio of Ross Stanley and James Maddren, on Hammond organ and drums respectively, in combination with world-renowned NYC saxophonist Seamus Blake to launch his second album as a leader, Do Or Die (Whirlwind Recordings), on their most extensive tour to date, supported by Jazz Services.

The Mark McKnight Organ Group have completed two UK/Ireland tours of McKnight's original music in the company of some of the leading international saxophonists of today including Will Vinson and Seamus Blake. The band has performed to capacity crowds at the Belfast Festival at Queens and the Cork Jazz Festival in addition to jazz clubs throughout the UK and Ireland. Together they reinforce the ever-developing voice of McKnight as an improviser and composer and re- interpret the sound of the 'Hammond organ group' in jazz today.

Mark McKnight's "singing, high-energy" (Journal of Music in Ireland) improvisational approach has led to him being described as "an exceptional talent" and "the future of Irish jazz guitar" by the Irish Times. Still in his 20's, McKnight, a graduate of Boston's Berklee College of Music, has toured throughout Europe and performed and/or recorded with such internationally recognised musicians as Terell Stafford, Tim War?eld, Jason Rebello and Bill Carrothers. He has appeared at major jazz Festivals including London, Cork, Glasgow, Edinburgh, 12 Points and Montreux, and was awarded 3rd place in the Montreux International Jazz Guitar Competition in 2008. Since then McKnight's pro?le has continued to rise rapidly both at home and on an international level, being awarded 'Best Young Irish Musician' from the Cork Jazz Festival and chosen to represent Ireland in the 12 Points Festival (Norway) and the UK in the European Jazz Orchestra. In 2009 Mark released his debut album as a leader, Overnight, which was recorded in NYC and features some of the city's leading jazz musicians including Sam Yahel, Will Vinson and Mark Ferber.

New York based tenor saxophonist/composer Seamus Blake is recognized as one of the finest and most creative young players in jazz. John Scofield, who hired him for his Quiet Band, calls him "extraordinary, a total saxophonist." In 2002 he was awarded first place in the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Saxophone Competition in Washington DC, and as the winner, performed with Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock. Blake was born in England and raised in Vancouver, Canada. At age 21, whilst still a student at Boston's prestigious Berklee College, he was asked to record with legendary drummer Victor Lewis, with whom he continues to perform. After graduation, he moved to New York, where he rapidly established himself on the New York jazz scene. Seamus has released six albums on Criss Cross Records and has also recorded as a leader for the Fresh Sound label -

Stranger Things Have Happened features Kurt Rosenwinkel as well as Jorge Rossy and Larry Grenadier from the Brad Mehldau trio. Blake is a long-standing member of the Grammy nominated Mingus Big Band, and is featured on their last six albums. He has also performed and/or recorded with Eric Reed, Dave Douglas, Antonio Sanchez, Scott Kinsey, Tal Wilkenfeld, Jane Monheit, Kenny Barron, Sam Yahel, David Kikoski, Bill Stewart, Kevin Hays, Michael Brecker, Randy Brecker, Wayne Krantz, Ingrid Jensen, Maria Schneider, Mark Turner, Brad Mehldau, Al Foster, Brian Blade, Jeremy Pelt and Jack DeJohnette.

Ross Stanley was awarded an organ scholarship to Marlborough College at the age of 13. He then completed a BMus in classical and jazz piano at Guildhall in 2004. Since leaving, he has performed with major jazz names such as Will Vinson, Dennis Rollins, Guy Barker, Ian Shaw, Liane Carroll, Stan Sulzmann, Steve Arguelles, John Parricelli, Bobby Wellins and Clark Tracey. He is a regular member of the Jim Mullen Organ Trio, the Mark McKnight Organ Quartet and the Jacqui Dankworth band and performs in the Nostalgia 77 Octet and the Heritage Orchestra. Stanley has also toured with Steve Howe Trio, Deodato and has recorded for Goldie, US3, Trevor Horn and Simply Red amongst others. He is a Hammond endorsee.

Tour dates are:

DATE	TIME	VENUE	TOWN	BOX OFFICE	WEB
04/09/2011		Colston Hall - Bar	Bristol	0117 9223682	
19/09/2011		606 Club	London	020 7352 5953	http://www.606club.co.uk
20/09/2011		Dempseys	Cardiff	029 2049 6802 (Jazz at Dempsey's)	http://www.riverbankjazz.co.uk
21/09/2011		Griffin Bar	Glasgow	0141 3315170	
22/09/2011	8.00pm	Seven Artspace	Leeds	0113 2626777	
23/09/2011		Millennium Hall	Sheffield	0114 2738678 (Sheffield Jazz)	http://www.sheffieldjazz.org.uk
25/09/2011		Crescent Arts Centre	Belfast	02890 242338	http://www.movingonmusic.co.uk
26/09/2011		Blue Lamp	Aberdeen	01224 647472	
27/09/2011	8.30pm	Cluny	Newcastle Upon Tyne	0191 2304474	
28/09/2011	8.30pm	St James Social Club	Swansea	01792 380615 (Swansea Jazzland)	http://www.swanseajazzland.co.uk
29/09/2011	7.15pm	Ronnie Scotts	London	020 7439 0747	
29/09/2011	8.30pm	Spice of Life	London	020 7739 3025	
30/09/2011		Great Northern Hotel	Peterborough	01733 552 595	http://www.peterboroughjazzclub.co.uk

Reviews:

“McKnight himself is an exhilarating talent” - The Glasgow Herald

“[McKnight's] solos were marvelously constructed and characteristically rather elegant combined with an emotional intensity, a soulfulness” - Jazzwise

“Effortless mastery of his instrument, a lyrical approach and a singing tone.” - Irish Independent

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