

# Crowd-Thrilling Performances Super Bowl Week in Minneapolis Earn Young LA Singer a Role in Prince's Former Band, NPG

*Mackenzie officially joins the New Power Generation to take the stage with the group Prince once described as his "best band ever" for debut concerts in Oz*

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-- A young, relatively unknown singer and songwriter based in Los Angeles who prefers to simply go by the name Mackenzie\* just got a wake up call to be in a dream. He's been invited to officially join the NPG ---- the New Power Generation. In March he will work with the group that Prince once described as his "best band ever" for five, debut concerts in Australia.

Mackenzie created [a major buzz on social media](#) and in Minneapolis with his "audition" performances during Super Bowl week, including one outside in the subzero cold and snow (!) that was put on by the Super Bowl host committee and produced by legendary music producers Jimmy Jam Harris and Terry Lewis.

The dynamic 30-year-old was a showstopper during his NPG performances. The crowd

seemed especially moved by his soulful version of "Nothing Compares 2 U" and immediately jumped to their feet with his rousing rendition of "You've Got the Look" during four sold-out NPG shows at the Dakota Jazz Club February 2 and 3 where he was joined by guest vocalists, former NPG singer Kip Blackshire and long-time Prince colleague, Andre Cymone.

“

He's a friggin' star! He absolutely crushed those Prince songs!"

*Prince choreographer Barry Lather (Paula Abdul, Janet Jackson, et al)*

The fabulous Hornheads, also formerly part of [the core NPG band](#), made up the energetic and musically tight 15-member group.

•[Mackenzie singing](#) "Nothing Compares 2 U" with the NPG at the Dakota Super Bowl Weekend.

**GREW UP IN A HOUSE IN RURAL VIRGINIA WHERE PRINCE MUSIC WAS TABOO**



Prince music was taboo growing up in a strict household on a Virginia farm

While growing up in a strict household on a farm in Virginia, Mackenzie wasn't allowed to listen to or

sing secular music. "Before I started pursuing singing professionally, Prince's music was taboo music! But it always had a spiritual feel to it for me, like that energy you get from music in church," he recalls. "Prince and NPG represent freedom and intense creativity at work."

## SINGER INITIALLY IGNORED THE CALL

"NPG's manager -- and former Prince manager, Jill Willis -- looked me up on the Jammcard app and reached out to me. I thought it was a joke so, initially, I ignored it. Then she called me. I ignored that at first too but decided I better check this out." Before long he was in the former Flyte Tyme Studios of Terry Lewis and Jimmy Jam in the Twin Cities, rehearsing with the NPG fellows -- and then in front of both hometown music fans and visitors from all over the world -- some in town for Super Bowl and some to hear NPG perform their first public U.S. concerts.

Mackenzie, who has worked as a singer on select soundtracks and other projects says "those shows during Super Bowl

week, were really my audition for the band. This is a great group of musicians and I'm honored to be working with them; they played with one of the most gifted musicians and songwriters of the past century, so I'm constantly learning from them. One thing I've rediscovered just being with the band briefly is how to respect the stage and always be growing on it. I also learned that by watching James Brown. That's always a key to a good performance and these guys drew it out of me."

## "HE'S A FRIGGIN' STAR," SAYS FORMER PRINCE CHOREOGRAPHER

"I am delighted to welcome our newest addition, Mackenzie, to The NPG!" notes Morris Hayes, NPG Music Director (and the only NPG musician to play with Prince as his Music Director and keyboard player the night of his unforgettable Super Bowl Performance in the rain in Miami 11 years ago). "Mackenzie is a gifted and magnetic singer with amazing charisma that locks you into his performances immediately."

"We are looking forward to presenting him to the world as the NPG continues to keep the Prince legacy alive. As I heard one screamin' fan in Minneapolis say recently, 'This is as close to a Prince show now as you will ever get.' And with our new official member on board, we're going to be bringin' it wheels up and full throttle."

"He's a friggin' star! He absolutely crushed those Prince songs," adds former Prince choreographer Barry Lather (Paula Abdul, Janet Jackson, Carrie Underwood, others). Lather caught the first of the Dakota shows, along with long-time Twin Cities Star Tribune music critic Jon Bream, who said he



**NPG**  
the  
**NEW POWER GENERATION**

thought Mackenzie was an exciting addition to the band , and that the NPG shows were one of the best musical experiences of the entire Super Bowl week.

The NPG alumni going to Australia include long-time Prince and NPG Musical Director and keyboard player, Morris Hayes, drummer Kirk Johnson who first met Prince when he was tapped for Purple Rain, along with dancer and percussionist Damon D and rapper Tony M. , who co-wrote a number of songs on the early NPG records. Also joining the group is bassist Mono Neon, keyboard player and lead vocalist Kip Blackshire, plus guest singers André Cymone and Támar Davis who was nominated for a Grammy with Prince for the song, "Beautiful, Loved & Blessed."

\*More About Mackenzie

Mackenzie grew up singing gospel and religious music at home and in church for most of his life in rural Virginia until he left to study singing and songwriting briefly at Berkeley School of Music. Enamored of the "Masters" -- James Brown, Marvin Gaye, Michael Jackson and Prince -- the artist moved to LA in 2012 with his then-girlfriend and now his wife – a singer who goes by the name, Apollo Jane.

Baptism by Fire and Ice: His NPG initiation was surreal: "It was probably negative 30 wind-chill the night we headlined that Wednesday gig before the big game. I've never experienced anything like it! And yet, there we were onstage in the snow -- and Terry and Jimmy were right out there with us on the sidelines with their camera phones and heavy coats! And there were lots of fans out there with us, too. That shows you NPG has the best fans, 'cuz they're still loyal to Prince's music and memory."

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