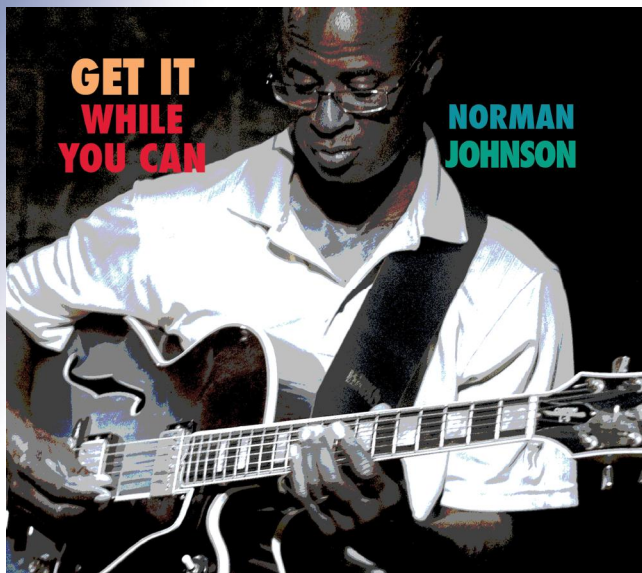




PACIFIC COAST JAZZ is proud to present

“Get It While You Can” by Norman Johnson



With over 20 recording as a sideman with the likes of Bill Mays, Harvie S., Phil Wilson and Steve Gadd, along with performing with Dave Brubeck and Jerry Bergonzi, guitarist Norman Johnson earned his chops among some of the very best. He learned quickly that music was a lot like love. No matter how much time you think you have left, you have to “**Get It While You Can.**”

Johnson’s original idea for the “**Get It While You Can**” (his sophomore release) was to have fun combining favorites with his own compositions, while featuring songs by musicians that he genuinely enjoyed. The result is a simmering sauce of conversations between musicians that grooves.

Johnson kicks off the CD with the title track, “**Get It While You Can,**” which urges the listener to enjoy life. “The horns add a sweet groove that makes you want to move your feet,” said Johnson. Creating music that connects the listener from ears to toes is something you also hear in “**Danza Dance.**” After listening to Puerto Rican music, he fell in love with a rhythm that became the heartbeat of the song. By using an altered Danza rhythm and the work of extraordinary flutist Ali Ryerson, the music comes alive.

Each song is given the room to tell its own story. “**Way Of The World**” is Johnson’s take on the Earth, Wind & Fire classic. “This is my all-time favorite song. I loved it when it first came out and I became an EWF fan ever since,” said Johnson. The lyrics tell of life’s positives and negatives. “What I take from it is one line, ‘plant your flowers, and you’ll grow a pearl’. I always felt those were words to live by,” said Johnson.

Having been a fan of Quincy Jone’s classic version of Benny Golson’s “Killer Joe,” Johnson wrote “**Killer Jane**” as a humorous take off on “Killer Joe” from the female perspective. It features driving improvisational exchanges between Johnson and talented trombonist Steve Davis (Chick Corea, Benny Golson, and Freddie Hubbard).

Perhaps the most romantic song of the album is “**Cloud 99.**” This song features the steel string acoustic guitar and imparts the feeling of floating above it all. It’s a light, mellow piece that Johnson hopes will bring a smile to the face of fans. “I figured if Cloud 9 means happiness, Cloud 99 is ten times as much,” said Johnson.

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Neal Sapper (510) 705-1660

neal@newworldnjazz.com

Matt Hughes (732) 835-5050

matt@newworldnjazz.com



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314-660-1755

A simpler side of love is revealed in "**Got To Get You Into My Life.**" "The Beatles have written some of the most iconic songs in my lifetime, and this one has always captured something positive in my mind," said Johnson. Although he rearranged the song, he tried to remain faithful to the original vibe.

"**Until You Come Back to Me**" is a special tribute to Aretha Franklin. "Of course, like most people, I am a fan of Aretha Franklin. Her version of Stevie Wonder's 'Until You Come Back To Me' has always been one of my favorites. I played a concert with Aretha's drummer, Bernard Purdie, and we talked about his time playing with Aretha. I decided to do my own version of this song and was thrilled to have my wife, Maryanne, play the string parts for me," said Johnson.

"**Saudade**" was written by Grayson Hugh ("Talk It Over", "Can't We Talk It Over In Bed," songs for "Thelma and Louise," and the end song for the "Fried Green Tomatoes."). Saudade has no direct translation in English, but closely relates to longing or missing. Grayson's song is a mysterious piece with no lyric other than the word saudade. "It's all about his voice, harmony, and the interplay with the guitar," said Johnson.

"**Calle Verde**" features a Latin tropical feel. This up-tempo song features Chris Herbert on flute and Ricky Alphonso (Joe Cocker) on trumpet. The danceable uncurrent of rhythm continues with "**Pack It Up.**" Written by Johnson's friend Don Wallace, the song is a "bouncy piece that has a Jamie Jamerson (bass player on most of the Motown recordings) vibe and introduces a great young pianist, Matt DeChamplain," said Johnson.

Sometimes love and music reveals many restless nights. The CD ends with "**Nagoya Nights.**" After years of being haunted by a melody, the song finally came together for Johnson after a sleepless night in Japan. This song features Jeff Fuller on bass (Paquito D'Rivera and Lou Donaldson).

Guitar aficionados will find the technical list of instruments used to be interesting. A Gibson L5 archtop with Thomastik Enfield strings was used on "Get It While You Can;" Martin Aura steel string acoustic (Labella silk and steel strings) on "Cloud 99" and "Calle Verde"; Ramirez nylon string (Labella strings); Heritage H535 guitar (D'Addario strings); Fender Telecaster; Fender Stratocaster (Fender Bullet strings), and a Fender Precision bass were all used in the making of album.

More about the artist:

In addition to his recording work with other musicians, Johnson has composed and recorded music for corporate clients. In 1988, he established Manor Recording, a studio that specializes in acoustic recording and the production of various other genres of music. A strong supporter of arts education, Johnson served as the Dean of the Hartford Conservatory of Music and Dance for over nine years, works as an instructor of recording technology at the award winning magnet school, The Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts and has worked a teacher at the Artist Collective in Hartford, CT, which is an inner city arts school, founded by Jackie McLean's wife, Dolly.

For interviews and reviews, please contact Cheryl Hughey Promotions at 314-660-1755 or email cheryl@cherylhugheypromotions.com.

www.normanjohnsonguitar.com



www.pacificcoastjazz.com
858-484-8609



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800.888.0486 · F 610.650.9102
203 Windsor Road, Pottstown, PA 19464
www.MVDb2b.com