

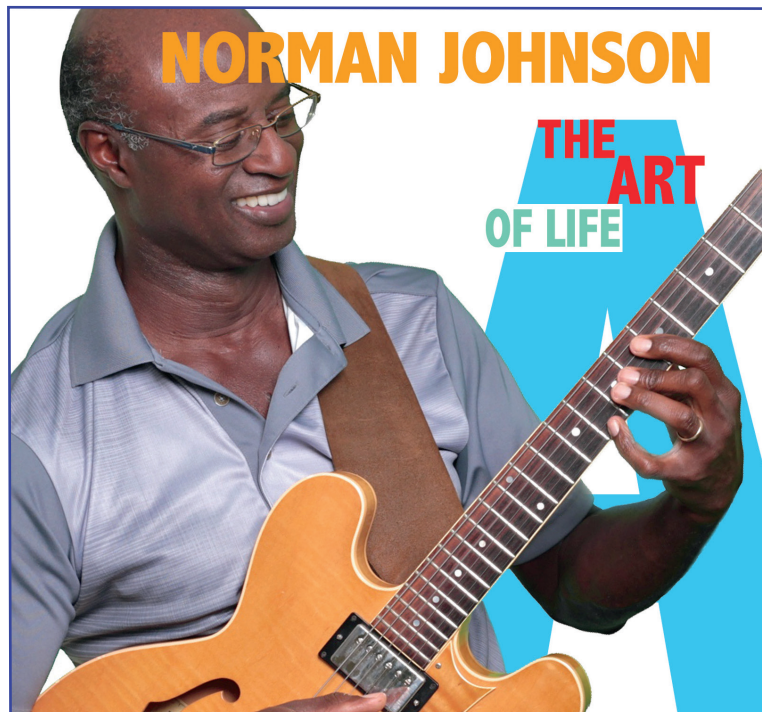
new release

file under: **JAZZ** RELEASE DATE: JANUARY 18, 2019



NORMAN JOHNSON "THE ART OF LIFE"

Guitarist Norman Johnson releases *The Art Of Life*, a smooth jazz gem filled with strong melodies and his attractive guitar.



Artist: NORMAN JOHNSON
Title: THE ART OF LIFE (PACIFIC COAST JAZZ) PJ83664
Artist Website: www.normanjohnsonguitar.com
Release Date: JANUARY 18, 2019
UPC Code: 829166836649
Produced by: NORMAN JOHNSON
Recorded and Mastered: MANOR RECORDING

Track Listings w/composer credit and track time

1. **SLIDE** (Johnson) 3:59
2. **SING ON** (Johnson) 3:56
3. **THE ART OF LIFE** (Johnson) 3:56
4. **OLD SKOOL** (Johnson) 3:56
5. **IT'S YOU** (Nakhimovsky/Bisantz) 5:15
6. **SUMMER DANCE** (Johnson) 4:00

NORMAN JOHNSON – guitar - bass - piano - vocal
CHRIS HERBERT, JOHN MASTROIANNI – Sax
BILL HOLLAMAN – horns **JEFF HOLMES** – trumpet
STEVE DAVIS – trombone **ED FAST** - drums,
MATT DWONSYK - bass **GRAYSON HUGH, JUNE BISANTZ,**
ATLA DECHAMPLAIN, POLLER MESSER, LISA MARIEN - vocal,
MITCH CHAKOUR -piano and organ, **ALEX NAKHIMOVSKY** - piano

While inspired by George Benson and Earl Klugh, guitarist Norman Johnson shows on his third CD as a leader that he is one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary jazz. Each of the selections on *The Art Of Life* contains exciting and inventive guitar playing from Johnson who is often accompanied by a horn section. The program begins with "Slide" which features Johnson stretching out over an extended and infectious groove that builds in intensity as it progresses. "Sing On" is a catchy r&b song featuring the vocalizing of Grayson Hugh. The guitarist is heard at his best on "The Art Of Life," taking a quietly expressive solo on the medium-tempo ballad. "Old Skool" is reminiscent of vintage George Benson from the 1960s and has fine interplay between Johnson and the background horn section. "It's You" includes a warm vocal by June Bisantz and a very complementary guitar solo that uplifts the music. The closer, the Latin-tinged "Summer Dance," is highlighted by an enjoyable tradeoff by Johnson and a tenor-saxophonist that certainly stretches the boundaries of the smooth jazz genre. In fact, Norman Johnson's accessible yet inventive music fits into its own enjoyable category.

Norman Johnson was born in Kingston, Jamaica. He began seriously playing guitar as a freshman in high school after hearing George Benson's *The Other Side Of Abbey Road* album. While he considered himself a comparatively late starter as a musician, he caught on fast, studying at the Hartford Conservatory of Music and the Hartt School of Music and soon getting quite busy as a guitarist.

Johnson developed his distinctive style not only from being inspired by George Benson and Earl Klugh but by loving the sound of the classical guitar after seeing Segovia perform in the 1970s, and also developing a fondness for the nylon guitar. He has appeared on over 30 recordings as a sideman including with pianist Bill Mays, bassist Harvie Swartz and drummer Steve Gadd, and has also performed with Dave Brubeck and Jerry Bergonzi. Johnson had strong success with his debut release *If Time Stood Still* and its follow-up *Get It While You Can*.

On *The Art Of Life*, the performances of Norman Johnson cross over between smooth jazz, contemporary jazz and just plain beautiful melodic music. It is his strongest release to date and will appeal to a large audience.

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