

Norman Brown: Smooth Jazz Great to Take the Stage at King Center

By Glenn Swift

Funk jazz, soul jazz, crossover jazz, smooth jazz... all have been used to describe the music of Norman Brown. The funny thing is - they're all right... some of the time.

"I grew up in a music-loving household where we listened to everything from Kool and the Gang to Peter Frampton," said jazz guitarist and vocalist, Norman Brown.

It shows.

Every time this remarkably gifted musician puts out a new piece of music, you sometimes wonder if it's the same Norman Brown. Then again, we should be getting used to this act by now.

After being discovered in a LA nightclub by legendary drummer Norman Connors, Brown burst onto the music scene in 1992 with the release of *Just Between Us* on Motown's MoJazz label. The critically-acclaimed debut album featured collaborative cuts with chorus group Boyz II Men and the legendary Stevie Wonder. Brown's love of R&B and the legendary Motown sound was fully evident... as was his extraordinary guitar playing.

Brown's next release was *After the Storm* in 1994. Once again, the work was well received, only this time Brown was being compared to jazz master, George Benson. Two years later, Brown released another highly-praised work, *Better Days Ahead*, which served to broaden his appeal even further.

With the collapse of Motown Records, the burgeoning star transferred to the Warner

Brothers label and released *Celebration* in 2000. Produced by the renowned hit-maker Paul Brown, the CD was yet another huge success, and virtually every smooth jazz station in the country was soon playing a steady diet of Brown's spirited repertoire.

But the biggest was yet to come.

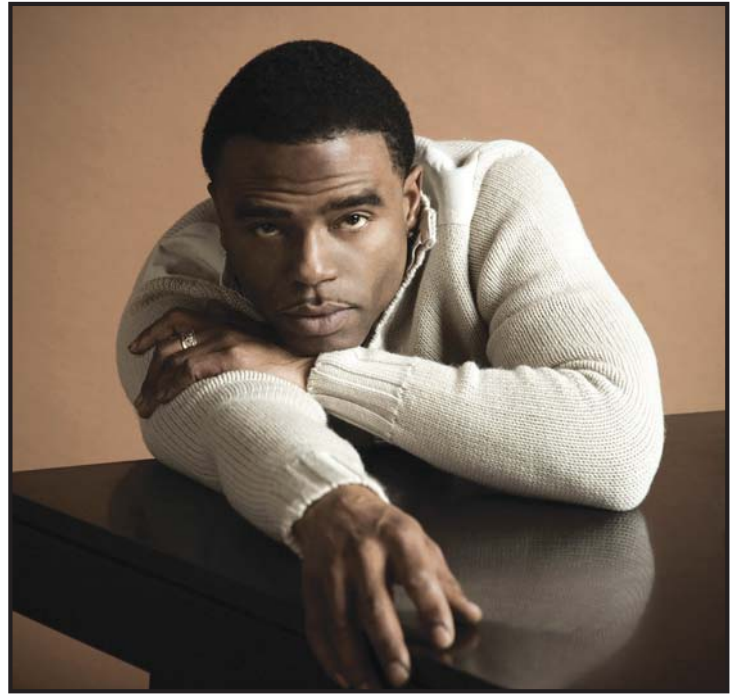
In 2002, Brown released *Just Chillin'*, which earned him a Grammy for Best Pop Instrumental. Shortly thereafter, Brown teamed up with two other giants in the jazz world: Rick Braun and Kirk Whalum. Known as BWB, the trio released *Groovin'* - considered by many jazz enthusiasts as one of the finest fusion works in recent years.

Brown himself alluded to the group as something very special.

"It was the label's (Warner Brothers) idea to put us together, and they must have known something," Brown laughed. "From the first session, it was magical."

The extraordinary project was followed two years later by another incredible production *West Coast Coolin'*, in which Brown broke new ground by testing out his skills as a vocalist. The move was a good one. His rich, soulful voice was immediately embraced by the urban radio market, and Brown soon found himself at the top of the jazz charts.

In 2005, Brown released *The Best of Norman Brown*, one of the best-selling smooth jazz albums for both 2005 and 2006. But the jazz phenom's success was far from peaking.



Earlier this year, Brown switched labels to Peak Records and released what may be another Grammy award winner, *Stay With Me*. The new work is an extraordinary collection of 10 urban-influenced contemporary jazz tunes - each one displaying Brown's enormous talents as a guitarist and all-around musician. As always, Brown's music allows the other members of his group to display their unique abilities.

"Whatever instrument the song calls for, whether it's a sax, trumpet, piano... then that's what I want. I enjoy being able to showcase the talents of the other members of my group, and what better medium to do that than jazz. After all, jazz is the most versatile genre... it allows a musician the freedom to incorporate a number of widely differing styles and techniques."

Brown then touched upon something else

that may account for the medium's continually growing popularity.

"Jazz is family music. It transcends all ages, races and walks of life."

You can hear Norman Brown and his *Summer Storm* in person at the Maxwell King Center for the Performing Arts at 3865 N Wickham Road in Melbourne on Saturday, July 21 at 8pm. For tickets or more information, call (321) 242-2219 or visit www.kingcenter.com.

Special Note: Two other giants of smooth jazz, Mindi Abair and Spiro Gyra will also be making an appearance at the King Center...and on the SAME NIGHT! Yes, that's right. On Saturday, August 18 at 8pm you can hear both of these incredible acts in one show!

Get Your Tickets Now!!!

NORMAN BROWN'S *Summer Storm*

Norman Brown



July 21, 8 pm

Marion Meadows



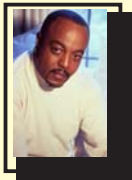
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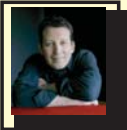
jazz

at its best!

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Coming August 18 at 8 pm



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