

## Bio of Paul Brown

With the crisp, jazzy sound of his beloved Gibson L-5 guitar once again front and center, two-time Grammy Award winner Paul Brown keeps his grooving momentum going on his Peak Records debut *White Sand*. Quickly closing in on a staggering 50 #1 charting airplay hits as the smooth jazz genre's top producer over the past 15 years, Brown had the unique experience in 2006 of scoring #1 Radio & Records chart hits as both an artist and producer. "Winelight," the second single from his 2005 solo album *The City*, was recently ranked by Mediabase as the genre's most spun track of the year. Brown also had chart topping hits with Norman Brown ("Up And At 'Em"), Euge Groove ("Get 'Em Goin'") and Peter White ("What Does It Take (To Win Your Love).")

Driven by seven powerful originals and three unique reworkings of recognizable classics, *White Sand* is a celebration of the great soul sounds from different eras (60's "soul jazz" through 70's old school and modern hip-hop) that have both influenced and informed the producer/guitarist's legacy as a multi-talented creative force in contemporary jazz. According to Brown, one of the great advantages to having composed, arranged, engineered and produced for nearly every top smooth jazz artist since the early 1990s is being able to invite them into the studio to create the kind of spontaneous and energetic ensemble action that happens on *White Sand*. "The thing I loved about my first album *Up Front* was that it was as much about the overall vibe as it was about my guitar," he says. "I thought it would be cool to make another real vibe record this time, featuring myself as the lead voice but also taking an 'and friends' approach so that I could include a lot of the artists I had worked with who have inspired me over the years.

"I liked the idea of creating more of a production oriented record and taking more of the classic Quincy Jones approach," Brown adds. "The key to his success was being so seamless that you don't pick up what he's doing because you're more focused on the performances. Because of my past experiences with everyone, I could just take for granted that a certain high level of performance would be built in, and I could feature my guitar lines over that. It's kind of like making a lot of mini-records within the context of a single project. It was also exciting for me to have the album mastered by the legendary Lee Hershberg, who was one of my top musical mentors."

The luminaries on *White Sand* include Al Jarreau, who works his vocal magic on the easygoing, sultry—and optimistically witty, thanks to the legendary singer's sharp lyrical insights—ballad "Makes Me Feel So Good"; Boney James, who works his famed tenor magic on the perfectly titled "Ol' Skoolin'," a track that captures the shimmering funk vibe and dual magic that James and Brown created on the saxman's numerous gold selling albums; Bobby Caldwell, who finds a rich emotional energy in the wonderful but seldom heard lyrics to the classic, Cannonball Adderly-popularized "Mercy Mercy Mercy," refashioned here with a unique neo-soul arrangement; and David Benoit, who engages in a sizzling piano-guitar call and response moment with Brown at the core of the brassy, Les McCann and Eddie Harris influenced "R 'n' B Bump"; the track also features the whimsical horn section of *Impromptu 2* (Johnny Brit and Bobby English).

Sax man Euge Groove plays it tender on the sensual, hip-hop meets laid back old school flavored “More Or Les Paul,” the one cut on which Brown plays a Gold Top Les Paul guitar rather than his L-5; and Rick Braun, whose lush trumpet on “Mr. Cool” helps create what Brown tabs as “the album’s quintessentially smooth jazz moment.” While Brown is always assured an elevated creative experience jamming with the veteran household name artists, he’s constantly on the lookout for fresh new performers to work with. None have been a bigger part of Brown’s life this past year than upstart female sax player Jessy J, who is a member of his live band and is featured here on the sexy, late night, acoustic guitar driven opening title track “White Sand”; she also plays lead tenor on the instrumental bonus version of “Mercy Mercy Mercy”. Another relative newcomer featured on White Sand is Lina, a singer Brown enthusiastically compares to Billie Holliday; Lina’s torchy, soulful vocals bring a fresh emotional urgency to Brown’s samba-lite take on “I Say A Little Prayer.” Keyboardist and drum programmer [DC](#), co-producer of Brown’s The City, also co-produced three tracks on White Sand: the ambient, hip-hop driven slow jam “The Rhythm Method”; “More or Les Paul,” and “Mr. Cool.”

Brown is also currently working on developing the musical career of Hawaii based painter and guitarist Andrea Razzauti, whose compelling visual work “White Sand” inspired Brown to write the title track; after Brown let Razzauti hear the song, Razzauti was in turn inspired to create the very tropical album cover artwork. There is also a larger, separate print of the cover included in the packaging. “The connection between visual art and music is a cool concept to me, and I was only too happy to blend the two on this project,” Brown says.

It’s hard to imagine what smooth jazz would sound like without the powerful, R&B driven sound that has been Brown’s trademark as a producer since breaking through with Boney James’ Trust in 1992. James, whose hit recordings routinely sell over 500,000 apiece, once said, “I wouldn’t be where I am today if it wasn’t for Paul Brown.” In an interesting bit of trivia that ties in beautifully with the sessions on White Sand, Brown met James years ago when James was on tour with Bobby Caldwell and Brown was doing mixes for the singer’s live shows.

In addition to Grammy wins as producer and engineer for Norman Brown’s Just Chillin’ and helming hits for instrumental and vocal stars like Jeffery Osborne, Kirk Whalum, Larry Carlton and Patti Austin, Brown—known by some as “The Babyface of Smooth Jazz” for his soulful leanings and Midas touch—achieved a lifelong dream when he produced tracks for George Benson, his chief jazz guitar influence. “It’s exciting that I was able to produce George Benson because it was his album Breezin’ that helped me realize that the guitar could be the focus of an entire album and could hold a person’s interest for 40 minutes or an hour. That was a big revelation back then.”

With Brown’s production career in overdrive for years and his solo career scaling new heights by the minute, it would seem that he’s working on music literally “24/7” (the name of his hit single from Up Front that Radio & Records named the #2 airplay cut of

2004). But he cherishes his down time, indulging in two major hobbies that he's almost equally passionate about and allow him some creative rejuvenating time away from the studio. Trumpet great Jerry Hey introduced him to the fine art of wine collecting, and Brown has quickly become a great French wine connoisseur, favoring French Burgundy. He's also a major poker enthusiast who plays with well-known friends on a weekly basis and participates regularly in major tournaments throughout his hometown of Los Angeles.

"It's one of those diversions that takes my mind off music entirely," he says. "I was a math major and it is a total mind game that uses those analytical abilities. There's a tremendous fad going around Los Angeles with a lot of Hollywood people engaged in celebrity poker tournaments.

Born and raised in LA to parents who were professional singers for legends like Mel Torme (as part of The Meltones), Frank Sinatra, Elvis and Barbara Streisand, Brown started playing drums at age five and picked up his first guitar two years later. A self-proclaimed Deadhead who was also fond of The Beatles and later, Peter Gabriel, Brown jokes that he was always starting, playing in or breaking up a band. He launched his production career unofficially with his first gig as an assistant engineer when he was 15, finding an immediate affinity for an environment that quickly became home when he returned to LA after studying music and math at the University of Oregon.

"The reason I got into this business was to play the guitar and perform live," says Brown. "As much success as I've had as a producer, I've always seen that as part of my evolution as a professional to get to this point. Making music is simple to me. When something moves me emotionally, then I know it's good. That's why I've worked this past year in between bigger projects with so many unsigned acts. Everything I do, from the albums I produce for established artists to those I do for up and coming performers to my own projects, is creatively stimulating to me. I love doing them all."