

Smooth Jazz Hits - The Ultimate Collection (2015)

Written by bluesever

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01. Batucada (The Beat) [feat. Rick Braun] - Boney James 02. Got To Get You Into My Life [feat. Mindi Abair] - Dave Koz 03. Haute Sauce - Mindi Abair 04. The Lady In My Life - George Benson 05. Shake Your Body (Down To The Ground) - BWB and Kirk Whalum and Norman Brown and Rick Braun 06. Champagne Life - Gerald Albright & Norman Brown 07. Sonnymoon - Fourplay 08. Heart And Soul - Kenny G 09. Feelin' It - David Benoit 10. Givin' It Up - Richard Elliot 11. Hacienda - Jeff Lorber Fusion 12. Bring Me Joy [feat. George Duke] - Al Jarreau 13. Head Over Heels - Peter White 14. Hot Fun In The Summertime [feat. Mindi Abair] - Dave Koz 15. Powerhouse - Boney James 16. Man In The Mirror - BWB and Kirk Whalum and Norman Brown and Rick Braun 17. City - Jeff Lorber Fusion

Smooth jazz may have many derivatives but in general it gets its name due to its down tempo. This along with a layering lead that includes a melody-playing instrument, which typically consists of saxophones or guitars, over a backdrop such as programmed rhythms and various pads and/or samples. While this simply sounds like elevator music, smooth jazz also contains formats that have vocals and tracks from the work of artists like Simply Red or Luther Vandross, who are normally considered “soul” or “R&B”.

What differentiates smooth jazz from soul is that the music must be mellow and soft. Professionals state that there should be no disturbances on the surface, no undercurrents, nothing challenging or obtrusive in the sound. Smooth jazz stemmed out of a decision to use music to create an instrumental based format that would take the place of music of the 70s and early 80s, which had provided background music for office and business environments.

Smooth jazz was brought to the forefront of the music industry by soprano saxophone players like Grover Washington, Jr., Wayne Shorter and Nathan Davis. Wes Montgomery and Grant Green influenced the industry as well with a mellow flavor of electric guitar. Jazz-fusion

ensembles such as Spyro Gyra and Bob James' Fourplay were important in the development of the genre as well.

Most can recognize groups identified as smooth jazz within a few measures as there is a melodic tempo to its sound. Popular smooth jazz artists of today include saxophonists Kenny G, David Sanborn and Art Porter, Jr.; guitarists George Benson, Marc Antoine, and Peter White; and pianists Joe Sample, David Benoit, and Bradley Joseph. As for groups, these include; Fourplay, Pieces of a Dream, Acoustic Alchemy, and The Rippingtons. On the female performers side there is Keiko Matsui, Joyce Cooling, Mindi Abair, Candy Dulfer, Sade, Brenda Russell, Pamela Williams, Regina Belle, and Anita Baker.

Smooth jazz remained successful until 2007 when it began to show signs of waning. Music industry insiders felt smooth jazz was dying out and began pulling out of the genre. However, those in the industry say that smooth jazz concerts and record sales continue to show strong fan support.

Despite the commercial decline in the popularity of smooth jazz, many prominent stations around the United States are still playing it. Why has the popularity of smooth jazz faded? Many say it is due to a handful of factors that include a lack of compelling new music, over-reliance on instrumental cover versions of pop songs similar to the old fashioned 'elevator music' style, lack of revenue and the genre not being viable during the current economic crisis. Many purists of the format also feel that the smooth jazz interpretation has strayed too far from its roots in contemporary jazz and new age music by over-relying on soft urban vocals

Will smooth jazz have a place in the future? It could all depend on how creative the artists become and basically, where people's tastes lie as time goes by. --- 977music.com

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