

New York Bass Works proudly welcomes NY bass legend Barry “Sunjohn” Johnson to the family

I first heard Barry Johnson, unwittingly, in the Italian born group, Nova. 1977's *Wings of Love* would be the first of two releases that Barry would soar on, before moving on to play with Return To Forever alumni and drum phenom, Lenny White in the group, Twennynine. They would record three albums of music steeped in the funk filled R&B climate that was Jamaica New York. A scene that was a melting pot of influences, situations and networks, creating a warrior caste of players that are still influencing music as we've come to love and understand it today.

In 1981, I would hear Barry once again on musical wunderkind, Bernard Wright's, first album titled, simply 'Nard. Bernard is a legend in the NY scene and another one of the Jamaica cats that I just kept hearing about when I was a much younger man.

As a member of Twennynine, Barry was a band mate of keyboard genius, Donald Blackman. Don "Captain Keyboards" Blackman was also featured on the Lenny White album released in 1978, "Streamline". Truly an accomplished player and singer in his own right, who's deft touch and versatility really caught my ear. Donald Blackman would release his first album "Blackman" in 1982. There again, smack dab in my ear, was Barry Johnson, as a crack member of this funk ensemble on steroids! Members were a young Dennis Chambers, fresh from George Clinton's P Funk all-stars. Guitarist Eddie Martinez who help meld rock and rap on Run DMC's influential "King of Rock". Also giving Robert Palmer the cutting edge on Heavy Nova's "Simply Irresistible" to name a few.

"Blackman" is a desert island album that I highly recommend to any player interested in hearing what funk and R&B can sound like, when the reigns are loosened and the whole thing is on the verge of coming off the rails. What Barry Johnson does in a rhythm section on tracks like "Heart's Desire", "Deaf Hookup Connection", "Holding You Loving You", and others are in my opinion the holy grail of pocket grooving.

Barry's list of recordings is an impressive one indeed. You can hear him playing or singing with Najee, David Sanborn, Kenny G, Cameo, Ryuichi Sakamoto, to name just a few. Barry has also toured with Nile Rodgers & Chic just to put a finer point on things!

We're saying all this to say that we are very excited to have Barry onboard with an RS5 in his very capable hands. As a fellow bassist I count Barry Johnson as one of a handful of players that I've always revered for his musical prowess and taste. Not to mention, longevity in an ever difficult musical climate. Keep your eye out for an interview of this legendary player coming soon!