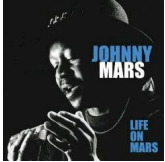


Johnny Mars - Life On Mars (1984)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 16 September 2013 15:54 - Last Updated Monday, 15 March 2021 16:08

Johnny Mars - Life On Mars (1984)



1. *Born Under A Bad Sign* 3:30 2. *Don't Start Me Talking* 3:00 3. *Back Door Man* 4:14
4. *Steal Away* 5:00 5. *Standing In Line* 3:32 6. *Hot Lips Boogie* 3:00 7. *I Can't Take A
Jealous Woman* 3:32 8. *Get On Up* 3:01 9. *Desert Island* 5:44 10. *Keep On Swinging*
5:46 Johnny Mars – vocals, harmonica Ray Fenwick – guitar Nick Magnus – keyboards
Terry Pack - bass Bimbo Acock – saxophone Steve Sidwell - trumpet Peter J. Shaw – drums
Colin Fox – backing vocals

Songwriter, harmonica player, and singer Johnny Mars was raised in a sharecropping family. He was given his first harmonica at age nine. His family lived in various places around the South, including North Carolina, Georgia and Florida. When Mars' mother died in 1958, the older family members settled in Florida, while Johnny and his younger brother went to live in New Paltz, N.Y. After he graduated from high school, he played club shows around New York and recorded with his band Burning Bush for Mercury Records.

In the mid-'60s, Mars moved to San Francisco, where he met Dan Kennedy and formed the Johnny Mars Band, playing clubs and festivals in northern California, as well as shows for rock promoter/impresario/producer Bill Graham. However, Mars could not seem to expand his audience much in San Francisco. After hearing about the greener pastures across the pond from his friend Rick Estrin of Little Charlie & the Nightcats, he toured England in 1972. There, he recorded a couple of albums, eventually moving to West London in 1978. Working with producer Ray Fenwick, who also worked with Spencer Davis and Ian Gillan, Mars met with success on the much praised album, *Life On Mars*.

In 1991, Mars became a featured soloist with the British new wave pop group Bananarama. The group used him on their singles "Preacher Man," "Megalomaniac," and "Long Train Running," and he appeared in the group's video of "Preacher Man." Throughout the '90s, Mars retained

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his strong European fan base, and he enjoys particularly strong followings in Ireland, Scotland, and Scandinavia. Critics there have called him "the Jimi Hendrix of the harmonica." Over the years, Mars has shared bills with Hendrix (before he was well-known) and Magic Sam. In 1992, after a long absence from the Bay Area blues scene, owing to his new foothold in England and the rest of Europe, Mars was invited to play at the San Francisco Blues Festival. Mars' 1994 U.S. release for MM&K Recordings, Stateside with Johnny Mars, features brilliant, original, topical compositions and superb, unique harmonica playing, unfettered by the standard Chicago blues conventions. --- Richard Skelly, allmusic.com

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