

Let It Wave (mp3 Album)



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2 MP3 Songs in this album (9:49) ! Related styles: EASY LISTENING: Crooners/Vocals, EASY LISTENING: Adult contemporary Details: For many years I have sought ways to bring my musical creations into the light. With no in depth training in music and having no significant contacts or connections in the music world, I never fully developed the skills and the confidence necessary to take the first big steps toward my first real love, the world of music and performing. Despite being a stand-out in grade school, church, high school and college presentations, having performed classical, religious, secular, popular, gospel, spiritual and oratorical works, the confidence to pursue music as a major or as an occupation still was not there. I met Barbara my freshman year at Kenyon College. She was my friend, college sweetheart, college fianc, and, in our senior year, my college wifenot to imply that a wife or other wives were in succession after college. We have been married now for over thirty-six years. Chapel choir, Kokosingers, an excellent male vocal group at Kenyon College, and countless serenades led Barbara to nudge me towards a degree in music instead of a degree in another discipline. Though I had played clarinet and cello in high school, I still rationalized that I had barely learned the instruments and had not developed my craft sufficiently as had most music majors at college entry level. I thought it would be a disaster, especially if I couldnt pull it off. If I were not successful, I knew there was the danger of losing my scholarship a definite no-no. After graduation, I pursued several fields: a job in the steel industryThe Inland Steel Company in sales/customer service, and later production; long term substitute teaching eighth grade honors English in the Gary Indiana public school system; self-employment in the insurance and investment business, registered with the NASD, series 6, 63, and 26 securities licenses; paraprofessional and substitute and associate teaching in the Dekalb County School System in Dekalb County Georgia; Supervisor of internal patient transportation, Ambassador Services at Georgia Baptist

Medical Center, Atlanta Georgia; several network marketing businesses; two real estate management companies; a few financial disasters; four children off to college; eagerly awaiting grandparenthood; a wife of more than thirty-six years, who evidently, by Gods design has endured it all, faithful and ever-encouraging, all briefly sum totals John Johnson. Who but God?!. I have been jotting down musical ideas and passages since grade school. Finally, in 2006, more than fifty years after the music bug bit, I was prompted to take a positive step toward romancing my only true love-- outside of God, family and country, my music. In 2006 I started pulling together all the scrap notes that I could recover from the many places I had stored my dreams; boxes in the garage, old file cabinets, papers in old clothes drawers, old wallets, index cards in old metal flip-top boxes, file folders in old dusty briefcases. I even found some of my notes in my youngest childs handwriting. Sometimes, when driving my children back and forth to Girl scouts, Brownies, Cub scouts, Boy scouts, tee ball, soft ball, baseball, swimming, martial arts, piano lessons, trumpet lessons, violin lessons, wrestling, football, cross country, ballet lessons and recitals, drama performances, choral and orchestral recitals, and only God knows how many church functions, I would talk or sing my ideas into a portable tape recorder or have one of the kids write as I dictated. Even when my wife and I traveled, my wife would jot down ideas and passages for plays and books and songs we imagined as we drove along ideas all shelved; dreams all deferred. After a while good excuses got in the way work, education, raising children and paying bills. But I was still hungry; and theres something about hunger. It doesnt go away until you get your fill, the meal you truly want. As a child of eight or nine years old, I would turn on my older brothers HiFi, and ever so carefully, play his LP albums--Jazz, religious, classical, secular, rock n roll, you name it. My brother Philip had collected quite a variety of music. I would turn up the volume, mount one speaker on my left shoulder and the other speaker on my right shoulder and just drift and listen for hours to Ella, Cannon Ball, Louis Armstrong, Nancy Wilson, Count, Dizzie, Johnny Mathis, Nat, Miles, Herb Aderly, Mighty Clouds of Joy, Dixie Hummingbirds, Five Blind Boys, Muddy Waters, The Duke, Handel, Mendelson, Beethoven, Brahms, Sinatra, Joe Williams, Billy Ekstine, and on and on. There was enough music there to occupy the ear, mind and soul forever. I used to think, after I listened to each artist that surely those seven notes that my grade school music teacher, Mr. Charles Ware, taught us had all been used up. And yet more and more new music kept coming. For those stolen moments, I was in heaven. Pretty soon I could imitate a lot of the artists; at least I thought I could. I had Johnny Mathis down to a fine science. When I was in grade school I used to dance for

money; that was okay. But the vocal arts proved more rewarding. Around the age of fifteen, I was serenading for kisses. The more I sang, the more I dreamed of being famous. I wanted people to know me as well as they knew Johnny Mathis, Nat King Cole, Andy Williams, Robert Goulet, Joe Williams. Touching my brothers HiFi was taboo. Everybody knew that. But my mom never stopped me from stealing those moments alone. The dream grew even bigger when The South Dade Democratic Society nominated me to be a page to The United States House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. under the patronage of Congressman Dante B. Fascel of Miami, Florida. I got to see and explore everything I had studied about. I, along with a fellow page from Fresno California, sat and engaged in personal conversation with Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall in the Supreme Court. I had seen Paris and was rapidly losing interest in the farm. Aside from pledging the flag, singing The National Anthem, God Bless America and America The Beautiful, I hadn't really felt such a sense of patriotism as I was starting to feel. After talking with Justice Marshall, and, at his urging, I headed home to complete my senior year of high school and to map out a path to travel. Fortunately or unfortunately, I think it's only now, in my older years, that I realize the impact of that one-on-one with Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Football didn't mean as much to me as before. My coach, I believe, saw football as my means to a scholarship to college. I'm sure he had my best interest in mind. I had achieved the first string guard position. I played right and left guard, occasionally tackle, and when a body was needed for practice sake, I would slot in as nose guard. Frequent sightings of a scholar and a stand out athlete were few. I was featured in the newspapers, clad in my church suite holding my clarinet in play position. Though the publicity was nice, I thought it was making me a target for opposing teams. Having been a page helped to clear my thinking: I was 57. In college the players were 65 and 250-300lbs. Even though the newspaper listed me at 185lbs., I was actually 170lbs. My philosophy at the time was-he who turns and runs away lives to fight another day-- I simply didn't see college football as my ticket. When I told Coachie I was quitting the team he seemed baffled and upset. As I understood it, he had already engaged in conversation about me with some schools. I returned to the band and played my clarinet. I wouldn't take the field at half-time though. I didn't want to suffer boos from any of the fans and especially from any of the players. It almost cost me a grade in band. I had already endured a lot of name-calling. Sissy punk bitch was probably the mildest. When I walked down the halls, some of the football players, along with other hired imps, who had never made the newspapers, would follow me and make toot-toot sounds and

motion as if they were playing the clarinet. I always felt Coachie was behind it I had seen him do it too. But I couldn't prove it. After a while it even became hilarious to me. I went to college after high school, so military service was deferred. I married while in college, so family and survival became the priority; children, their up-bringing and their education. And here we are, years later, and I still have not done anything with music. But I don't feel too very badly. After all, another good reason arose to account for my lack of achievement in the music world. August 23, 2000, a year and some days before the tragedy of 9 /11 2001. I had just gotten off the operating table-five and a half hours of cutting and pasting stage three colon cancer. The cancer had already eaten through the transverse colon. Between self-pity, fear and frustration, I finally had the ultimate excuse not even to try. Eventually a different kind of fear set in; the fear of not having achieved my personal desires. Oh, my wife and I have been complemented a thousand times on our children, their accomplishments, and on holding together a marriage for over thirty-six years. But somehow I was still hungry. I would sometimes look at the music I had written, which I thought for the most part, was good; and then I'd concede that I didn't have the tools or the connections enough to make anything happen. I thought that maybe my children would do something with my music one day and that would rest well with me if it benefited them and their mother. Still, my lingering thoughts were I haven't done it. It was starting to seem sinful as if I hadn't shown my appreciation to God for his gifts. September 11, 2001 created an entirely new set of circumstances for Americans and for the world in general. One Sunday morning, I believe it was September 22, 2001, my wife and I and the children were all dressed for church. As we were about to walk out of the door to get into the car and start our trip to church, I asked my wife if she would mind taking the kids without me. I told her that a song was pressing heavily on me and I had to write it. She agreed, When they returned home after service, I had written a song that I entitled Let It Wave, a tribute to the victims of 9/11 and an overall tribute to the American flag. I placed the lyrics on paper and created the orchestration in my mind. I was quite pleased, overjoyed in fact. I sang it into a portable tape recorder and was pleased. Then I became depressed. I didn't know theory and composition. How could I share this? The dream that was awakening was slowly becoming comatose once again. All kinds of doubt surfaced: John, you don't know the right people; you don't have the formal training; you are way too old, just help the children do their thing; start practicing saying Welcome to Wal-mart. My mother died in 2004. Long before her death she shared with me, on several occasions, her dream of joining the Navy and seeing the world. When she spoke of it, I could almost see the world in her

eyes. She thought that ladies in Navy uniforms were simply the coolest. But mom got married, birthed and raised six children and seemed very happy when one of us made the least achievement. She had a way of making us feel as if the world had been created for us. I would like to think she did see some of the world through us and her grandchildren, but I also feel that shes watching, waiting for her children, and their children, and their childrens children to show her all the rest. Im not certain if my mother talked with any of my siblings about her dreams. I do know that my mother generally corrected me in everything, either in word or with a strap. But she never stopped me from listening to my brothers HiFi.. Hopefully, Let It Wave will help my mother realize her dream. Let It Wave has made me relive the feelings and thoughts I had when I was standing on the steps of the Capitol with Congressman Fascel (posing for a picture for my hometown newspaper); when I sat in the Supreme Court discoursing with Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Hopefully Let It Wave will rekindle the American spirit and cause Americans, the world over, to glow with patriotic pride. Let It Wave, hopefully, will serve as a pronouncement of a cohesive spirit and as an announcement that America will rise to the call of defense of its citizens rights and liberties. Let It Wave hopefully, will foster a greater respect for our men and women in uniform who risk their lives daily to insure the safety of all Americans. Let It Wave hopefully, will be the boost that these men and women need to raise morale and lift their spirits as they carry on every day in spite of their situations. My son, William Johnson, designed the CD cover of Let It Wave. Pictorially he gives a translation of our flag and its purpose in relation to our country: The flag has grown out of America. It has its roots deeply embedded in American soil and therefore, in the experiences, good and bad, of the American People. Its strength and might are depicted in the steel flag pole that grows out of a living tree branching out and blossoming into a vibrant and waving red, white and blue leaf, flag as it were, waving high above our country. Each wave of the flag praises and thanks the men and women in uniform who proudly give their service and their lives to safeguard America; Each wave praises and thanks the civil servants who daily show their commitment to our citizenry; Each wave praises and thanks our every day work-a-day citizens who work hard just to better themselves and their families, whose efforts result in a better America. I must thank a number of people who helped to bring Let It Wave to life. I offer a special note of gratitude for Dr. Alonzo A. Alexander III, who departed this life July 12, 2008. I also thank Michael Wheeler, who introduced me to Cindy Lou Harrington, who introduced me to David Leonard. David Leonard, Thank you so very much. Thanks also to my wife, Barbara, who still believes that music, aside

from the welfare of my family, is the only thing that will make me totally happy. I sincerely hope that Let It Wave will not only soothe, heal and reassure, but that it will ignite a charge in every American citizen to be the absolute best they each can be in all fields of endeavor; citizens willing to accept the call to serve and protect. Many have made great sacrifices for this country. I have simply written a song. But I hope it is a song that will inspire all creeds and colors to reflect, forgive and applaud all that is right in this land and work together to change all that is not. I hope it is a song that, at its hearing, leads American people all over the world to pat their feet and take a mental march through our history, present, and into our future. I hope my song will move others loudly to proclaim, Let It Wave! It stands for freedom, it stands for justice -- Let It Wave! Sincerely, John Johnson

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