GEORGE BENSON

Appreciated as both a musician and performer by millions, George Benson has always had the dual role of expert improviser and vibrant entertainer. He has consistently placed his keenly discerning art in the service of a rousing good time. Rounding out his singular approach with sly, seductive rhythm and blues, he's earned himself an impeccable reputation as one of music's most enterprising and engaging stars. Few might have predicted that striking level of stardom some forty years ago, when Benson was a fledgling guitarist working the corner pubs of his native Pittsburgh. That's where his yen to please a crowd was born. "I was an entertainer first," he says proudly. "As a kid I sang, danced, and played the ukulele in a nightclub. As my career has progressed, I've had the pleasure of playing with the baddest jazz cats on the planet. But that doesn't change my desire to entertain folks. That's really who I am."