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INSIDE

BOOTSY

SURFACE

JOE SAMPLE

THE METERS

STEVIE WONDER

PLUS MUCH MORE

BOOTSY COLLINS (Photo by Michael G. Williams)

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Question Time with Bootsy

IF THERE'S any truth to the saying that "the funk lives on", then punk-funk maestro bassman Bootsy Collins bears testament to the statement. A member of the James Brown's band aged only fifteen, in the early '70's William "Bootsy" Collins was (and still is) an integral member of the whole Mothership/Parliament-

Funkadelic thang in the '70's, not to mention having his own Rubber Band hit the platinum mark regularly from the mid to late '70's.

In more recent years, despite the lack of success of his last album for CBS in '88, Bootsy's helped (sometimes inadvertently) the likes of LA & Babyface, Deee-Lite and Monie Love along the bumpy road to success, and has now secured a new deal with

Island Records and is kickin' it live and direct on the road again with his Rubber Band and The JB's. What goes around . . .

Here's how the ever jocular Bootsy saw the whole thing when I caught up with him during his fleeting visit to the UK; where he played London's Brixton Academy.

●Working with new artists again, like Deee-lite

"I wanted to get back involved

with musicians, just to get that creative flow going again. Once they put that 'star' label on you, like I had a few years back, it's hard to be accepted as just one of the guys. I grew up around musicians and I feed off other musicians. It takes some funk to give up some funk.

"When I walked into the room and saw Deee-Lite, I knew there was somethin' different about these people. It kind of reminded me of when people came in to see us for the first time. I hadn't even heard their music, but I knew when I met them that I wanted to work with them. They didn't have an attitude or anything . . . they were just cool people. They reminded me of the love and peace vibe of the Sixties".

●Being part of the Cincinnati funk scene of the '80's and creating "Babyface"

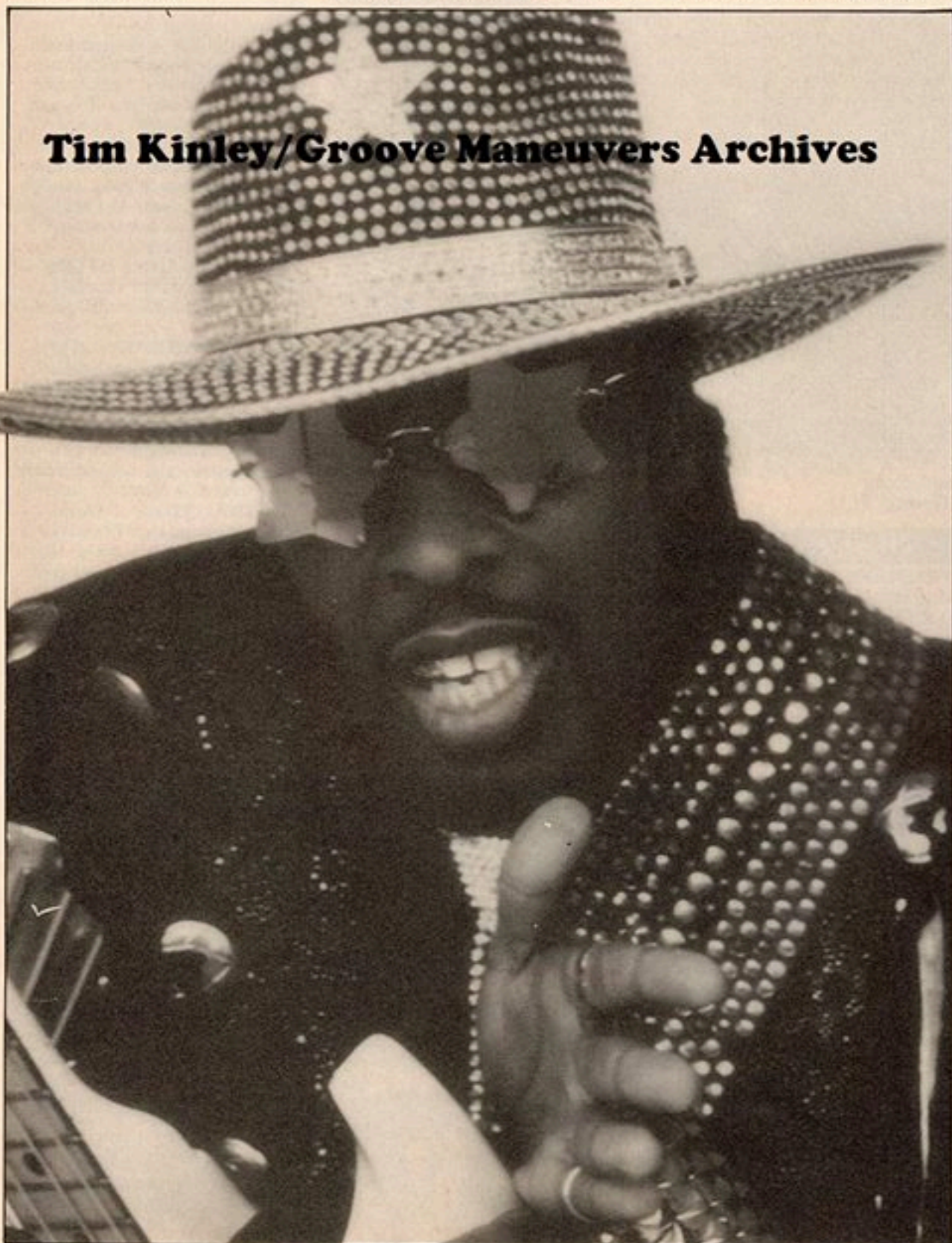
"I worked with Babyface (then known simply as Kenny Edmonds) and his band The Deele before they got to be as big as they are now. This was when they still lived in Cincinnati, Ohio. We were working on a demo project for Arista. As soon as I saw Kenny, I said, "man, you got a babyface!" I don't think he liked it, but I've always been the person to give folks nick-names.

"Every time we were in the studio and I'd call him Babyface, his group would start laughing at him — and that was something he didn't like at all. Once LA & 'Face left Cincinnati, though, and the girls hit on his name, Babyface, he thought, "Yeah, I can live up to that". Now, not only has he kept the name Babyface but he's added it to his company name!

"There were a few groups around Cincinnati, though at the end of the '70's and beginning of the '80's, that you could tell were gonna make it big, like Midnight Star, us and The Deele and Roger Troutman. Those groups were always working and rehearsing while the others were clowning around. Despite all the critics, the flops, the failures those groups kept on going, whereas other bands would quit if they didn't make it first or second time.

"People are always saying that your sound, your look, your style doesn't fit but, if you believe in what you're doing, you've gotta stick with it. Look at Deee-Lite, the same applies to them. If they didn't do their own thing they wouldn't have made it.

Tim Kinley/Groove Maneuvers Archives





**Tim Kinley/Groove Manueve
Archives**

Photo by Michael G. Williams

●**The mass use of Parliament-Funkadelic samples in today's rap**

"We pretty much made the word "funk" legal to say. Rap has pretty much kept the funk alive, by sampling our old stuff and coming up with their own beats. Because of that and more, I'd say rap has pretty much got the cutting edge on what's coming out. In rap you can be creative without having a ceiling over it, and that, to me, was what the funk was about.

"Rap is always gonna have that funk element because funk is from the street and you don't need a lot of money to become funky!"

●**Coping with the new technology**

"When computers first came out, I was kind of scared because I said, 'okay, I play bass in the studio, drums, a little rhythm guitar — what am I supposed to do with this COMPUTER?'" When I started hanging out with other musicians, though, and saw how they worked with the new equipment I lost my fear really quickly. I guess it was like when the acoustic guitar was in and then the electric guitar came in. When they say the sky's the limit, don't believe it — you can go further!"

●**Getting the deal with Island**

"I'd dealt with Chris Blackwell (Island's boss) when Bootsy first appeared. I knew Chris liked to deal with things that are kind of different. His taste is more on the cutting edge. He also had his input on this album . . . along with the funk, he wanted me to add some house beats and different dance styles."

●**The new album**

"We haven't even recorded it all yet, because we've been on the road and things are going really well. But when we cut it, Deee-Lite will be contributing a few tunes. That was the agreement when I worked with them. Most of the stuff on my album will be played live — about 75%. We're going to record it like we used to with the band. It seems to be what the people want."

●**Future plans**

"Well I'm getting ready to work in the studio with George (Clinton) in Amsterdam on some house stuff and then in January all the P-Funkers, including Bernie Worrell, will be out on the road with us on the Deee-Lite tour. We'll be Deee-Lite's band and we'll also be doin' our own P. Funk family thang". (JL)