

CLINTON

IT'S NOT that George Clinton is uniquely talented or particularly innovative that makes him such a joy to interview — although one would hardly deny him these assets. It's quite simply that the man is so damned *HONEST!* And, believe you me, young followers of the funk, honesty in this business is not (I repeat *not*) the most readily available characteristic to be found.

Clinton accepts this premise totally — but, more than this, he practises precisely what he preaches. Having experienced his fair share of music biz hype and superficial "camaraderie" as practised by an ever-increasing percentage of music industry figures and "music" observers, Clinton has now reached a stage whereby he now flatly *refuses* to compromise.

This is not to say that Clinton has withdrawn into a rigid and inflexible world of self-righteousness. His philosophy can be summed up in the phrase "*be true to oneself*" and as George shrewdly points out: "I can give *anyone* a snow job . . . the only person I cannot con is *myself!*"

AS YOU will have gathered, George Clinton had renewed his longtime friendship with B&S whilst on "promo chores" in London and our meeting at Capitol Records' Manchester Square HQ was, as ever, fruitful and fun. Clinton may be one of black music's most sincere and erudite spokesmen, but his sense of the ridiculous is steadfastly maintained: "Can you show me *anyone* who has survived this madhouse without a sense of humour?"

George was wearing his "faintly amused" smile when I walked into his dimly-lit "receiving room" (a *swiftly converted rabbit hutch as used by the majority of EMI Records' executives!*)

"Hi, it's good to see you again" beamed George. "Come into my parlour and let us untangle the world's problems!"

"Hello George" I smiled, "things haven't been *that* bad, surely?"

With eyes raised to the heavens, he swiftly dispelled any lingering doubts that I might have harboured — things *had* been that bad . . . a succession of eager-beaver hacks anxious to secure THE George Clinton interview for their respective

papers, and a non-stop round of PA's had taken their toll.

For all that, George (*forever the pro*) had no intention of dropping out until the very last. "Yes, it's *always* tough — but I could always get out if I wanted to, couldn't I?"

Nostalgia is fine — if you've got time! A quick (*but enjoyable*) few minutes on past meetings and mutual friends and back to business.

1982 had *not* been one of the vintage Clinton years. Instead, the majority of the time had been taken up with petty squables and legal hassles — not the most apt of environments for creative thinking?

"Shit, *no*" grimaced George. "No matter *who* the hell you are, once you get tied up, and I do mean *tied up* in contractual problems with a record company — and in my case it was Warner Brothers and PolyGram — it can take a lifetime to sort out, so my philosophy was simple: cut the crap and let me get back to the funk."

"The end result was that I

George is back from the frozen zones, with an answer to all those who were waiting to bury the P-Funk Mother Ship. . .

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agreed to give up my interests in Zapp in exchange for the remainder of the Clinton catalogue material. There are one or two points still to be ironed out but I'm relieved that 98% of the problems have been overcome."

Mention of Zapp and the brothers Troutman brings a resigned look to the face of G. Clinton Esq. Despite the apparent amiable parting of the

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funk, it is clear that George regards the split as both premature and mutually ill-advised.

"I knew the split was gonna happen before anyone... I had a premonition that it would happen. If I'm honest, I would have to admit that I feel kinda let down by Roger. He knew the way I had it figured — to do his 'time' behind Bootsy and then to eventually succeed Bootsy when it was time — and not before.

"However, it transpired that Roger was in too much of a hurry

to get there. There were other contributory factors — like money — but this would have come anyway. Roger and I are still friends but now the emphasis is squarely on his



shoulders; mentally and creatively the onus is on him and him alone. I wish him luck."

IN THE meantime, George appears to have overcome his sorrows with the best possible remedy known to entertainers — a *HIT!*

"Anyone who tells you that his records don't mean shit, is lying," growled G.C. "Success is the lifeblood of any entertainer... of anyone. I've had my time in the frozen zones and it's not exactly fun time either. Sure, the whole success thing is not everything but it damned well helps in putting the rest of the jigsaw together.

"I'm pleased with results achieved by 'Computer Games' and, YES, before you ask, it is of special significance to me. It is my statement of intent in 1983, it is my answer to all those smart-assed a-holes who were waiting in line to help bury the Mothership. Well, they'll have to wait a little longer!"

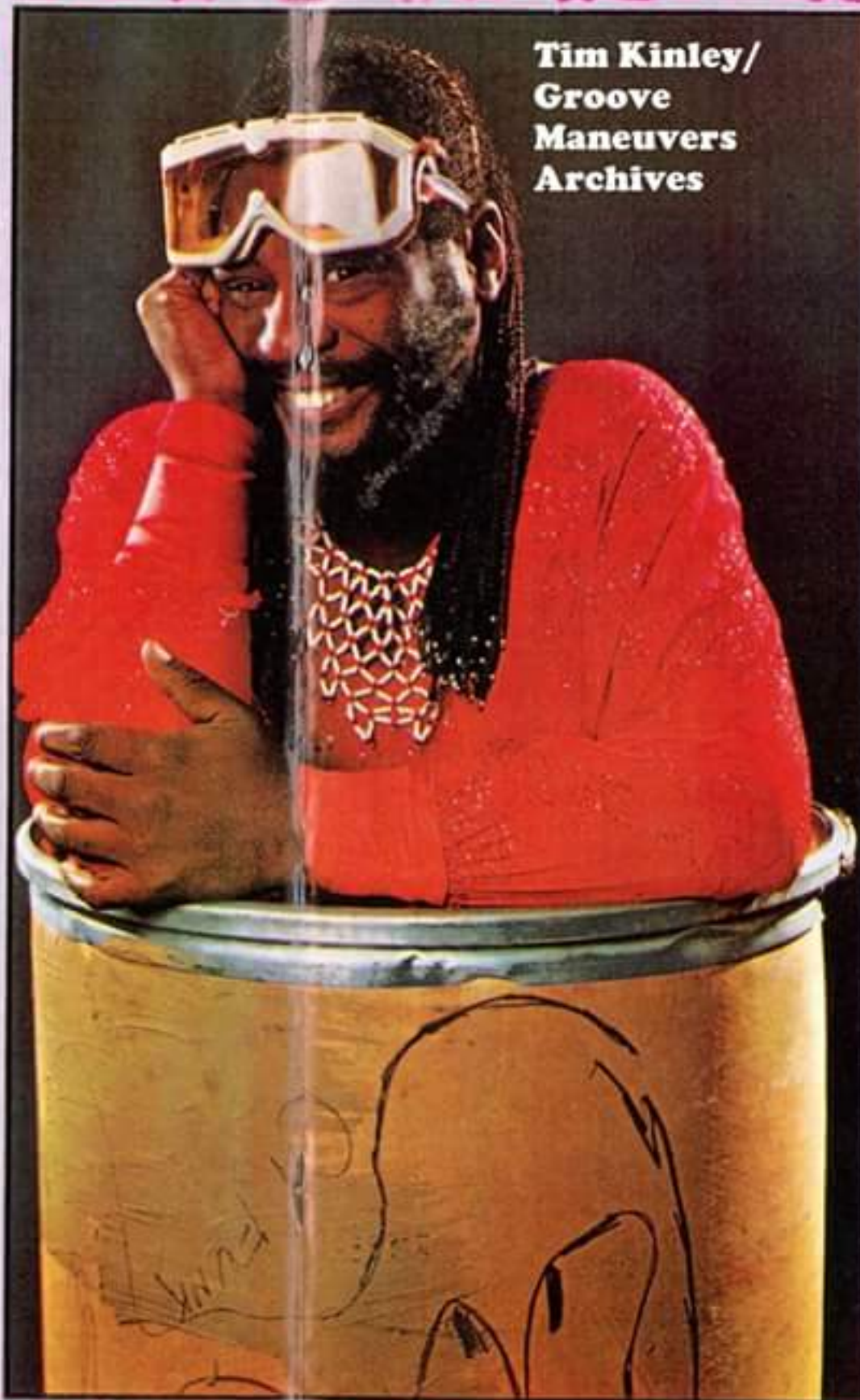
They may have to wait considerably longer; Clinton is not about to abdicate — just yet!

"Computer Games" is George's debut shot for Capitol Records; how were things shaping up? "Fine, just fine. I know I'm supposed to say all the right things about Capitol/EMI but the whole thing is working out well. I like the vibes here — they're reminiscent of the old time record company vibes that used to be. Y'know, I actually hear people playing records here!"

Clinton's deal with Capitol is pretty much standard although George is anxious to point out the extra benefits.

"I still have the same basic problem, in terms of acts, as I've always had. Too much product for too little outlet! I've got maybe some twenty albums waiting to go out and I'm looking for some release opportunity with the new deal."

TWENTY albums-worth of product — can you believe that? Well, considering George's renowned appetite for work, perhaps it isn't that surprising. Included in the current Clinton-roster are some interesting acts and one in particular which George has more than just a business interest.



Tim Kinley/ Groove Maneuvers Archives

The new "By Way Of The Drum" set: "It's the language of the Caribbean coupled with the language of the Mothership..."

Yes, the Clinton offspring are ready to make their mark on the world! My two sons are now beginning to show some distinct signs of the funk. They are involved with a group called Tray Lewd which is coming along well. Then there is E.T. Brain — a group which is fronted by Ronnie Ford and my brother, Jimmy Keaton.

"The E.T. thing? Yeah, it's quite a coincidence isn't it, but we came up with the concept of 'state of mind' music a year or so before Steven Spielberg dreamed up his little money-maker. In fact, Steven is quite a Mothership fan, I mean, the connection is pretty obvious, right?"

"Oh yeah, we do have another act waiting in the wings who's pretty weird. He's a character called the Rev. Uriah Boyington who comes from Detroit. We're cutting an album with him right now and all I can say is that he's a real strange person — a sort of funky preachin' Al Green!"

A FLEETING return to sanity revealed details of the new Funkadelic album — an intriguing project titled "By Way Of The Drum". "I've subtitled this album 'Funkaroo Meets Jonkaroo' 'cos that's exactly what it is.

"The concept for the album came about as a result of a visit to Nassau at the invitation of the BMA (Black Music Association) who wanted me to conduct a seminar. They have this annual festival thing in the Bahamas called Jonkaroo which is akin to the street carnivals of South and Central America. They have lots of street dancing with people wearing huge traditional masks and re-enacting ceremonial rites and dances — it's a great atmosphere.

"The music is a funky combination of calypso and soca but with its very own unique characteristic: the central instrument is a goat skin drum which creates this weird sounding rhythm. I love it!

"When we did the actual recording, I brought in drummers from Nassau and I believe the whole concept has come across well. It's the language of the Caribbean coupled with the language of the Mothership!"

George also made a brief comment on the upcoming Parliament album which will herald the return of Sir Nose: "Yeah, it's time he came back and started diggin' the funk again — he's been out of circulation for too long. The album will be called 'Up South' —

as opposed to 'Down South' — and will put a new angle on all that 'cotton-pickin'' stuff — y'know?"

AND HOW is the rest of the world with George. Any startling revelations?

"Well, we'll definitely be coming back to Britain early in 1983 with the Mothership. At the moment we're trying to get Bootsy over his fear of flying. He experienced an engine failure on Concorde, would you believe, and is now refusing to lift himself six inches off the ground!

"I don't know yet who will be won't be coming but we'll be here in one shape or another. We'll be stirring up the funk a little and barking around the universe with the 'Atomic Dog' (which, incidentally, is the new single release) and just foolin' around in general.

"And then maybe I'll get in a little fishin' time down in Miami and see what's bitin'. I need to go there once in a while to get my mind back in shape — the whole fishin' thing is very therapeutic and it helps me overcome the humps in my life."

I suspect that "humps" will be an occupational hazard for George until the day he decides to hang up his funk-boots and then just watch the action in Funkadelica (the final resting place for all the good guys). The heavens will never be the same place again!

Funk on George — it's been good to see ya!
(BK)



George: back to Britain soon!

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