



PAUL MORSE / Los Angeles Times

George Clinton, right, and his P-Funk All Stars rock the hall with a three-hour extravaganza that showcases his band's various incarnations.

Funkarelic? No Way!

■ Visionary bandleader George Clinton gives Universal Amphitheatre crowd an R&B history lesson.

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At 9:45, two hours into a rousing performance by George Clinton and his P-Funk All Stars on Thursday at the Universal Amphitheatre, the show went intergalactic when a spaceship descended from the rafters and landed onstage.

Billowing smoke and flashing lights, the Mothership is a cornerstone of P-Funk lore, accentuating the idea that the listeners are being transported to

POP BEAT

The beat goes on inside Calendar with four more events

- **CECE WINN**—She's celebrating Jesus and her first album without brother BeBe.
- **SLASH'S BLUES BALL**—The former GNR guitarist returns to the fundamentals.
- **RUSTED ROOT**—Ebulliently carrying on the Grateful Dead's global village vibe.
- **CHEMICAL BROTHERS**—A too-techno concert from the British dance music duo.

a surreal world not unlike one of Pedro Bell's elaborate album cover drawings, where nothing else matters but the music.

Saints and sinners, preachers and porno stars, hippies and hip-hoppers can all meet at this interplanetary connection, where funk is a factor that unites and smooths. It's a fact that hip-hop's multicultural audience has proven, and many of them have accentuated that point by sampling from Clinton's deep catalog.

The fans that packed the Universal—a ragtag bunch ranging from teens to fans in their 50s—came to relive moments of the '70s, when the uncut, bomb funk was P-Funk's specialty. They weathered the season's worst rainstorm to witness Clinton's three-

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CLINTON

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ring circus of his band's various incarnations, including Parliament, Funkadelic, the Brides of Funkenstein and the Horny Horns. The high-flying musicians—notably, guitarist Michael Hampton—included wailing war baby vocalist Gary Shider (wearing just his trademark diaper) and the general assembly of freaks, from the dancers to the rhythm guitarist in a wedding dress.

The audience got just what Dr. Funkenstein ordered—a show that rocked with no quarter for more than three hours.

Unlike their former labelmates KISS, P-Funk never gave up the outlandish theatrics or allegiance to the old songs that the hip-hop nation has kept alive via countless imitations. Hitting the stage without an opening act, the group went into 20-minute renditions of such

staples as “P Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up)” and “Flashlight.”

Once they jumped head-first into the hardcore jollies of “Cosmic Slop,” however, playtime was over. The smooth horns stepped back and the rhythm & bluesy Parliament element transformed like a Ridley Scott alien into Funkadelic, a stripped-down, monstrous-sounding heavy-metal funk band. Michael Hampton stood center stage, his explosive guitar playing evoking everything from backwoods jook-joint night life to apocalyptic strife.

Clinton, meanwhile, like a proud P.T. Barnum, stood off to the side and let musicians slash it out, like players elbowing for a rebound. He's right to be proud. Clinton, whose Parliament-Funkadelic will be inducted next May into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, may not be writing new chapters in the P-Funk annals, but he was once so far ahead of the rest of the pop world, they're all still catching up.