

PARLIAMENT: ON AND

FLY WITH PILOT STARCHILD, ALIAS GEORGE CLINTON ON HIS TRIP THROUGH THE SUPER HEAVY WORLD OF FUNK!!! CAN YOU DIG IT?

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PHOTOS BY BRUCE TALAMON

Tim Kinley/Groove Maneuvers Archives



George Clinton, the master of funk, is shown doing his thing with the usual wig & cosmic wearing apparel. This was a sold-out concert.

His face contorts as the tune "Starchild" deepens into a rhythmic sing-song chant. As the strains of the music gets louder, he gets more involved in the message he's trying to relate. After a while, he's practically shouting, "Let me ride, let me ride, let me ride." The crescendo of the music is phenomenal and after a while, the audience loses all consciousness except for the fact that the mothership is arriving.

With an explosion the mothership descends to the stage and suddenly the master of funk, George Clinton stands smiling in satisfaction at the top of the ladder at the opening of the \$200,000 mothership set up! He bows as the audience cheers wildly at the same time while wondering what took place and should they believe what they've seen.

Dr. Funkenstein stands in his glory wearing a long white robe looking like a Pharaoh or some type of idol. People tripped off the scene and it's something forever implanted in their mind. Even though a writer, I unconsciously fell underneath this spell because when I first got a glimpse of George Clinton off stage in his management office in Beverly Hills, I refused to believe that this ordinary looking man is the same personality as Starchild/Dr. Funkenstein/chocolate coated freak in habit form/leader of the P-Funk!!!

George Clinton strolled in tall (about six feet), wearing studded jeans, a vest and a head band around his rather short hair. His voice is quiet and resonant, although you can pick up a few of his voice inflections which are transmitted on some of the vocals on the album. Once you've talked to him, you can tell when he's speaking on the album because he has a very distinguishable voice.



Bootsy Collins is Georgia's main man! Ours too. When they aren't working, they like to go fishing together with Clinton's teenagers!

Clinton is also polite and well-mannered, rather than vulgar and freaky as some picture him. He laughs a lot, and you're not always sure why he's laughing, but he knows. George knows all.

While he eats an ordinary brunch of eggs and other breakfast foods he explains between mouthfuls that the entire parliafunkadelicment thang is all his idea, based on his belief that man descended from extra terrestrial beings. Whether the Parliament group (including Funkadelic and Bootsy's Rubberband) also feel the same way is not important. When it's time to feel the funk, they let it loose! They don't really care about the exact meaning of everything. Funk is fun and funk is pure!

DEVELOPED THE MOTHERSHIP IDEA

Dr. Funkenstein told Right On! that the entire mothership connection and spaceship were his own ideas. "I always wanted to do theater rock with funk and a concept. I always got off on that and I wanted to do it to popular music. That was a goal in my life although I knew it was hard."

George is aware of the fact that very few people really understand the concept developed in the *Mothership Connection* album and *The Clones of Dr. Funkenstein*. "But they will in time. Most of them get off on the music, space-

OFF STAGE THEY JUST



When George Clinton arrived in L.A., he discovered that inner-city schools needed \$20,000 worth of equipment. He bought it!!!



His motto for the year is, "Funk to Heaven in '77." Another one of his sayings is, "Funk is its own reward." What does that mean???

"FUNK" AROUND!

ship, and the costumes. It will be better explained when it's written down.

"Some people are actually religious about it. Whichever way they take it is cool with us. We try to provoke thought, entertainment, and mainly let the people get involved. It's easy to put people to sleep nowadays."

The funk master attributes the costumes, concept, etc. to the success of his exciting entertainment group. Although the original Parliament group have been around since the mid sixties, it's their turn now, and they've made it big, with the Mothership going platinum and Clones going gold.

Actually, they said the extra terrestrial begins concept had always been used in their music although at the time it wasn't as popular as it is today. George plans on unfolding the entire life-span of his career with Parliament through a movie which should be released at the end of the year.

"I wrote it and it's a whole trip, my life story from about age 12, our music, and how it all evolved." George said the movie will feature everybody, including Bootsy's Rubberband and may even include their entertainer friends.

EXPLAINS THE P-FUNKTIONARY!

About this time, George was asked to explain what I call the "funktionary" or dictionary of funk words in plain terms. "A clone is a biological duplication of a cell. You can also duplicate people to a point and interrelate characteristics: super tall, super short, super intelligent. We make them super funky."

A maggot, he explained, is a self aware person who knows he isn't funky up yet (like in the P-Funk song) because he has to unlearn everything and be transformed. After all that takes place, that maggot has to be cloned—reborn and reduplicated. And the process through which they become a clone is supergroovalisticprosifunkstication. "That would make them relinquish the funk whether they want to or not," Dr. Funkenstein explained.

When asked who thinks of all the names, Clinton's eyes twinkled mysteriously as he replied, "Dr. Funkenstein. It's religious with the group now."

Apparently all members of the paliafunkadelicment thang have been cloned so that they can accept funk for what it is. Leader of the pack Clinton doesn't feel that his organization of clones is confusing either; they're separate entities who simply come together on stage.

Parliament is the mainstay of the organization and is usually the title used when people are referring to the groups. Parliament's harmony is more arranged and vocals are emphasized on stage. It appeals much so to the Black audience.

Funkadelic, on the other hand, is more on a hard rock trip with its looseness and craziness. Bootsy's Rubberband is more for the younger people who aren't too sure what Parliament's about. His music is simpler and his rap is solid, almost like he's sitting in your home explaining things to you.

MORE FUNK'S GOING TO EMERGE!

Out of Bootsy's group has emerged some instrumentalists called the "Horny Horns." According to Clinton, these musicians are coming out with their own album soon. That's a goal George has, to let different groups within the organization come out with

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"FUNK"

CONTINUED

their own solo albums backed by everybody else. There's a wealth of material to pour out and so it will, little by little.

Suprisingly, Parliament et al. really has no imitators yet. There are only two groups who have infringed on the boundaries of funk city: the Brothers Johnson and the Bee Gees. George laughs as he recalled how the Brothers Johnson blew his mind by being too funky. "I've fined them for that. They're not allowed to be doing that yet. The Bee Gees did the same thing with the last recording."

The mastermind of Parliament went on to talk about Bootsy Collins whom he claims his own two children are crazy about. "Whenever I call them, my kids get on the phone and ask, 'where's Bootsy?'"

"We took Bootsy out on the road first before his first record was even out and he had the chance to play for a lot of people. He in turn pulled in a lot of the younger kids that we weren't even attracting because we had an older crowd. Between Bootsy and the mother-ship, we reached a whole new audience.

"We were glad for him and he's glad for us. He's in front of a wide range of people and so are we. It works different. Especially in this corporate world, groups don't know that it's better to get along than not to.

"Competition is cool on a light level, but it's not too cool really because you have forces working against you that aren't even about competition. So we're just going to stick together and pull each other along."

When you analyze his remarks he doesn't seem crazy or weird at all. He's very practical and has a lot of common sense. It's a different look at Dr. Funkenstein and you can breathe a sigh of relief because George Clinton is normal. It's just that his other 15 personalities get loose on stage to reveal the most frantic, bizarre, mysterious, funky performer in show business!

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