

## Tim Kinley/Groove Maneuvers Archives

"THE UFOS ARE in your mind," says Bernie Worrell, former musical child prodigy and current master keyboard player for Parliament/Funkadelic.

My sigh of relief that all Funkadelians are not as insane as group leader George Clinton is arrested by an affirmative whisper. "But they are there. The UFOS in your mind are there." Then Bernie throws me a question. "What do you think of Martians?"

"They're devoid of funk." Bernie laughs. We are communicating on the One.

"Cool, them thinking that we were fools. We showed them how cool us fools could be, and here we are celebrating . . . Check us out."  
—BERNIE'S WOO

"No, I didn't enter the depth of the Bermuda Triangle. George and Muddbone (Gary Cooper) actually went deep into it. I was on the outskirts in a rescue boat, to insure their return should anything happen."

Perhaps that is how Bernie "Da Vinci" Worrell has come to be decreed the "Insurance Man For The Funk" by "Maggot Overlord" Clinton himself, who wrote the song of the same name and appears on his debut album, *Bernie's Woo*.

"I am insuring everyone into the realm of the funk. Listen and observe. Take some insurance out on your funk. You are the beneficiary. I insure everything . . . all the Woo in the world. We've got success. I mean more than to insure the success of the funk. It's higher than that. I'm insuring the Woo. Otherwise, funk at your own risk." Clinton came up with the idea of extraterrestrials coming to earth in search of the funk. Funkadelic is his vehicle. Bernie Worrell is his insurance man.

I take this to mean that Bernie is insuring the reunion on the One, when we all will Woo together. "Produced and designed with your Woo in mind, . . . Bernie, Bernie, Bernie." The Funk Mob's own Renaissance Man is adding another score to the Parliament/Funkadelic allegorical opera.

He is preparing the way for the landing of the Mothership, and the emergence of the Psychodisobetaioquadoloop. The Master Funkers of the galaxy will funk with the 20,000 Mugs From Under the P, and the continents will unite as one. One Nation Under A Groove.



Bernie (center) poses with his funk family.

## BERNIE WORRELL: INSURANCE MAN FOR THE FUNK

By Jaimee Smithson

Bernie unties the scarf about his leg. It's the Funkadelic flag. He wraps it about his head. Comfortable now, he mumbles something about wearing it that way for tomorrow night's show in Greenville, North Carolina.

"I'm not overexerted about the release of my album," he says with a questionable grin. "I make my debut as a singer, however, and I am being featured as a separate act so that I get to do some of my songs on the tour," he adds with a gleam in his eye like that of a schoolboy with a new toy. "I figure I've held my patience, and now it's my turn to go out and expand further. But it's all on the One. I'm not ready yet to go off and do my own thing like Bootsy Collins."

"We would just like to mention, at the annual Funk Convention, we'll be calling for some Woo from your town. You need Woo, and I need Woo; why can't we Woo as one?"  
—BERNIE'S WOO

"There is a lot of Woo in the world. There are a lot of Woos to tempt you. Woo is pleasure. You need Woo." I decide that Woo

ought to sound. However, words can be misconceived. They don't mean the same to everyone. People use them to lie. Look at the government.

"Glad that everything turned out right. I'm glad to have you in my corner."

—BERNIE'S WOO

Bernie Worrell has been pushing out sounds for the funk on his synthesized keyboards for the past 10 years. He joined Parliament after their first hit, "Testify," back in 1968. "I was down in Bermuda touring with Maxine (Brown), and George called me and said, 'Come on up; we got a hit record, and we're playing at the Apollo.'" That was 10 years ago, and I've been with the Parliament/Funkadelic thing ever since. As a native of Plainfield, New Jersey, Bernie had known George coming up, in the days when Clinton ran a barber shop. Bernie is part of the creative concept. Among the songs he has helped write are "Aqua Boogie," "Chocolate City," "P-Funk," "Flashlight," "Undisco Kidd," and "Cosmic Slop." "The concept we put out is real. It's not contrived." I nod in agreement, adding, "it's deep." We laugh, and Bernie raises the pinky and index fingers to the funk.

Bernie seems mellow. The scarf is now about his waist. In talking with him and several of his fellow funkateers, I recognize a definite togetherness . . . a brotherhood. There is one prevailing philosophy, and one cause. Funk. There is a subtle difference in Bernie. From time to time he'll talk about his birds or his dogs. He has a 130 pound Newfoundland named Bouive. "It's like the dog who saved Napoleon's life. Peter Pan had one called Nana," he adds. "I love animals. I love nature."

The mention of his wife/manager, Cora, and their two children brings a twinkle to his eye. He has decided to stop home on his way to North Carolina. "You seem more settled than some of the other funkateers." I comment. His laugh gives him away. "That's because I'm older, and maybe a little wiser," he confides. "A lot of the other guys are young. They are just getting started with Parliament/Funkadelic. They've got a lot to learn. They've got to pledge. It's a way of life. It reaches out to the world to bring people to a way of thinking without putting out demands. We don't demand anything," he smiles. "cause you'll give it up anyway."

must fit somewhere between the Pleasure Principle and the Promentalbackwashpsychosis Enema Squad. "Woo looks good. It seduces your indulgence, but it may not be good for you. Like the obscene Woo pictured on the album, the ice cream—it looks good, it tastes good." Bernie sighs. "But it can make you fat. Woo in excess is bad. It's up to the person and how they use it."

I begin to conjure up all the Woos that could possibly seduce the indulgence of a Funkadelian. Cocaine, reefer, sex, money . . . and I raise my brows and give Bernie a sidelong glance. He grins. "My Woo is music, and I use it to make people happy. That is why I hold my keyboard in the crystal ball."

"I have perfect pitch and hearing so I take everything in when I play. As a result I can mix a lot of music into itself. I also have a rhythm thing going, so a lot of my solos are syncopated into the ensemble. I'd rather deal with music than with words. When I write music I can feel what a lyric line is saying. I know how it