

AT THE SHRINE

Fun 'n' Funk From Parliament

When Parliament took the stage Saturday night at the Shrine Auditorium, the audience—even if it hadn't been familiar with the group's music (which it was)—probably would have felt assured that it was in for a good time. The sight of the crazily attired musicians, particularly leader George Clinton in platinum wig and minitoga with assorted furs, conveyed the intention of the group: to have fun. Best of all, Parliament, unlike shallow bands like Kiss, was able to back up its outrageous look with some outrageously good music—the funky, varied music in which it excels.

It would be hard to find another band from any corner of contemporary pop music that plays such a diversity of styles so well. The group displays consummate skill at every turn as its music flows from R&B to jazz to rock.

The multiformity of the sound can be attributed to the fact that Parliament is a hybrid of two groups from the '60s—the singing Parliaments, who had the hit "I Wanna Testify" in 1966, and the instrumental band Funkadelic, with whom the Parliaments linked up in 1969.

Since this merger the band has recorded under the name Parliament for one record company and Funkadelic for another. The latter is supposed to be the group's outlet for its loonier, far-out material, but Funkadelic's eccentricities have been adapted more and more in Parliament's records and stage appearances.

The group seems to have struck a perfect balance in its current presentation. It never fails to entertain visually,

Los Angeles Times

VIEW

PART IV

★ MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 1976

but it never forsakes its main strength—the music—for the sake of mere effect.

Composer-producer-singer Clinton was rightly the center of attention at the Shrine, but the entire band offered superb support. Guitarists Gary Shider and Michael Hampton especially shined.

The almost continuous ecstasy of the performance was broken only during "P. Funk," which served as an excuse for three overlong solos (trombone, tenor sax and keyboard); the latter grew particularly irritating before the song gave way to a raucous version of the group's most recent hit, "Give Up the Funk."

Preceding Parliament was Bootsy's Rubber Band. Bootsy, former bass player for James Brown and bassist on Parliament's albums, headed a large band that played well but didn't generate much real heat until the last song—a long, scintillating rendition of its hit, "Stretching Out."

A relatively new soul group, Sun, opened the show with an ordinary, derivative act.

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