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## George Clinton and the Parliament Funkadelic

by Daniel Q. Marek  
April 09, 2003

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**George Clinton  
and the Parliament Funkadelic**  
Marquee Theatre  
730 N. Mill Avenue, Tempe, 480.829.0607  
Sunday, April 13, 8 p.m.  
\$38.75

George Clinton is a name synonymous with Funk. In the 1970s he took the genre farther than any musician imagined when he formed the Parliament/Funkadelic collective with the concept of the Mothership and its wild characters who remain pillars in the plan of Funk's greatest architect.

One of his greatest achievements is the admiration of his peers. He has single-handedly worked with 100s of musicians from OutKast to Michael Bolton (no lie). His work has been a toolbox for hip-hop and rap samples across the globe proving once again that we are all "One Nation Under A Groove."

Recently making appearances on Prince's new boxed-set, being awarded the 'Songwriting Pioneer Award' by the Rhythm and Blues Foundation and touring across the country with the Mothership, we got a few seconds from the architect himself on his endless projects and the foundations of his legacy.

**College Times: You've worked with such a wide variety of bands, from Ice Cube to the Red Hot Chili Peppers, do you have a favorite and what is the best thing you get out of projects with younger artists?**

George Clinton: Just learning what's up or whatever is new - seeing where everything is going. I get experience with them, endurance is what I have to offer them, but what they offer me is whatever the new shit is. I try to make myself available so I don't have to copy - I can just learn it first hand by hangin' out.

**With such a long and successful career, there had to be some rough times (i.e. the short period before you teamed up with Prince's Paisley Park). Was there ever a point that you thought it was too**

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**much and you would stop releasing new music?**

The weirdest part about that is just about the time when you stop being on the road, trying to figure out when it's time to slow down. I call it "planned obsolescence" – everything becomes obsolete after a certain time. Trying to read that – so you're not pushing too hard when it ain't your time, to even do nothin'. Trying to figure that out is still kind of hard. Especially around One Nation time cause we had been on the road from Chocolate City and by the time we got to One Nation we was really ready to come off the road. So we thought it would be time to get off the road earlier than we did. When One Nation happened and we had to go right back, we couldn't go back with all that big production, so we just made it real simple. We called it the Un Tour, we wore fatigues, no limos, no roadies, we had to go to little small places and set up our own equipment – it actually turned out kinda' fun.

But to me it's never a downer to not be doin' nothin'. It gets hard when you're doing something everyday and keep that fresh. When you come off, it's a time that you can rest and re-up for the next go-around. People who try to put an interpretation on it have all kinds of things to say like, 'the empire has fallen' or this or that. To me that was normal, it probably should have happened earlier than it did and it gave me a chance to reinvent myself and get some rest. To me it's always – the pursuit of happiness is the fun part. I guess what I'm saying is without no up's there wouldn't be no getting' down – without no humps there wouldn't be no gettin' over. I'm just really trouble blind. It aint that nothing can't bug me, it's just that I welcome that.

**Where did you come up with the concept of the Mothership?**

It was around the time when the Beatles was doin' Sgt. Pepper's and the Who was doing Tommy, we was at Motown tryin' to come up with a concept that would last. It was about making the members of the group characters as opposed to people, because characters live longer. Mothership – well you never seen no niggers in outer space, so to me Mothership was just a natural thing for us.

Especially after we did Chocolate City – puttin' blacks in places you don't normally see 'em. So it was kind of commercial. That's what we did and once we went there it was about 'keep the Funk alive, don't let them (the media) change the name on you.' That way you could stay in control. It's like rock-and-roll kept it's name, but R&B and all that kept changing when ever the media wanted to change it to Urban, Black or this and that. By keeping it Funk, even if it was out of date it would come back eventually. So when hip-hop came along, it was Funk again, it was just called hip-hop, but they still acknowledged the Funk. We said there would be clones and sampling ain't nothin' but cloning.



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