



George Clinton *Biography*

Think of **George Clinton** and you'll likely conjure an image of a crazy black man with rainbow dreads and garb befitting a galactic shaman literally barking at phat bottomed girls with a sub-atomic "WOOF!" This lovable nutcase is the legendary and internationally renowned grandfather of funk and the founder of the **Parliament-Funkadelic MOB**, taking the sonic innovations of **James Brown** and **Sly Stone** to both outer space AND Neptune while selling millions of records and concert tickets in the process. Quiet as its kept, however, George Clinton's initial approach to the ladies was crooning (when he wasn't cutting hair) as the leader of a standup vocal group he formed in '55 called **The Parliaments**, emulating the doo wop and love songs that were popular when he was in diapers (well...he STILL wears those on occasion).

What is there left for the North Cackalackee-born grandfather of funk to do after four decades of rockin' steady on the one? He can dip back to an era of sweet street corner soul that was his initial inspiration, take some folks back into time while blowing their minds **THIS TIME** with new spins on the standards - with a mothership full of special guests that completely have his back! We're talkin' **Carlos Santana**, **Sly Stone**, **El DeBarge**, **Kim Burrell**, the **RZA** (of **Wu Tang Clan**), **Shavon** (from **System of a Down**) and the **Red Hot Chili Peppers** - not to mention P-Funk stalwarts such as **Belita Woods** and **Gary Shider**! It's a concept he calls **George Clinton and The Gangsters Of Love**, produced by **Bobby Eli** and George Clinton - a blue light grind in da basement that marks the first in a series of special projects for Shanachie Entertainment.

"I'm actually just trying to stay ahead of the game," George says, posted up in the studio of co-producer **Mark Bass (Eminem, 50 Cent)**, "'cuz ALL of this music is coming back like I knew it would. Mark and I figured we'd mix some doo-wop, hip hop and techno doo wop and call it 're bop!' I've been thinking about it for a while now." Techno doo wop? "That's when you play a slow ballad groove against a triple time beat. I first did that on '*How Late Do You Have to Be Before You're Absent*.'" George was very purposeful in the diversity of his special guests. "I didn't want the record to be 'nostalgic,'" he states. "I wanted to merge the old school with the new school. Some of the kids didn't even know the original songs, so they did them their own way."

George calls his rag tag assemblage of talents the **Gangsters of Love**. "Today, everybody wants to get their gangsta on," he says. "Gangsters never want to admit that they're in love, so they play it off. I'm trying to give them something they can take back to their ladies but still keep it gangsta."

Thus the decades spanning boomerang ride of **George Clinton and Some Gangsters of Love** - songs dear to George's heart such as the late, great **Johnny Ace's** "*Pledging my Love*" from the `50s, Motown marvel **Marvin Gaye's** "*Ain't That Peculiar*" from the `60s and Maestro of Love **Barry White's** "*Never, Never Gonna Give You Up*" from the `70s. George Clinton sings Barry White? You've got be kidding, right? "The Barry White song was hard as hell," he admits! "I had to do some for real work to get the intonation along with the groove. I'm really proud of it. I don't know if I can do it on the stage yet (laughs), but we'll see. People forget that I sang lead on '*One Nation Under a Groove*' and '*Knee Deep*.' I knew I still had it!"

The jump off for George to seriously pursue this kind of music again came from a multi-artist one-off project he participated in a couple of years back called **A Soulful Tale of Two Cities: Detroit and Philadelphia**, on which he sang former **Delfonics** member **Major Harris'** ebony boudoir classic "*Love Won't Let Me Wait*" (produced by **Bobby Eli**). "I surprised myself when I pulled that off," he says. Now on **Gangsters of Love**, he cruises through **Ruby & The Romantics'** "*Our Day Will Come*," **Tommy Edwards'** "*It's All in The Game*" and **The Heartbeats'** "*A Thousand Miles Away*." Most of the rhythm tracks and George's vocals were laid in the Philadelphia studio of **Bobby Eli** (a Philly Soul veteran whose credits stretch from **Blue Magic** to **Atlantic Starr**).

And then there are many friends with whom George linked up in various stops along his travels. "I did '*Let the Good Times Roll*' with **RZA** and the **Chili Peppers** out in L.A. while I was working on some soundtrack stuff for **Quentin Tarantino**," he shares. "We cut it at the guitar player's house! Then I hooked up with **Sly** where he lives now back in Northern California. He sang on '*Ain't That Peculiar*,' but plays keyboards all over the project." Having his old friend **Sly** on the record - an icon he has collaborated with on several past occasions, most significantly the early `80s club jams "*Hydraulic Pump*" and "*Pumpin' it Up*" - was very special for George. "Being on my record is the first thing **Sly** has done on record since...forever! He had a lot of fun singing with **El DeBarge**. A couple of songs came out so good he wanted to keep them for himself! He did a version of '*Fever*' and added lyrics that relate to global warming. He has such perfect vocal pitch, when uses a vocoder it's better than anybody I've ever heard. **Sly** showed me a lot about vocals, made me work even harder."

George was also able to do tracks on home turf back in Detroit, including remakes of two of his songs: "*Heart Trouble*" (a `60s hit for **The Parliaments**) and "*Mathematics of Love*." "I originally wrote '*Mathematics*' for **Michael Jackson** around the time of his *Dangerous* album, but me and the **P-Funk All Stars** wound up recording that upbeat version on our CD **T.A.P.O.A.F.O.M (The Awesome Power of a Fully Operational Mothership)** in 1996. On **Gangsters of Love**, we slowed it down to a ballad for **Kim Burrell**, one of the greatest gospel singers in the world today."

George was in for another surprise when he sent Carlos Santana a tape intending for him to play on a remake of the '50s hit "Sway," but the guitar legend gravitated to another track altogether. "Carlos never even made it to 'Sway,'" George recalls. 'Gypsy Woman' (a 1961 smash for the vocal trio **The Impressions** led by a young **Curtis Mayfield**) also happened to be on that tape. Carlos had been dreaming of doing a version of that song which I did not know because Curtis is my all-time favorite songwriter, other than **Smokey Robinson**."

The music of **Gangsters of Love** is at the service of bringing love back to the people - people more in need of it now than ever before. "*Blue Lights in the Basement* is about making love to the point where you don't feel ashamed to take out a ukelele and serenade your lady," George schools - "to get down on one knee and ask her to marry you...or beg her for some pussy! When rappers are rappin' about 'my bitch' - I don't care how gangster they think they are - they're still trying to impress a girl. They're just using another language - and the girls of their generation don't have a problem with it! I made the mistake of trying to tell some young bloods on the street not to talk that way in front of the ladies. They looked at me like, 'Oh, no, here comes 'Captain Save-a-Hoe!'"

Thankfully, George Clinton is in possession of the street cred to reintroduce concepts of timeless romance to a near-clueless generation. His classics such as "*Flashlight*," "*Atomic Dog*," "*Get Off Your Ass and Jam*" and "*Aqua Boogie*" have been covered and sampled by so many rockers, rappers and turntable scratchers that they're like new tunes today. His plan is to include a couple of songs from **Gangsters of Love** in a showcase smack in the middle of his patented funk fests. "There will be a point in the middle of the show where we slow it down - like when Prince sat on a stool and played '*Little Red Corvette*' on acoustic guitar. I have to be real careful not to get too excited before that because that's when my voice gets real heavy. So I'll have to do like the 1978 tour when we had Junie Morrison rehearsing all the Parliament-Funkadelic songs so I can hit them with the soft stuff. I've also considered doing some lounges because it's funny as hell to think of P-Funk in that light. We have some very good jazz musicians in the band. I could actually do a show like that which would turn it into a club setting."

68 years-young, George Clinton has several other projects in the hopper, including a salute to Motown and a solo album by longtime P-Funk All-Star siren **Belita Woods**. The master is also mindful that most of the folks whose songs he's singing on *Radio Friendly* are no longer here, but he has no intention of joining them in Soul Heaven anytime soon. "I ain't going nowhere," he declares. "I feel like I'm starting over right now...for real!"

George Clinton & Some Gangsters of Love in stores October 7th on CD.

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