

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The Portland Observer

George Clinton's Greatest Funkin' Hits

A party record from top to bottom, *Greatest Funkin' Hits* compiles new versions of such R&B chart-toppers and dance floor staples as "Atomic Dog" from Clinton's 1982 solo debut *Computer Games* and "Flashlight" from Parliament's 1978 disc *Funkentelechy Vs. The Placebo Syndrome*. Q-Tip, Busta Rhymes and Ol' Dirty Bastard and original P-Funk members do the honors on the updated "Flashlight," while Ice Cube takes the mike for a version of Funkadelic's "Bop Gun (one Nation)" which has been commercially unavailable until now. The '96 remix of the funk anthem "Knee Deep (Deep As A Mutha Funka Remix)" included here features new vocals by digital Underground and Clinton himself. This #1 R&B smash is among the most sampled songs in the history of hip hop. *Greatest Funkin' Hits* also includes a remix of "Mothership Connection Starchild," the theme song of Clinton's current Mothership Tour, which began last July and continues through 1999!

Greatest Funkin' Hits testifies to George Clinton's production genius and innovative musical style and his



profound impact on every major contemporary artist from Prince to Snoop Doggy Dogg and beyond. By presenting these fresh reworkings of the most influential and respected songs in today's urban music scene, a whole

new generation of critics and fans can appreciate Clinton's enormous musical achievement in a fully modern context -- proving once and for all that the funk is truly its own reward.

CAPLETON

If reggae is a rhythm set to poor man's cry, Def Jam Record's microcker Capleton has charged that cry with red hot discourse and slamming beats. Since he received a record-breaking seven encores at 1990's Reggae Sunsplash festival, "The Prophet" searing word bullets and riveting live performance have established him as a pace-setter for reggae's new wave

roots generation. I-Testament, the label's follow-up to Capleton's 1995 chart-busting debut *Prophecy*, is the artist's most audacious venture so far. It's percussive rhythms, powerful melodies, and memory-tugging samples obliterate boundaries between R&B's soul, hip-hop's catharsis, and reggae's promise.



"We have to mix it in order to transcend to a wider audience, so everyone can hear the message," Capleton explains.

Even as a 12-year-old rebel from a huge extended family in the bucolic St. Mary's Parish of Jamaica, Clifton Bailey's precocious gift of gab earned him the nickname Capleton. "There was a lawyer in my town named Capleton, and when I met with my breddren, and me just jump and start to talk. One of them said, 'He can talk. He's just like lawyer Capleton. It's like from then, the name just stuck.'"

Young Capleton was also known for spinning dreams of deejay stardom and stealing from his bed to bask in the intoxication of night-long country dances. At eighteen, he left St. Mary's to

juggle odd jobs and the mic by night within Kingston's fiercely competitive sound system circuit. An audition with (his current manager/producer) Stuart Brown's Toronto, Canada-based African Star sound system led to Capleton's first break, going head to head in head Roache. The roots grapevine telegraphed the new of Capleton's success to home, attracting interest from heavy-weight Jamaican producer

Phillip "Fattis" Burrell of the Xterminator label. Fattis released his first hit single, 1989's "Good Chart," "Woman Mi Lotion," "Good Loving" and "Make Hay." Slinging slackness won him dance hall stardom and those multiple Sunsplash encores in '90. But in 1992, Capleton risked it all by breaking from the girls n' guns pack and dedicating himself instead to Rastafari and lyrics of upliftment.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9 at 7 p.m.
SATURDAY, JANUARY 10 at 5 p.m.

PORTLAND PREMIERE - VISITING ARTIST

Charles Mingus: Triumph of the Underdog (1997)

"I am Charles Mingus, half black man, half yellow man...I play jazz, I am a Negro," declares the volatile, uncompromising genius at the start of Don McGlynn's riveting look at the tortured musical life of the great composer and bass player. Featuring wide ranging interviews with musicians and critics who were close to Mingus, along with the insights of his wives Celia and Susan, an extraordinary portrait emerges of an artist of unparalleled talent and complex, paradoxical temperament. Over the course of nine years of digging, McGlynn has also surfaced treasured film and television clips from the 1960s and 1970s, radio broadcasts, interviews and vintage photographs, many unknown, to capture the joy and rage of his life, and the legacy of musical genius that he left behind. (78 mins.) Preceded by Mark Mills' Ornette Coleman: Harmolodiscs (1996), a pithy examination of jazz saxophonist Ornette Coleman's theory of music (and life), which is to "remove the caste system from sound." (10 mins.) Director Don McGlynn will introduce his film.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16 at 7 p.m.
SATURDAY, JANUARY 17 at 5 p.m.

PORTLAND PREMIERE

Can't You Hear the Wind Howl? The Life & Music of Robert Johnson (1997)

He never gave an interview or wrote any of his compositions down on paper, and only recorded 29 songs. He claimed he sold his soul to the devil at the crossroads for a diabolical tuning of his guitar, constantly roamed, and was murdered under still mysterious circumstances at the age of 27. Robert Johnson, the most influential artist in the history of blues music, is both a legend and an enigma. Peter Meyer's imaginatively crafted portrait reveals the power of music to shape our culture as it presents a vivid picture of Johnson and the circumstances that gave rise to his brilliant music. Danny Glover narrates portions of the story and bluesman Keb' Mo' portrays Johnson in new footage, which Meyer blends with rare photographs, stock footage, insightful interviews with Johnson contemporaries such as Johnny Shines and Robert Jr. Lockwood, and appearances by Eric Clapton, Robert Cray, John Hammond, Keith Richards among many others. (77 mins.) With *Third Ward Blues* (1997). An entertaining examination of the personal and professional relationships of Albert Collins, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Johnny Clyde Copeland and Joe "Guitar" Hughes. (29 mins.)

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SUNDAY JANUARY 18 at 7 p.m.
SUNDAY, JANUARY 25 at 4:30 p.m.

PORTLAND PREMIERE

Blue Note: A Story of Modern Jazz (Germany, 1996)

One of the great jazz labels, Blue Note Records was founded in 1939 by Alfred Lion and Francis Wolfe, jazz fans from Germany who came to New York to escape Nazism. By the 1950s, the fledgling company came into its own, documenting the rich currents of modern jazz with little regard to commercialism as well as amassing a legacy of recordings that provide the backbone for any serious jazz record collection. Recordings of Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Thelonius Monk, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Horace Silver, Art Blakey, Ornette Coleman, Herbie Hancock and hundreds more, past and present, are essential documents of America's greatest art form. Julian Benedikt's homage is full of great clips, photographs, interviews and history of the music and the two men with the rare dedication and vision to preserve it. (120 mins.) Sponsored by Bravo.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31 at 7 p.m.

PORTLAND PREMIERE

Dexter Gordon: More Than You Know (1997)

Don McGlynn's *Charles Mingus: Triumph of the Underdog*, *Art Pepper: Note From A Jazz Survivor* newest jazz biography celebrates the life and career of the great saxophonist Dexter Gordon. At seventeen Gordon joined the Lionel Hampton Orchestra, soon graduated to the Billy Eckstein Band and then went on to be one of the great performers by Gordon and some of those who inspired him—Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Dizzy Gillespie and Bud Powell—as well as clips from the screen tests for Gordon's role (for which he received an Academy nomination) in Bertrand Tavernier's *Round Midnight* and other rare treats, McGlynn's portrait most of all captures the beautiful expressiveness—in personality and music—of this musical treasure. (52 mins.) Preceded by *Jules At Eight* (1996), Mark Becker's portrait of Santa Rosa, California eight-year-old Julian Lage, who, except for the trials of the second grade, has spent his time taking jazz, blues and classical music lessons. You will be impressed. (24 mins.) *And The Spitball Story* (1997), Matthew Seig's recounting of how trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, playing in Cab Calloway's band in 1941 with fellow musicians Jonah Jones and Milt Hinton, got his start down the path to modern jazz history. (20 mins.)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 at 7 p.m.

PORTLAND PREMIERE

Gilberto Gil: Tempo Rei (Brazil, 1997)

"Gilberto Gil is one of the legends of Brazilian music. In this intimate, beautifully photographed documentary he returns to Ituaçu, his childhood home and to the rivers of Salvador, where he wrote the first song that gained him attention. Talking with his family and friends, musician and writers Jorge Amado, Caetano Veloso, Paulinho Carnaúba, Carlinhos Brown and Bahia and Africa Gil, a mulatto, reveals the ideological importance he placed on integrating questions of race in his art, and the central influence of the Candomblé tradition. The many performances captured in the film range from improvisations in village squares to concerts in huge auditoriums. Wherever he goes, people know his songs, and jubilantly sing along. He is their king."—Kathy Gerritz, Pacific Film Archive. (107 mins.)

Reel Music is sponsored by Willamette Week, Music Millennium, McMenamins Theaters and Pubs, and KINK 102 FM.

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