

)))))) Official TFS Mutiny-Funk Road CD Review ((((((

He is arguably the most respected and well known of the P.Funk Drum & Wiggle Corp through the mid-70's peak of the band's creative output. However, a rich musical history was paved that began long before he hooked up with George Clinton's US Funk Mob in the summer of '75. Jerome Bigfoot Brailey's legacy goes all the way back to Armstrong High, Virginia and his early musical inclinations to blow the trombone in marching band. Seems the 'bone was wearing on his chops and he got into beating those drums, and the pounding percussive rhythms he laid down were heard up way thru the stoned soul stratosphere into the middle of The Chocolate Milky Way.

Along the way, he totally funk'd up and helped blow the cobwebs offa black R&B and rock thru the late 60s/early 70s. Just check his licks on music by The Unificks, The Five Stairsteps and legendary rock/funk/pop hybrid masters The Chambers Brothers. This unheralded master of rhythm and groove had crossed paths with The Funk's out on the chitlin' circuit and got the call from Dr. Funkenstein about midway thru 1975. He hopped on The Mothership Connection and the rest is a lesson in funk history.

For the next three years into '78, Clinton regularly called on "J Romeo" night after night in sold out 20,000 seat arenas across the nation to 'gimmie dat FOOT!!' Celebrated artist Pedro Bell picked up on it and he has been known as the legendary Bigfoot air since. I fondly recall Jerome stepping proudly up to the mic at the Rock Hall of Fame induction ceremony. "I am the co-author of 'Tear the Roof Off The Sucker'". Casper and The Dr actually wanted him to tone down the rhythmic intensity and put it on the 1,2,3,4. But listen to a recording like Funkadelic: Live At the Sugar Shack '75 and you'll find this bad azz cat slipping in all kind of fills when he takes the solo over "Chocolate City". I think Clinton ought to have appreciated that pushing of the groove.

A book could be written about his contributions to The P, locking the groove on so many of the collective's best offerings. Although that is what he is most known for, the man has never stopping refining and redefining what the essence of the groove is about. His Mutiny from the Mamaship has been well documented on albums by Quasar and his own tightly syncopated street funk unit, Mutiny, which he has been cutting material on for over 30 years.

During the 90s, he became master proto-funk producer Bill Laswell's go-to drummer and appeared on too many projects to mention. His resume reads like a journey through a roll call of Rock Royalty. He has contributed to records and road shows by a diverse roster of artists including: Eddie Hazel's New Funkadelic, Dave Stewart, Keith Richards, Herbie Hancock, Buddy Miles, Buckethead and the list is ever funk'n' on.

But enough about the history I gotta get to what time is today, this incredible record. J Romeo has never been intent on resting on laurels, and that is nowhere more prevalent than on Funk Rd, his latest explosive offering to come out on Mutiny. Here, he incorporates a smorgasboard of master players, layers and collaborators to tear the roof off of radio's formatic, formulated, robotic play lists. Cut with a stellar cast of musicians all up and down the east coast from NYC to Miami this is a genre-busting mélange of high octane tracks.

I've come to expect from Mutiny just that...the unexpected. Fonk-N with airthang from R&B, Blues, Hip Hop and whatever other grooves that have bubbled up out of this cauldron of spirit and essence. It's truly refreshing and a testament to pure rhythmic creativity that no two tracks here sound anything remotely alike. But that is what Mutiny has come to be about, pushing the musical envelope into unexplored regions of funkability. He is not trying to recreate P-Funk, nor the first two now classic Mutiny albums. Instead J Romeo's future has never looked so bright.

Bigfoot recently told Bay Area Funk Historian Rickey "The Uhuru Maggot" Vincent, that he wanted to

create a record that gives back in love to those who have supported him. There's just sooooo many goodies here. Some spread hate all around the world but "We Keep Doing Our Thang". A chanking loop of The Godfather's "Let Yourself Go" on the popping "What?YEAH!!!" Totally lose oneself in a track like "Sweet Blessings". Garry "Starchild" Shider's Plainfield-drenched gospel overtones fill the atmosphere with a bliss of sweet soul spiritual yearnings. That one and "Prayer For The Living" just take me to that space, man,

what more can I say. The spirit of Parliament is alive with big, fat blobs of the late, great Cordell "Boogie" Mosson's bass on the pounding "Ouch". And then he turns around and hits you with a southern fried track like "Promanade(Git 'er Done)" with it's up-the-country twang. The neo-futurist "Thought Patterns" opens the affair with 'once you change you philosophy' and I think Bernie the Wizard of Woo is laying down that sinister synth/organ on "Something Better To Do". He even reworks my all time fav Mutiny track with "Lump". A real treat for a brudda.

There's plenty more here, it's a diverse offering. Like I said, he gives up something for everybody to enjoy. I'm thankful this master of the game is still at his funky best, delivering the groove straight up no chaser. It's Funk plus the One put the two together and it's the Bomb.

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