



Funk: The Music, The People, and The Rhythm of The One

By Rickey Vincent

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Funk: The Music, The People, and The Rhythm of The One By Rickey Vincent

Funk: It's the only musical genre ever to have transformed the nation into a throbbing army of bell-bottomed, hoop-earringed, rainbow-Afro'd warriors on the dance floor. Its rhythms and lyrics turned bleak urban realties inside out with distinctive, danceable, downright irresistible music.

Funk hasn't received the critical attention that rock, jazz, and the blues have-until now. Colorful, intelligent, and in-you-face, Rickey Vincent's *Funk* celebrates the songs, the musicians, the philosophy, and the meaning of funk. The book spans from the early work of James Brown (the Godfather of Funk) through today, covering funky soul (Stevie Wonder, the Temptations), so-called "black rock" (Jimi Hendrix, Sly and the Family Stone, the Isley Brothers), jazz-funk (Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock), monster funk (Parliament, Funkadelic, Bootsy's Rubber Band), naked funk (Rick James, Gap Band), disco-funk (Chic, K.C. and the Sunshine Band), funky pop (Kook & the Gang, Chaka Khan), P-Funk Hip Hop (Digital Underground, De La Soul), funk-sampling rap (Ice Cube, Dr. Dre), funk rock (Red Hot Chili Peppers, Primus), and more.

Funk tells a vital, vibrant history-the history of a uniquely American music born out of tradition and community, filled with energy, attitude, anger, hope, and an irrepressible spirit.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In his introduction, Clinton, the force behind Parliament/Funkadelic, defines the importance of "The Funk," as well as Vincent's written history, as political assertions: "[The] story told herein chronicles the predicament the [music] industry faces in trying to monopolize their profiteering of Black Music." By examining the Black jazz and blues roots of funk, Vincent depicts a people more often than not robbed of their music. Funk has remained considerably free from industry greed and gentrification due, argues Vincent, to its illicit power. In the next breath, he contends that James Brown, Sly Stone and Clinton owe as much to the Beatles for their successes?particularly the 1967 Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album, which would influence Jimi Hendrix's Electric Ladyland and Clinton's own Free Your Mind and Your Ass Will Follow. Vincent's funk is broad, encompassing Hendrix; Miles Davis; Earth, Wind, and Fire; and Dr. Dre. It's true rap's sampling of funk classics brought new interest in sloppy, sexy jams. When rappers refused at first to pay their dues, by way of recording royalties, they only helped to draw attention to such forgotten bands as The Ohio Players and The Meters. Funk is an untidy quarrel of history, musicology and hearsay that certifies the cultural heritage of a Hip Hop nation.

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From Library Journal

While it's usually easy to distinguish music that is funky from music that is not, it's much more difficult to say what funk actually is. In this book, Vincent, who has an all-funk show on KALX in California, attempts to arrive at such a definition and to provide a historical overview of "The Funk" (as he calls it) from its emergence as a recognizable element of black music in the 1960s to its varied manifestations in today's popular culture. He does a good job of demonstrating how funkiness celebrates various aspects of African American culture, many of which have historically not been valued by white society, and makes clear the broad impact of various funk styles on American music. Unfortunately, Vincent's encyclopedic knowledge of funk is not matched by a broad understanding of the larger musical context in which he wishes to place it; his stabs at music theory are weak and ill informed, and by the time he refers to the Rolling Stones as James Brown imitators and to Ronald Shannon Jackson as a guitarist, the reader has come to the uncomfortable conclusion that the author has bitten off far more than he can chew. Worst of all, Vincent's writing style borders on unreadable: the sentence "It would be a measure of any hip black act in the seventies to come with a funk bomb to get respect" is, unfortunately, typical. The book ends with a fine annotated discography, but it's not enough to justify purchase. Not recommended.?Rick Anderson, Contoocook, N.H.

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From Booklist

Funk, which with its sharp syncopation and improvisational freedom has had a lasting impact on all popular music, is finally the subject of a book-length study. Vincent provides substantial analysis of funk's musical elements, especially its unique harmonies and rhythms, and the social forces that shaped its development. He focuses on well-and lesser-known innovators since the 1960s and on how such diverse elements as jazz and African pop music fed into funk, and he concludes that rap and hip-hop have successfully continued to incorporate funk's beat and lyrical edge. His book is strongest when he argues for recognizing the cultural importance of George Clinton and the brigade of his Parliament-Funkadelic cohorts. Vincent shows that not only did Clinton establish a framework for the explosive talents of bassist Bootsy Collins, keyboardist Bernie Woffell, and others but "without polemics, militarism, or racially charged code words, Clinton's P-Funk placed the African-American sensibility at the center of the universe, and ultimately at the center of *history*."

Aaron Cohen

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ralph Garibay:

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Karen Schanz:

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