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Bernie Worrell

(P-Funk Musical Director 1968 - 1980, Talking Heads)

In many circles, Bernie Worrell needs no introduction. From his work as a founding member and Musical Director of Parliament-Funkadelic to his contributions to the Talking Heads, Worrell has been twice inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Indeed, songs such as “Burning Down the House” and “Flashlight” wouldn’t have been the same without him, and Worrell’s keyboard prowess has only grown since those classic recordings. As one of the most sampled musicians in history, Worrell’s funky licks have graced hit songs by Dr. Dre, Snoop Dog, Ice Cube, En Vogue and more. “One generation needs to segue to the next generation. So now I work with the sons and daughters, and we coincide.”



Worrell’s early years were spent studying at the New England Conservatory of Music and the Julliard School of Music, giving him a structural foundation on which to base his stratospheric playing. He cites his classical training as a big reason why Parliament-Funkadelic sounded so different from other funk bands of the day. When asked about influences, Worrell lists musical giants such as Ray Charles, Herbie Hancock, Jimmy Smith, Oscar Peterson, and Thelonious Monk as making a strong impression on him as a budding performer. And now it is Worrell who is cited as an influence by many of today’s generation of players.

Worrell is in high demand as a performer with acts such as Bootsy’s New Rubber Band, Jack Bruce & The Cuicoland Express (featuring Vernon Reid) and rapper Mos Def’s rock band Black Jack Johnson. He’s collaborated in the past with seminal artists such as The Rolling Stones, Bill Laswell, The Pretenders, Soul Asylum, and Jody Watley, and has also been involved in scoring a few movies, most notably Ice Cube’s “Friday.”

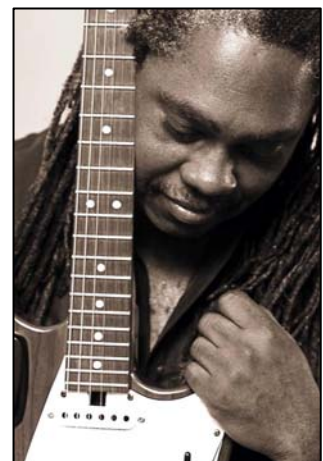
When asked about the state of music today, Worrell laments record companies that have lost their artist development in exchange for accountants and lawyers. Worrell also misses true songs and players, and doesn’t like all the machines involved in newer music. “Music is versatile, hands on, nurturing, touching. It can’t be all about the dollar.” When it comes to Bernie Worrell, you can be sure it’s all about the music.

Blackbyrd McKnight

(P-Funk Musical Director 1980 - 2008, Herbie Hancock)

Blackbyrd Mcknight, the well known guitarist and songwriter, continues striking your soul with his axes. You do not need more than a few seconds to be shocked. Once you are struck, you will never forget the wild but precise, eccentric but intelligent, elaborate but straightforward sounds of guitar created by Blackbyrd.

Blackbyrd was grooved in the cradle by his father’s broad collection of jazz recordings as an infant, brainwashed by Jimi Hendrix in his teens, entered a University of Funk in his twenties, has never stopped evolving



and rocking people. In the early stages of his career, Blackbyrd mainly worked with Jazz musicians, such as Charles Lloyd, Sonny Rollins, Herbie Hancock & the Headhunters, and more. He then directed his path towards funk when he joined P-Funk Camp in 1978. He is currently the musical director and guitarist of George Clinton and Parliament/Funkadelic. Other than working with P-Funk artists such as George Clinton, Bootsy Collins, and Bernie Worrell, Blackbyrd has also worked with Miles Davis, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Ron Wood & Bernard Fowler of the Rolling Stones, Bill Laswell, HR of Bad Brains, Macy Gray, Fishbone and Wyzard of Mothers Finest to name but a few.

Cindy Blackman

(Lenny Kravitz, Pharoah Sanders, Cassandra Wilson)

Cindy Blackman has been touted as one of the hottest drummers in the business, by the Star-Gazette and touted as one of the top drummers in the world. She is a solid, dependable drummer who can easily move from straight-ahead jazz to rock to funk and back again. Shes upheld the backbeat and created texture for a veritable Whos Who in jazz: Jackie McLean, Joe Henderson, Don Pullen, Hugh Masekela, Pharaoh Sanders, Sam Rivers, Cassandra Wilson, Angela Bofill, Bill Laswell, Buckethead...and the list goes on.

From her beginnings as a New York street performer, Blackmans rising star has been seen by millions of people all over the world performing with her own group as well as providing the percussive backbone for retro funk rocker Lenny Kravitz. She has also appeared on Saturday Night Live, The David Letterman Show, Arsenio Hall, The Tonight Show, the UKs Top of the Pops, Black Entertainment Television and the 1993 MTV Video Awards. She has recently completed her first drumming instructional video entitled, Multiplicity.

Jon Pareles of The New York Times says about her performances with Kravitz, Cindy Blackman on drums could switch from the splashy, sludgy style of the Jimi Hendrix Experiences Mitch Mitchell to the casual economy of Ringo Starr to the crisp repetitions of James Browns funky drummers. Zwerin also says, ...her strength is a variety of texture rather than one particularly evident style. She plays hard softly, aggressive but supportive, distinctive without encroaching.

A force in her own right, Blackman puts the heart and soul of her music above all else. A true artist, she plays for the moment as if shes directly inside each note, playing each beat as if it were a melody. Close your eyes and listen. You can imagine that she can harness the power of thunder within her hands. When you open your eyes and watch her perform, you realize that she doesnt just merely play the drums, she becomes the drums. Her playing is forceful, yet passionate enough to stir the soul. From the syncopated dance of her ride cymbal to the thunder of her snare, her dynamic sensibilities invoke the stylings of her mentor, Art Blakey and source of inspiration, Tony Williams. Her other influences include: Miles Davis, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Thelonius Monk, Max Roach, John Coltrane, Philly Joe Jones, Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes, Jack DeJohnette, Pete LaRoca and Billie Holiday.

Over the years, Blackman has graced the covers of Talking Drum, Drum, the UK publication Rhythm and the Dutch publication Slagwerkkraant. She has also been featured in Modern Drummer, Downbeat and Musician. In 1997, Blackman opened for the legendary Godfather of Soul, James Brown.

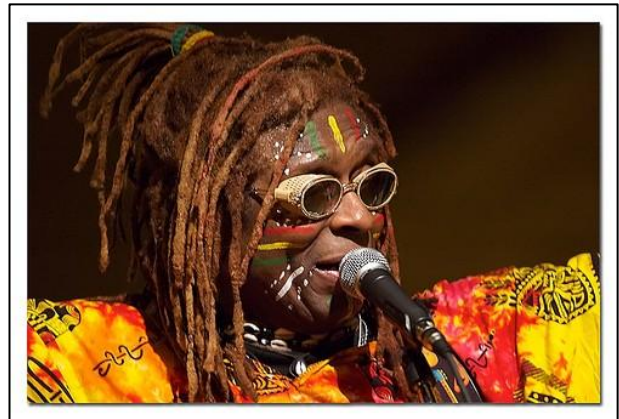
Talking Drum said, ...you can be assured that Ms. Blackman will be around for a long time to come. She is thunder. She is fire. She is energy. She is passion. She is Cindy Blackman.



TM Stevens

(Pretenders, Miles Davis)

TM Steven's skill and proficiency globally as a bassist and vocalist is legendary. A luminous figure amongst today's bassists, he has unbelievable energy, stunning stage presence and knows how to win a crowd over within minutes. His ferocious, yet melodic, style of bass is as unique as his larger than life persona. Never losing sight of his own special blend of signature roots music Heavy Metal Funk with his band Shocka Zooloo, TM's versatility and heavyweight skills as producer, songwriter, singer and instrumentalist are obvious on his now six solo albums with a seventh due in summer of 2006. (See Discography, Concert, Video and TV-Show list.)



He successfully presents himself on these as both songwriter and producer and still enjoys working with other artists when his schedule allows. With at least two European Shocka Zooloo tours each year he also toured in 2004 with Jean Paul Bourelly and drummer John Blackwell (Prince). In Autumn 2005 he completed his Asian tour with Neil Zaza going directly into a lengthy European tour with Shocka Zooloo, finished 2005 with the collaboration of TM, Carl Palmer (ELP) and Andrea Brado in Italy and Russia and even squeezed in another European ELP tour in February of 2006.

TM's rich, hefty, trademark vocals came about through James Brown's insistence that he not only play bass but sing on "Living In America" and Mr Brown's album "Gravity". This was TM's in-road to many years of sessions and productions with some of the world's finest artists.

His extravagance, combined with tenderness and complimented by a whole lot of 'Funkiness', is enriched through years of recording with award-winning stars like Steve Vai, Cindy Lauper, Little Steven, Tina Turner and Billy Joel. A former member of The Pretenders, TM recorded on the platinum album "Get Close" and also produced and arranged, amongst others, the album "Tribute to Deep Purple According to New York" on which artists like Yngwie Malmsteen, members of Living Color and Bernie Worrell (P-Funk) all participated. It was TM who contributed the compelling groove with his unmistakable style on Joe Cocker's mainstream classic "Unchain my Heart." Together with Narada Michael Walden he penned the billboard hit "I Should Have Loved Ya."

His early jazz years brought him to play with the man himself, Miles Davis, and fans speak almost religiously of TM's performance at Montreaux Jazz Festival so many years ago with One Truth, Mahavishu and John Mc Laughlin.

With the songs on TM's CD's leaning more on the heavy metal funk side, combining Afro percussive blends and Reggae roots with funk and strong melodies peppered with his impressive ballads, we note: "The important thing is that all of the songs came from my heart, guts and roots."

From the early days of Delta Blues with artists such as Blind Lemon and Lead Belly, to the very beginnings of modern day Rock'n'Roll, which was carved and invented by the likes of Chuck Berry and Little Richard, these forerunners are indeed part of his roots.

"As an artist, to draw from what these pioneers had started and then be able to add my own ideas to make a sound that's unique to me, is not only a privilege but also an honor... I find that contrary to the marketing strategies of separating the various music into different categories, new music is created by combining the elements of many styles. We are all the sum total of our ancestors (roots) through our past to the present. Hence by playing, without 'over thinking' what I naturally feel, the sound will be more original and real."