

# Funk fans get in the groove

*They shimmy, shake to Clinton at festival*

BY DANIEL NEMAN

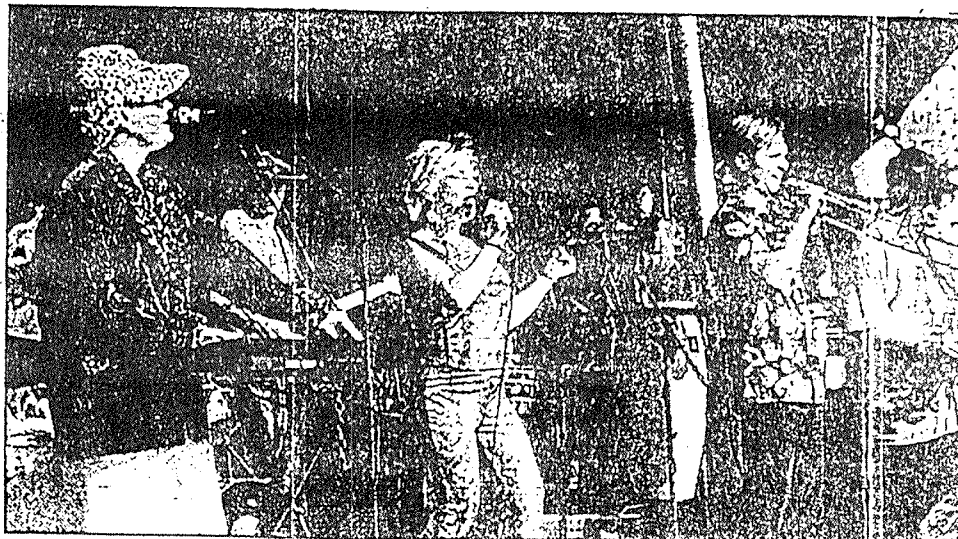
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

In the spring and summer, Richmond transforms from a quiet town of monuments and well-preserved history to a weekly outdoor festival of music, activities and funnel cakes. Just yesterday, revelers had a choice of attending the sedate Ashland Strawberry Faire, the serene All in Rose show or the educational Virginia Vacation Show.

And then there was the Funk Festival.

More than 7,000 music fans, from babies in strollers to grandparents in their 50s, streamed onto Brown's Island last night to shimmy and shake to George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelics, the band that made America one nation under a groove.

Although Richmond's Grammy-winning D'Angelo did not show, as had been rumored, no one seemed to mind. A diverse crowd rocked the island while chowing down on the usual festival food: hot dogs, gyros, the inevitable funnel cakes and plenty



JOE MAHONEY/TIMES-DISPATCH

The local band Groovespot entertained the crowd on Brown's Island last night as the opening act for George Clinton.

—plenty— of beer.

"The music's got a bit of energy to it," said Ernest Brooks, drinking a lemonade while his wife, Michelle, enjoyed an Italian sausage. "The music's kind of loose. They don't go by a script. It's just a party."

Brooks added, "It's always fun to see how they dress."

The ever-flamboyant 60-year-old Clinton was dressed in Kente cloth with brightly colored streamers in his hair. Two muscular members of the band were wearing nothing but their pants, including one who was very limber and is reportedly from Richmond.

"He didn't look like that in high school," said one woman.

The crowd got into the spirit of fashion as well. Some wore Afro wigs, including one that was bright blue. One man was spotted in the star sunglasses made famous by the former Funkadelic bassist Bootsy Collins.

The area near the stage was a waving, swaying clot of humanity, chartreuse wristbands, spilling beer and décolletage. Many

gave the two-finger P-Funk salute while others raised the roof — although technically speaking, because it was outdoors, there was no roof to raise.

As the band rumbled through such songs as "Flash Light," "Bop Gun" and "Fly On," some in the orderly crowd were seen pouring liquor into cups. The scent of pot sometimes wafted quite heavily through the crowd.

"I'm going to lose my job for no reason at all," said one man who declined to give his name. "This takes me back 20 years."

Julie Ranson, who parked herself next to the rockfish decorated by her pupils at Reams Road Elementary School, said she is "definitely a fan of good old-school funk music."

The crowd came to boogie, and boogie it did. Proceeds from the sale of drinks went to Prevent Child Abuse Virginia.

And Clinton and the gang tore the roof off the sucker. Though technically speaking, there wasn't a roof.

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