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11-6-2021

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### Recommended Citation

Duff, De Angela, "Pour Some Water on Me: Prince and the Ohio Players" (2021). *Content Presented at the First and Second Dayton Funk Symposia*. 40.

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# **Pour Some Water on Me: Prince and the Ohio Players**

*De Angela L. Duff, New York University*

Abstract: In Prince's incomplete and posthumous memoir, *The Beautiful Ones*, the Ohio Players is referenced four times. However, Prince's love of the Ohio Players was evident decades before the release of this book. Prince has covered Ohio Players' classics, such as "Skin Tight," "I Want To Be Free," "Love Rollercoaster," and "Heaven Must Be Like This," in numerous rehearsals, shows, and after shows over the years. However, the Ohio Players are rarely discussed as one of Prince's influences by music critics. This talk will attempt to deconstruct why, while also exploring Prince's funk roots and influences.

*This is an edited transcript of the presentation.*

Hello, my name is De Angela Duff, and today I'd like to talk to you about Prince and the Ohio Players. I want to start at the beginning for some context.

Prince Rogers Nelson (yes, Prince is on his birth certificate) was born June 7, 1958, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The picture on the right is from October 1958 with his mother, Mattie.

It's really important to set this context that Prince was a Midwestern musician. Also, similar to the Ohio Players, Prince never really left Minneapolis. He resided in Minneapolis at the height of his fame. He had

homes all over the world in L.A. and Spain and Canada. But his home base was Minneapolis. He was born there, and he died there at his home of Paisley Park (which is a 65,000 square foot audio- and film-recording complex in Chanhassen, Minnesota, that Prince built in 1987). Paisley Park has been turned into a museum and this was part of Prince's wishes before he passed.

There is an "Influence Wall" mural at Paisley Park. This wall contains images of or references to James Brown, George Clinton, Miles Davis, Larry Graham, Grand Funk Railroad, Jimi Hendrix, Joni Mitchell, Rufus and Chaka Khan, Santana, Sly Stone, Tower of Power, and Stevie Wonder. On a list Prince compiled (possibly for the 2000 Celebration that he held at Paisley Park), you will see four of those key people repeated: Brown, Stone, Hendrix, and Santana. But the Ohio Players are missing from both.

Prince was definitely a disciple of James Brown. I'm going to show you a very short clip of "Baby, I'm A Star." This particular performance is from the 1985 Grammy Awards. And you will immediately see that he's a disciple of Brown. There's no doubt about it. So, James Brown was super obvious.

He spoke about Sly in early interviews. For instance, in a 1981 interview by Chris Salewicz in *New Musical Express* (NME), Prince is quoted as saying, "There was quite a lot of Sly Stone stuff we used to do. I really liked it when he'd have a hit, because it would give us an excuse to play them." The "we" he's referring to is his high school band he put together with his childhood friend André Anderson, also known as André Cymone. That band was named Grand Central, after Graham Central Station as well as Grand Funk Railroad.

In a 1985 article from *Rolling Stone*, Neal Karlen interviewed Prince, asking, "What do you think about the comparisons between you and Jimi Hendrix?" Prince responds, "It's only because he's black. That's really the only thing we have in common. He plays different guitar than I do. If they really listened to my stuff, they'd hear more of a Santana influence than Jimi Hendrix." However, later, as you saw, he publicly embraced and acknowledged Hendrix.

In his autobiography *The Beautiful Ones*, unfinished but published, there were five musical influences that were mentioned more than once.

It was definitely the preceding four I have mentioned—but also the Ohio Players.

In the book, he particularly describes a night at a high school dance. He writes, “As I recall I just asked Marcie 2 dance because she was the closest in [the] vicinity & I loved the song that had just come on. It was ‘Skin Tight’ by the Ohio Players & the bass & drums on this record would make Stephen Hawking dance. No disrespect—it’s just that funky.”

In Morris Day’s autobiography *On Time: A Princely Life in Funk*, he also speaks of their love of Midwestern funk. Day writes alongside David Ritz:

Just saying that the backbone of everything was funk. And funk wasn’t anything we invented. The great inventors—from Chuck Berry through Bo Diddley to James Brown—’specially JB!—were our teachers and our gurus. We loved them. We found their funk so beautiful, so irresistible, so much fuckin’ fun that we naturally copied the cats that came after Chuck and Bo and James. I’m talkin’ ‘bout Sly, the Isleys, Clinton, Bootsy, Cameo, Lakeside, Graham Central Station, Ohio Players, and all the others. So yes, we were a cover band. Like most bands, we started off covering stuff. And, yes, we did it to pay our respects to our elders.

André Cymone would essentially say the same thing that Morris Day said about the influence of the Ohio Players at a symposium I organized last year, called #DM40GB30 for 40 years of Prince’s album *Dirty Mind* and 30 years of *Graffiti Bridge* (<https://dm40gb30.polishedsolid.com>).

This clip you’ll be seeing is of André Cymone; Jill Jones will be in the top right-hand corner; myself in the bottom left-hand corner; and my partner in crime, Arthur Turnbull, in the top left-hand corner.

**Arthur Turnbull:** It’s interesting that you bring up the bands, at that time, the whole Midwestern funk band-oriented style, from what, Dayton, Ohio, being like a

hotbed of bands.

**André Cymone:** Ohio Players, man! [André sings the chorus to “Fire!” and ends with saying “Say What!” in the manner of Leroy “Sugarfoot” Bonner.]

**Turnbull:** Right! All the way here, Brother Catfish, all the way up North... I always just felt between Shampayne and Grand Central Prince was a band-oriented funk artist. So, it seemed like he would thrive in the band environment.

**Cymone:** Yeah, we were a funk cover band. We played literally played four-hour sets. I mean it was insane when I think about it in retrospect. But yeah, no, we were a funk cover band. And, we had a blast! It’s like, that’s why when we were watching the video, it’s really just a carryover from a lot of the stuff we used to do back then. It’s, at least, for he and I. The rest of the band came from dramatically different backgrounds and we really wanted to choose the band. The band we put together the way we wanted on purpose, because in a lot of ways because I originally thought Morris should have been, I don’t know how many people know how amazing Morris is on the drums. We originally thought Morris should have been, could have been the drummer. But there were other issues at work.

So, this clip really establishes that Prince is a Midwestern funk artist at his root. This is really important to understand.

Some more hard evidence about Prince’s love of the Ohio Players is he appeared in a 2014 episode of the Fox TV series *New Girl*; and for his appearance on this show, he sent the editor Steve Welch a playlist for a party. On that playlist, there are two Ohio Players songs: “Fire” and “Skin Tight.” This is notable because Prince often covered both of these songs, but this is evident a little later on. Earlier in his career, there were breadcrumbs.

In the second volume of Duane Tudahl's Prince studio session series (*Prince and the Parade* and *Sign O' the Times Era Studio Sessions: 1985 and 1986*), he wrote that Susan Rogers, who was Prince's sound engineer, booked the 5th Floor Recording Studio in Cincinnati, Ohio, while Prince was on tour for *Purple Rain*, most likely, "because of its incredible history of funk music, which included music by the Ohio Players, Bootsy Collins, Faze-O, and Zapp among others." At 5th Floor Studio, Prince primarily worked on Sheila E.'s second album, released on Prince's own record label, Paisley Park Records, a subsidiary of Warner Brothers.

Like many Dayton funksters, Prince was encouraged—by parents, relatives, and other members of the local community who also played instruments—to pursue his musical interests. First and foremost, Prince's father was a jazz musician: he had a trio named Prince Rogers, and that is where Prince got his namesake. Mattie was initially a jazz vocalist in John L.'s band before they got married.

Another crucial person in Prince's musical life is Bernadette Anderson, who is the mother of André Cymone. You can see Bernadette. She is in the front row, the second from the right. And you see André in the top row all the way to the right with a hat on; next to Bernadette is André's sister, Linda. Everybody else are siblings of André except for the guy that is in the top left-hand corner—and that is a young Prince.

André and Prince met during the seventh grade, and they became immediate and fast friends, jamming the exact same day that they met one another. They were inseparable. Prince essentially moved in with the Andersons, living in their basement.

Scot Brown, in his essay "Land of Funk: Dayton, Ohio" (*The Funk Era and Beyond*, edited by Tony Bolden) talks about how important schools are in the development of many funk musicians. And while the church is critical for burgeoning musicians (such as my personal favorite Cory Henry), schools, particularly during the '60s and '70s, were just as critical: "Schools, however, were the elemental place for both music performance and education of would-be funksters in their adolescent years and held a special place in the story of Dayton funk" (Brown).

So, this was Prince's main high school band Grand Central. The reason why I pointed out Linda is that Linda Anderson (André's sister) is in Grand Central. Linda was on keyboards. André was on bass. Morris

Day was on drums. Terry Jackson was on percussion. Prince was on guitar and keyboards. Hollywood was on percussion.

André would continue to be with Prince during Prince's first touring band. André told Prince in the beginning that he would help him get started but that he wanted to embark on his own solo career. And before the Controversy Tour, André bowed out and began his own solo career.

Brown writes, "A walk through virtually any predominantly black urban neighborhood in the 1970s decade may have been accompanied by a soundtrack supplied by bands rehearsing or playing in an outdoor gathering at a park." Like Dayton, Minneapolis was no different. There were many talent shows and local battles of the bands.

Andrea Swensson writes, in her wonderful book *Got To Be Something Here: The Rise of the Minneapolis Sound* (2017), that there was a place where many musicians gathered: the now-defunct North Minneapolis Community Center named The Way, pictured here when it had been rebranded The New Way, which, according to Swensson, "served as an incubator and a launchpad for many of the artists we now associate with the Minneapolis sound."

Spike Moss was one of The Way's key figures. Notice the title of this article, "10 years After Plymouth Avenue." Plymouth Avenue was a site of civil unrest in North Minneapolis. You can see the aftermath and boarded-up storefronts in these two photos from 1967.

To learn more about The Way, Spike Moss, and the civil unrest, watch the unofficial documentary *Mr. Nelson on the North Side*, which was released earlier this year.

Swensson also relays that "the more we treat Prince like a singular creature, who must have been beamed down to Earth, because he couldn't have possibly emerged from an actual place, the more we help to erase the generations of influential jazz, gospel, soul, R&B, and funk musicians who first made it possible for African Americans to earn a living making music in Minnesota and contributed to the ongoing evolution of sound that eventually enraptured a young Mr. Nelson."

This audio compilation *Twin Cities Funk and Soul* (released on Secret Stash Records in 2012) is a really great compilation of artists from the Twin Cities (which is St. Paul and Minneapolis) from 1964 to 1979. This is a wonderful place to start listening to what was going on

musically in Minneapolis and is a great companion piece to Andrea Swensson's book.

In addition to Swensson's book, *Secret Stash* also created a wonderful newspaper companion to the CD compilation.

Another compilation from the record label Numero Group is *Purple Snow: Forecasting the Minneapolis Sound*. This compilation concentrates on the late 1970s, which includes the Lewis Connection and early recordings from André Cymone, Alexander O'Neal, Sue Ann Carwell, as well as many others related to the Prince camp.

One thing that should be noted about the title of Swensson's book is that it is based on a song from this album *The Lewis Conection* (sic: it is missing a second "n" due to a printing error.)

The song that the book's title comes from was written by Sonny T. He was a local musician who was a musical hero to both Prince and André. If you look closely, you can see that Prince performed background vocals and guitar on the song. Prince was eighteen or nineteen. Even though the song is billed to the Lewis Connection, the song was actually recorded by another one of Sonny T.'s bands, The Family.

According to Swensson, Prince was "something of an understudy to the older generation of players." The Family would be important to Prince. Prince would later name a band he architected in possible tribute to Sonny T.'s local Minneapolis band, The Family.

In addition to family, surrounding community, the local music scene, and local radio (like WDAO for Dayton) were also important in shaping Prince's musical chops. KUXL was the only early black-oriented community radio station in the Twin Cities, and Swensson noted that it was "barely audible outside a one-mile radius of its North Minneapolis adjacent station." If you were to look at this Super Soul Thirty list from KUXL, on this list is the Ohio Players' "Pleasure," which I have a cover of here, with the lovely model Pat Evans on it.

Prince was rooted in the self-contained band, again, similar to the Ohio Players. This is the earliest known photo of Prince and Grand Central. It was discovered this year but it hasn't come to the public's attention until now. Prince is sixteen here. Grand Central was performing as part of a demolition ceremony for the YWCA. You can find this photo and video footage at the Hennepin County Library. They have online



archives, and there is a very short snippet of Grand Central. It's so short, like seconds. But that's the earliest known recording of Prince as a live performer, and again, Grand Central. You'll see André Cymone on the bass to the left. You see André's sister, Linda, on the keys. You have Morris Day on the drums. You have Terry Jackson on percussion. And you have Prince over there in the plaid pants to the right with his afro.

Prince released his solo debut in 1978 on Warner Brothers Records. He was one of the youngest producers that Warner Brothers had. Prince had to jump through hoops to be able to produce his own record, but he finally did. And the byline "written, arranged, composed, produced, and performed by Prince" emerged. Even though he was rooted as a Midwestern funk self-contained band member, he was introduced to the world as a solo artist.

With 1984's *Purple Rain*, "Prince and" started making an appearance. In 1984, it was Prince and The Revolution.

However, if you look at the preceding album, 1982's *1999*—if you look very closely, even though the spine does not contain "and The Revolution"—if you look at the closed eye (what I call the football but it's actually a closed eye), you can see "and The Revolution" backward. So, technically, Prince and The Revolution began with the *1999* album.

When people think of The Revolution, they think of this lineup immortalized in the 1984 blockbuster film *Purple Rain*. However, there was an expanded version of The Revolution towards the end of their tenure.

Prince's longest-running band was Prince and the NPG, which went through nine different configurations from 1994 to 2015. What you're seeing here is the second lineup. Sonny T. on bass. This band overlapped with the NPG towards the end of Prince's career, Prince and 3rd Eye Girl. This is Prince's female-only band, and this band existed roughly from 2012 to 2014.

However, my favorite band is The Band with No Name, a term coined by Harold Pride in *Lovesexy*. This band was short-lived but packed a powerful punch. This band was also known as the Sign O' The Times/Lovesexy band. One thing I want to note about this Lovesexy band is that it primarily (the bulk of it) consisted of Bay Area artists. Sheila E., Levi Seacer, Jr., Miko Weaver, and Boni Boyer are all from

the Oakland/San Francisco/Bay Area. This is another really important music scene, and Santana was from that area as well.

For Prince's first three solo records, he was an amalgamation of R&B, soul, new wave, [and] rockabilly with flourishes of funk.

However, *Controversy* is where he truly allowed his funk flag to fly high in terms of his solo output, and this funk extravaganza wouldn't be topped until the shelved 1987's *The Black Album*, which would have been released six years after *Controversy*. It's also known as the "Funk Bible." And when the album was shelved, it became one of the most bootlegged albums ever until Warner Brothers officially released it seven years later in 1994.

But Prince didn't dismiss the funk; he just created a whole other self-contained band, The Time, to channel his funk through. In the beginning, Prince hid his involvement behind a fictitious producer named Jamie Starr.

In this 1981 article for the *Minneapolis Star*, "'Time' Helps Set Hometown Sound," Jon Bream, the music journalist who has covered Prince throughout his entire career the longest, writes: "Prince was originally scheduled to produce this album, but lead singer Morris Day and engineer Jamie Starr are given production credit. (In fact, Prince is not even mentioned in the album credits.) It's too bad Prince didn't stick around, because The Time could have benefited from his experience."

Earlier this year on Substack, Nelson George wrote in his newsletter *The Nelson George Mixtape*, "It was during these early tours that Prince, Day, Benton, Vanity, and everyone on his team perpetuated the fiction that all this music was being created by a mysterious producer named Jamie Starr. Since, at that point, no outside music journalists had yet ventured to the Twin Cities to confirm this tale I, and everyone else, just jotted it down (though it seemed odd that such a prodigious music maker had just suddenly appeared out of the frigid Minnesota air)."

Less than two months later, Bream would write another article for the *Minneapolis Star*, and the cat was out of the bag. (Even though if you listen closely, Prince is clearly all over this record.) Jon Bream writes, "The other night I had the strangest dream ... Prince was The Time and The Time was Prince." Prince *was* Jamie Starr, the producer.

Here's a rare photo taken by Allen Beaulieu of Prince *as* Jamie Starr over to the left. You can see this photo as well as a lot of other incredible

photos in the 2018 photo book *Prince Before the Rain* by Allen Beaulieu. This is another photo that you can find in the same book. And I love this photo because if you look at it, you can tell that Morris Day and Prince are just two peas in a pod.

For the first three records, The Time was essentially Prince and Morris Day. Prince played all the instruments, and all the songs were written, arranged, composed, produced, and performed by Prince with significant contributions by Morris Day on vocals, obviously, and then also drums.

The Time as a touring band was a self-contained band unit. Here's a snippet of "The Stick" from The Time's debut at the MET Center in Bloomington, Minnesota, in 1982.

The Time consisted of Jimmy Jam and Monte Moir on keys, Terry Lewis on bass, Jellybean Johnson on drums, Jesse Johnson on guitar, and Jerome Benton on mirror and percussion. Everyone would become producers in their own right. In my opinion, Prince channeled his love of the Ohio Players through The Time as a vehicle.

One thing you'll notice about The Time, and particularly their first three albums, is that they all contain a six-song format, which wouldn't be broken until 1990's *Pandemonium*. Again, three songs to each side, similar to the Ohio Players' *Pain* (1971) and *Skin Tight* (1974).

In addition to the six songs, another aspect borrowed from the Ohio Players was the one-word anthem: such as "Cool" for The Time and "Fire" for the Ohio Players.

The only thing missing from The Time records is a sexy female on the cover. Otherwise, the homage to the Ohio Players would have been a dead giveaway. Obviously, there were other musicians who had sexy girls on the cover. This is one of my favorites: it was Leon Ware's *Musical Massage*, which was released in 1976; this, obviously, heavily borrowed from the Ohio Players covers. So, the Ohio Players covers were iconic. Everyone saw them. I know Prince saw them too.

While Prince did not use sexy ladies for his own album covers nor The Time's, he put his own body out there several times. *Dirty Mind* was Prince's third album. This is the infamous shower poster that was included with 1981's *Controversy*, Prince's fourth album.

If you want to learn more about the *Controversy* poster, in another Prince symposium that I organized earlier this year, #1plus1plus1is3

(<https://1plus1plus1is3.polishedsolid.com>), Zach Hoskins of the *d / m / s / r* blog did a phenomenal talk called “[I Wish We All Were Nude:] Allen Beaulieu’s Infamous ‘Shower Poster’ – Aesthetic Linchpin and Artifact.” You can find it online if you google “controversy presentations Zach Hoskins.”

Even more incendiary and controversial was the *Lovesexy* cover because it wasn’t hidden inside. Prince’s nudity was blatantly on the cover. This was in 1988.

However, Prince did use a sexy lady in a pinup style for his two-album funk-jazz instrumental project *Madhouse*. Both albums were released as bookends for the year 1987. All of the songs were numbers on both albums: the first album contained “One,” “Two,” “Three,” “Four,” “Five,” “Six,” “Seven,” “Eight,”; the second album... you got it. And cover girl Maneca Lightner graced both the covers, as well as all the singles in between.

If you don’t know about *Madhouse* and want to learn more, I invite you to listen to the *Grown Folks Music* podcast that I produced.

You can definitely see the influence of the Ohio Players on Sheila E.’s third record, which was on Prince’s Paisley Park Records. Several of the songs were written, arranged, composed, produced, and performed by Prince on this release. And the only thing that really irks me about this release was that it was not a gatefold. So, you had to flip the album over. Even at sixteen years old when this was released, I was like, “Why don’t you have an Ohio Players cover?”—I was used to seeing Ohio Players covers because I grew up with my uncles and aunt, and they all had those gatefold albums.

Now, Prince really did get explicit with his NPG record, and this was released on another one of Prince’s record labels. This time it was an independent record label NPG records. Paisley Park was again a subsidiary of Warner Brothers. So, *Gold Nigga* is the first solo album by the New Power Generation, which had previously been credited on the Prince and the New Power Generation albums: *Diamonds and Pearls* and *Love Symbol*. It was also the first album to be released by NPG Records, and the majority of the record was written and produced by Prince with significant contributions from members of the NPG and Sonny T. being one of those major contributors. I have a little image of the Ohio Players’

*Skin Tight* record because the album cover (which is over to the right) really reminds me of this particular album cover.

This shelved album from NPG records in 2006 by Tamar Davis was going to be called *Milk and Honey* even though it was originally titled *Beautiful, Loved, and Blessed*. It was going to be the unreleased debut studio album from Tamar Davis (who goes by Ashley Tamar now) and was recorded in 2005, early 2006. The album was advertised on a flyer included in Prince's *3121* album. And, believe it or not, Prince toured as Tamar Davis' guitar player on the 2006 Tamar Tour to help promote the album.

Before we take a deep dive into Prince's love of the Ohio Players, it's important to note that Prince had a direct connection with another Dayton, Ohio-based musician, Roger Troutman. Zapp opened for Prince during the Controversy Tour. Here you see a photo of Roger with Prince. I've compiled some of the wonderful posters on this particular tour. Prince was a fan of Dayton funk. He would occasionally play "More Bounce to the Ounce" in soundchecks and after-shows throughout his career. In fact, he played it as late as 2014, a couple of years before he passed, at a show in London.

I want to play two songs: one by Prince and one by the Ohio Players. If you listen closely, you can hear the Ohio Players' influence on Prince and his music. These two songs, I think, really show it. For me, it's really obvious.

Listen to this snippet of "Condition of the Heart" from Prince's album after *Purple Rain*, *Around the World in a Day*. Then compare that to "It's Your Night/Words of Love" from the Ohio Players' *Skin Tight*.

Prince would cover over the course of his career—usually during soundchecks or rehearsals or after-shows, but sometimes even within proper shows—three songs from the Ohio Players' *Skin Tight*: he covered "Skin Tight" the most, though it's really a toss-up between "Skin Tight" and "Fire"; and "Love Rollercoaster" would probably be in the third slot. But he also covered "Jive Turkey" and "Heaven Must Be Like This."

From *Fire*, he covered "Fire" and "I Want To Be Free." What's interesting about "I Want To Be Free" is that he really starts covering it in the late 2000s up until towards the end of his career. I think it's a song that was near and dear to him.

And then from *Honey*, he would play “Love Rollercoaster.” I was kind of surprised that Prince never covered the Ohio Players’ “Sweet Sticky Thing” from *Honey*. But there is a very short reference to it in the concert film *Sign O’ The Times* that was released in 1987. There’s these narrative interludes throughout the concert film, and there’s this love triangle between Prince, Greg Brooks, and Cat the dancer. So, we’re going to do some deep listening for some covers.

What we’re about to hear is a snippet from a 1991 tour rehearsal for *Diamonds and Pearls*. Prince isn’t probably at this rehearsal. So you’ll hear Levi Seacer, Jr. and others, as well as Rosie Gaines (who’s also from the Bay Area) in this version of “Skin Tight.”

Now, I really wanted to leave this out, but it exists. This is an album by Carmen Electra. Carmen Electra’s debut was on Paisley Park Records. This album was produced by Prince, and this song “S. T.” (1993) samples “Skin Tight.”

- This [“Heaven Must Be Like This”] is during a one-off performance at Prince’s Paisley Park in 1995.
- This [“Fire”] is another [1995] Paisley Park performance.
- This is a version of “Skin Tight” during the *One Nite Alone ...* tour.
- This was during an after-show in 2002.
- This [“Love Rollercoaster”] is originally a direct to video release in 2003’s *Prince Live at the Aladdin*. This is still during the *One Nite Alone ...* era.

What was significant about the *One Nite Alone ...* tour was that Maceo Parker was in the band. You can now get this DVD in the 2020 box set *Up All Night with Prince: The One Nite Alone Collection*.

Earlier this year saw the first complete unreleased album from Prince’s vault—Prince had this storied vault where he would just shelve thousands of recordings. *Welcome 2 America* is composed of two LPs, one CD, and a Blu-ray. On the Blu-ray, Prince performs a fantastic version of “Fantastic Voyage” by Lakeside, another Dayton-based group. It’s the next-to-last song.

If you want to learn more about the release, I had an online virtual celebration in August, where we had four different roundtables giving multiple takes (<https://w2avc.polishedsolid.com>).

Now I want to play you two different versions of “I Want To Be Free”:

- The first version is from 2008.
- The second version is from the *Welcome 2 America* tour during the Charlotte, North Carolina, stop.

I also want to play this very short clip of Philip Bass, author of the book *Pour Some Water on Me*, being interviewed on *Funk Chronicles*. This video is from the Funk Music Hall of Fame and Exhibition Center’s YouTube channel.

“The civil rights movement, in my opinion, and that’s what I write about, developed the stage for funk music. Funk music is an expression of freedom.”

So coming full circle back to Prince’s autobiography, *The Beautiful Ones*, on page thirty-five, he wrote, “If I want this book to be about one overarching thing, it’s freedom and the freedom to create autonomously without anyone telling you what to do, or how or why.”

I would like to dedicate this talk to my uncle Eddie Oliver, Jr., who actually died in Dayton, Ohio, in 1966, four years before I was born. And, he was only nineteen. And, he also passed alongside his first cousin, Rogers Oliver Jr. And, two of my grandfather’s brothers lived in Dayton. We often had our family reunions, either in Dayton or Alabama. We would go back and forth. My grandfather was the only brother that remained in Alabama.

But the reason why it’s important for me to dedicate this to my uncle is that he was a musician. His primary instrument of choice was the drums, but he also played piano. And, I know in my heart of hearts that if he would have lived that he would have joined one of the incredible local Dayton bands.

I would like to personally invite you to the five-year anniversary fundraiser for the PRN Alumni Foundation next Saturday online [<https://prnalbumni5.polishedsolid.com>]. Tickets benefit the 501c3 nonprofit founded by former Prince staff with a desire to continue his philanthropic vision. The day will be centered around Prince’s acoustic album *The Truth* with one roundtable, four talks, and a keynote with

PRN Alumni directly involved with the album, including bassist Rhonda Smith and guitarist Kat Dyson. Thank you!

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