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INDEPENDENT LENS PREMIERES A SOULFUL AND MOVING PORTRAIT OF FUNK MUSIC “WE WANT THE FUNK!” APRIL 8 ON PBS

*Filmmaker Stanley Nelson’s Out-Of-This-World Documentary
Featuring Interviews With George Clinton, Questlove,
Kirk Franklin, David Byrne, and More, Will Make You Get Up
and Dance*

(San Francisco, CA) February 4, 2025—“WE WANT THE FUNK!” the documentary from Emmy® Award-winning filmmaker Stanley Nelson, and co-director and producer Nicole London, which traces funk music’s African and gospel roots, from James Brown to Parliament-Funkadelic and beyond, premieres on INDEPENDENT LENS on April 8, 2025, and will then be available on PBS, [PBS app](#), and [PBS YouTube](#). A syncopated and star-studded voyage through the journey of funk music, the film delves into the genre’s influence on contemporary music, fashion, and freedom of expression as well as its role in the rise of hip-hop.

Distinctly rooted in joy, funk music reflected a post-Civil Rights Movement sensibility. “WE WANT THE FUNK!” examines the symbiotic relationship between the explosion of funk music out of the Midwest and the political and racial dynamics in 1970s inner-city America. At the heart of the film are the first-hand stories, recollections, and experiences of the people who created and defined funk: George Clinton of Parliament-Funkadelic; Fred Wesley of The J.B.’s; Robert ‘Kool’ Bell from Kool & The Gang; Marcus Miller; Nona Hendryx of Labelle; Kirk Franklin; David Byrne of the Talking Heads; Prince Paul, DJ and Producer for De La Soul; along with additional perspectives from Questlove and Thomas DeFrantz. The film also features archival interviews with musical icons, including James Brown, Elton John, David Bowie, and more.

“WE WANT THE FUNK!” explores how the rhythms and grooves of funk music can put us in a trance, reminding us that it’s a joy to be in the world and dance into a frenzy of freedom. As George Clinton says, “Free your mind and your ass will follow.”

"Funk transcends the boundaries of genre and time, connecting to many musical and aesthetic styles in the present," said filmmaker Stanley Nelson. "To me, this documentary captures so much more than cultural history, since funk is very much alive—really ever since James Brown let the funk loose! I'm excited for audiences to experience the magic of this story—and, of course, feel the music—as part of INDEPENDENT LENS."

"It's an honor to share the journey of funk music, a story embedded into Black and American culture," said co-director Nicole London. "Bringing the energy of funk to a broader audience is an incredible experience, and I hope everyone embraces its magic and rhythm."

"Music, especially funk, fosters social connection, provides a mental break from worries, and helps build resilience which allows us to cope with challenging situations," said Lois Vossen, executive producer of INDEPENDENT LENS. "We need the funk."

"WE WANT THE FUNK!" debuts on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS on April 8, 2025, at 10 p.m. (check local listings). The film will be available to stream on the [PBS app](#).

Visit the "[WE WANT THE FUNK!](#)" page on INDEPENDENT LENS to learn more about the film.

CREDITS

Directed and Produced by

Stanley Nelson
Nicole London

Executive Producer

Lois Vossen
Carrie Lozano
Keith Brown
Marcia Smith

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

Stanley Nelson, Director and Producer

Stanley Nelson is an Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, MacArthur Fellow, and member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. President Barack Obama awarded him the National Humanities Medal. Nelson has

directed and produced numerous films, including “The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution,” and “Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple.”

Nicole London, Director and Producer

Nicole London is the Grammy Award-nominated producer of *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*, which was also awarded a 2021 News and Documentary Emmy Award. Recent credits include *Sammy Davis, Jr.: I’ve Gotta Be Me*, *The Talk: Race in America*, and 16 films now playing in the Segregation Gallery of the Smithsonian Museum.

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

INDEPENDENT LENS is an Emmy® Award-winning PBS documentary series. With founding executive producer Lois Vossen, the series has been honored with 10 Academy Award nominations and features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, INDEPENDENT LENS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Park Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and National Endowment for the Arts. Stream anytime on the PBS app. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Services (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years the San Francisco non-profit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy® Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS app. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, The Park Foundation, Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org.

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