



FUNK: A Music Revolution

'From 1967 when Mr. Brown and I wrote "Cold Sweat" until today, Funk has been woven into the DNA of popular music. We want to tell that story.' - Pee Wee Ellis

Led by James Brown's Musical Director, renowned saxophonist Pee Wee Ellis and co-curated by singer China Moses, *FUNK: A Music Revolution* celebrates Funk's influence from its early days to latest sounds. Originating in the mid '60s through a mixture of the exhilarating jazz and soul scenes that had flourished over the previous decades, funk drew on soul, jazz and R&B, but added bold syncopations and prominent bass lines that sent the dance floors wild.

In James Brown these tantalising musical developments found their perfect manifestation, and, with his unique voice, charisma and unapologetic racial pride, Brown signified a pivotal point in music. On 4 April 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King had been assassinated and on 7 August, Pee Wee Ellis co-wrote the music for James Brown's *Say It Loud, I'm Black & I'm Proud*. The song instantly became Black America's street anthem, even quicker than King Records could press the singles, despite some "white" radio stations boycotting the song. James Brown had the message; Pee Wee Ellis had the soundtrack. *Cold Sweat*, another composition co-written by Ellis and Brown and widely acknowledged as funk's original song, was inspired by Miles Davis' *So What*, signifying the important connection between jazz and funk.

The funk mantel was taken up by the inimitable George Clinton whose doo wop band the Parliaments morphed into Parliament, adding gospel, rock n roll to the intoxicating mix and solidifying funk as a genre in itself. Through the '70s the movement continued via Sly and the Family Stone, Earth, Wind & Fire, Stevie Wonder, Le Chic, and many others. Whilst some artists like Prince continued to progress the music, the earworms of the 70s also became the samples of the late 80s and 90s hip hop artists such as Public Enemy, Dr Dre and Salt-N-Pepa. Funk samples became an intrinsic part of early hip hop that filtered into the mainstream.

Alongside the musical structures that create the funk feel, funk kickstarted a revolution of irresistible bass lines, outlandish fashion and free spirited attitude that has influenced our music, culture and outlook ever since.

Pee Wee Ellis – BAND LEADER & MD, SAX
China Moses & special guest OMAR MBE – VOCALS
Lady Sanity – RAPPER
Tony Remy – GUITAR
Camilla George – SAX, Dennis Rollins MBE - TROMBONE
Dan Moore – KEYS
Neville Malcolm –BASS
Daru Jones – DRUMS

'Mr.Ben' Ajose-Cutting & Samantha Haynes – THE LOCKSMITHS DANCE CO.

Produced by Sound UK. Join us on social: @soundukarts #FunkRevolution

ABOUT Pee Wee Ellis: Few musicians get to celebrate their 78th birthday knee deep in a new project charting the history of funk and its impact on music. Even fewer are still actively touring the world with their own bands or working in new collaborations. But after some 55 eventful years as a musician, band leader, arranger and composer Pee Wee Ellis can claim all those things.

His remarkable story spans six decades, starting in the 50s when he took himself and his sax off to New York City to find his heroes Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk and the great Sonny Rollins (who became his teacher and mentor.) A promising career leading jazz bands in Florida took an unexpected turn in 1965 when he joined James Brown's sensational Revue, playing alto. Within six months he was bandleader and musical director and was co-writing with James Brown. *Cold Sweat*, widely acknowledged as the first true funk record, and many of JB's hits for the next four years, including *Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud* were the fruit of this collaboration. www.peewee-ellis.com

ABOUT China Moses: China Moses brings the image of the soul jazz chanteuse bang up to date with style and sass. She is also a Singer-songwriter and producer in her own right. Daughter of jazz singer Dee Dee Bridgewater and "Roots" director Gilbert Moses, China has the love of her Black American culture in her blood. She hosts *Late Night China Moses* weekday nights on Jazz FM and is a former MTV VJ. www.chinamoses.com

About Sound UK: Sound UK produces and commissions extraordinary musical encounters in venues from national concert halls to village greens. It works with the world's most creative artists to create memorable performances that excite and move audiences across the country and beyond.

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WHAT DID YOU THINK?

Funk: A Music Revolution was produced by Sound UK and promoted by Brighton Dome. They'd love to know what you thought and are grateful for your feedback to help them produce more music tours like this in the future.

THANK YOU!



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