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### Con Funk Shun's Latest Album Is "More On The Upbeat"

By Loretta Manago  
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Lift the second word out of Con Funk Shun's name and in a word you know what the seven-member band is all about. Funk.

Their 10th Mercury-PolyGram album, "Electric Lady," proves that. According to the group, the new album is a definite departure from "Fever," the band's former LP.

"'Fever' was a very laid back kind of album. But 'Electric Lady' is really upbeat - more intense. We also decided to experiment a bit more on the album-go for some different kinds of sounds. We're all really happy with the results."

And well they should be. In putting the album together, the group decided to utilize the talents of no less than three producers, Maurice Starr who did New Edition's big hits, Billy Osborne of LTD, and Larry Smith who's worked with Whodini, Fat Boys, and Run DMC. Smith helped the band get that great rap sound for the "Electric Lady" track and the rest of the album features a lot of other dance floor bound hits like the synthesizer driven "Turn The Music Up" or the pop danceable "Rock It All Night." Each song featured on "Electric Lady" features compelling beats and memorable hooks and even though there's an accent on the faster tracks, the LP does contain some ballads, like the senuous "I'm Leaving You."

What "Electric Lady" represents is the progression of a group that was formed over 17 years ago. Then called Project Soul, Con Funk Shun was the brainchild of Michael Cooper and Louis McCall; then 10th graders at Vallejo High School in California.

The rest of the group came



CON FUNK SHUN

—Mercury recording artists

together a year later and today the members of Con Funk Shun remain the same, Michael Cooper-guitar and vocals; Karl E. Fuller, trumpet; Louis McCall, drums and vocals; Felton Pilate II, trombone, rhythm guitar, and vocals; and Danny Thomas, keyboards and vocals. As Project Soul the group soon became one of the premiere bands in the San Francisco area.

When the opportunity arose for the band to become the back-up band for Soul Children, Con Funk Shun moved its operation to Memphis. According to co-

founder, Michael Cooper, there were sound reasons for this decision.

"That's where it was happening-Stax Records, Isaac Hayes, Al Green, Willie Mitchell, the Staple Singers, Rufus Thomas, and the Bar Kays -- they were all from Memphis."

After backing The Soul Children in the film "Wattstax," Con Funk Shun struck out on its own, sweeping the college circuit and attracting the attention of potential record companies. One company that was to be drawn to the band was Mercury Records.

At the time Con Funk Shun was

opening for some very prestigious groups like Stevie Wonder, the Commodores, and Earth, Wine & Fire, they even had a couple of regional hits out. Con Funk Shun signed with Mercury-PolyGram in 1976.

While Con Funk Shun has spent years developing a sharp funk sound, they have not neglected to expand in the areas of pop and rock as well. Realizing that the key to a long period of success is versatility, Con Funk Shun seems to have adopted a musical policy of close no doors and investigate all doors.

### LaBelle, Cosby To Host NBC Special

..New York, NY - Patti LaBelle, whose show-stopping performance brought down the house in NBC-TV's "Motown Returns to the Apollo" special May 19, will star in her own special, "The Patti LaBelle Show," Thursday, November 21 (10-11 p.m. NYT), it was announced recently by Rick Ludwin, vice president, Specials and Variety Programs, NBC Entertainment.

"The Patti LaBelle Show" will reunite the dynamic songstress with superstar fellow Philadelphian Bill Cosby, who hosted the Motown special. Other guest stars will be Cyndi Lauper, Luther Vandross, Amy Grant and the Krofft Puppets.

While currently enjoying great success as a solo artist, LaBelle first broke into the star ranks in the 1960s with her group, Patti LaBelle and The Bluebells. She has since become known as the "Queen of Rock 'n' Soul." She has had a banner year, with another hit song, "New Attitude," from "The Beverly Hills Cop" soundtrack.