

Mp3 George Griffin - The Time Has Come



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Upbeat tunes which mystically warms and delights the hearts of many through an electrifying aviance of charisma and passion. 9 MP3 Songs BLUES: Rhythm Blues, URBAN/R&B: Contemporary urban Details: The George Griffin Band appears at the Chat Noir every Thursday, Friday Saturday night, 8pm to midnight. Dining and Cocktail Lounge. No Cover Charge. On Wednesday, The George Griffin Duo plays from 7:30 to 11:30 pm. Chat Noir 655 Anton Blvd. Costa Mesa, CA (714) 557-6647

GEORGE GENTRE GRIFFIN "THE MUSIC MAN" B I O G R A P H Y Encased within the stocky frame of this incredibly talented man is all the power, drive and guts that Americans have come to call "SOUL." His involvement with life is obviously immediate and the depth of his feeling is, at once, astounding and exciting! The force that flows from him, so openly, places him in the eyes of all his followers as one of the top singers and drummers around. GEORGE GRIFFIN'S interest in music began at the age of five in his native New Orleans, the jazz capitol of the world. At the age of sixteen he made his professional debut with the Dave Lewis Combo as a drummer and featured singer in Seattle, Washington. Since 1961, GEORGE has worked with such well known musical stars as Ray Charles, Lionel Hampton, Jimmy Witherspoon, Jr. Walker and the All Stars, Etta James, Sammy Davis, Jr., . . . and the list goes on. His affection for music is uniquely personalized. He is the best of the male rock/blues artists. GEORGE'S sound is that of a master jazz vocalist. The quality of his voice enables him to transcend the lyrics and the traditional character associated with such originally spirited tunes as "Big Boss Man," "Down Home Blues," "The Thrill is Gone" . . . turning them into astonishing, compelling expressions of pain and desperation as so sensually unveiled in his performance of "I've Been Loving You Too Long." Hearing GEORGE perform makes an evening complete--he displays a tremendous amount of energy and yet a compelling sensitivity, as well. Through his many vocal renditions of jazz favorites, ballads and original compositions,

he simultaneously keeps the rhythm going for the group. Still, GEORGE has a way of delivering a song that keeps the listener constantly aware of the context and the message the song is trying to deliver. To sing a song as it's supposed to be sung and play the trap drums at the same time is a difficult feat, but GEORGE pulls it off exceptionally well. GEORGE GENTRE GRIFFIN knows ALL the licks . . . i.e. he can be as sophisticated as the best music players from the big city, but underneath it all is New Orleans--where his genius was born; and where he learned the blues and what "SOUL" means. Therein lies the charm of GEORGE GRIFFIN . . . country roots and city wisdom . . . a thorough nature and a gentle humor . . . a gift for music and an urge to make it soft and lazy, romantic and happy, fierce and dynamic! * * * * * THE ROOTS OF GEORGE GRIFFIN THE MUSIC SCENE from the new book JIMI HENDRIX Voices From Home By Mary Willix George inspired many younger drummers. "In the forties, it was the big band sound," says Barney Hilliard, a graduate of Garfield and the University of Washington Law School, who played saxophone with The Dave Lewis Combo, and now plays with Carousel. "In the fifties we had small combos, three or four people. Rhythm was central to our music a heavy back beat and shuffles. Our drummer George Griffin- has been a legend in Seattle." "I know I have a gift, but Dave Lewis brought it out," says Griffin. "When we were coming up, Dave was a very shy person. But Dave is a genius. He has the ability to be where Quincy Jones is or higher. For me, Dave is the essence of the Seattle sound. The Dave Lewis Combo was the transition from rhythm and blues and rock to funk. When I asked other people to speculate about the source of the "jungle beat," someone guessed it was New York. I asked Barney Hilliard. "What we were playing in Seattle was not a New York sound," said Hilliard. "We weren't influenced by New York. Occasionally we heard musicians who came through Seattle, but mostly we were all influenced by records. For example, we got "Louie Louie" off the record by Richard Berry. We were doing it at Birdland back in 1958. The pioneer rhythm players were Tommy Adams and George Griffin." When Alex Palmer, the owner of the Black and Tan nightclub, painted GEORGE GRIFFIN in 8 foot high letters across the side of the building, George became a Seattle hero. He embodied the universal language of rhythm. George Griffin and I sat in a Long Beach coffee shop two days after my brother told me to call Barney, who told me where to find George. This book has come together as a serendipitous odyssey. Seattle was really a small town, a handful of separate, small communities and we belonged to the central area, the Garfield community. We were a small circle then, and we're a small circle now. It is that community anchor, that connection that has allowed this project to

unfold. People leave messages to call this person, or that person, and new material flows like a river. Or as Luther Rabb says, sometimes I tug people in. Whatever reasons people have for opening up, this project is clearly one that could go on and on. Meeting George Griffin felt like a signal for completion. For weeks I'd been immersed in memories of rhythms, rain, the mountains, the birds, the lake, and the lagoon in the Arboretum where as a child my soul felt at home. When George told me that before he goes to sleep he listens to a recording of rhythms, birds and rain, that he creates best in Seattle, and that he always like to go down to the lagoon, I knew I was on the home stretch. In some ways, I felt as though I were listening to my own voice. "Rhythm is earthy, haunting, and hypnotizing," says George. 'My work is sacred. I always say, 'God, I give you my life.' Rhythm is my heartbeat. When I was a kid in New Orleans I heard a lot of rhythms. I liked to listen to my own heart. Rhythm releases anxiety. It's healing. It's a universal language that everybody understands. It can put you in a trance or make you want to move."

George met up with Jimi in New York. "I went to a club in Manhattan where Jimi had been out. I was sitting at the bar when he walked in. He spotted me right away. 'George Griffin!' he said. What are you doing here?' I told him I was in New York with Bobby Taylor and the Vancouvers. 'You want to play?' he said. I said, 'Yeah.' It was really funny. We started playing and I didn't know what Jimi was playing. I thought it was a little jazz, a little funk, a little of everything, so I started playing, and to this day I always say it was the first time fusion was ever played. People were going crazy. We were playing so many different combinations of things and people were in awe, saying, 'What is this?' That was the highlight of my life. I know somebody in that audience had a tape recorder and got a tape recording of it. That's the last time I saw Jimmy. We said goodbye, and the next thing I knew he was dead. It was devastating."

THE DAVE LEWIS COMBO The Dave Lewis Combo was the band. They influenced all of us. I'm sure Dave was a big influence on Jimi. Dave Lewis and George Griffin and the other musicians in their combo were far better musically than any of the other groups. If Dave Lewis were playing commercially in today's market he would be considered a virtuoso. * * * * * The Time is Here and Now Take one part gravel dredged up from deep in the Mississippi Delta, add an anguished wail of the Blues that reaches in and grabs hold of your soul, and finish with the maturity that comes from a lifetime of paying dues and you've got George Griffin. It hasn't all been easy, but it's the maturing process that makes wine and Louisiana hot sauce just right and it's done much the same for George Griffin. The mellowing years in Seattle; gigs with Lionel Hampton, Jimmy Witherspoon, Ray Charles, Etta James, Sammy Davis Jr. and

the host of other greats who have employed his musical talents have provided Griffin with quality experiences to put into his musical stew. This man cooks!! These characteristics are all readily evident in The Time Has Come, Griffin's first album under his own leadership. He is ably backed up by Jimmy Felber on keyboards, James "Baby Hewy" Hewitt on guitars, Jerry Watts on bass, Chris Myers on drums, Joe Perez on sax and some imaginative harmonica work from "Harmonica Tom" Richmond. Well known for his innovative timekeeping on the drums, Griffin delegates those chores to Myers, and concentrates on vocals. The result: a varied menu of sounds guaranteed to get you moving and to help you become better acquainted with this extraordinary musician who has become a Southern California legend. The Time Has Come is an eclectic collection of tunes, from the antidrug message of When You can't Say No (Just say you gotta go), to an exploration of his roots in New Orleans Blues and A Pa Ne to the harddriving, red hot Pump Pump and Hell is On the Run. Griffin's original transformation of the traditional Happy Birthday song into Happy Birthday Blues is a marvel, a version you will want to hear again and again on your birthday. and the fascinating modern rendition of the traditional Stagger Lee is just what the blues doctor ordered. As is Griffin's trademark, every tune on the album is danceable, the rhythm section laying down a strong and steady beat, while Perez, Hewitt and Richmond take us to new heights. Not only has the time come for Griffin to put out this enjoyable collection of tunes the time is long overdue. I look forward to future releases Ken Wibecan * * * * * George Griffin "The Time Has Come" By Steve Pastis, Happening Magazine The Time Has Come, a collection of songs reflecting real life experiences, showcases the powerful talents of blues veteran George Griffin, who performs at Phil Trani's Restaurant in Long Beach every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Griffin talked about his career and his new CD just before he was set to perform at the release party for his new compact disc. 'I'm very happy with it,' he said about The Time Has Come, which features Jimmy Felber on keyboards, James "Baby Hewy" Hewitt on guitars, Jerry Watts on bass, Chris Myers on drums, Joe Perez on sax and some imaginative work from "Harmonica Tom" Richmond. "It's clean, it tells a story, it's not mechanically messed with and I'm pleased with it. I get very good comments about it." As he sat at a table in the back room of Lamar's Record Store in Long Beach on perhaps the hottest Saturday afternoon of the year, he sipped a Coke and responded to the question a writer feels most obligated to ask a blues musician: "What are the blues?" "The blues are just a feeling that you have inside of you that comes out happy, comes out sad," he responded. "it can hang you up so much that you can get stressful. The blues can get

you down when you worry if you don't have a paycheck, where you're going to live the next night. If you're living on the streets you got the blues. But what makes the blues happy is when you can say, 'Hey, I got a place to sleep. I got a place to work.' It's still the blues but it's happy. I've got to maintain, I've got to keep going. So to me it's a cycle of sadness and happiness, sadness and happiness. I worry about what makes me happy and I can translate that to the people. I can feel down and I'll sing to you and tell you how I feel and you'll feel it." Griffin, whose mother was a singer and dancer known as "Sweet Hazel," lived with his godparents in New Orleans until his mother moved from New York to Seattle. When she was settled there, she sent for her children to live with her. It was there that George Griffin started his musical career in the mid 50s. "I grew up in rhythm and blues," he recalled. "I started playing music professionally when I was 16 in Seattle. Back then we had a high school band when I was a junior. We were the band that played for white teen parties. The first gig, we were paid a buck apiece or something like that. We became the school idols. We started playing PTA dances and dances for other schools. "People from nightclubs started noticing that the band was drawing good so they started hiring us in nightclubs. Then we started working for booking agencies out of Seattle. We opened shows for Ray Charles, Ike and Tina Turner, Bill Haley and the Comets, Little Richard, Gene Vincent and the Sonny Thompson Band. We were young and coming tip. We had a good band." The band, the Dave Lewis Combo, opened for touring acts in Seattle, and sometimes in Portland and Vancouver. In addition to playing drums and singing with his band, Griffin started a career playing drums for headlining acts. He played for B.B. King in Portland when he was just coming up as a star," Lionel Hampton, Jimmy Witherspoon, Etta James and Sammy Davis, Jr. Playing drums for Davis at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas in 1962 was "one of the biggest thrills of my life," according to Griffin. "The guy was incredible. He was a musician's musician." His experience as a drummer for the Platters, however, was quite different. "Playing with the Platters was the worst day of my whole life," he said. "The guys in the Dave Lewis Combo didn't all read music, some of us did, some of us didn't. They hired us to back the Platters, so what we did was learn all their music from their records all the music, every arrangement down pat. Every arrangement. I remember we were saying, 'Bring on the Platters, we're ready for them.' They brought out the Platters, but they put out this sheet music with some dance thing before they set up their program. Blank. The keyboard player didn't know what was going on. Nobody knew what was going on. They stopped the show after the first number. They didn't even get through the first number and they closed the curtain. The guy said, 'We gotta get a piano

player. The drummer's all right, but we gotta get a piano player and a bass player in here to read this music.' I remember saying, 'You don't have to do that man, just sing your songs. The cats can play it just sing your songs. Go ahead, sing 'The Great Pretender.'" The piano player who was brought in, whom Griffin described as a "long hair," may have been able to read the music and play the right notes, but his playing was more appropriate for a classical performance or perhaps a Broadway play. Griffin, who remained as the drummer, was "dying" on stage. "The show to me was the biggest letdown to my career, but I thought that was just show business." The Platters experience notwithstanding, the Dave Lewis Combo was very successful, especially considering the ages of its five members "We made a lot of money as teenagers in school," Griffin recalled, "but it didn't get to our heads. We kept going to school and we all graduated." Griffin went on to attend Olympia Junior College and the University of Washington, where he majored in physical education and studied music. As he continued to perform with some of the top musicians in the country, he developed his versatility. "I could sit in and play drums with these people, so I had a good feeling for rock'n'roll and the blues and rhythm blues," he said. "Then it dawned on me, where are my roots? I could play jazz, I could play anything, but what do you really want to do? I found out when I was a kid playing back of all those people, hey, blues and rhythm and blues is my thing. So why not go back to your roots, George and do what you did best? "In the last 15 years, I found something in music that I could translate to people and make them feel happy. Just for that moment let me take care of your burdens and everything. I'm not a healer, but let me bring out that little thing for an hour or so and then when you leave, I hope you feel better because I have felt better. Sometimes, I feel like I put out a lot of energy and I haven't received any back and I feel real bad. And my girl will tell me, 'Hey man, you did a good job. Maybe it wasn't to your expectation, but people were happy.'" As he finished his Coke and his band was just about ready to start playing, Griffin was asked to explain the difference between the blues and rhythm blues. "Rhythm and blues is just a step up from the blues," he said. "It's a different transition of the way people want to play the music. It's so closely related, I don't know why people make a rap out of rhythm blues and blues. When you go into a club, as long as you can play blues and play rhythm blues, what's the difference? Why do you have to be an authentic blues person? I'm not an authentic blues person. Together it's all the blues. "Some people characterize the blues as authentic with the guitar, the laid back open notes, some of your Muddy Waters records, Papa John Creach. There's the down earth blues singer that doesn't mess with nothing but the blues." When he is not playing music, Griffin is

very active in community service. He was the first black director of the Boys Club in Seattle and he has served as program coordinator and counselor for the Sugar Ray Youth Foundation and as a crisis intervention worker in South Central Los Angeles for Community Youth Gang Services. 'I love kids he said. I still can see myself as some of those kids when I was In New Orleans I used to run around and I got into everything good. I made things happen for myself. I sold papers, I shined shoes, I danced on the street It's like I knew I could make the money and I knew I could do, it naturally, without any aim or anything, I just had fun doing what I did and people gave me money. So every kid I see I see a kid that could haw been like me. They go out there and go for it. I grew up down south, man I was drinking from different water fountains and riding in the back of the bus but I enjoyed my fife. The prejudice part didn't get on me I worked for myself and people respected me for it." He seems to still enjoy life, including working at Phil Trani's. 'Phil's is like a home base kind of thing. It's warm and I care about his business and he cares about me. I work hard to try to improve his business.' George Griffin is also very happy being where he is, living and performing in Long Beach. He likes the current music scene of the city, as well as its future potential. When asked what he would like to do next the veteran of 40 years in music responded, 'I want for us to play some of the festivals and represent Long Beach.' * * * * *

* * Trinity's lively Arts By JANE M. BELDEN jstewartbelden@snowcrest.net As I entered the annual Salmon Festival Saturday, I found myself moving to the bluesy tempo of the music filling the park, and I was drawn to the open tent where George Griffin and his band were performing. The George Griffin performance gave me all I was looking for from an audience perspective. This opinion is from one who is crazy about the Blues and most Jazz. A lot of other people thought so, too, as they were in line with me to buy his CD and have him autograph it. I didn't get to hear the whole concert so I have listened to the CD several times and found George Griffin to be a most satisfactory choice for the featured performer at the festival. He is based in Los Angeles, CA and has worked with stars such as Lionel Hampton and Ray Charles. We were privileged to have him in Trinity County (California). Thank you, Arts Council, for getting him to come north. The festival was held in Lee Fong Park in a most charming setting. The grass had greened up from recent rain and some of the trees had fruit still hanging from the branches, providing a natural backdrop for activities that were aimed at families and individuals of all ages. Festival Fun George Griffin and his band had the Salmon Festival in Weaverville, California rocking Saturday afternoon. Griffin is a veteran blues/jazz singer and drummer who lives in Los Angeles. The festival at

Lee Fong Park drew crowds to many varied forms of entertainment and information and education. * * * *

* * * * * George Griffin the Man Meeting George Griffin for the first time over a dozen years ago I was impressed immediately by his piercing eye to eye contact as he looked directly into my soul. He seemed sincerely interested in meeting me and hearing what I had to say. Now, many years later it is clear to me why this man of many talents delivers his music so honestly and without pretense. It is because he is a man of good character who speaks the truth and he pours out his heart to you giving a very real, straight from the heart, performance. I am proud to call this man my friend. . . . Bob Spaulding,

propmgrbob@aol.com, October 2002 * * * * * We've been swing dancing since the late 40's, always searching for that special dance rhythm and feel. We have danced to many different types of bands and combo's, but when you are blessed to dance or listen to a Blues group that produces a danceable beat you can't sit still to, that's special! George Griffin brings that kind of group together to create the energy that makes us want to dance to every tune he plays. Blues played with Soul like George creates is simply Feel Good stuff that gets us into a groove. On those days when you are really down, and you need a pick-me-up, you say, let's go listen and dance where George Griffin is playing. Love You George, Joe Carol Camasta Huntington Beach, California

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