

Original P set to play Friday

■ Parliament-Funkadelic members, minus George Clinton, will play old and new favorites.

BY JOSH KRAUTER
Senior staff writer

Music lovers may have to spread themselves very thin Friday.

As if live shows from punk rock goddesses L7 and country music outlaw Willie Nelson weren't enough, another legendary group of musicians is bursting

Concert Preview

The Facts

Who: Original P
Where: Royal Grove
When: Friday, Aug. 27, 9:00 p.m.
Cost: \$16
The Skinny: Original members of Parliament-Funkadelic play the hits that made them famous.

Lincoln's entertainment seems this weekend.

Four original members of Parliament-Funkadelic will be making booties shake at the Royal Grove on Friday night.

Although the concert is being billed as a Parliament-Funkadelic show, the band goes by the name Original P, said production manager Bob Dedeckere. George Clinton, co-founder of the group, won't be there, and he usually tours with the P-Funk name.

The group members, comprised of vocalists Calvin Simon, Grady Thomas, Fuzzy Haskins and Ray Davis, guitarist Billy Menz and drummer Ben Powers Jr., have all played with Parliament in its prime.

"The four vocalists have been on every recording from 1960 to 1981," Dedeckere said.

The singers started as the Five Parliaments, with Clinton, in the early 1960s as a soul/doo-wop group. They mutated into the funk/R&B/rock juggernaut Parliament-Funkadelic in the 1970s and stayed in the group until its dissolution in the early 1980s.

Original P will play "all of the hits" from the P-Funk era, as well as a few new songs from its latest album, "What's Dat Shakin'" on Westbound Records, Dedeckere said.

"People can expect to hear 'Tear the Roof Off,' 'Atomic Dog,' 'Flashlight,' 'Cosmic Slop' and 'Maggot Brain,'" he said.

The band usually draws a diverse crowd that complements the diversity of the music, Dedeckere said.

"(The group) attracts a rainbow audience," he said. "It's a combination of urban and alternative."

The band usually plays between two and three hours a night, Dedeckere said, so the audience should be prepared for a long night of funk.

"Bring your dancing shoes," Dedeckere said. "As Fuzzy Haskins says, 'We got back together because it was time to put the fun back in funk.'"

State of the Arts

NATURE OF A POET

Author held scientific passion

Editor's note: In this weekly series, we explore the lives and work of notable Nebraska artists from the 20th century. ■ He observed the world around him and then wrote about what he observed. ■ It was the unique ability to combine these two talents that made Loren Eiseley one of the most renowned Nebraska authors of the 20th century. ■ "No one in the last half of the 20th century has written better or more beautifully about the natural world or about science," said Carl Heintze in the February 1997 issue of Willow Glen Resident. ■

Eiseley — poet, anthropologist and philosopher — holds a place in the Nebraska Hall of Fame. His work, as a scientist and a writer, has continued to gather attention more than 20 years after his death. ■ Born in Lincoln in 1907, Eiseley grew up in a solitary world. He despised his deaf mother and seldom saw his father, a traveling hardware salesman. ■ Because of this, he had a lonely childhood, in which he retreated to reading books and writing about what he observed living on the south edge of Lincoln. ■ He had an interest in poetry that he learned from his father, a former actor who passionately read Shakespeare plays to his son when he was home. ■ At a young age, Eiseley showed his talent and interest for the written word. ■ At age 6, he wrote his first book. Called "Animal Aventures," the book was written in ink with photographs for pictures and chapter titles such as "Kitty's Adventure" and "The Kunning Fox." ■ Because of his interest in the outdoors and how the world worked, Eiseley believed his calling was to be a scientist. He pursued this by studying biology when he entered the University of Nebraska in 1925. ■ In a biographical film about Eiseley, he was described as a poet who was really a scientist and a scientist who was at heart a poet. ■ Eiseley's passion for nature continued while at the university, sending him on fossil-hunting expeditions with "Barbour's boys" in western Nebraska. ■ "Barbour's boys" were named for the man who sent them on their expeditions, Erwin Barbour, founder of what is now known as Morrill Hall. ■ On one of the expeditions, Eiseley and C.B. Schultz discovered the skull and jaws of a male mastodon, now on display in Morrill Hall. ■ Eiseley held the experiences and observations he made on these expeditions in his mind and in the notes taken during the trips. Many years later, he wrote poetic essays about them. ■

Although he was majoring in science, Eiseley also began to enroll heavily in English classes at the university. ■ One of his English professors, Lowry C. Wimberly, took a special interest in Eiseley's writing. Wimberly, who was also founder and editor of The Prairie Schooner magazine, began to publish much of Eiseley's poetry in the magazine and later made him a contributing editor. ■ It was from Wimberly that Eiseley developed some of the pessimistic views of the world that can be seen in his writing, said F.M. Tuttle, who has researched and written on Eiseley. ■ After being published in the Prairie Schooner, Eiseley's work was picked up by various other publications, garnering him national recognition. ■ Even with this recognition, Eiseley did not consider himself a writer or a poet, but he continued to write. ■ In 1933, after a short leave from the university and years of drifting during the Great Depression, Eiseley returned to Lincoln and earned a degree in anthropology. ■ He then entered graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania. During this time he kept busy with research and professional courses in anthropology. He was able to write poetry in his free time. ■ Eiseley received his doctorate in 1937 and, after teaching stints at the University of Kansas and Oberlin College in Ohio, returned to Pennsylvania. ■ There, he became a well-respected teacher and lecturer. Eiseley also kept to his solitary ways. He would end his lectures while walking out the doorway of the classroom in order to avoid having contact with his students. ■ Not until 1957 was Eiseley's first book, "The Immense Journey," published. ■ This book of essays, many referring to his experiences in Nebraska, was a huge seller and would go on to be printed in more than a dozen different languages. ■ For the remainder of his life, Eiseley would write. ■ A few of the many other books by Eiseley included "The Firmament of Time," a collection of lectures on how science has affected the way people view themselves, and "The Innocent Assassins," a collection of poems dedicated to the members of his fossil-searching parties in Western

Nebraska. ■ Christina Pappas is a graduate student in the political science department and president of the Friends of Loren Eiseley organization, which works to promote the writings of Loren Eiseley. ■ She sees a growing interest in Eiseley as a result of the upcoming millennium, she said. ■ "A lot of messages he gives point us in a direction that would be helpful in the 21st century," Pappas said. ■ "In his writing," she said, "he provides answers to the future." ■ She described Eiseley as one of the "preeminent nature writers" and "a literary naturalist." ■ Eiseley was unique because he was trained in the hard sciences and made it accessible through how he told his stories, Pappas said. ■ Assistant Professor of entomology Mary Liz Jameson is a member of the Friends of Loren Eiseley and teaches an honors class about Eiseley. ■ She said she was fascinated with Eiseley's philosophies of life and living and how his writing was about "the inner works of mind and nature." ■ Her class focuses on the philosophies and messages he was trying to get across in his writing, she said. ■ Sometimes, Jameson said, her class will go outside to study his writing. Being outside in the surroundings that Eiseley was writing about sometimes helps relay his meanings, she said. ■

Interest in Eiseley has already increased in his birthplace. Last January, a library being built on 15th and Superior streets was named after him. ■ The library board selected to name the library, expected to open in February 2002, the "Loren Corey Eiseley Public Library," said John Dale, assistant library director. ■ Eiseley's name was selected because the board was searching for an author of note from the Lincoln area, Dale said. It felt Eiseley was the best choice. ■ Eiseley died in 1977 at the age of 70. He was still living in Pennsylvania when he died. ■ After his death, a collection of Eiseley's unpublished work was collected in a book titled "The Lost Notebooks of Loren Eiseley." ■ The inside cover read: "The last book of one of the great authors and anthropologists of our time, these hitherto unknown journals are a rich mosaic of autobiography, observations on nature, and philosophical — sometimes mystical — musings on man and his place in the universe." ■ The book illustrates the lifestyle that led Eiseley to be the thinker and writer he was. ■ Eiseley said, "All great literature is, in the last analysis, the literature of solitude."

STORY BY JOSH NICHOLS ■ PHOTO BY LANE HICKENBOTTOM