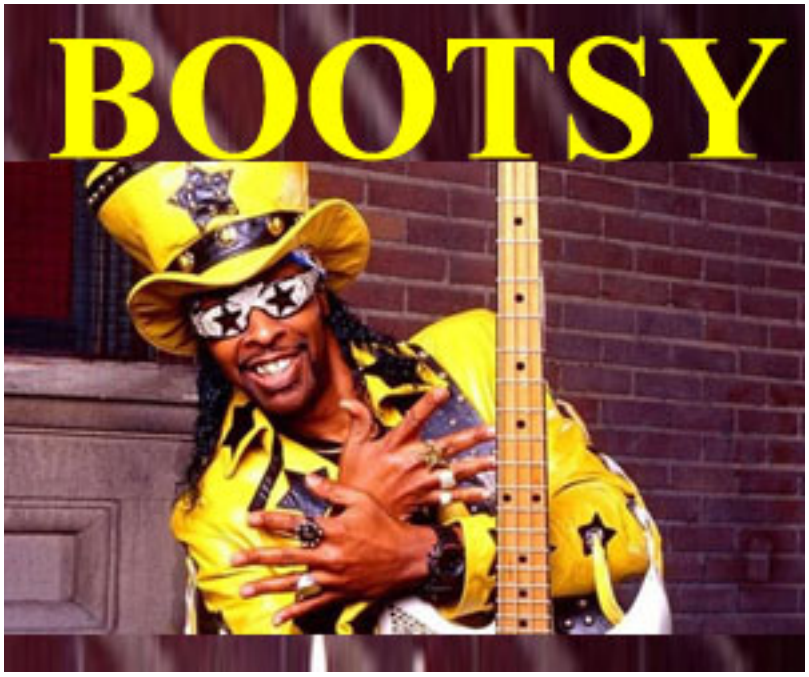

While Collins changed into a gold outfit with matching gold-and-black wig, the band performed a Sly Stone medley featuring “Higher,” “Dance to the Music” and “Everyday People.” The band also paid tribute to Parliament with a spot-on version of “Flashlight.

By CHRIS BOURNEA
Staff Writer

Cincinnati’s own Bootsy Collins brought his world tour to the LC Pavilion in downtown Columbus on June 20. The audience was a good mix of young people and “OGs” who are diehard Parliament Funkadelic fans from back in the day. The diversity of the crowd – Black and White, young and old – is a testament to funk’s far-reaching influence on other forms of music, from hip hop to indie rock.

Before taking the stage, Collins brought out a young singer who was announced as his protegee. The peppy young blond man, who performed a respectable version of “Your Love Keeps Lifting Me Higher,” brought to mind Justin Bieber. Perhaps Collins was inspired by Usher’s success in grooming Bieber for stardom and wants to do the same for up-and-coming musicians. Collins’ crew also informed the audience about his charitable foundation and his online Funk University that is grooming the next generation of bass players.

When the lights finally dimmed and the time came for Collins to come on, an elaborate animated video showed Collins boarding a spaceship manned by George Clinton. The video also featured a cameo by educator and cultural commentator Cornel West expressing his appreciation for funk music.

Collins took the stage in a red sequined outfit with his trademark sunglasses and top hat. Playing a bass shaped like a star, he opened with “Bop Gun.”

Of course, Collins couldn’t perform with a band dressed like ordinary people. Adding to Collins’ flashy showmanship, the backup musicians wore outlandish costumes, with the drummer in jail stripes, a background singer in a gold superhero outfit, a trumpet player in a Mardi Gras mask and a keyboard player in pajamas.

The enthusiastic crowd at the LC Pavilion proved that no one comes to a Bootsy Collins show to just sit there. There was much audience participation, with fans singing along, waving their hands, bopping their heads and even jumping up and down to the beat.

Much like his longtime collaborator George Clinton, Collins’ music consists not so much of structured songs with a chorus and verses, but more like free-form jam sessions that would go on for 10 or 20 minutes if he had the inclination to do so. The set list included dance-floor anthems “Do You Love Me” and “Wind Me Up.” Collins also delivered an extended version of the sexy ballad “I’d Rather Be with You,” on which he wowed the audience with an extended bass solo.

While Collins changed into a gold outfit with matching gold-and-black wig, the band performed a Sly Stone medley featuring “Higher,” “Dance to the Music” and “Everyday People.” The band also paid tribute to Parliament with a spot-on version of “Flashlight.” It’s too bad that Collins was offstage changing during the Parliament tribute, since fans would have loved to have seen him perform the P-Funk material that made him famous.

Collins also performed newer songs from his 2011 album “Tha Funk Capital of the World,” such as “Yummy, I Got the Munchies” (featuring the catchy chorus “I got the munchies for your love”) and “Don’t Take My Funk.” As long as Collins is alive and kicking, it’s a safe bet that funk will endure for years to come.