COLUMBUS OHIO -- Bobby Harris formed the Dazz Band in the late ‘70s, merging two Cleveland funk bands, Bell Telefunk and Mother Braintree. After myriad lineup changes, the end result was an eight-piece band featuring Harris, Skip Martin II, Pierre DeMudd on horns and vocals, guitarist Eric Fearman, bassist Michael Wiley, drummer Isaac Wiley, keyboardist Kevin Frederick and percussionist Kenny Pettus.

Funk legends, Cleveland’s own the Dazz Band, will be among the headliners of the King Arts Complex 13th Annual Heritage Concert Series on Thursday, July 28. The concert series attracts 2,500 to 4,000 people each week from all walks of life from surrounding communities and beyond for live music, food and more to Mayme Moore Park, adjacent to the Complex (867 Mt. Vernon Ave.)

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Harris and lead songwriter/guitarist Mike Calhoun's concept for the group was "danceable jazz." He shortened the description to "dazz" and called the group Kinsman Dazz. Under that name, the group had two minor hits in 1978 and 1979. After Calhoun left the group, they changed their name to the Dazz Band in 1980 and signed to Motown.

"Invitation to Love," the band's first record for Motown, was released in 1980. Once the group moved away from the more melodic, pop-oriented dance music that dominated their debut and started playing a tougher, more groove-oriented funk, the Dazz Band began racking up hits.

"Let It Whip," featured on their second album, "Keep It Live" (1982), reached number five on the pop charts and won a Grammy Award for Best Performance by an R&B Vocal Duo or Group. While they never reached that lofty chart position again, the Dazz Band had a string of six consecutive Top 100 albums that ran until 1986. During that time, they scored two other hit singles, "Joystick" and "Let It All Blow."

In 1985, Fearman and Frederick left the band and were replaced by Marlon McClain and Keith Harrison, respectively. The Dazz Band switched labels to Geffen in 1986 and releasing the album "Wild and Free."

In recent years, the Dazz Band has continued to tour, packing in fans at outdoor festivals and concert halls around the world. For more information about the group's upcoming performance at the Heritage Concert Series, call the King Arts Complex at (614) 645-5464 or visit Kingartscomplex.com.