

Handouts: Bios

Ralph Anwan Glover (aka Genghis & BG)

I was a founding member of the Backyard Band. In the late 1990s, we were considered go-go's new school. We consciously chose to stray from old school bands like Chuck Brown & the Soul Searchers, EU and Rare Essence to create a harder sound, a kind of "gangster go-go." We were young and we catered to young crowds. Like most other bands, Chuck Brown gave us our first break; we had our first concert at the Kilimanjaro in Adams Morgan in the early 1990s. I was the lead talker with Buggy on drums; Hot Sauce on percussion; Unc on percussion; Weensey & LJ on vocals; EB & Mike on keyboard; Keith Cali on guitar; and Los rapped. We were managed by Terrance "Coop" Cooper. Many fans and critics consider our album, "Skillet," go-go's best album.

Marion Barry

Many people don't know that I moved to DC in 1965 to start a local chapter of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the student-led organization that was committed to voting rights, democracy and freedom. And I wasn't the only activist who relocated to DC. We were all excited about a predominantly black city, with a black mayor (Mayor Walter Washington); we all wanted to be part of making DC a mecca for social justice. And we got pretty darn close. In the 1960s and 1970s, there were some wonderful coalitions among people who were active in the Black Power, Latino/a rights, women's rights, gay rights and statehood movements. There was also an amazing art and music scene here. The possibilities were endless. And I think it's in this context that go-go was able to take root and flourish.

Be'la Dona

We are an all-female band that developed a new go-go sound we call "sensual crank;" it puts a go-go spin on contemporary R&B. Formed in 2008, we are singers and musicians who are classically trained and love to perform a range of music across genres. Most of us graduated from Duke Ellington School of the Arts, and received bachelor degrees in music from Howard University or Bowie State. We are often compared to the group Pleasure, another all-female go-go band. And we don't mind! We happily carry on their legacy, as well as other go-go bands who came before us.

Trouble Funk

We are known for our big and futuristic sound. Keyboardist Robert "Dyke" Reed was our founder and leader. He graduated from Howard University with a degree in music. We still feel his loss. Tony "Big Tony" Fisher who became the new leader, played the bass, sang and served as lead talker. Dyke's brother, Taylor, played trumpet. Our best songs include "Drop the Bomb," "Pump It Up" and "Hey Fellas." The album, "Drop the Bomb" was issued in 1982 on Sugar Hill Records, the major rap label of the 1980s. Moreover, our songs are some of the most sampled sounds in hip-hop.

Chuck Brown (Charles "Chuck" Louis Brown)

What you want me to do? Wind me up, Chuck!!! This was the signature start-up to my concerts. It would be repeated over and over again until we got the groove where we wanted it. I feel so lucky that I was able to keep grooving for as long as I did. Although the beginnings of go-go don't lend themselves to an exact start date, it started percolating in the late 1960s/early 1970s. In 1966, I began putting a group together, which would become the Soul Searchers and renamed Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers in 1972. Before that, I was a member of Los Latinos. They were mainly Latino musicians who played funk. It was with Los Latinos that I got the idea of the bridge: linking songs with percussion so that there was a non-stop sound. And the rest is (go-go) history.

Peggy Cafritz

Mike Malone and I founded the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, a DCPS high school focusing on music and art. The school grew out of our work with the Workshops for Careers in the Arts in 1968. Ellington, which opened in 1974, has been a huge success. As other schools have seen a decrease in music and art, that's our bread and butter, along with traditional academic subjects. We are proud to claim a number of go-go musicians, including Kevin 'Kato' Hammonds, Meshell Ndegeocello and Sweet Cherie as attendees and graduates.

Club U

I was founded by Warren Williams and Paul D. Gwynn, and was located at the corner of 14th and U Streets, NW in the Frank D. Reeves Municipal Center, a local government building. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, starting in the late 1990s, I was a popular nightclub for go-go lovers. I also became a symbol of the city working with the private sector. I had a good run before I was forced to close in 2005 due, in part, to Ward 1 council member Jim Graham. Some, like author Natalie Hopkinson, who wrote about me in her book, *Go-Go Live*, see my forced demise as a symbol of the death of Chocolate City. Others see it as part of the complex history of music-making in DC.

the beat

I am the most critical component of go-go. Without me, go-go doesn't exist. I am complex, syncopated, polyrhythmic and ancient. Over three hundred years ago, I traveled from West Africa and Central Africa in the hearts, minds, muscle memory, fingertips and instruments of women, men and children who were brought to the Americas by Europeans. You can hear me in the clave beat of Afro-Cuban mambo rhythms, in Trinidadian calypso and soca, and in Brazilian samba. In go-go, my sound is: boomb, bah, boomb, boomb-bah-boomb. I achieve that combination mainly with the bass drum, snare drum and hi-hat. I can also be enhanced by conga drums, timbales and hand-held cowbells.

Thomas Sayers Ellis

The Maverick Room. Remember that? I'm talking about the club that was alive in the 1970s. I think it's so important that I used it for the title of one of my books of poetry. I have been documenting the history of go-go for more than twenty years—as a poet, a photographer and curator. In 2011, I curated what's considered the first exhibition of go-go photos. I'm also completing a photographic history of go-go. When I'm not in DC taking photos, I am in New York working as an Assistant Professor of Writing at Sarah Lawrence University. I'm also a proud alumnus of Dunbar High School.

James Funk (aka Jas Funk & James “Funk” Thomas)

My connection to go-go goes back to (at least) 1976, when I was the DJ between sets for Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers. Chuck encouraged me to start doing go-go. With my brother, Quentin “Footz” Davidson, a member of Young Dynamos (an R&B band), we created Rare Essence (RE) in 1976. It was truly a family affair! My mother, Ms. Annie Mack, managed the band and I was the lead talker. My favorite RE songs are “Body Moves” and “Lock It.” Also, I never stopped DJing: I still host a radio show with Captain Fly on WPFW, 89.3 called Old School House Party.

Kevin “Kato” Hammonds

I am a musician and journalist. My most recent contribution to go-go have been my role as historian and archivist. I founded Take Me Out to the GoGo (TMOTTGoGo), which includes a website, online magazine and podcast. This is a major resource for information on go-go, past, present and future. I have been active in music and arts virtually all of my life. As a child, I was active in CUE (Children's Urban Arts Ensemble), the Bren-Carr Dancers and the T-N-T Poppers. I attended Duke Ellington School of the Arts. At the age of 17, I wrote a play entitled Buddies, which was performed Off-Broadway by Denzel Washington and Anna Maria Horsford. And, of course, I played in several go-go bands, including Pure Elegance, Little Benny and the Masters, and Proper Utensils.

Tony Williams (aka Jungle Boogie)

I was involved with go-go in the early days, most notably with Rare Essence (RE). I played the congas. The congas are tall, narrow, single-headed Cuban drums with roots in West African drums. Most funk bands, as well as Chuck Brown, played with four large congas. RE couldn't afford four, so we ordered two large ones and two small ones called “Junior Congas” and later “goomboxes.” It turns out that I was able to make some incredible, unique sounds from that combination, so the goombox became part of the classic go-go sound.

Jim Graham

I don't think it's fair for me to be painted as the poster child for anti-go-go city officials. As Ward 1 council member, it is my duty to insure the safety of all residents of the city's most populous ward. Since 1998, I have been committed to improving and ensuring the quality of life for residents in my ward and throughout the city. Yes, in 2005, I wholeheartedly supported the revocation of Club U's liquor license. What else could I do? I had to respond to the stabbings and shootings, and the hundreds of weekly complaints about the violence.

The Roll Call

Although I'm not a musician or a lead talker, I'm central to the go-go experience. People who go to a go-go not only want to see their favorite bands and dance, they also want to have their neighborhood or crew acknowledged. A cousin to the shoutout, the roll call is a go-go tradition in which the lead talker shouts out the names of those in attendance who have written their names on t-shirts or pieces of paper. Here is an example of a typical roll call: “I see Petworth's in the house, oh yeah. And Deanwood's here, too. Oh yeah. And I see Charles is in the back. Say what now.”

Pentecostal Church service

This might sound sacrilegious but I have a lot in common with go-go. We both have long services/concerts without a time-specific end. We both require the full and active participation of members/audiences in order to have a successful and transformative experience. We are both rooted in and draw strength from West African and Central African traditions. One of the most important ones is repetition. It is repetition that ground and cohere the preachers/musicians and members/audiences together. Repetition also enables the ability to “bring on the feeling” that ushers in the Holy Spirit and the sweat. Other church services—African Methodist Episcopal (AME), Seventh Day Adventist and Baptist—also have similar traditions.

the pocket

I refer to two things—a special space in a song and a documentary. First, the pocket is the space in a song in which the lead talker freestyles about the news of the day. The music continues to play in the background but the focus is on communicating with the audience. The content can be light-hearted or serious, depending on how the lead talker is feeling. Second, “The Pocket” is a documentary that was produced by two filmmakers who were students at Georgetown University.

Nico Hobson

If there were a reality show about my life, it would probably be titled, “The Accidental Archivist.” Because go-go thrives on live shows, and people count on being able to purchase the tapes & CDs of those shows, my vast collection of tapes & CDs is central to the history of go-go. I began selling tapes out of a rolling suitcase twenty years ago. From 1993-2000, I could be found every day at the corner of 12th and F Streets, NW. I carried my inventory in my blue van and set-up shop in front of it. I have the master recordings in storage and hope to have all of the recordings digitized someday.

Timbales

I have had a strong presence in go-go since its beginning. Bounce Beat, which is a new musical cousin in go-go, features me as a primary instrument. I look like two drums suspended side by side on a tall stick. Technically, I am two shallow-headed drums with metal casings. And I am often paired with an attached cowbell. The musician uses a variety of stick strokes, rim shots, and rolls to make me sound good. I originated in Cuba and one of the most well-known timbale players is *Tito Puente*.

Young Senators

We were considered a top band in the city. We were major rivals with the Soul Searchers back in the 1960s when we were both primarily doing R&B and funk covers at go-gos—which at that time meant dance halls, parties or function. One of our most famous songs was “The Jungle.” That song, in fact, paved the way for the Soul Searchers to become the #1 band. Why? Because “The Jungle” caught the attention of Eddie Kendricks who invited us to join him on a world tour. How could we say no?

Rare Essence

Also known as RE, we began as a group in 1976. We are credited with being central to the development of “the beat” in the late 1970s and helping to cultivate the classic go-go sound that DC knows and loves. Donnell and Whiteboy were lead talkers, and Go-go Mickey played congas and rototoms. Trumpeter Anthony Harley, aka Little Benny, who later formed Little Benny and the Masters, was a member of RE in the 1980s. thanks to James Funk, a popular dj who played gigs with the Soul Searchers and his brother, Quentin 'Footz' Davidson, co-founded the band.

Horns

Although I'm not in many contemporary go-go bands, I was initially adopted into go-go because of the genre's genesis from funk music, which usually included trombones, trumpets and saxophones. I was also able to continue to have a place in go-go because of the prevalence of horns in DCPS marching bands. Many of the students who played in marching bands in elementary, junior high and high schools were also members of go-go bands. I began to fall out of favor by 2000 for a number of reasons

Mambo Sauce

We were founded in 2003 by William “Malachai” Johns and Treehouse. Our name derives from the mystery sauce that can be found at Chinese/Soul Food carry-outs throughout the city. Our style is a nod to the past and the future. Our musicians include a lead talker, vocalist, drummer, timbale player, guitarist, bassist and keyboardist. We blend go-go percussion with well-crafted songs, explosive raps and sultry melodies. One of our best songs is “Welcome to DC” (2007), which became the unofficial intro song to the Washington Wizards. The song also appeared on the Billboard Magazine’s Hip-Hop/R&B charts, the first go-go song to do so in 20 years.

Call & Response

I can be found throughout a range of black cultural traditions in the United States and beyond. For example, in traditional Baptist church services when the preacher says, “Can I get an amen?” and the congregation responds “Amen.” The same thing happens in go-go, albeit in a more secular vein! I work best when the musicians and the audience are really in the groove together and the call and the response seems seamless. Years of practice and work went into building this tradition. Every musician and band develops their signature call(s). And the audience has to feel it enough and hear it enough in order to be moved to a response. Trust me, it doesn't always stick the first time. But when it does, it's pure beauty.

Gregory “Sugar Bear” Elliott

I am one of the original members of Experience Unlimited aka EU. We chose the name “Experience” because of our respect for The Jimi Hendrix Experience and “Unlimited” because we didn't want to limit the range of our music. I played bass and served as bandleader. The other original members include Andre' “Pops” Lucas on conga, Ronald “Preacher” Roundtree on drums, Donald Fields on guitar and Rufus Lassiter on guitar. We all lived in Southeast and attended Ballou Senior High School. We are most known, at least nationally, for our big hit, “Da Butt,” that was featured in Spike Lee's film “School Daze” (1988). Da Butt won “Soul Train’s” best R&B/Soul Single for a Group in 1989. One of my favorite moments was performing on a show with Bob Dylan in 1989. During the day, I teach special education at TC Williams High School and EU is still rocking the stage night after night.

Sweet Cherie

I began playing piano at the age of five, classically trained by the late Mamie Ronca. I attended the Duke Ellington School of the Arts under the direction of saxophonist Davey Yarborough. At Ellington, I competed in several piano and violin competitions. Upon graduation, I was crowned Miss D.C. National Teenager (sponsored by Wynton Marsalis) and received a two-year scholarship to Oklahoma City University. I also attended Virginia Commonwealth University and graduated cum laude at Howard University, receiving a BA in Jazz Studies, under the tutelage of Bob Hallihan and Geri Allen. I am the bandleader of Be'la Dona, an all-female band that plays a new go-go sound called "sensual crank." I have performed with Chuck Brown, EU, Raheem Devaughn, Sir Elton John, Erykah Badu and many more. I have won two Washington Area Music Awards (WAMA) with Be'la Dona and three for best instrumentalist.

John "JB" Buchanan

I am a product of the DC Public Schools Instrumental Music Program. By the 7th grade I could read music, play the flute and trombone and had learned to play jazz. I performed with the DC Youth Orchestra Program, first on French horn and then on trombone. Later, I studied composition in college and lead my own soul band, "The Magnificent Seven," the crossover group, "Melting Pot," and jazz combo, "Coatis Mundi" at the University of Notre Dame. I first heard the Soul Searchers at Byrne Manor in 1970 and sat in with the band after rehearsal in Horace Brock's basement. I was invited to join the band playing trombone after I graduated from college in 1971. I gradually added the keyboards to my repertoire and played electric piano and synthesizer. I wrote or co-wrote most of the songs on our first three albums: "We the People" (1972), "Salt of the Earth" (1974) and "Bustin' Loose" (1978).

Stanley Cooper

I started playing guitar at age thirteen, inspired by the sounds of Jimi Hendrix, Ernie Isley, George Benson. I joined my first go-go band, Prophecy Band & Show (everyone was a "Band & Show" back in those days), in the early 1980s. Deeply immersed in all things go-go during my tenure with Prophecy Band & Show, my guitar influences included Andre "Whiteboy" Johnson (Rare Essence) and Chuck Brown. As my technical facility grew, I began to perform with R&B, Funk, and Smooth Jazz bands, bringing influences from those genres back to go-go. My next go-go endeavor was with CJ's Uptown Crew. CJ, former saxophonist with EU, Redds & the Boys, and Little Benny & the Masters, fostered and encouraged my development as a complete musician (songwriting, background and lead vocals, and keyboards/guitar synthesizer). My motto was "Don't call the hall, I do it all!" Today I have my own group, 76 Degrees West which fuses all musical styles with a go-go flavor. I made a promise to myself long ago that no matter how far I went as a musician, I would always have a place for go-go.

The Beat: Go-Go Music from Washington, DC

I am a book on the history of go-go written by Kip Lornell and Charles Stephenson. There has been very little scholarly attention to go-go. Lornell teaches in the Music Department at George Washington University and Stephenson is a political and cultural activist, and original manager of Experience Unlimited (EU). I can teach you about the early roots of go-go, the influences, major bands, the entrepreneurs and what it feels like to attend a go-go. I am also illustrated with dozens of photographs, most of which were taken by Thomas Sayers Ellis. You will also find a list of all the go-go bands that the authors were able to find. Can you believe that there have been more than 100 bands?

Milton "Go-Go Mickey" Freeman

I am known for my fast hands on congas and my raw beats that became a staple for many area conga players. I won "Congo Player of the Year" in 2006 at the first Go-Go Awards presented by WKYS, and again in 2007. I have also won two individual "Wammies" from the Washington Area Music Association (WAMA) and five as a member of Rare Essence; RE also received a spot in WAMA's Hall of Fame. Counting percussionist and Prince protégé Sheila E. as an inspiration, I was also inspired by local legends Jungle Boogie and Ricky "Sugarfoot" Wellman. I joined Reality Band in 1980 and followed that with stints in Redds & the Boys, Ayre Rayde, and several other go-go groups, before joining Rare Essence in 1984. Today I perform with Familiar Faces and am working on a project with my sons, Mickey and BJ.

Maxx Kidd

I moved to Washington, DC in 1960 and quickly immersed myself in the music scene. While I had experience as a singer, I have been most interested in music production. I am proud to say that I have been a part of the go-go scene since its inception and have contributed to the development of its signature sound through my production techniques. Check out Chuck Brown's "Blow Your Whistle" and see if you can hear my unique production techniques. In 1976, I founded the first record company to focus on go-go music. The label, T.T.E.D., produced 7-inch and 12-inch singles, long-play records and audio cassettes. The label was strong for more than a decade, partnering with Island Records to produce bands and the film, *Good to Go* (1986).

William "Ju Ju" House

I am a multigenerational musician; you could say it's in my blood—from my grandfather, my father and I've passed it on to my son. I first picked up drumsticks when I was six years old in order to play drums at my dad's church, and I've been playing ever since. I first played with the Peacemakers, one of the early go-go groups that not many people remember. I practiced and played so intently that I developed my own unique style. As a result, I had the opportunity to perform internationally with go-go bands, as well as Chaka Khan, David Sanborn, George Benson and many others. Through the years I have loved go-go, but I have to admit, I'm a purist. I like the old go-go sound and would love to see it resurge.

Bounce Beat

I originated in 2003 with the band TCB. When the P.A. System malfunctioned at a performance, percussionist Eddie "Luv" McCoy and former drummer Neal Thomas kept the music going with me. They had been working on my sound for awhile and were waiting for an opportunity to test me in front of an audience. What do I sound like? I'm a much faster version of go-go, relying less on melody and structure, and more on rhythm. My main instruments are timbales, drums, keyboards and bass. I am very popular among teenagers. In fact, there's an annual teen awards show names after me: The Bounce Beat Teen Awards.

The Washington Post

I was founded in 1877, making me the oldest *extant* newspaper in the city. My coverage of go go is quite mixed. I admit that on the front page and the Metro Section I am very likely to include articles relating to go-go and violence. As a result, the accusation that I am anti-go-go is understandable. One article, with the title “Go-go Slaying” is a perfect example. However, in the music section of the newspaper and online, I eagerly review performances and new music. In 2005, Chuck Brown was featured in a television ad promoting me. I was so happy when he agreed to appear in the ad. His endorsement is essential to how I'm viewed in the city, especially among African Americans. And after his death, I devoted the front page (and the home page) to his life and legacy. His importance to the city is undeniable. Maybe I need to consider sharing the importance of go-go to the city on the front page more often.

Globe Poster Printing Co.

Do you remember those 2 ½x3 feet, bright pink, green, yellow and orange posters stapled to posts throughout the city that advertised go go shows? Well, we made those. We are Bob Cicero and Frank Cicero, former owners of Globe, which was located in Baltimore from 1929-2011. In the late 1950s & 1960s, Globe began experimenting with screen printing—using fluorescent inks (also called DayGlo)—to make our posters stand out. We had no idea that this decision would help us to create our signature style. We used this new design style with R&B bands of the 1950s and 1960s. And then when go go began, we made posters for all those bands, too. We never thought of our work as art. For us and the bands, it was an inexpensive form of advertising.

Chocolate City

No one knows who really deserves the credit for coming up with my name, “Chocolate City,” for DC. But we do know it was the band *Parliament* who made it popular with their “Chocolate City” song and album (1975). One of the lines in the song is: “There's a lot of chocolate cities around....But you're the capital, C.C.” *Parliament* was celebrating the fact that DC—the nation's capital and a world capital—was a majority-black city. (In fact, DC was the first majority-black city in the U.S. in the 20th century.) The band, and all the people who began using my name, was celebrating the end of legal segregation and the beginning of African Americans gaining true political and social power. Dig this: Parliament envisioned an African American president 33 years before President Obama's first term.

D.C.'s Political Status

I have a unique status in the U.S. I am technically a federal district, which means that the federal government plays a major role in how I'm governed and how I spend money. This unique status goes back to the Constitution which states that Congress has the authority to “exercise exclusive legislation” over me. It was ratified at a time (1789) when I was a new national capital with a small population. Now, of course, I'm a full-fledged city with more than 600,000 residents. Did you know that, in the 20th century, Washingtonians couldn't vote for a mayor or city council until “Home Rule” was passed in 1973! And this only happened because residents organized to gain this political power. Since then, many residents have been organizing to end DC's colonial status and to make DC a state in order to have full representation in Congress and full control over its own local affairs. (It's called the Statehood Movement.) And that's why DC license plates say, “Taxation Without Representation.”

Handout #2A What's My Name? What's My Story?

What is your name?

What is one thing of significance about your own identity?

Meeting others:

1. Find someone who can tell you about go-go's African roots.

Who/what did you meet?

What did you learn?

2. Find one band from the 1970s.

What is their name?

Share one thing you learned about them:

Handout #2B What's My Name? What's My Story?

What is your name?

What is one thing of significance about your own identity?

Meeting others:

1. Find one band from the 1970s.

What is their name?

Share one thing you learned about them:

2. Find someone who can tell you why is Chuck Brown considered the "Godfather of go-go."

Who did you meet?

What did you learn?

Handout #2C What's My Name? What's My Story?

What is your name?

What is one thing of significance about your own identity?

Meeting others:

1. Find someone/thing who can tell you where go-go bands would play, other than nightclubs.

Who/what did you meet?

What did you learn?

2. Find one performer (other than yourself if you are a performer).

What is their name?

Share one thing you learned about them:

Handout #2D What's My Name? What's My Story?

What is your name?

What is one thing of significance about your own identity?

Meeting others:

1. Find at least one female musician associated with go-go.

Who did you meet?

What did you learn?

3. Find the names of two of the most popular songs from the 1970s and 1980s.

What are they?

Had you heard of them before?

Handout #2E What's My Name? What's My Story?

What is your name?

What is one thing of significance about your own identity?

Meeting others:

1. What are some of the biggest misconceptions about go-go?

List at least one:

Who did you meet who helped you answer this question?

2. Find at least one instrument that was central to early go-go bands that isn't often present in contemporary go-go bands?

Name at least one:

Who did you learn this from?

Handout #2F What's My Name? What's My Story?

What is your name?

What is one thing of significance about your own identity?

Meeting others:

1. Find someone who can tell you about the role of the audience in go-go music?

What is it?

Who did you meet who helped you answer this question?

2. Find someone who can tell you about the connection between the Pentecostal church and go-go.

What is it?

Who did you learn this from?