



Photo: NYTNS

drugs," here, she is burger-flipping casual, "acid, mushrooms, marijuana; some of them I still do, some I don't. I didn't care about my parents at all, I was really disrespectful of them. In hindsight, it was clear that I was obviously very upset about a lot of things – not being able to be heard, so ..."

The word dissipates, and she is quiet.

Handler prefers to focus on the comic aspects of her family life – her father, Seymour, a retired Jewish used-car salesman whose pride in her achievements still fails to ignite her enthusiasm. She is at her comedic best with his evergreen libido, which she discusses to riotously intrusive impact in *Chelsea*

Chelsea Bang Bang. "He has a prescription for Cialis," she says. "I don't know who is ... garnering that, but obviously there's somebody out there who's ... probably being paid to have sex with him."

Deciding that college "would be a waste of time", Handler left home at 19. She was, she says, promiscuous in her youth ("umm ... yeah!"), and, like all those with a refracted desire for intimacy, "promiscuous in general". A current sex tape fiasco – an old audition reel that cuts to footage of a topless, seemingly inebriated Handler appearing to engage in coitus – has been dismissed by her as exactly that: a joke. But if the tape is, in fact, simply an old audition reel,

questions about her sense of personal value remain.

"I had a terrible attitude," she says, entirely without humour, of the five long years she spent waitressing in her 20s. "It wasn't funny if you were waiting for your food. My mum taught me a lot about acceptance, but I didn't always practise it; I've done things I wasn't so proud of when I was younger. My frustration was mostly based on the fact that I just wanted to get going, but I didn't know what form success would take. I just wanted to have a life. When I was waiting tables, I was just waiting for the rest of my life to start. It was only when I had a show that I started to feel like I was having a good time."

Blue notes Robin Lynam

"The record companies didn't even know what the hell we were doing back then," Stanley Clarke says as he looks back on the heyday of jazz-rock fusion in the early 1970s. "But they were selling records, and people were coming out to see the shows. We were as loud as rock bands, but we brought all kinds of technique to it. It was a great time."

His latest album, *The Stanley Clarke Band*, on Heads Up, harks back to his music of that era, played with the Return To Forever outfit and on his groundbreaking solo albums, *Journey to Love*, *Stanley Clarke* and *School Days*.

One track in particular, *Larry Has Traveled 11 Miles and Waited a Lifetime for Vishnu's Report*, pays tribute to the most influential fusion bands – Larry Coryell's 11th House, Miles Davis' electric groups, Tony Williams Lifetime, Return To Forever, Mahavishnu Orchestra and Weather Report. Clarke and Weather Report's Jaco Pastorius rewrote the book on playing the electric bass in jazz, and although Pastorius is more reverently regarded, perhaps because he died young, Clarke has arguably been the more influential. His percussive slap technique is now ubiquitous not just in jazz but also in rock, soul and R&B.

Clarke is also a superb acoustic bass player, and his previous album *Jazz in the Garden* featured him in an acoustic trio with pianist Hiromi Uehara and Return To Forever drummer Lenny White.

For the new set, however, he has brought out his full arsenal of basses, ranging from his trademark Alembic four string to the electric piccolo bass he developed with luthier Carl Thompson. On *Sonny Rollins* – dedicated to the great saxophonist, with whom Clarke has worked – he plays an acoustic bass that belonged to Charles Mingus.

"It was given to me by Bill Cosby many years ago, and I haven't modified it in any way since Charlie used it," says Clarke. "So the track has this really

classic sound that I like a lot. The tones I could pull from this bass were extraordinary."

Long-standing fans, however, will be pleased to hear Clarke returning to his signature funky "pop and slap" electric sound on most of the tracks. Although the album is bass dominated, there are other prominent solo voices. Uehara returns – as does White, as co-producer – and Clarke has also deployed the talents of keyboardist Ruslan Sirota, drummer Ronald Bruner Jr, saxophonist Bob Sheppard, and guitarists Charles Alturas and Rob Bacon. Cheryl Bentley from Manhattan Transfer also features as a guest vocalist.

"Everyone on this project brought their own music and their own ideas," Clarke says. "The styles of the individual tunes may be different, but the continuous thread that runs through the whole record is the fact that we're all operating as a unit on each track."

Take Three

Three of the best CDs featuring Stanley Clarke on bass.

- *The Bass-ic Collection* (1997, Sony Music): a well-selected retrospective featuring the best of Clarke's solo work between 1974 and 1990, including such signature tunes as *School Days*, *Journey to Love*, *Silly Putty* and *Jamaican Boy*.

- *Loading Zone* (1977, Wounded Bird Records): Clarke produces and

plays on what was meant to be a breakthrough album for blues-rock guitarist Roy Buchanan. Sadly it didn't sell, but check out the inspired guitar bass duet *Adventures of Brer Rabbit and Tar Baby*.

- *Return To Forever Returns* (2008, Eagle Records): one of the best of the early 70s jazz-rock fusion bands breathe new life into vintage material. *El Bayo de Negro* is Clarke's show-stopping bass feature.



Stanley Clarke

My playlist Tommy Chan, CEO, Love Da Records

1. *Forever & Ever Amen* – The Drums
They've been lauded by the BBC, the *New Musical Express* and MTV, and I love their 1980s-influenced sound.

2. *Even Though* – Morcheeba
Finally Morcheeba are back, and even better than before. Their sound is just too beautiful.

3. *Tenderoni* – Kele
A great track off the first solo album by the lead singer of Bloc Party. Personally, I like this album more than Bloc Party's work.

4. *Boots of Danger, Wait Up* (DOM remix) – Tokyo Police Club
If you like the sounds on France's Kitsuné label, you cannot miss this.

5. *Goal! England* – We Are Scientists
There were Facebook petitions calling for this to be made the official World Cup anthem and BBC Radio 1 played it whenever England took to the field.

