
Questlove Reflects on Ignoring Struggling Black Artists' Needs

Description

Questlove has candidly shared his reflections on mental health, expressing regret over his inability to intervene for some of his past collaborators who faced significant struggles.

During a question-and-answer session following the screening of his latest documentary, *SLY LIVES! (aka The Burden of Black Genius)*, the acclaimed musician and Oscar-winning director drew parallels between Sly Stone's decline from stardom in the 1970s and the immense pressures that African American artists frequently endure. Questlove, whose full name is Amir Thompson, lamented witnessing the deterioration of numerous musicians he worked with during their pursuit of success.

"I can only think of one who seems to have emerged unscathed," remarked Questlove, now 54, referencing 12 artists he collaborated with at Electric Lady Studios in New York City. "It is disconcerting that out of those 11, there invariably exists a moment of sabotage or panic that threatens to derail their careers."

"I often wish I could have staged an intervention," he added wistfully.

Lauryn Hill at the 1999 Grammys.

VINCE BUCCI/AFP via Getty

In crafting this unconventional documentary, Questlove had numerous artists in mind, including SZA, Solange, Michael Jackson, Prince, Whitney Houston, and Lauryn Hill.

He described the film as "perhaps my closest attempt to sound the alarm for every artist I've ever encountered."

Acknowledging his own struggles with the destructive impulses that accompany fame, he reflected on why he previously felt unmotivated to intervene.

Prince in 2009.

BERTRAND GUAY/AFP via Getty

"My tendencies to overwork and overeat resonate with panic. My struggles are perhaps even more pronounced," Questlove elaborated. "Yet, unlike his [Stone's] vices, mine are less conspicuous."

Since ceasing performances in 2020, Questlove has dedicated himself to therapeutic practices, advocating for the importance of prioritizing mental health.

The latest documentary project from Questlove, who previously directed the Oscar-winning *Summer of Soul* and *Ladies and Gentleman... 50 Years of SNL Music*, chronicles the life of Sly Stone, founder of the iconic



funk-rock ensemble, Sly and the Family Stone, known for their influential hits from the late 1960s and early 1970s, including "Everyday People" and "Family Affair." Stone, who is now 81, has publicly battled substance abuse for many years.

Scheduled for release in 2025, Questlove believes *SLY LIVES! (aka The Burden of Black Genius)* arrives at a time when societal awareness will be heightened and "we're on a beneficial path."

"I hope that many more artists will see this film and begin to ask the necessary questions and embark on their own journeys of self-discovery," he concluded.

SLY LIVES! (aka The Burden of Black Genius) is set to be available for streaming on February 13 via Hulu.

Vocabulary List:

1. **Documentary** /ˌdɒk.jʊ'men.tər.i/ (noun): A film or television program that provides a factual report on a particular subject.
2. **Struggles** /ˈstrʌɡ.əlz/ (noun): Difficulties or challenges faced in life or during a specific activity.
3. **Intervene** /ˌɪn.tə'veɪ.n/ (verb): To come between so as to prevent or alter a result or course of events.
4. **Deterioration** /dɪ,tɪə.ri.ə'reɪ.jən/ (noun): The process of becoming progressively worse.
5. **Sabotage** /'sæb.ə.tɑːʒ/ (noun): Deliberate destruction disruption or damage to something often used in contexts of undermining.
6. **Reflecting** /rɪ'flek.tɪŋ/ (verb): Thinking deeply or carefully about something.

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. What is the process of breathing new life into something called?

- Option: Revitalizing
- Option: Established
- Option: Emphasize
- Option: Tribute

2. What are assertions made without proof called?

- Option: Empowered
- Option: Lamenting
- Option: Allegations
- Option: Posthumously

3. What is another word for skillfully made or constructed?



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- Option: Crafted
Option: Contenders
Option: Cerebral
Option: Antagonists
4. What type of film presents facts and information about a subject?
Option: Struggles
Option: Documentary
Option: Intervene
Option: Deterioration
5. What is the act of giving special importance or attention to something?
Option: Revitalizing
Option: Tribute
Option: Emphasize
Option: Turmoil
6. What is an award given to someone after their death called?
Option: Empowered
Option: Accolades
Option: Posthumously
Option: Eligibility
7. What is a warning or indication of a future event called?
Option: Empowered
Option: Foreshadow
Option: Artistry
Option: Sabotage
8. What describes things that are connected or related to each other?
Option: Reflecting
Option: Interconnected
Option: Antagonists
Option: Incarcerated
9. What is expressing sorrow or grief about something called?
Option: Empowered
Option: Lamenting
Option: Allegations
Option: Contenders
10. What is the act of deliberately destroying or damaging something?
Option: Tribute



- Option: Crafted
- Option: Cerebral
- Option: Sabotage

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

11. The company was _____ in 1995 and quickly became a market leader.
12. During difficult times individuals use different strategies for _____.
13. Understanding the _____ of historical events helps in analyzing their impact.
14. Her new role _____ her to make important decisions on behalf of the team.
15. The concert was a fitting _____ to the legendary musician.
16. His actions were a way of _____ his innermost thoughts and feelings.
17. The lack of maintenance led to the _____ of the old building.
18. In the upcoming tournament there are several strong _____ for the championship title.
19. To participate in the competition athletes must meet the _____ criteria.
20. The novel's plot revolves around the conflict between the protagonist and the _____.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. A leader who held the position before the current one.
22. To confirm or give support to a statement or finding.
23. A state of great disturbance confusion or uncertainty.
24. To give someone the authority or power to do something.
25. Expressions of praise or admiration.
26. Occurring awarded or appearing after the death of the person concerned.



27. Carefully created or constructed.
28. Involving intelligence rather than emotions or instinct.
29. To be confined in prison; imprisoned.
30. To be a warning or indication of a future event.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Revitalizing 2. Allegations 3. Crafted 4. Documentary 5. Emphasize 6. Posthumously 7. Foreshadow 8. Interconnected 9. Lamenting 10. Sabotage

Gap-Fill: 11. Established 12. Coping 13. Significance 14. Empowered 15. Tribute 16. Reflecting 17. Deterioration 18. Contenders 19. Eligibility 20. Antagonists

Matching sentence: 1. Predecessor 2. Corroborate 3. Turmoil 4. Empowered 5. Accolades 6. Posthumously 7. Crafted 8. Cerebral 9. Incarcerated 10. Foreshadow

CATEGORY

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