

BOOKS

Living in America

James Brown: the Godfather of Soul
by James Brown with Bruce Tucker
(Sidgwick & Jackson, \$55)

This is a rags to riches story, James Brown's version of his life, his career, and his American Dream. James has always been full of himself, but you gotta be if ya gonna be the single most innovative figure in black music for over three decades, and particularly if you didn't get off to a good start.

After being brought up by his auntie, living at a road house, James was arrested and imprisoned at the age of 16 for stealing from parked cars and received consecutive sentences of two-to-four years on four charges. Fortunately he was paroled after three years, released in 1952. Breaking the terms of his parole on several occasions, Brown went close to returning to prison.

Brown is known to be a difficult interview subject, often misunderstanding the question or the intent of the writer, readily becoming antagonistic. Some reviewers have criticised Tucker for over-editing and



removing the incoherence often present in a James Brown interview. But as Brown's music proves, on his own terms, setting his own parameters, Brown is very eloquent.

Biographies are given depth by secondary themes—sure it's a music bio but Brown's recollections of black life in Augusta, Georgia (where German prisoners of war were treated better than blacks and paid more for labouring) and his remarks on the civil rights issues (which he confronted head on as an upwardly mobile entrepreneur) provide a passionate, eye-witness social history.

This biography's richness lies in his fine memory for detail; he reflects on his early appreciation of music, he

loved Louis Jordan, gospel and pop, disliked blues and country, loved the church and the circus. Brown speaks at length on the recording of such crucial albums as *Live at the Apollo, Vol 1* and his relations with his record companies, his musicians and his wives.

A gripping Southern soul story—sure there's room for an unauthorised bio sometime in the future, but this book is fascinating as it puts his music in its cultural and chronological context. Plus, Charly Records' archivist Cliff White provides a 57 page discography. (James Brown is available from Books by Mail, PO Box 5689, Auckland 1.)

Murray Cammick

Say It Loud: the Collected Wisdom of JB

Survival

"That's what everything that went on in that house—gambling, bootlegging, prostitution—was about: survival. Some people call it crime, I call it survival. That's what hard times bring—makes pimps and prostitutes out of preachers."

Education & Justice

"If you don't allow a man to get an education, don't put him in jail for being dumb. That's what they did in Augusta—they sent me to prison for being dumb."

The Bomb

"When the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, we were glad because we knew it meant my father would be coming home soon. Now I think about it a lot differently because I realise that a bomb like that would never be dropped on white people."

Air Conditioning

"I got a brand new 1959 red Cadillac, we kept the windows rolled up to pretend we had air conditioning, no matter how hot it was. One time we stopped at a

service station in the desert. We sat there, and the service station attendant moved real slow so we started to sweat. This little old white lady in her car at the next pump watched us. We smiled and sweated, sweated and smiled. When she couldn't stand it any more, the little old lady jumped out of her car, jerked open one of the doors and yelled, 'Get out quick before all you niggers die in there!'"

Integration

"After the municipal buildings opened up [bigger venues] to black performers, most of the black clubs disappeared. By the mid-60s integration killed them off."

Soul

"Around this time [1967] I got the name Soul Brother Number One. The word 'soul' by this time meant a lot of things—in music and out. It was the roots of black music, and it was a kind of a pride thing, too, being proud of yourself and your people. Soul music and the civil rights movement went hand in hand, sort of grew up

together. I think Soul Brother Number One meant I was the leader of the Afro-American movement for world dignity and integrity through music."

South Africa

"I am unwilling to undertake a tour of South Africa under any circumstances because of the policies of that country with respect to the black members of the nation." [1969]

Inland Revenue

"But I don't blame the government. I don't hold a grudge. The government hurt my business a lot, a whole lot. But they didn't destroy me. Polydor did that."

Politicians


"Vice President Humphrey was my first politician." [1966]

Endorsing Richard Nixon

"You can either try and get inside and have some influence, or you can stay outside and be pure and powerless. Either way you're going to get criticised, especially if you're a black spokesman."

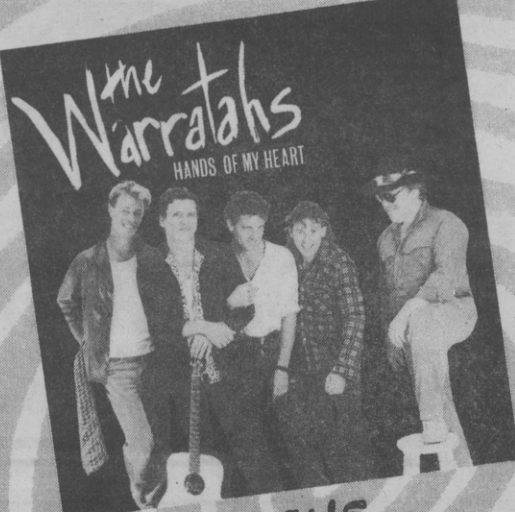
— from James Brown: the Godfather of Soul

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7. WHITESNAKE Saints And Sinners LP. Exc pics
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9. QUEEN A Kind Of Magic/Don't Lose Your Head (Instr.) Pic of band as tramps.
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17. ROLLING STONES Miss You/Far Away Eyes. Bright pink vinyl, Dutch.

OTHER LPS

18. SCORPIONS Fly To The Rainbow. Unreleased in NZ. 1974 5th LP, US.
19. JETHRO TULL Stand Up. Original G/Fold cover with stand up cut out, UK.
20. FATS DOMINO Lets Play. Original NZ LP in exc cond.
21. T REX Bolan's Zip Gun. Neat cover. 1974, UK.
22. THE BEATLES I Favoisi Beatles. Original Italian pressing, early material.
23. SIMPLE MINDS Themes For Great Cities. Unreleased in NZ compilation 79-81.
24. GOLDEN EARRING Winter Harvest. 1967 2nd LP. Original line up. Dutch.
25. RUSH Rush Through Time. Excellent Dutch compilation.
26. ROLLING STONES Let It Bleed. US. Still sealed.
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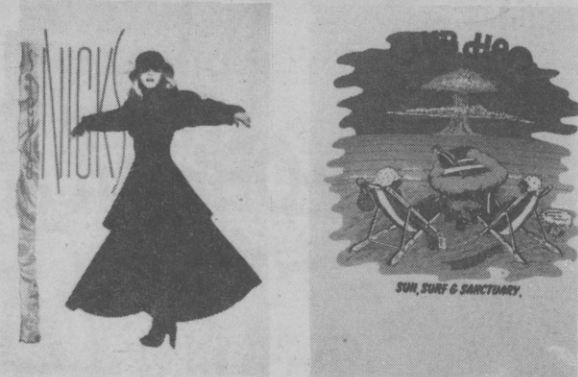
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