

GET ON UP!

JAMES BROWN

THE GOD-HEAD OF GET DOWN

by Kerry Buchanan

Let's talk religion. When God created rock'n'roll, when the beat was given and received, many were called, but only a few were blessed.

There was Hank Williams, Elvis Presley, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis and James Brown.

Yes, James Brown: Mr Please Please Please, the Godfather of Soul, Mr Dynamite, Mr Excitement, the Minister of the Heavyweight Funk, the Godhead of Get Down. There are many names for him, but just simple James Brown is enough, to render the rest irrelevant.

So with joy and a touch of trepidation I spoke to JB, alas only for 10 minutes, but time is not important when confronted with that voice.

James Brown talks like he sings, a warm consoling sound, but strident when he wants to make a point.

Sure enough, he's still the hardest working man in showbiz:

"We're doing a lot of things, with NBC, CBS, the whole entire extravaganza, one for Sony, the World Peace Conference . . . I'm looking forward to coming to Australia and Auckland, New Zealand."

Apart from the stage shows, JB is recording again, currently doing sessions in New York with Full Force.

"They doing fantastic. *Gravity* was one of the most fantastic things I've done in a long time . . . But this Full Force is going to be even better."

To some, *Gravity* was the "comeback," but to many others, the soul man had never gone away. Those who want a complete picture of what the man has done, check out his recent autobiography and the chapter in Gerri Hirshey's essential *Nowhere to Run*—both full of historical and intimate facts. But just a quick musical aside.

Get on the One

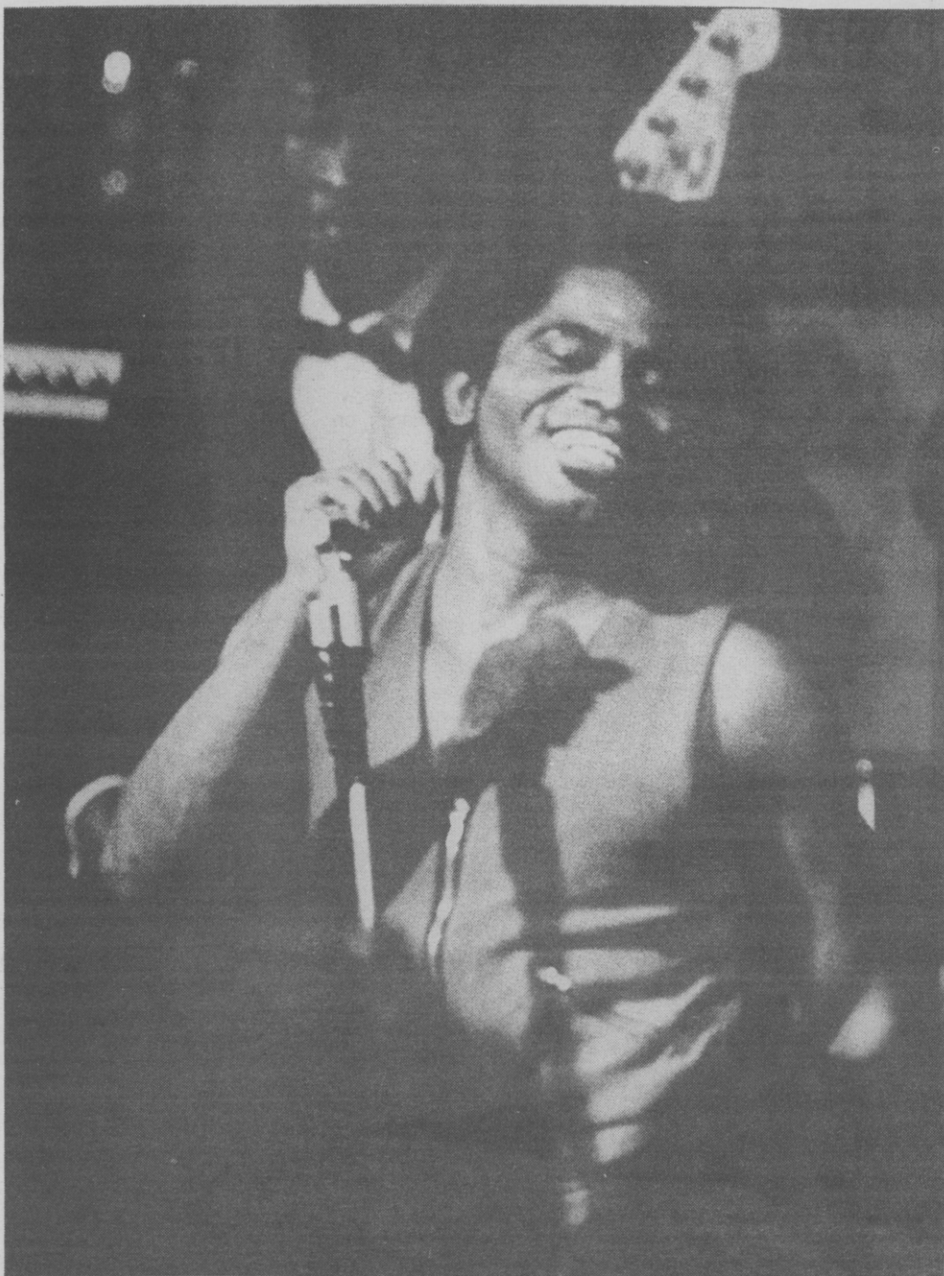
JB is the Boss of the Beat, he hears rhythm in everything, a guitar sounds like a snare drum to him. In that churning beat lies the genius of JB. Starting with

the early days of rhythm and blues, JB was on the one and turning it around.

The gospel feel of 'Please Please Please' led to the shuffle of 'Good Good Loving,' which set the rhythm for the 60s. Songs like 'I'll Go Crazy' and his re-working of the Five Royales' 'Think' led to soul music, but JB seeks out new rhythms and new truths.

With 'Out of Sight' he created funk, the chicken scratch guitar of Jimmy Nolan, the sax of Maceo Parker, the alternating horn and voice arrangements, which all come to a head on 'I Got You' and 'Papa's Got a Brand New Bag.' JB works a groove to death.

On the forefront of every change in music, he's influenced people as different as Led Zeppelin ('The Crunge') and Aerosmith (listen to their live version of JB's 'Mother Popcorn'), right up to the current



ALL MY FRIENDS HAVE GONE TO