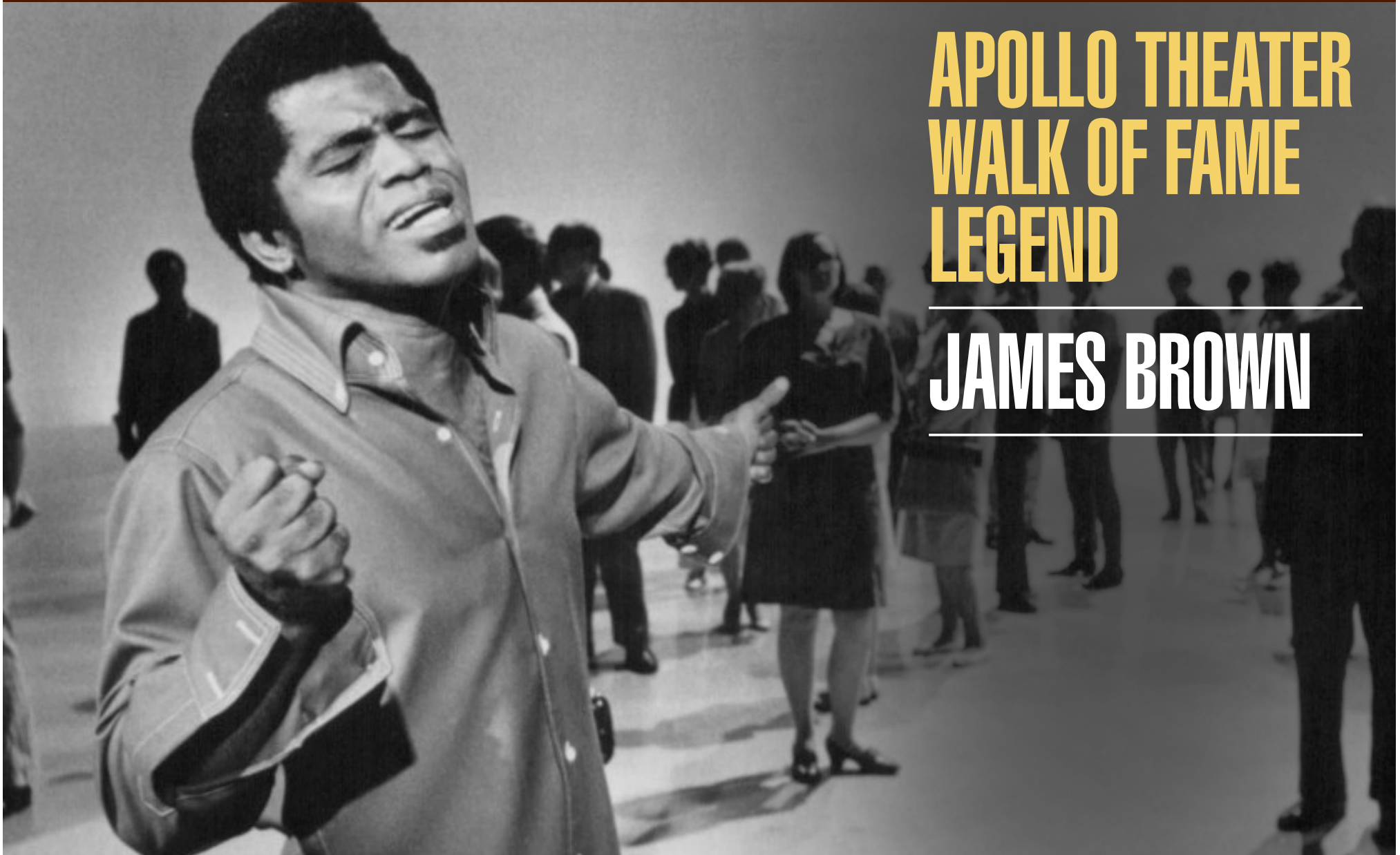


APOLLO

EDUCATION

APOLLO THEATER
WALK OF FAME
LEGEND

JAMES BROWN



JAMES BROWN



Ever since he was a boy growing up in Augusta, Georgia, music was in James Brown's soul. Whether singing while he shined shoes in front of a local radio station, or dancing for soldiers stationed at a nearby Army base, music simply made him feel good. He especially loved singing in church, where the uplifting messages of gospel music helped him overcome difficult challenges at home.

Born on May 3, 1933 in Barnwell, South Carolina, Brown moved to Augusta with his family when he was young. They struggled like many Americans did in the 1930s, as the economic hardships of the **Great Depression** weighed heavily on the nation. Leaving school after the 6th grade, he shined shoes and danced on the street for pennies. Struggling to make money, he became determined to make something of himself.

In 1954, Brown joined a Rhythm & Blues act based out of Toccoa, Georgia, led by singer Bobby Byrd. A year later, under the name The Famous Flames, the group recorded a #1 hit called "Please, Please, Please." Word of Brown's explosive singing and dancing spread like wildfire. As The Famous Flames popularity grew, they found **crossover appeal** with black and white audiences alike. Performing over 300 shows a year, Brown soon became known as "The Hardest Working Man In Show Business."

Brown viewed his growing success in show business as an opportunity to explore business interests aside from performing. He owned and operated his own record labels, radio stations, and even a chain of soul food restaurants. He became one of the first African American **entrepreneurs** in the music industry. Even before his interests in soul food, Brown was a pioneer of both Soul and Funk music.

Soul and funk music reflected the social unrest of the 1960s and served as a soundtrack to the **Civil Rights Movement**. Songs like "Say It Loud - I'm Black and I'm Proud" became an anthem in black

DO NOW

Who's been to the Apollo?

The Apollo Theater is full of so much amazing history. Discover your own connections to the events and artists that have appeared at the Apollo over the theater's 80-plus years in Harlem.

Who among your family, friends, or community have seen a show at the Apollo before? Interview them and find out what shows they've seen, when they took place, and what memories they recall from the event.

The Apollo is deeply rooted in the history and soul of American culture. With a little research, you never know what you might discover!



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

James Brown had many nicknames over the course of his career. *Can you guess why? Draw a line to connect each nickname to the reference.*

Nickname	Reference
A. "Mr. Please Please"	1. a leading pioneer of Soul music
B. "Mr. Dynamite"	2. a leading pioneer of Funk music
C. "The Godfather of Soul"	3. a popular Soul artist and Civil Rights figure
D. "Soul Brother No. 1"	4. his explosive showmanship on stage
E. "Minister of New New Super Heavy Funk"	5. his first million-selling hit, "Please, Please, Please."

Determine a quality about yourself, which you consider special and unique. Come up with a nickname that fits that quality. Like James Brown, maybe your nickname will go down in history too!

Answers: A-5, B-4, C-1, D-3, E-2

communities across America. Brown's story of rising from shining shoes in front of an Augusta radio station as a kid, to owning the same radio station by age 36, was evidence of **Black Power** in action.

By the 1970s and 80s, Brown had influenced musicians and musical styles for generations to come. Funk bands including George Clinton's Parliament Funkadelic, Pop artists like Michael Jackson and Prince, and groundbreaking Hip Hop groups such as Public Enemy and Run DMC, all modeled elements of their music and performances after the "Godfather of Soul."

While he performed all over the world, there was one place James Brown felt more at home than anywhere else — The Apollo. He holds the record for the most performances at the theater having appeared there over 200 times. In a career that lasted over 50 years and influenced the development of Rhythm & Blues, Rock & Roll, Soul, Funk, Pop, and Hip Hop music, James Brown like the Apollo, holds a special place in the history and soul of American culture.

James Brown was inducted into the Apollo Theater Walk of Fame in 2007.

JAMES BROWN AND THE APOLLO

James Brown first performed at the Apollo with The Famous Flames in 1959. In 1962, they returned to the theater to record the album Live at the Apollo: Volume I. The record sold millions of copies and established Brown as one of the leading entertainers of his time.

On December 28, 2006, three days after his death, a memorial was held for Brown at the Apollo. Thousands of people came to pay their respects — the line to get into the theater formed the night before and stretched for blocks along Harlem's 125th Street. .

MUSICAL STYLES

James Brown performed many styles of music throughout his career, influencing generations of musicians who followed him.

Listen through the musical examples provided. *Do you hear any similarities between the styles? What differences do you hear?*

Rhythm & Blues (1940s and 50s) – Often referred to simply as R&B; a bouncy, rhythmic style of music originating out of Blues and Jazz. "Please, Please, Please"

Soul Music (1960s) - A style of music combining R&B and Gospel, which reflected strong social and political messages during the 1960s. "Say It Loud — I'm Black and I'm Proud"

Funk Music (1960s and 70s) - A highly repetitive and danceable style of music which became the stylistic foundation for Hip Hop. "Make It Funky"

Hip Hop (Late 1970s and 80s) - DJs in the late 1970s and 80s sampled James Brown's Soul and Funk records for emcees to rap over, helping lead to the creation of Hip Hop. Hip Hop artists continue to sample his music to this day. *Do an internet search, "James Brown's influence on Hip Hop", for songs that have sampled Brown's songs.* Song that launched many hip-hop hits: "Funky Drummer"



WORDS TO KNOW

Great Depression

On October 29, 1929, a day known as Black Tuesday, the New York City Stock Exchange came to a halting crash. Investors lost billions of dollars in a single day, giving way to a 10-year economic depression, which crippled the U.S. economy and affected countries around the world.

Crossover Appeal

James Brown and The Famous Flames got their start when much of the music created by African American artists was labeled “Race Records.” Commercial success for black artists was often determined by their records “crossing over” to young white audiences.

Entrepreneur

Someone who starts his or her own business.

The Civil Rights Movement

A time of social and political protest in the United States that took place between 1954–68. The efforts of Civil Rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a minister and activist from Atlanta, Georgia, aimed to overcome racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans. Major political victories included the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. [Learn more about the Civil Rights Movement.](#)

Black Power

First used as a slogan by members of the [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee](#), “Black Power” was an expression used in the African American community during the late 1960s and 70s. The phrase represented racial pride and promoted self-determination.

LISTENING AND VIEWING

“[Try Me](#)” - Live at the Apollo (1968)

“[Papa’s Got A Brand New Bag](#)” and “[I Got You \(I Feel Good\)](#)” - Live on the Ed Sullivan Show (1966)

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Photo of James Brown performing on the ABC Television program Music Scene. Wikimedia

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