



Vocals - Martha High (34 years)

Ms. High joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk as a member of the vocal group “The Jewels” who toured with James Brown in 1966. Ms. High stayed with the Godfather of Soul once The Jewels disbanded. Ms. High was featured with Mr. Brown on his "Summertime" track and on the *Original Funky Divas* album. Billed as the 'The King's Queens' in 1998, she her closest friends (Lyn Collins, Marva Whitney and Vicki Anderson) were the opening act on the 'Bobby Byrd ' European tour where they promoted their 'The Original Funky Divas' CD. In 2000, she stopped performing with James Brown and has toured under her own name and with former James Brown saxophonist Maceo Parker ever since. In February 2005, Ms. High toured Europe, sharing the stage with her best friend Lyn Collins. She has also several recordings as a leader – e.g. a self-titled disco album in 1979 (Salsoul), It's High Time in 2006 (Diaspora Connections) and Soul Overdue (Freestyle) in 2012.



Emcee / “Cape Man” – Danny Ray (46 years)

Mr. Ray joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1960. Born in Birmingham, Ala. Mr. Ray is best known as the Master of Ceremonies for the James Brown shows and for draping the star-studded capes over the Godfather of Soul at the close of a concert. Mr. Ray met James Brown at the Apollo Theater in New York City and worked as Mr. Brown’s valet for two years until 1962 when an announcer failed to show up for a James Brown concert. Mr. Ray’s rich baritone voice and strong desire to be in the entertainment business made him a “natural “announcer. Yet Mr. Ray was much more than an announcer as Danny Ray and James Brown were partners - each one understanding the dynamics, timing and professionalism necessary for each high energy James Brown performance –that usually started with Danny saying: "**Ladies and Gentlemen..., IT'S STARRRRRR TIME!**



Bass Guitar – Fred Thomas (35 years)

Mr. Thomas joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1971 and was a member of the original JB’s band. He is currently setting up a tour of School and Colleges for clinics with their music departments – sharing how James Brown put it all together and how he made it work. He will soon release a CD that speaks to the music from his lifetime of writing and arranging.



Musical Director/ Trumpet - Hollie Farris (31 years)

Mr. Farris joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk when James Brown heard Mr. Farris playing with a popular Nashville show band and hired him on the spot in 1975. Mr. Farris became lead trumpet, section leader, arranger and later music director. Mr. Farris has also toured with Steve Winwood, The Commitments, and for the last five years, Joss Stone, the British soul-singing sensation. He has written songs for James Brown, jazz guitarist Denny Jiosa and several television shows. Mr. Farris earned his Bachelor and Master’s degree in Music Education at Arkansas State University, had a brief stint as a band director and was a member of the elite 82nd Airborne band at Ft. Bragg, N.C.



Trumpet – Joe Collier (26 years)

Mr. Collier joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1980 and has also performed with ‘Clarence Carter, Albert Collins, Aretha Franklin and Joe Cocker. His TV and movies credits include Rocky IV and Mama Flora’s Family featuring Cicely Tyson and the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson.



Percussion – George “Spike” Nealy (16 years)

Mr. Nealy joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1990 and was featured in the movie “Drum Line”. He currently teaches in the Music Department at South Carolina State University and has also performed with the SOS Band, Keith Sweat and Xscape just to name a few.



Vocals – Cynthia Moore (15 years)

Ms. Moore is a native of Buffalo NY and joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1991. She eventually became the lead vocalist and shared the spotlight with Mr. Brown on several songs. Ms. Moore has spent the past 9 years performing with “The Unity Band” in Buffalo.



Guitar - Keith Jenkins (12 years)

Mr. Jenkins joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1994. He performed with James Brown at many notable events such as the Woodstock 99 Festival and Mr. Brown's final appearance at the Apollo Theater. He's currently working toward a college degree and resides in Augusta, Ga.



Drums – Tony Cook (30 years)

Mr. Cook from Augusta Georgia joined Elite Family of Funk in February 1976 as a member of The JB's. He is one of the most sampled musicians of all time! In 1984, Tony's New York Production, "On the Floor – Rock It" was released and charted in the US and UK and is referred to as the Grand Daddy of all House Records. Mr. Cook worked with Etta James, Latimore, Z.Z Hill, Billy Ocean, Robert Palmer, Little Milton, and many others and has been featured in several magazine such as Billboard, Echoes, Rhythm, Blues & Soul and We Go Funk. He played on many James Brown's recordings such as Jam 1980's, Mutha's Nature, Love Over-Due and many more. Mr. Cook's Trunk-O-Funk track "Teenie Bopper" appears in episode twelve of season one of the hit TV-show The Shield and in the HBO series The Mind of the Married Man. Track #1 (Cram) from The Brother's In The Groove CD was recently used on a British movie (The Clubbed) Directed by Neil Thompson.



Musical Director/ Trombone – Tyrone Jefferson: (27 years)

Mr. Jefferson joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1979. In addition to writing and arranging music for the Godfather of Soul, he was one of six composers from around the world commissioned in 1983 by the Minister of Culture in Basse Terre, Guadeloupe to compose original music for World Peace. He has also performed with jazz legends Frank Foster and Slide Hampton as well as with The Dells, The Manhattans, and Grammy-nominated vocalist Carla Cook. Poet Laureate Amiri Baraka's dedicates an entire chapter to Mr. Jefferson in his book Digging: The Afro-American Soul of American Classical Music; University of California Press.