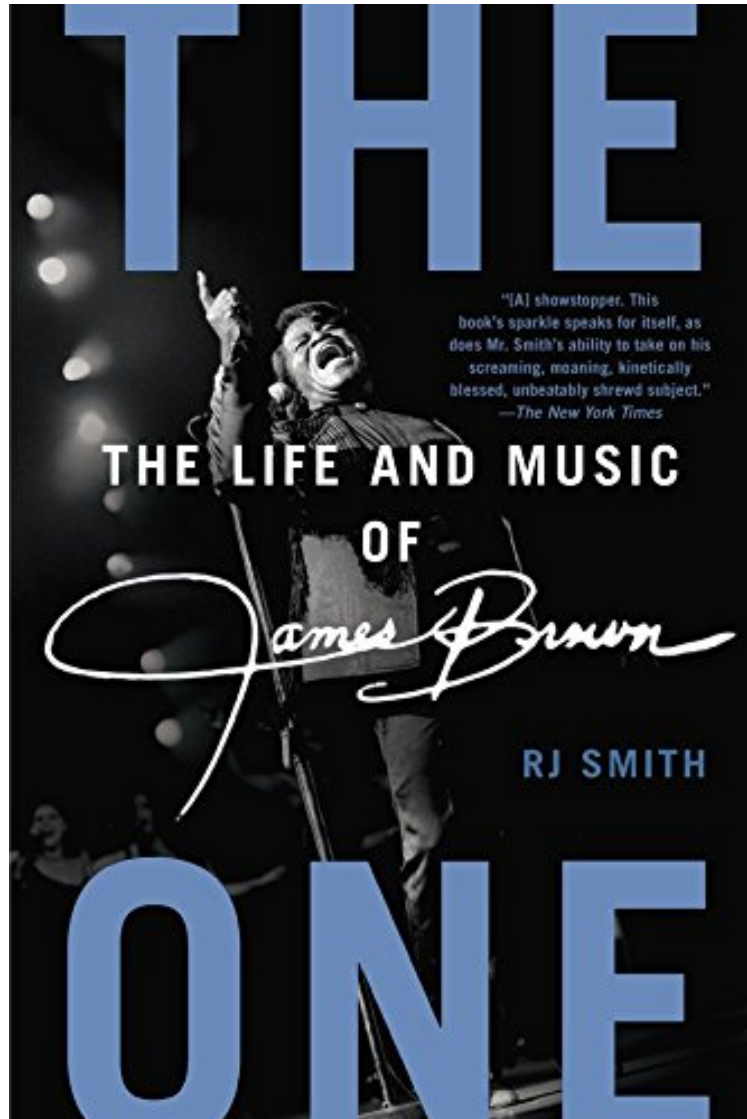


The One: The Life and Music of James Brown

RJ Smith

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RJ Smith : The One: The Life and Music of James Brown before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The One: The Life and Music of James Brown:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Mixed Feelings....By MDJames Brown's actual "story" is fascinating. But I have to agree with the person that said it was written left of center. The way the author chose to write it is weird, sometimes you didn't know 'who' he was talking to or getting the information from. He sometimes lost focus and wandered off into unnecessary territory. There is a LOT of "side-bar" info (historical) that just seemed like rambling. There were a few times where I had to go back to re-read pages because it was hard to follow what the heck he was talking about! After all was said and done, the James Brown story is VERY interesting and you learn a

LOT of things about him, and I would definitely recommend this book because even with the author's "long-wind-ed-ness", you DO get some history and it is NOT boring! I especially liked the "Bootsy" era and had to laugh at his antics! James Brown was a trip, but also a smart guy waaaaay ahead of his time, and I am left to wonder how he even knew to do some of the things that he did? 23 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Great read

By Herman P. Howell
I am a 64 year old white male who grew up on black music. In general I like all music and have seen a wide range of concerts which range from Elvis, Janice Joplin to early Ike and Tina Turner to Otis Redding. Of all of them no-one could hold a candle to James in the 60's and 70's. His stage shows were mind blowing. Reading this book took me back to my youth and collecting James Brown posters off telephone poles whenever James came to town. The book is a great read, and I would recommend it to any James Brown fans.

H Howell
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Creation of an Icon
By Patricia N. Beavers
No matter how much you know about the life and times of James Brown, that barely scraps the bucket, for what you can learn about him in this well researched biography, nearly exhaustive in its reach.

R.J. Smith shows James Brown in all his glory. He's also not afraid to let us see JB's warts, such as his ongoing love of angel dust and some of his interactions with others. I gave this book five stars for all we learn about Soul Brother Number One. I learned, for instances, that he even had his own dance show at one point.

R.J. Smith does an outstanding job of recreating the complexity of the life that was that of James Brown. The one criticism I would have is that we don't learn much about his interaction with his children. Were they interviewed or just background? I would have liked to have heard more about the first wives. Did they remain close to him, or were they gone forever? All in all, this book is well worth its price, and I would recommend it to anyone who idolized him, as I did, or even someone not yet born then to learn about the music and times of James Brown. One important aspect is how JB is placed in history with a strong sense of place, whether Augusta or Africa. Also, I didn't realize how close he was with Rev. Al Sharpton, who plays a positive role in his life.

The definitive biography of James Brown, the Godfather of Soul, with fascinating findings on his life as a Civil Rights activist, an entrepreneur, and the most innovative musician of our time

Playing 350 shows a year at his peak, with more than forty Billboard hits, James Brown was a dazzling showman who transformed American music. His life offstage was just as vibrant, and until now no biographer has delivered a complete profile. The One draws on interviews with more than 100 people who knew Brown personally or played with him professionally. Using these sources, award-winning writer RJ Smith draws a portrait of a man whose twisted and amazing life helps us to understand the music he made.

The One delves deeply into the story of a man who was raised in abject-almost medieval-poverty in the segregated South but grew up to earn (and lose) several fortunes. Covering everything from Brown's unconventional childhood (his aunt ran a bordello), to his role in the Black Power movement, which used "Say It Loud (I'm Black and Proud)" as its anthem, to his high-profile friendships, to his complicated family life, Smith's meticulous research and sparkling prose blend biography with a cultural history of a pivotal era.

At the heart of The One is Brown's musical genius. He had crucial influence as an artist during at least three decades; he inspires pity, awe, and revulsion. As Smith traces the legend's reinvention of funk, soul, RB, and pop, he gives this history a melody all its own.