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REVIEW

Music DVD Review: James Brown - *Double Dynamite*

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When James Brown passed away on Christmas Day 2006, the world lost one of its most energetic and enigmatic voices. His loud, vibrant music was the stuff of legends and his live show was tight and relentlessly entertaining. The Godfather of Soul was truly the Hardest Working Man in Show Business and his vocals and enthusiastic movements made him an icon for all-time.

To see James Brown do his thing is to experience spiritual renewal. To listen to a James Brown record is to experience revival through the Fires of Funk. Whether getting on up or getting on down, nobody does it better.

With the *Double Dynamite* DVD, viewers are treated to a pair of shows that exemplify the energy and vigour of James Brown in the 1980s. From the glitz and coked-out glamour of Studio 54 to the historic Chastain Park, this concert DVD captures Brown in two very different venues maintaining the same liveliness and get-up-and-go he was famous for.

It all gets rolling at Studio 54, where everyone who was anyone came out to play. Brown takes to the stage in front of a crowd of movers and groovers more than acquainted with the wonderful wonderland of the "basement." With its uncensored hub of drugs and disco music, Studio 54 was a notorious locale.

Brown's presence on the stage is astounding. He is encased with his band, braving the March 26, 1980 night with his immaculate sense of showmanship and timing. With Brown just dumped from Polydor Records, the show found him in tentative times and looking for a miracle. But you wouldn't *dare* know it!

The footage is suitably cloudy, with the smoke and mist of 54 swirling about. Brown and his impeccable band own the stage, working hard under the pounding red lights with endless hooks, jumps, kicks, and blasts. Brown comes across like a man in a rush, rocking the house down and tearing it apart at the seams with renditions of hits like "Sex Machine," "Cold Sweat," "I Got the Feelin'," and "Get On the Good Foot."

By contrast, the Chastain Park show is broader and more concise. Accompanied by less haze and more open air, Brown's 1985 Atlanta show is a barn-burner of epic proportions.

Not confined to the opaque setting of 54, Brown's backing band has more room to play at Chastain. The set is more active, more exhilarating, and more polished. With his gut-wrenching, blistering vocals, James Brown owns the stage at Chastain Park and provides a show that is honest and at times deeply personal. He pushes hard through tracks like "Try Me," "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag," "I Got You (I Feel Good)," and "It's a Man's Man's Man's World" with frankness and uprightness.

Double Dynamite offers us two shows that capture James Brown offering us the consistency and dedication that he was famous for as a performer. While the venues differ, the shows themselves share the common sense of zeal, fire, and energy that would become synonymous with the one and only Godfather of Soul.

Jordan Richardson likes to review movies as the [Canadian Cinephile](#) [here](#) and enjoys reviewing music of all genres as the [Canadian Audiophile](#) [here](#).

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