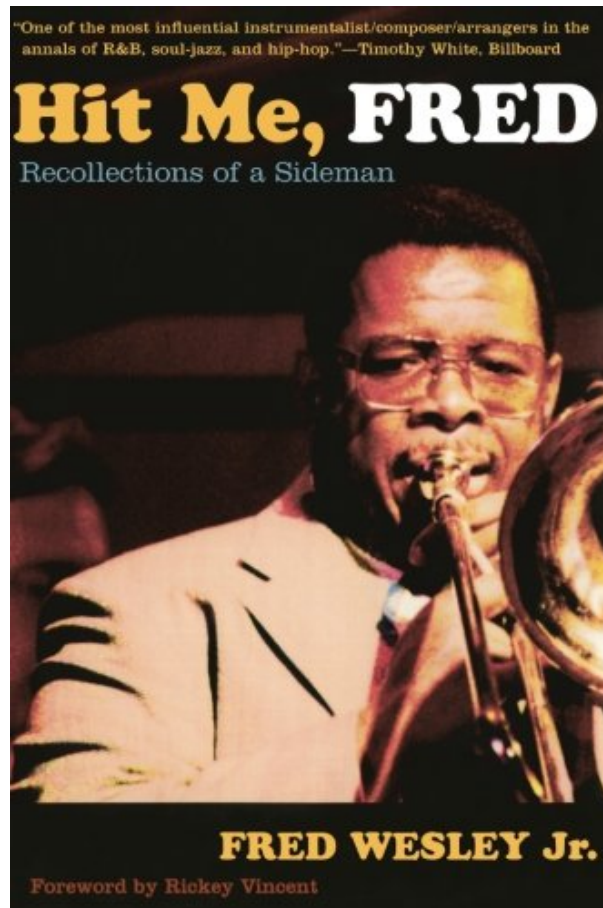


HIT ME, FRED: RECOLLECTIONS OF A SIDEMAN BY FRED WESLEY



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Hit Me, FRED

Recollections of a Sideman



FRED WESLEY Jr.

Foreword by Rickey Vincent

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With *Hit Me, Fred*, sensational sideman Fred Wesley Jr. moves front and center to tell his life story. A legendary funk, soul, and jazz musician, Wesley is best known for his work in the late sixties and early seventies with James Brown and as the leader of Brown's band, Fred Wesley and the JB's. Having been the band's music director, arranger, trombone player, and frequent composer, Wesley is one of the original architects of funk music. He describes what it was like working for the Godfather of Soul, revealing the struggle and sometimes stringent discipline behind Brown's tight, raucous tunes. After leaving Brown and the JB's, Wesley arranged the horn sections for Parliament, Funkadelic, and Bootsy's Rubber Band, and led Fred Wesley and the Horny Horns. Adding his signature horn arrangements to the P-Funk mix, Wesley made funk music even funkier.

Wesley's distinctive sound reverberates through rap and hip-hop music today. In *Hit Me, Fred*, he recalls the many musicians whose influence he absorbed, beginning with his grandmother and father—both music teachers—and including mentors in his southern Alabama hometown and members of the Army band. In addition to the skills he developed working with James Brown, George Clinton, Bootsy Collins, and the many talented musicians in their milieu, Wesley describes the evolution of his trombone playing through stints with the Ike and Tina Turner Revue, Hank Ballard, and Count Basie's band. He also recounts his education in the music business, particularly through his work in Los Angeles recording sessions.

Wesley is a virtuoso storyteller, whether he's describing the electric rush of performances when the whole band is in the groove, the difficulties of trying to make a living as a rhythm and blues musician, or the frustrations often felt by sidemen. *Hit Me, Fred* is Wesley's story of music-making in all its grit and glory.

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Most helpful customer reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

From "Misty" to Funky

By Phil Silverman

Not that expected otherwise (see Review title)...just that so many JB-related books are mostly publicity vehicles and covering the same old ground. What made JB tick? Nothing. What is "eeeeahhhh"? Nothing.

I still don't understand "eeeeahhhh" after reading this book...but I now have the most balanced and descriptive tome on b-Soul-Funk-Super Funk, by the Master of the Super Heavy Funk. No Super Heavy Funk without Trombonist Wesley. And big question: would James Brown have transformed into a vaunted *Album* Artist without Mr. Wesley?

The James Brown Musical family reunites here for a James Brown House Party...and all the dysfunction that any family has.

Would have loved some penetrating, personal perspective on the many 45s and albums in Fred was heavily involved. (Though he goes deep on the highly successful movie soundtracks...which *he* basically produced, getting himself fired). We are treated to a fairly extensive Wesley discography. A nice add-on would have been, in this age of star-ratings, said values ascribed to the many titles which hit the bins and now the "web".

Haven't finished this Master Course on Modern Music..and on a "sideman" who stood up front with a King. So great, in addition, that Fred wrote this book with no "help", in the form of "as told to", or "with" [so and so].

Maybe Fred had enough "help" in his career!

Here we have the penultimate "sideman" taking up the pen and delivering another mutha. But the opinionated artist-author does not explain how James Brown, the Super Bad Sex Machine, is a...."sissy"? What were all those audience screams about? :)

But later for that. Buy this book. Read this book. Pass The Peas.

[Book comes with a well-produced CD of 12 cuts of Wesley, live and studio].

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Riveting! !

By Amazon Customer

This book was everything I thought it would be and more! Sometimes I had to put it side and ROAR with laughter at some of the funny anecdotes and things that go on during road life as a musician. It brought back pleasant and horrid memories of my own life on the road. Mr. Brown was quite a character!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

recollections on hit me, fred!

By khaled

I was initially bored with the first chapter or two detailing Fred's life... then when I read the entire book, it made more sense to me. His early life was setting the stage for an amazing journey (literally and figuratively). Fred has an amazing memory. He was able to recall events from 50 years ago like they happened last week. I purchased the book mostly because I was interested in getting some insight on what made JB such a tremendous performer. He shed some light on that. Funky Fred pulls no punches!

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