

Meet: The Brothers Footman (Interview)



The Brothers Footman are literally four brothers, a cousin and a close friend newly formed in their mission of making genre-defying music. The brothers, Dikembe, Gerald, Micah and Joshua were raised in a close-knit household where their parents preferred gospel music. As they came of age, the discovery of other sonic worlds took over and their budding musicianship grew beyond their childhood influences. It was an unplanned bump in their daily routine that spurred the Indiana natives to casually share their music on the Internet. They were seen by indie label Victory Music Buzz within a year of posting and soon had a deal.

Whether it's the R&B and country sound of "Clear Country Sky" or the doo-wop and rock-influenced "A Lil Mo' Time" the band's collective voice paints a lasting memory after one listen because of their singular style. This summer they are touring and releasing new singles as they continue to hone their playing, writing and smooth harmonies. Dikembe, who sings and plays guitar, shares their story and some details about how The Brothers Footman dove into music and where they are headed next in their odyssey.

"I feel like people are missing out on so much music because we have categorized it so crazy"

How did you and your brothers become artists?

It started when we were little kids both of my parents were involved in music in different groups singing and stuff in

church. The whole family plays so we pretty much started then but we never tried to be a band together until about Iâ€™d say about six months ago.

Do you play an instrument as well?

I do, I play the guitar and Gerald plays the piano Josh plays the drums but heâ€™s also a front man and then Micah plays the bass and then we got Zack Craft on the guitar and Don Reynolds on the drums.

Was it ever decided that your music would be one genre?

No, We never really to put music in a genre thereâ€™s really only two categories whatâ€™s good to you and whatâ€™s good to somebody else.

With â€œA Lil Mo' Timeâ€ I hear some doo-wop influence.

Absolutely.

Where does that all come from? A lot of times when I talk to musicians and their parents were artists sometimes the parents were really into sacred music so they werenâ€™t allowed so they finally get free and they do everything.

Absolutely, thatâ€™s exactly the story. I snuck music into the house. So we reached for everything whatever we could get our hands on is what we were listening to so I might have an Aerosmith album, tape or CD, with an Outkast tape or CD with The Dungeon Family on it and then some Bon Jovi some Temptations, anything from Motown was crazy for us we loved it. So we grabbed at pretty much anything we could get our hands on.

Were your parents strict?

They were as weâ€™ve gotten older and times have changed and theyâ€™ve experienced more and learned more their views have changed a little. I wonâ€™t say theyâ€™ve changed a lot but

they're a little more apt to listen to what we have to say now because everything we talk about is still in a positive light. It's still a message of love or family there's no disrespect in our music so our parents are more apt to listen to it.

How did you tell your parents you all were going to do music?

Our mother she heard and asked a couple of questions but she loves the music our dad was the one a little more staunch that it needed to be a certain style of music but we had a show not too long ago and we look in the audience and there he stands. He didn't come out initially when we first started doing it but once there was like a little buzz and he was hearing that it was just like good musicianship and things like that were taking place he came to see it.

How did you all decide to do music professionally?

It sounds funny but it all started with a broken down car my youngest brother and I were working at this place and his car broke down so we started riding to work together and he's never stopped writing and doing music. All of us play around with it at this point but he and I were in the car all the time he always had his beats he was always playing it.

One day he was playing a song that he hadn't written any lyrics to and I was just like 'That is an amazing song' and we wrote 'Never Get Away.' We sang it and recorded it for kicks and giggles and we did 'Clear Country Sky' and when people heard it, the reaction to it is what made us continue. We were not on this mission to be a band but we were just having a good time making some songs we were spending time together and then people were hearing it and we just went with their response.

How did you connect with Victory Music Buzz?

We just kept making music and then we got on a site so people

could hear the music and watch videos just to see what would happen. Rick saw it and called Jill and said: "You've got to listen to these guys." Before you know we were on a phone call all together and she was talking about it the way we were feeling about it and it felt like we were all on the same page and we went with that because you need people on your team that are as excited about your art as you are.

You're from the Midwest, is there anything about being from Indiana that influences your work?

We're the crossroads every style of music passes through here and just growing up as little kids you can live in the inner city and in 15 minutes be in cornfields that's just the truth of the dynamics of where we live. Growing up you heard everything. We grew-up more diverse than what people give Indiana credit for I'm not saying there aren't parts of Indiana that are racially broken down but it just wasn't like that where we grew up. There isn't a lot coming out Indianapolis and I'm not going to say that no one is from here because Ro James is doing great things. People don't really leave from here. So sometimes when people see us they expect one thing and when we start performing they are like "Wait a minute."



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The story behind A "Lil Mo' Time?"

Our family was getting older and some of the uncles were passing our older uncles they were called The Footman Brothers and they had a quartet but it was a gospel quartet and the harmonies on these guys they could float in and out of different ranges together and it was always pristine and pretty. As that was happening we saw what was happening and we decided "You know what?" this is how family feels about

each other and love is really about relationships so when you hear this song youâ€™re going to put it in whatever context you want to youâ€™ll put it in a relationship context a brother to sister a sister to sister a woman you are in love with or a partner you are in love with youâ€™ll put it in your own context.

The fact is we all want â€œA Lil Mo' Timeâ€ with the people we love and thatâ€™s why we wrote this song. But we wanted it to go uptick we didnâ€™t want something sad and solemn because I think we look at life and death and we give it the wrong connotations. We get stuck mourning people when we should celebrate them. [youtube id="W0slQM8JZrQ"]

Who would you want to open for?

As a band if we could ever do something with Outkast or The Roots because musicianship wise theyâ€™re so out there and doing so many things and if you could ever get on stage with Earth, Wind & Fire that would be amazing.

Can you tell me about the album?

The dynamic of what we have is just so different we wrote a song about it, itâ€™s called â€œFormula.â€ Thereâ€™s so many aspects in this song you will hear a reggae undertone, a reggae beat with country guitar strings we refuse the rules. I feel like people are missing out on so much music because we have categorized it so crazy. I think some people are afraid to give us a shot because they donâ€™tâ€™ know what to do with us. We had one guy say, â€œI love your music but I donâ€™t know where to put you.â€

When is the album coming out what are your next plans?

I think what weâ€™re going to do for a while I think weâ€™re just going to keep putting singles out every six weeks or so. I know that â€œClear Country Skyâ€ is getting ready to be re-released because we did that on our own so we remixed and

remastered it. We wrote a song about Indiana thatâ€™s going to dropped the week weâ€™re down in CMA.Â

How is it working with your brothers?

We love working together we learned how to argue and deal with each other at a very young age. My mother didnâ€™t put up with that type of stuff so if she found out that we were mad at each other she would tie us together like face to face thatâ€™s not a joke until we got over it. She didnâ€™t do the whole angry thing see even now sheâ€™ll sense it and call up here and be like â€œIs everything alright?â€ Sheâ€™s in tune.

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