

Throwback: James Brown-The Boss

James Brown recorded “The Boss” for the *Black Caesar* soundtrack in 1973. Larry Cohen directed the movie that starred former football star Fred Williamson as the head of a Black crime syndicate. Brown’s theme song was quickly recognized for its funky guitar and ostentatious horns that fit Williamson’s gait, status and attitude as gangster Tommy Gibbs. The music for *Black Caesar* was an important stage in Brown’s pioneering of funk music and a future bedrock for hip-hop. Pete Rock, Madlib and Kendrick Lamar are a handful of endless artists to sample “The Boss” from Brown’s catalog. *Black Caesar* was one of three blaxploitation film soundtracks Brown created in the ’70s which was also his last era of innovation. By the ’80s his sound stood firmly on its previous foundations but had mellowed out as hip-hop took his blueprint into the next phase. Brown had one more important experience with soundtracks when he recorded “Living In America” for the 1985 movie *Rocky IV*. The song was Brown’s last big hit and he also made an appearance and performed it in the film. The late Chadwick Boseman played Brown after his 2006 passing in the 2014 movie *Get On Up*. Mick Jagger produced the Alex Gibney-directed documentary *Mr. Dynamite: The Rise Of James Brown* which also released in 2014.

✖ l

Â

Â