

"James Brown and B.B. King: One Special Night" Attendance

*Date confirmed in [New Yorker](#), [Setlist.fm](#), and [GQ](#)*

["Black Beat" magazine \(1984\)](#)

It was a night to remember. James Brown, Michael Jackson, and Prince, all on the same stage in one show. Brown was on the stage of the Beverly Theatre in Beverly Hills, California, delivering his soulful revue, when he spotted Michael in the audience. Prince was waiting in the wings as well, and the three of them nearly burned the place down. But the only reason I'm even bringing the whole thing up (it happened last year) was because of something Brown said. As Prince was doing his thing--some fancy footwork, fooling around with the guitar of one of Brown's band members, Brown yelled in Michael's direction: "Look out, Michael!!!"

It was a warning delivered in panting, sweating jest. And if anyone could make the joke, certainly Brown could. After all, Michael and Prince are two of his most famous students, both of them pinching a wealth of influence from him. No Biggie. However, it might be the time for someone to throw the line Brown threw at Michael to Prince, because the word is out.

[Alan Leeds, tour manager for Prince and James Brown, "Vibe" magazine \(June 25, 2010\) \(archived\)](#)

Prince went to a James Brown gig [in 1983] with Bobby Z, his drummer at the time, Big Chick, who was his security guard, and I think Jill Jones, who was one of his protégés. By now, everybody knows what happened at that gig. I don't think Prince realized that Michael was going to be there. James looked a little puzzled in that video when Michael whispered in his ear, "Hey, bring Prince up." And of course Prince didn't really know what to do either. He went to the guitar first but he fumbles with that because it was left-handed. He played a few licks, did some dancing and knocked over a prop by accident. Now I always wondered if Michael intentionally brought Prince up to put him in that position just to say, "Hey, you think you're on my ass? Well follow this, motherfucker [*laughs*]." Bobby Z called me and said, "Oh boy...he made an ass of himself tonight." He said Prince didn't say a word the whole way to the hotel.