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James Hunter Bio

James Hunter has certainly paid his dues. Over the span of 30 years, he's worked on the railway, busked in the streets of London, provided backup vocals and guitar for Van Morrison, played clubs and theatres all over the world, written scores of original songs, and recorded some of the most original and honest rhythm & soul albums of the last two decades. By 2006, Hunter was recognized with nominations for a **GRAMMY®** Award ("Best Traditional Blues Album" for *People Gonna Talk* (Rounder)) and an American Music Award ("Best New/Emerging Artist"). He and his band then hit the road for a decade of extensive touring and recorded three additional critically-acclaimed studio albums— *The Hard Way* (Concord), *Minute by Minute* (Concord) and *Hold On!* (Daptone). By 2016, MOJO magazine had crowned him "**The United Kingdom's Greatest Soul Singer.**"

On February 2, 2018, renowned soul label **Daptone Records** will release James Hunter's most ambitious album to date, *Whatever It Takes*, offering ten new and original songs written by Hunter and recorded live to 8-track tape by Daptone's two-time GRAMMY® Award-winning Gabriel Roth.

At age 16, Hunter left school in Colchester, Essex and began working for the railway, while honing his blues guitar and singing skills. Six years later, he played his first paid gig at the Colchester Labour club (as "Howlin' Wilf and the Vee-Jays"). In the decades since, James Hunter has gone from singer/songwriter to labourer and back again. After releasing one album in 1986, Hunter and his band became a popular fixture on the UK club circuit and radio waves. His gritty, soulful voice has matured well along with his musicianship and song writing.

In the early 90's, **Van Morrison** recruited Hunter to sing backup on the road touring and on two albums, *A Night in San Francisco* and *Day's Like This*. In the years to follow, Hunter opened shows for **Aretha Franklin**, **Etta James**, **Willie Nelson**, and **Tom Petty**, and headlined clubs and theatres in England, Europe, Australia and the United States.

Once again, he steps into the studio as one of the "The James Hunter Six" along with **Jonathan Lee**, drums; **Lee Badau**, baritone saxophone; **Damian Hand**, tenor saxophone; **Andrew Kingslow**, keyboards/percussion; and **Jason Wilson**, bass.

Hunter's latest album, *Whatever It Takes*, was inspired in part by his new wife, Jessie. Originally from New Jersey, Jessie met James when – after hearing him on the radio – she turned up at a show in New York City. A year later, they were married in New Orleans and now live in Brighton on the south coast of England. James dedicates three songs in particular to Jessie: "**I Don't Wanna Be Without You**," "**I Got Eyes**," and "**Whatever It Takes**"—a song written to cheer her up during a rather grueling application process for UK residency.

Whatever It Takes is The James Hunter Six's third album working with Roth (AKA Bosco Mann,) who has long been a fan of Hunter's songwriting and appreciates his voice "**not only for its natural beauty and grit, but for its honesty.**" And Hunter, an equally uncompromising stickler when it comes to his music, notes that, "**it's a rare thing when a producer knows what you're going for before you've told him. It's good to be associated with a record company that 'gets' us.**"