



William "Bootsy" Collins

Collins was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on October 26, 1951. He said that his mother named him "Bootsy". "I asked her why," he explained to a journalist, "and she just said, 'Because you looked like a Bootsy.' I left it at that." Bootsy & Phelps stayed on Kemper Ln. and lived on Park Ave. just a block away, I'd go by to hear them practice and he and his friends came by where my group practice on Hollaway Ct. playing their new jam "House Guest" early 70's

His brother Phelps "Catfish" Collins (1943–2010) was also a musician. He and Bootsy were once part of James Brown's backing band, The Pacemakers. Bootsy Collins has maintained a strong connection with Cincinnati

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AN7miu3uK74>

1960s–1970s With his elder brother Phelps "Catfish" Collins, Frankie "Kash" Waddy, and Philippé Wynne, Collins formed a funk band, The Pacemakers, in 1968. In March 1970, after most of the members of James Brown's band quit over a pay dispute, The Pacemakers were hired as Brown's backing band and they became known as The J.B.'s. (They are often referred to as the "original" J.B.'s to distinguish them from later line-ups that went by the same name.) Although they worked for Brown for only 11 months, the original J.B.'s played on some of Brown's most intense funk recordings, including "Get Up (I Feel Like Being a) Sex Machine", "Bewildered (1970)", "Super Bad", "Soul Power", "Talkin' Loud and Sayin' Nothing", and two instrumental singles, the much-sampled "The Grunt" and "These Are the J.B.'s". In regards to his tenure working for James Brown,

After parting ways with James Brown, Collins returned to Cincinnati and formed House Guests with his brother Phelps Collins, Rufus Allen, Clayton "Chicken" Gunnels, Frankie Waddy, Ronnie Greenaway and Robert McCullough. The House Guests released "What So Never the Dance" and another single on the House Guests label, as well as a third as The Sound of Vision on the House Guests label.

Next Collins moved to Detroit, Michigan, after Philippé Wynne suggested joining The Spinners, for whom Wynne had been singing. However, following the advice of singer and future Parliament member Mallia Franklin, Collins had another choice. Franklin there introduced both Collins brothers to George Clinton, and 1972 saw both of the Collins brothers, along with Waddy, join Funkadelic. Collins played bass on most of Funkadelic and all of Parliament's albums (with the exception of Osmium) through the early 1980s, garnering several songwriting credits as well.

In 1976 Collins, Catfish, Waddy, Joel Johnson (1953–2018), Gary "Mudbone" Cooper, Robert Johnson and The Horny Horns formed Bootsy's Rubber Band, a separate touring unit of Clinton's P-Funk collective. The group recorded five albums together, the first three of which are often considered to be among the quintessential P-Funk recordings. The group's 1978 album *Bootsy? Player of the Year* reached the top of the R&B album chart and spawned the #1 R&B single "Bootzilla".

Like Clinton, Collins took on several alter egos, from Casper the Funky Ghost to Bootzilla, "the world's only rhinestone rockstar monster of a doll", all as parts of the evolving character of an alien rock star who grew

gradually more bizarre as time went on (see P-Funk mythology). He also adopted his trademark "space bass" around this time.

1980s–1990s Collins released two 1980 albums, his first "solo" album "Ultra-Wave", and Sweat Band, on George Clinton's Uncle Jam label with a group billed as Bootsy's Sweat Band. He also was credited for co-producing the debut of P-Funk spinoff Zapp.

In 1984, he collaborated with Jerry Harrison of Talking Heads to produce "Five Minutes", a dance record sampled and edited from Ronald Reagan's infamous "We begin bombing in five minutes" speech. The record was credited to "Bonzo goes to Washington" (also referenced in the 1985 Ramones song "Bonzo Goes to Bitburg", derived from Reagan's starring role as Professor Peter Boyd in the 1951 comedy film *Bedtime for Bonzo*).