

J. Teeza: Different Partners



To some he is J. T. while others know him as J. Teeza or even Johnnie Ray. But his name is Johnnie Ray Thomas. Born and raised in the small country town of Wabaseka, Arkansas.

His love for music came at the age of 15 where he played drums for the Evangelist Lemmie Battles (his mother) and the Vocal Airs. Now a resident of Atlanta, his love for music has peaked and grown. Due to extensive blessings from the Lord, the finance became available to start a Production Company and Recording Studio. Thus in March of 1999, Gold Train Productions was started with a goal of praising the Lord through numerous gospel formats, with some emphasis on hip hop gospel. Headed by J. Teeza, the production company's first project was a gospel hip hop CD featuring the "Little Voices of Praise" where he wrote and produced all of the songs.

Now teamed up with fellow producer Dr. P., he collaborates with songwriter Maxxyn Morant of Atlanta and Ray Spears of Arkansas. With this team in place, in May of 2000, he developed the gospel hip hop group "Different Partners" (DP). This group, though evolving, includes collaboration with vocalist member Samuel Ceus.

His gospel hip hop production talents are evident in two renditions featured on the CD entitled "Praise Pleases Him". The first song, *Give Praise*, features vocal performances by Lemmie Battles and DP and is a reminder to all that God accepts us for who we are without strings. The second song is purely Different Partners and is entitled *Righteous God*. The song points out that "He is a righteous God who loves us and hears our prayers". His upcoming Different Partners gospel hip hop CD entitled "Party Over Here" will further proclaim his love for the Lord.

He attributes his early learning about music and singing to his mother. Such great producers as Puff Daddy and Jermaine Dupri musically influenced J. Teeza, but his messages reflect serving a "Different Partner". His inspiration also comes from such legends as Stevie Wonder and the Soul Stirrers. His gospel hip hop inspiration comes from numerous performers including Kirk Franklin and Mary Mary.

Photo: Different Partners

(L-R) J. Teeza, Maxxyn Morant, and Samuel Ceus

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