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HEADLINE SOUL/R&B REVIEW VINYL

## DONNY HATHAWAY: TROUBLE IN HIS SOUL

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Frustrating. That's Donny Hathaway. That this soul man, with a smooth voice, an accomplished interpreter of the protest song, a singer who some believed was a greater talent than Otis Redding, should come to this, "Donny Hathaway, a 33-year-old Grammy-award winning singer and composer of pop tunes with blues and gospel undertones, died Saturday after he plunged from the 15th floor of his Essex House room at 160 Central Park South, the police said." As told by the New York Times. There

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were colleagues who refused to believe the suicide verdict. His estranged wife Eulalah did comment that Hathaway had been suffering from emotional problems, "He was troubled." She said his 'trouble' was his quick rise to success and the anxiety it had produced.

Hathaway had been a long-time producer, arranger, songwriter and session pianist/keyboardist. Then he released the classic single, The Ghetto Pt.1 to deafening silence (although hip hop creators have sampled the hell out of it ever since).



Then this album was released on Atco in 1970, *Everything is Everything* is plastered with quality backing musicians which provide a perfect framework to allow Hathaway's rich vocal tones to ooze into your head. There's always a message with this guy, he took a lot onto his shoulders, as you can hear in his *The Ghetto* and *Tryin' Times*. He also, at times, reminds me of Stevie Wonder when he infuses his sound with energy. Just a bit. *I Believe to My Soul* is one example of that. The beginning of *Misty* is another.

As for the sound and mastering quality, the music emerges from a beautifully arranged soundstage. The latter, infused with clarity and transparency, is spread evenly across the channels while the soundstage is pushed a bit further than you might expect left and right. This gives a panoramic view of the music which sounds grand and just a bit on the epic side of life with a slight, just a slight, 70s-era warming presentation. The space and air infused in the soundstage also allows the music to flow with ease. That same space adds detail to each voice and instrument. An example of that is the backing harmonies on the track *Je Vous Are (I Love You)* which features a soulful rendition with a slow funk twist that is eminently appealing. The fact that the master allows the ear in between each voice just adds to the emotion of their cries. A classic master for a classic album.

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