

Music

Donnell Jones

It's all in Black and White in The Focus

Black Radio Exclusive conference a few years ago. Within a month of their meeting, he was signed to Untouchables/LaFace Records, and went to work on



CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Like a breath of fresh air, singer/songwriter/producer Donnell Jones adds a certain kind of coolness that exemplifies where he's at creatively in his music career. After three years, he explodes back on the music scene with his sophomore album, *Where I Wanna Be*. Donnell leaves nothing to the imagination on this 12-song compilation, which is guaranteed to soothe the spirit and move the body.

The versatile Donnell combines lush musical arrangements with modern, hip hop inspired beats to create a rich collection of sultry ballads and funkified pop tunes. The album also showcases Donnell's talent as a songwriter - making each song a complete, personal story. "This album is straight storytelling," he says. "Stories about situations guys go through, and situations women go through." *Where I Wanna Be* is a true testament of Donnell's love - lost and found.

For *Where I Wanna Be*, Donnell assembled a multi-talented group of musicians, including Eddie F. (Heavy D and the Boyz) and Darren Lighty (Next). His first single, "Shorty (Got Her Eyes On Me)," is a flirtatious combination of mellow melodies and mid-tempo grooves. "This song is about having fun, going out with the guys, going out to the clubs, you know, just having fun," says a smiling Donnell. It puts him at the center of attention - where all eyes will be on him. There is no question whether or not you'll

want to go with Donnell - all the way to the top of the charts.

And to the top of the *Billboard* charts is where Donnell is heading, with his second single "U Know What's Up" (which features Lisa "Left-Eye" Lopes of TLC) as a *Billboard* Hot Shot Debut and consistently climbing the R&B chart. It moved 15 slots to #13 and 21 positions on the *Billboard* Hot 100 to #48 (with a bullet). This is a sizzling hot party track.

As a youngster, Donnell found comfort in music. His father, who was a gospel singer, influenced Donnell and he would try to imitate him. As he grew older, however, music became more than just a passing interest. He even credits music for "saving his life." Growing up on Chicago's notorious Southside, Donnell found himself caught up in the lure of the streets. "I was in a gang," he explains pensively. "You see guys with nice things, and you want to have those too. But then I got into music and it kept me inside."

Donnell hooked up with Untouchables Entertainment President, Edward "Eddie F." Ferrell when he sang for him at the

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