

Click [here to print](#) or select **File** then **Print** from your browser.

[Close Window](#)

Donell Jones Let's Fans Know What's Up with Upcoming 2010 CD and 'The Lost Files'

Donell Jones on Going Independent, Relationships and Today's R&B

By Shamontiel

There's a plethora of talent in Chicago, but it's not a secret that Chicago artists tend to go on the East Coast or West Coast to further their careers. R&B singer Donell Jones, who is most popular for songs like "*Shorty Got Her Eyes on Me*" and "*U Know What's Up*" featuring the late TLC member Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes, has cut ties with La Face record label after four CDs and gone independent with his label, Candyman Music Inc.

On December 9, 2009, Donell Jones released "*The Lost Files*," which were unreleased tracks made during the making of his first four CDs—"My Heart" (1996), "*Where I Wanna Be*" (1999), "*Life Goes On*" (2002) and "*Journey of a Gemini*" (2006). Now he's back in the studio working on his untitled 2010 CD. Although in his beginning years he had to travel to Washington D.C. for a radio conference to get his career going because "if you wasn't making music like R. Kelly, nobody was really checking for you" and loves his current home in Atlanta, which he's nicknamed "The Baby New York," when asked if he's from Chicago, he proudly boasts "Oh, no doubt!"

From the tilted hat, crease in his pants on his [Twitter page](#), laid-back and sultry performances to his friendly demeanor during the interview with [AC Source Writer Shamontiel](#), Donell Jones is so Chicago.

Shamontiel: When did you become independent? Was it last year?

Donell Jones: Actually it's been since my last album with Jive, which was "*Journey of a Gemini*."

Do you prefer being an independent artist or did you prefer being with a record label?

I prefer being independent because every record label I was on I felt like I never got what I deserved so being independent is beautiful.

Do you feel like other artists, especially new artists, should start off with a major record label or they should start independent, too?

It really depends. If they have enough of a fan base to be independent then I would say go independent. With a major label, they do put you out there. You can gain a fan base. But in my case, I already had a fan base so I really don't need a record company for that anymore.

If you could've done it all over again, would you have gone with a major record label or do you feel like times have changed and it's easier now as opposed to when you first came out in '96?

No, I wouldn't have changed it. I would've still went the route I went. Being with La Face Records, they did a lot for my career. They did what they were supposed to do up until this point now. Since they helped me build my career, now I'm able to go out there on my own.

What is your favorite part of being a singer?

I enjoy writing the songs and going out and performing them. I love writing for myself because the stories I tell are personal experiences so for me it's almost like getting something off your chest.

Since you write songs about yourself personally, what is the most memorable experience you've had with someone who knew the song was about them?

"*Where I Wanna Be*" was a song about a lady I was with for a lot of years, and we turned out to be the best of friends. I don't have any horror stories.

You have five daughters. You let them listen to your music?

No doubt. They listen to my music.

Takeaways

You've got to have a really strong woman to be able to stomach some of the things that women do.

Those things that the guys my age were doing I wasn't really getting into.

That song right there, it just really touched a lot of people.

How important do you think it is for young ladies to hear songs about love as opposed to other types of songs?

It's very important. To me, love is never going anywhere. Love has been here from the beginning. God is love so I don't see anything wrong with it. There are some sex songs that I think kids shouldn't listen to because they're a little bit too vulgar, and I try to keep my children away from it. But they go out. They're out and about so they're going to hear them anyway.

Would you mind giving the ages?

My daughters are 2, 8, 14, 16 and 17.

How is it having teenagers?

You know what? It's weird. It almost seems like just yesterday they were two or three years old. And by me being in the music business and on the road a lot it seems like that time went so fast. They're older now, and it's hard for me to let them go. I'm real protective over my daughters.

As an independent artist, is it easier for you to be around them as opposed to being on the road? Or, do you have more control over when you travel?

For the last couple of years, I've been able to be home and watch my daughters grow so that's been a great thing. Now the traveling is about to start because I'm about to release a new album so that part will be the same. This time around I get to pick and choose what I want to do.

With your last album "*The Lost Files*," I see a couple of songs floating around. Did it release in stores?

"*The Lost Files*" was actually an album that I put out there for my hardcore group of fans. It was nothing we went out and promoted. It was for my fans who were on [Twitter](#), [MySpace](#) and [Facebook](#) just to check out. It's not a brand new album. It's an album comprised of old songs that I've done that nobody ever had a chance to hear. They would have to buy it on iTunes or [Rhapsody](#) or other online sites.

With your upcoming CD, are we going to get a new Donell Jones or the Donell Jones we've been counting on?

It's the Donell Jones you've been counting on but a little more sexy. It's definitely for the grown and sexy. I feel like something happened to love in R&B, and that's what I want to bring back.

Do you feel like R&B artists of today are keeping the love going or do you feel like they've become basically singing hip hop artists?

Basically. (Laughs.) A lot of young cats out here now are definitely [hip hop](#) driven. And you know what? There are a few. I won't say everybody. You've got [Raheem DeVaughn](#), and there are a lot of brothas in my era that's still getting it on like Maxwell and Jaheim. I think it's time for the guys in my era. We're not old, and that's what I think that record labels forgot.

Is your birthday May 22, 1972?

No, '73.

What do you feel you bring in R&B that's different than other artists—even the artists that are about love in R&B?

I feel like my sound is totally different, and I think I have a very distinctive voice. And the emotional side that I bring to a record is different than a lot of other cats. I don't sing every record the same. And also I try to make every record a single. I never want to make an album where you get two songs and that's it. I want to make sure if a person puts this album on if they're getting ready to make love to their mate, they don't have to get up and fast forward. If they're driving a long distance, they can drive and be comfortable and relaxed. I feel like I make all-purpose music.

What is your favorite song from the upcoming album or is it even finished enough to pick one?

I would be lying if I picked a favorite because they're all so different. I love them all.

Is there one that touches your heart more than others when you sing it?

I haven't sang any of them live, just in the studio. I wouldn't know until I know what the fans feel. They all mean something to me.

So out of all of the songs that you've released, which one do you enjoy singing live the most?

That would be "This Love." That's usually the first song that I sing when I come out, and that opens me up and gets me ready to do the rest of them. The energy that I get from that song and people hear it and start going crazy, it gives me that energy to just go out there and kill it.

What is your most memorable experience with a Donell Jones fan?

I was in Philadelphia and this was when "Where I Wanna Be" first came out. It was in a convention center, and when I came out and I was about to sing the song, it was just a flood of people. It kind of made me feel like I was Michael Jackson. People was crying. You saw women boo-hooing. That song right there, it just really touched a lot of people. I was just saying something that was true. It was something that I went through, and I didn't know it was going to touch that many people like that. It freaked me out how a lot of people reacted to it.

Has there been any one individual who stuck out to you?

It's been a lot of individuals that come up to me and say, "Man, you know what? That record right there, I was going through that situation." A lot of people come up to me and say, "I played that record for my woman and that's what helped me get out of this relationship." I've had so many stories about "Where I Wanna Be."

Rumors get circulated in the entertainment industry. Are there any untrue rumors that have started about you or do you think we have it right?

I'm pretty much a straightforward, down-to-Earth guy. I'm a humble person. There's no "big me, little you." Any fan could walk up to me and talk to me. I haven't been in the tabloids or anything like that.

Right! I haven't heard about you, but that doesn't mean you haven't heard about you.

There's nothing to talk about because I'm pretty much to myself. My thing is make some good music and take care of my family.

How did you manage to stay so low-key with your music branching out so far? What would you say to artists to keep them out of that kind of negative spotlight, too?

It probably would've happened to me, but when I came into the business I was already in a relationship. I was 19. I already had two kids by the time I was 20 so I came in with a family. That kept me out of the streets a little bit. Those things that the guys my age were doing I wasn't really getting into. My focus was family.

Okay, so you just weren't into the whole groupie scene at all.

I mean, I had a little fun.

[Laughs] Okay, so you were a little bit into it.

I wasn't out there like that. (Laughs)

Are you currently in a relationship? Single? Married?

I'm in a relationship right now, and it's beautiful. I hate being single.

Considering you sing about so much love I'm not surprised. Is it more difficult to be in a relationship as an artist because you travel a lot?

It depends on the woman. A lot of women don't understand the fans. I had a young lady that I was with, and I used to take her to my shows. And every time we went to a show she would get mad because you're out, you see all these girls coming at your man and they don't care about you. They'll disrespect you. It's not about you. It's about trying to get with your man so you've got to have a really strong woman to be able to stomach some of the things that (other) women do when you have a man that's in the music business.

So you've been able to make your relationships last by only sticking to strong women?

No, I'm a faithful man now. When I was young, I wild out a little bit. That's not me anymore. Things like that get old, and you just really want to be with somebody that's going to have your back and take care of you. I found that so I'm good.

All right, last question. Have you narrowed down a season when the new CD will come out?

We're going to rock this summer all the way until...I won't say this summer because I'm coming out with another joint right after that. I'm not really trying to wait. Usually I wait about two or three years, but this time I'm not trying to wait. I'm trying to bombard the system and keep this music going. I want people to leave a Donell Jones concert thinking, "Wow, this guy just did something that made sense and that I can really relate to." If I can get a person to get up and dance or feel good to the music, I feel like I've done my job. I just want to thank the fans for supporting me through the years and I'm getting my second run at this. It's going to be a great run.

More resources

<http://twitter.com/donelljones96>

<http://www.facebook.com/donelljones96>

<http://www.myspace.com/donelljones>

2010 © Associated Content, All rights reserved.
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)