

## **Daron Jones Pays Homage to the Greats With an Intimate Performance of His Latest Project *The Unofficial Diary of Daron Jones Vol. 1***

**By Dione M. Davis**

Not even a rainy night in Atlanta could stop over 300 fans and supporters from showing up at the Aloft hotels Living Room on November 3, 2015 for an up close and personal live performance by singer, songwriter and producer Daron Jones. It actually added an extra element to the sexy ambiance at the Aloft Hotels Living Room as ladies sipped glasses of wine, exotic signature cocktails and conversed, with each other and the gentleman present while waiting for the man of the hour to make his grand entrance.

As an eminent musical mastermind in the R&B group 112, Jones' multi-layered talent catapulted him into producing and songwriting for the likes of Keyshia Cole, Kelly Price, The Isley Brothers, Pink and Jamie Foxx, but who's name dropping? With close to 20 years in the business, it's no wonder that the #TeamDaronJones family as he proudly calls his supporters of fans, friends and music veterans are deep in the building.

As host Taiye "The Wild Afrikan" Samuel strategically moves through the room signaling and preparing, the lights are dimmed and attention is placed in the center of the Living Room. "I'm not gonna go through his discography, but he writes a lot of music. He wrote "Cupid," he wrote for Faith [Evans] he wrote for Usher and I'm happy that you guys are here to experience this," says Samuel.

After the brief introduction by Samuel, there is momentary silence and Daron Jones mystically appears and walks to what he has revealed via Instagram to be his first love - the piano. Wearing well - tailored suit, white shirt, black tie and Versace shades, he is the perfect representation of the classic style of the Temptations with a taste of the modern era in which we live. He takes his seat at the black grand piano with a look of excitement. There's a bevy of beautiful ladies of all flavors directly in front of him. The windows behind him flowing with metallic beads made the view of the city the perfect backdrop.

Jones gives a shy grin. It's the same grin that he had at the beginning of his career and proof that time has been good to him. If you were fortunate to get some of the best seats in the house, you may have been close enough to get a glimpse of the happiness in his eyes behind his shades. With a packed house, Jones and his manager Charles McCree, the self-proclaimed "Batman and Robin" who were dressed to the nines decided to live stream the show so that fans all over the world wouldn't miss out on this rare gift. If that were not enough, Jones promises a meet & greet and even vows to send autographed copies my mail to his fans who could not make it. This degree of dedication and appreciation is rare these days, but it speaks to what lies in his heart and the type of selfless artist he is.

As he sits at the piano like a king on his throne, he starts the evening by letting fans old and new that his mission for the evening is to formally introduce himself through his music, namely pieces of his new mixtape *The Unofficial Diary of Daron Jones Vol. 1*. He warms up the audience by playing the beginning of 112 song "Crazy Over You." Jones takes his time and sings with sincerity.

A familiar voice carries over the ladies and it turns out to be Daron's close friend, musician and producer "Hitman" Stevie J. of Love & Hip Hop Atlanta cheering him on. "We love you baby!!!!" "I can't sing this song right here by myself. I got somebody special in the audience," he says. Dressed in all black and biker-chic, a very energized Michael Keith of 112 obliges with mic in hand and stands next to the piano as Jones plays while taking in the moment.

Keith walks back and forth like he is preparing to deliver the gospel on Sunday. "I'm a Player, girl I thought you knew," he sang. Ladies in the house start to lose their minds and sing along. The Living Room is now officially LIT. The vibe is contagious and Jones can't contain his smile and begins a Stevie Wonder-esque rock at the piano. When Keith passes the mic back over to Jones, it's like watching the musical version of Kobe and Shaq. With perfect timing, he starts singing and Keith starts jumping up and down and clapping like he caught the Holy Ghost. This is the type of chemistry that comes with over 20 years of making music together and brotherhood.

Jones slows things down to explain the concept behind *The Unofficial of Diary Daron Jones*, the 7 track project of classic covers that pays homage to those who influenced him from Stevie Wonder to Luther Vandross. "With this project what I really wanted to do was just go back to a time when you really first fell in love with R&B. I wanted to take everybody back to that time when you first fell in love with R&B- when it was at its true essence. ..and I also kinda wanted to go back to a time when R&B songs sounded like a page out of your private diary. You know what I'm sayin'? When it was real and when it was just straight up R&B love music."

An unexpected surprise was his live cover of The Weeknd's "Go Tell Your Friends." "I really like that song," he confesses. He seems rejuvenated by displaying his versatility and ability to catch the audience off guard while they simultaneously sing along. He gives the crowd another cover, the R&B version of Drake's "Hotline Bling." Daron is truly having fun and gives the crowd a piece of his sense of humor and laughs along with the audience. One thing is certain, Daron loves music, keeps his ear to the streets and salutes two of the most popular artists out right smashing the charts who both happen to be from Canada.

Perhaps the most beautiful and memorable song of this intimate performance was a classic by Donny Hathaway. "When I was trying to figure out what songs to put on this album, I was doing a lot of thinking- and this one particular song is - You know when I think about everywhere I've been in the world and things like that - this is kinda like the song that comes to mind for me and it's really personal for me. It kinda talks about my life story to a certain extent. It really feels like it's a song that personally relates to me." He teases the audience with the first few notes and it sounds like heaven. "Man... I really love this song right here. This is my joint." He performed a perfect rendition of "A Song For You." His connection to the song made some eyes in the room tear up. It's the kind of moment that gives you goose bumps and makes you realize just how powerful music can be and what it should feel like.

*The Unofficial Diary of Daron Jones Vol. 1* and show schedules are available on his website [www.daronjonesmusic.com](http://www.daronjonesmusic.com)