

Throwback: Darondo-Didn't I



[youtube]PZqQT5904_U[/youtube]

Berkeley native Darondo debuted on the soul scene in the early '70's when he recorded "I Want You So Bad" with jazz pianist Al Tanner. The song didn't do well commercially but it attracted a deal with indie label Music City where he recorded his Al Green-esque ballad "Didn't I." The radio-rotation of the song brought Darondo local acclaim, a brief friendship with Sly Stone and the opportunity to open for James Brown. Urban legend also casts him as a pimp during this time in his life and his colorful Rolls Royce and the constant company of flashy women added to the perception. The self-admitted hobbyist left music in the late '70's and became the star and producer of a few cable TV shows. He beat a cocaine addiction in the '80's before attending college to become a physical therapist and speech pathologist. The 90's were financially better because he had a successful time working in real estate. Gilles Peterson discovered "Didn't I" in 2005 and began playing it on his show attracting the attention of Ubiquity Records. The company soon reissued Darondo's old singles with never-heard recordings for 2006's *Let My People Go* project. The artist experienced a new international recognition and a return to live stage performances. *Listen To My Song: The Music City Sessions* from 2011 is another backlog of could've been soul classics from the cult singer. Darondo died of heart failure on June 9th 2013.