

# Leela James Releases *Did It For Love* (Interview)



Leela James just chronicled the ending of one chapter in her life and beginning of another with the release of her sixth studio album, *Did It For Love*. Her seasoned vocals have been one place to find some of the style and feelings associated with prime soul of the past five decades in a post-hip-hop world. She has represented that spectrum by lending her voice to projects featuring Ray Charles and Pete Rock. And like many soul legends, she is known for eye-catching hair as well as her singular voice. *Did It For Love* is her latest dedication to the most obsessed over emotion in the world. James shares the backstory to the album and why the popularity of her hair took her by surprise.

***“It’s about the things that we do for love”***

**Is *Did It For Love* about one particular relationship or a series of relationships?**

Actually, it’s about one relationship that led to another relationship.

**What kinds of things were you going through when you made this album?**

I wasn’t really going through anything. I was pregnant and very much in tune to the emotions that was happening, a pregnancy for me is like a new beginning. I was able to tap into a lot

of the feelings I had from a previous relationship as well as a current relationship. Not just my situation and my relationship I also had the indirect experiences of the people close to me people that I know are going through certain things and sometimes certain subject matters. You're in the studio and you're vibing, emotions are on high certain songs just come out. I write like that, I write in the spirit of the moment I don't stay at home and think of ideas, I just go in the studio and create whatever is true and authentic in my spirit at that time.Â

**How was this pregnancy different than the first one? I know that you were making music when you were pregnant with your first child.**

When I was pregnant with my daughter I was on bedrest for the last five months of my pregnancy. I couldn't do any work the doctor sat me down this time, had the doctor known I would've snuck out again. I recorded the album the last few months of the pregnancy until I just couldn't anymore. I would say the biggest difference because they were both very challenging is that I pushed myself, I completed the work it made me even more emotional because I was like determined to complete certain projects whether it was get through my tour or I'm going to get this song out of my system I'm going to go to the studio. I didn't want to be on bedrest this go round so it was kind of like, it was challenging it was tricky because there was part of me like maybe I should sit at home and behave I don't want to jeopardize my health but at the same time I was determined to prove to myself that I could still work.

**Who are you dueting with on "Good To Love You"?**

That's Dave Hollister he was definitely in his groove in a grown man kind of way which is what the track calls for as well. We've known each other for some time so we talked

about doing something and we finally did it.

### **How did you like doing reality TV?**

It was fun and then there were moments when I wasn't really feeling it and there were times it was fun.

[youtube id="kdk8t9sr0yo"]

### **Can you tell the story again of the time you met James Brown?**

I toured with him overseas in Germany. I was opening for him and it was amazing. At that time he was in his ~70's performing at the level he was performing at it was inspirational to the point where it made you as a younger artist feel like bad. We complain about so many things and he's out here working like it's the beginning of his career. It's like you're a legend you don't have to do nothing. I felt like there's no excuse for our generation when you can see someone work as hard as he did at the time and so many of the things they went through I was inspired.

### **How did you feel when he gave you a compliment?**

I felt like a little girl. At the time, I'm feeling like I'm just happy to be in your physical presence to even meet such a legend so when they know you and they compliment you, you feel like "little ole me?" After this, I don't need a Grammy.

### **How do you feel about being a natural hair icon?**

I didn't know I was one. (laughs) It's funny because I'm actually very lazy when it comes to hair so when I read something when somebody has something to say about one of my hairstyles I plait my hair up, I do everything to avoid a hot curler I don't like all that. First of all, I can't figure out how to use them doggone things. I'm impatient and I'm lazy I just learned how to put my lashes on and they still blend to the top of my eyelids. The hair thing is always funny

because Iâ€™m always like how did this happen I just stumbled upon this. Right now Iâ€™m rocking some faux locs I just got and Iâ€™m loving them I really ainâ€™t got to do nothing. Who has time to flat iron and curl their hair everyday. The whole natural hair movement if you will, what I love about is that it does allow our sisters to engage our true authentic selves. Even if you choose not to wear your hair in a natural hairstyle thatâ€™s not to say that you are not a beautiful Black woman or youâ€™re not real or anything like that. Itâ€™s all a matter of choice to me rock a weave do whatever you want because at the end of the day itâ€™s your hair. I feel like some of the newer styles like I said the faux locs, different braids itâ€™s really cool because it allows for people to have protective hairstyles out there.

**So is *Did It For Love* ultimately about beginnings and endings?**

Overall what itâ€™s about is love, itâ€™s about the things that we do for love, sometimes itâ€™s good sometimes itâ€™s bad at the end of the day what you do you do it for love whether someone understands it or not. Thereâ€™s an old saying,â€™You canâ€™t help who you love.â€™

**Keep up with Leela James on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and her [Official site](#). [Â Tickets](#) for her *Undeniable* tour with *Daley* are on sale now.Â**