

Throwback: Edwin Starr-Easin' In



[youtube id="k0Bh4NZ4wZQ"] Edwin Starr's recording of the soundtrack to 1973's *Hell Up In Harlem* was his last for Motown. He had become a star on the label in 1970 because of the Norman Whitfield-produced single "War." Freddie Perren, who was a member of Motown's songwriting team The Corporation, wrote "Easin' In" for *Hell Up In Harlem*. Fonce Mizell, who was also a member of The Corporation and one-half of the Mizell Brothers, produced the album with longtime friend and colleague Perren. The movie was the sequel to *Black Caesar* which also starred Fred Williamson and it is another blaxploitation film remembered more for its soundtrack. Starr's gruff vocals took perfect shape within the funky arrangement accented by the bass and Joe Clayton's congas. "Easin' In" had a spellbinding effect but it was not one of the three songs released as a single from the soundtrack. Hip-hop brought "Easin' In" to its full glory years later as a much-used sample for Digable Planets, Ice-T, DMX and many others. Starr passed in 2003 but after spending the second half of his life in England as an icon of the Northern Soul scene.