

Throwback: The Valentine Brothers-Just Let Me Be Close To You



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John and Billy Valentine were singing siblings from Columbus, Ohio who recorded four R&B albums from '75-'89. Billy Valentine was the lead vocalist with the jazz outfit Young-Holt Unlimited and both of them appeared in the touring company of The Wiz. Their 1982 release *First Take* was completely written by them and is distinguished for the song ["Money's Too Tight To Mention"](#) famously covered by Simply Red. However, *First Take* had other fine picks like "Just Let Me Be Close To You" and ["This Kind Of Love \(So Special.\)"](#) Their later music was pleasing but never garnered more than a collector's type of appreciation. Billy Valentine did some producing during the this time period as well for Jesse Johnson and Sly Stone's ["Crazay"](#) and music for the *Soul Man* soundtrack. He also co-wrote "You Want Me To Love Again" with Leon Ware for Con Funk Shun which would be covered by Vesta at another time. His writing skills also helped created the tune "My World" for Ray Charles and three songs for the Neville Brothers' *Family Groove* project. Robert Townsend used his voice for the lead singer character in *The Five Heartbeats*. Fans of the TV show *Boston Legal* heard him sing the theme song and perform throughout each episode. In 2006 he released the solo album *Travelin' Light*. John Valentine offered his self-composed CD *Uke 'N' Surf 1* in 2008. Billy continues to do shows and travel wherever his voice engagements take him.