

MORE MEOW

Lalah Hathaway lets go

Sometimes being the progeny of a soul music legend doesn't leave much room for individuality. The shadow of their parent's greatness can block their own moments in the sun, especially when faced with inevitable comparisons to that parent. But **Lalah Hathaway** isn't a victim of her dad's legacy. She's carved out one of her own that's reminiscent of the gifted **Donny Hathaway** but musically and creatively representative of nobody but **Lalah**. If you didn't get that from **Lalah** before, her fifth album, *Self Portrait*, confirms it.

"I think it's a pretty good reflection of where I am right now artistically and professionally," the Chicago-born songstress told us, raising her voice to compensate for a flurry of background noise. The commotion was a group of starstruck fans behind her in a Washington, D.C., restaurant, where she was taking a break from her promo tour to grab a bite to eat. **Lalah** is hoping that that type of overt enthusiasm is a sign of good things to come.

The album is **Lalah's** first release on the reborn Stax label, which was once the hit-making home of classic artists

like **Isaac Hayes**, **Otis Redding** and **The Dells**. After going bankrupt in the late '70s, Stax has been revived as part of the Concord Music Group. **Lalah** and fellow powerhouse vocalist **Angie Stone** are among a small bunch of contemporary artists set to bring the label's reputation into the now. To say that their vocal talent will be in good company is an understatement.

Lalah is particularly amped about the production of the first single, "Let Go." She said of the track, which long-time associates **Rahsaan Patterson** and **Rex Rideout** co-wrote: "I was on iTunes at midnight downloading it and so were a bunch of my friends, so it was very exciting." The lyrics were an opportunity for her to take stock of and clear out some fruitless emotional baggage. "I realize that I tend to hoard things, which is sometimes unhealthy. I let go of a lot this past year—some people, some places, real and imagined, some jeans ...," she joked of the song.

Self Portrait features 11 more songs—even one with a rap—that run the topical gamut including "On Your Own," which **Lalah** has said is a message from her father that came to her in a dream. "The only thing I could

remember when I awoke was this line: "You can make it on your own," she said. Of course she'll always be her daddy's girl in her heart and **Donny Hathaway's** daughter in the minds of fans. That famous last name and those velvety vocals will forever tie them together. And she doesn't mind. But she's

just hoping those who loved her father and those who love her, too, can anticipate and appreciate the work she's invested into making a name for herself.

BET shows lifestyles of the young, Black and fabulous

Mix a teenager who has graced the covers of *Italian Vogue* and *Elle* with another whose mother is a renowned actress (**Vanessa Bell Calloway**) and what do you have? "Baldwin Hills," of course! Hailed as the Black "Laguna Beach," "Baldwin Hills" comes back to BET in the show's second season with more promises of documenting the lives of "the young, Black and fab."

Newcomers for the season include sisters **Aunjel** and **Lor'Rena**, two rising track stars and outspoken divas, reformed bad boy turned youth pastor **Justin**, and star athlete and future novelist **Johnathan**. Plus, **Star Jones**, **Vivica A. Fox** and **Lela Rochon** (**Ashely L's** "aunties") appear in an episode for a ladies' power lunch. The show airs July 8 at 10 p.m. on BET.

Melky Jean tries to save Haiti, brings Patti LaBelle along

Melky Jean is known for promoting parties in New York and touring the world performing with her big brother **Wyclef**. But one day she took him up on his offer to visit Haiti, where he was born, and it changed her life. "It wasn't something that I saw coming," the Brooklyn-born-and-bred singer told *S2S*. "Haiti was always **Wyclef's** plight. It was never my plight. I could relate more to the things that were going on in America." But **Wyclef** told a crowd in Haiti that without **Melky** there would be no **Wyclef**.

"The laws in the late '70s and early '80s were different, and because (my brother **Sedeck** and I) were born in America, our parents were able to go back and get the other two that were not born in the States—to keep the family together," she said.

When **Melky** finally visited Haiti with



Lalah Hathaway, Donny Hathaway's daughter, is releasing her debut album on Stax and promises her own unique sound.

Photo by Jonathan Mannion