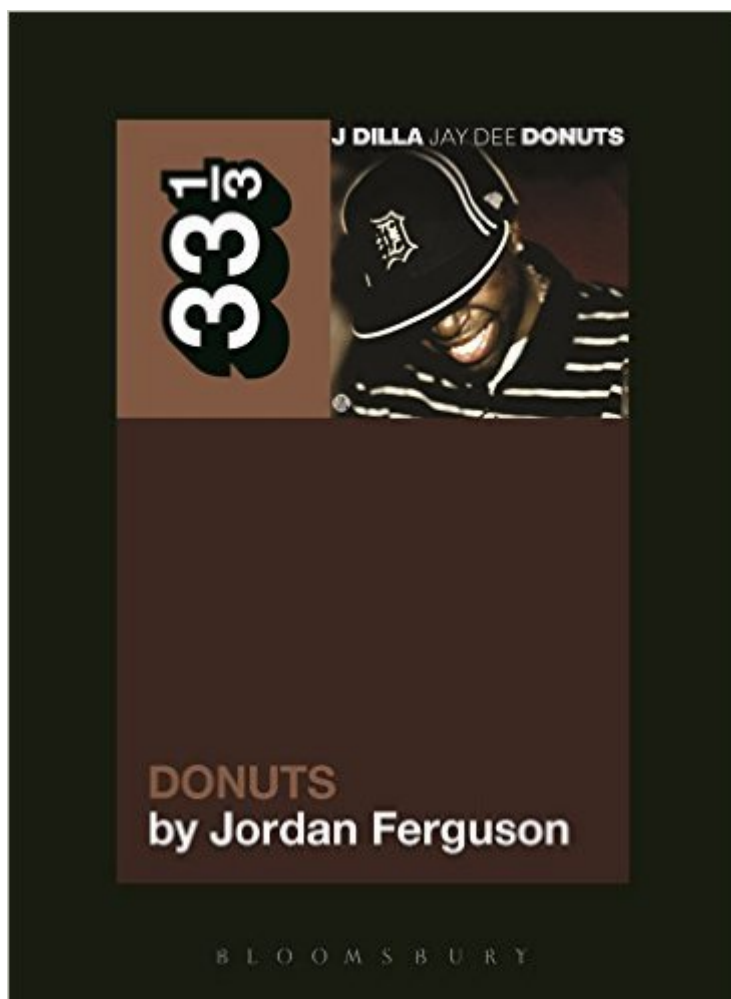


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J Dilla's Donuts (33 1/3)



Synopsis

From a Los Angeles hospital bed, equipped with little more than a laptop and a stack of records, James "J Dilla" Yancey crafted a set of tracks that would forever change the way beatmakers viewed their artform. The songs on *Donuts* are not hip hop music as "hip hop music" is typically defined; they careen and crash into each other, in one moment noisy and abrasive, gorgeous and heartbreaking the next. The samples and melodies tell the story of a man coming to terms with his declining health, a final love letter to the family and friends he was leaving behind. As a prolific producer with a voracious appetite for the history and mechanics of the music he loved, J Dilla knew the records that went into constructing *Donuts* inside and out. He could have taken them all and made a much different, more accessible album. If the widely accepted view is that his final work is a record about dying, the question becomes why did he make this record about dying? Drawing from philosophy, critical theory and musicology, as well as Dilla's own musical catalogue, Jordan Ferguson shows that the contradictory, irascible and confrontational music found on *Donuts* is as much a result of an artist's declining health as it is an example of what scholars call "late style," placing the album in a musical tradition that stretches back centuries.

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Customer Reviews

I was looking forward to reading this book the moment I heard about it. I had already gleaned what I could from the internet about the album, and I hoped the book would provide some good insight not

found elsewhere. As soon as I started reading the book, I believe it took only 2 or 3 days to finish. The author goes after people who knew Jay closely, so you get to read about things that happened in Jay's life that I doubt you will find elsewhere. The author does take a risky trek out on a limb to compare stages of death with the structure of the album. It surprised me how much sense he was able to make, and didn't feel dull like some other tangents I've found in 33 1/3 books. The main thing I want to say is that this book actually enhanced my enjoyment of the Donuts album, which I already liked enough to buy a book about it. Hearing about J Dilla's no-rules policy to making music and style change-ups is freaking inspiring. Also I loved reading about the amount of thought Dilla put into the samples that he knew would make up his final work, it really touched my heart. If you are a longtime fan or someone wondering what all the hype surrounding J Dilla is about, this book is a great resource - and personal pick for the best 33 1/3 book I've read so far.

A fantastic story and sometimes poetically written document of Dilla's final art piece and Dilla's life. I am a HUGE fan of Dilla and there are so many details on Dilla's technique, headspace and influences that are unearthed in this book. The author also gives a snapshot of the eclectic Detroit black music scene and the city's rich history (and turmoil) that played such an influential role in Dilla's development as an artist. Found this at a record store and so happy I picked it up. This book is a real gem, just like diggin' through a stack of records when you find that dope open drum break

This Book Is Informative Of Dilla's Producing Process and Chronicles How He Got His Demo To Tip. It Is Somewhat Depressing As Well As The Author Contemplates Dilla's Mindstate In His Final Days. Good Reading Over All. Very Well Written.

I've been a 33 1/3 fan from the very first Velvet underground and Nico book I snagged from the library, and I've been collecting them ever since, simply b/c I love music and writings about the "classics". I was thrilled when I found out that Donuts will be getting the treatment that many great albums have gotten before. Donuts is one of my desert islands records, an album that continues to captivate and mystify me with its quirks and deeply melancholic and bluesy approach and will be with me till my dying days. Donuts has continued to gain popularity and has continued to amass a cult following as people slowly recognize the genius behind this record, and the genius of this record. To my pleasant surprise, this book offered a lot of previously unknown insight and interpretation on an artist whose luminous career and life were cut horribly short. As a MAJOR Dilla fan, I would highly recommend this book for its off-kilter and unexpected insights into the life

and music of a low-key legend, that certainly left us too soon, and this being his last album, will forever leave us wondering what could have been next.

You can learn a bit of history of Detroit hip-hop, and a bit about J. Dilla, but that's about it. Most of this book is an exercise in intellectual self-gratification, using the Donuts album as fodder. Lots of pages that try to draw from philosophy, literature, psychology, and other fields in an attempt to explain Dilla's work. The author spends an entire chapter writing about himself, as he tries to justify writing a book like this. If you're seeking to learn about J. Dilla's approach to sound and music, I don't recommend this book.

I couldn't put this book down! I read it all in one day! This really gives insight into not only the last days of J Dilla but also why he was so special to begin with. How he defied conventions and became revered by those in the know. This is the most thoroughly researched 33 1/3 books I've read thus far and there is a wealth of insight gathered from those who knew Dilla best. I found it really interesting the stories of how Dilla and Madlib were intrinsically connected and how Dilla and ATCQ linked up. I really can't recommend this book enough!

You've listened to the album and you've professed your love for Dilla's Donuts. But, do you know the story, the WHOLE story behind the album? Jordan Ferguson goes beyond the hidden messages Dilla placed in his final(?) album and links together a story that could inspire a new generation of crate diggers and beat makers. Within the pages of this book you'll learn things about Dilla you may not have known. Very informative and captivating. A must have book to read while giving the album one more listen. And yes, Donuts changed my life too.

Great bio! Good background on Dilla and gave a good discussion on what his last album could have meant to the listeners

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