

Johnny Hartman – Songs From The Heart (2000)

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1. *What Is There to Say?* 2. *Ain't Misbehavin'* 3. *I Fall in Love Too Easily* 4. *We'll Be Together Again* 5. *Down in the Depths* 6. *They Didn't Believe Me* 7. *I'm Glad There Is You* 8. *When Your Lover Has Gone* 9. *I'll Remember April* 10. *I See Your Face Before Me* 11. *September Song* 12. *Moonlight in Vermont* Johnny Hartman - Primary Artist, Vocals Danny Bank - Sax (Baritone) Jay Cave - Bass Christy Febbo - Drums, Drums (Snare) Milt Hinton - Bass Osie Johnson - Drums Hank Jones - Piano Howard McGhee - Trumpet Anthony Ortega - Sax (Alto) Frank Rehak - Trombone Jerome Richardson - Flute, Sax (Tenor) Ernie Royal - Trumpet Ralph Sharon - Piano Lucky Thompson - Sax (Tenor) Ernie Wilkins - Arranger, Orchestra

Most jazz fans know Johnny Hartman from the famous album he recorded with John Coltrane in the early '60s. However, the singer had an illustrious career prior to that, recording for a variety of labels including Bethlehem, which released this album for the first time in 1956, six years before the Coltrane session. Of all Hartman's earlier albums, *Songs from the Heart* is the best place to start. It features the crooner fronting a small band, which gives the proceedings a more intimate ambience than Hartman's forays as a big-band singer (with Dizzy Gillespie, among others). The small ensemble suits Hartman's romantic melancholia perfectly; the album is like one long sob. His smoky baritone fits the mood, and the band follows in suit with some tender but evocative stylings. Considering pianist Ralph Sharon has backed up Tony Bennett for decades, it's not surprising to find in his early work an elegant smoothness. Consisting mostly of standards like "Ain't Misbehavin'," "I Fall in Love Too Easily," and "I'll Remember April," this is the perfect album for pouring a good stiff drink and drowning one's sorrows (especially on a cold winter night). A stand-out track is "Down in the Depths," where Hartman gets carried away, and apparently so does the band: the tangling between bassist Jay Cave and Sharon is the most exciting moment on the album. --Joe S. Harrington, amazon.com

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