

Old Soul makes a New Hit

Motown evokes memories of good times past

By John T. Stephens, III
Special to Sentinel-Voice

When one thinks of classic soul music, Motown Records comes to mind.

And Motown, according to KCEP FM 88 radio program director Louis "L.C." Conner Jr., is the most requested music on the station's all-day Classic Music Thursday format.

Says Conner, "Motown music, like all classic music is the grandfather of today's R&B."

Motown, or Hitsville U.S.A. as it was also known then, was founded in Detroit by Berry Gordy Jr. who was born in that

Michigan city November 28, 1929.

Gordy began his music business career in 1957 as an independent producer selling recordings of the Miracles to other recording labels.

In 1958, Gordy opened his first recording company and called it Jobete Publishing Co. The name originated from a combination of first names of his children, Hazel, Joy, Berry, and Terry. "I Need You," released by Herman Griffin was the company's first record.

On January 12, 1959, Berry Gordy borrowed \$800 to finance Motown Records. The Miracles "Shop Around" was Hitsville U.S.A.'s first million copy seller.

Classic

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it's home," says Mark Mellow-D of KCEP FM 88 radio and the Thursday night's DJ for The Hop night club.

"It was the foundation that takes you back to when times were real and the lyrics were based on people's lives," Mellow-D said. "Artists back then sang from the heart and conveyed messages which all could relate to and understand," he said.

KCEP radio personality Carlaya believes classic music is popular because, "the music was real vocalization and harmony that appeals to a wide range of listeners, both young and old. The grooves were live and the artists were real," she said. "In those days there were no synthesizers, voice filters, beat boxes or any other technology that produced stars in

the studio."

David Allen, station program director for KOOL 105.5 FM Radio believes "for the first time in history, the youth of today can enjoy the music of their parents.

"Classic Music has a distinct type of rhythm that is appealing and attractive to a particular audience. It represents a time when there was happy energy in the music. There was no mention of gangs or drugs in the lyrics. Everyone was happy and joyous with a "Party On" mentality," states Salvador Avila, a reference librarian.

KCEP on-air personality David Lee feels that "Rap has come in and we have lost our originality. People are realizing that they are missing a lot of good music that has been here all the time. Making them aware of what they have missed is my job," said Lee of the quiet storm and classic Thursday for KCEP.

Library sponsors events

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Saturdays in June, the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District's West Las Vegas Library, 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd., celebrates African-American Music Month with a series of concerts and lectures. For more information, call 647-8169.

Saturday, June 7, 7 p.m.

BLUES: Join Lawrence T. as he performs music from W.C. Handy of the 20's, Bessie Smith of the 40's, T-Bone of the 50's, B.B. King of the 60's, Joe Williams and other musicians.

Saturday, June 14, 7 p.m.

GOSPEL MUSIC: Noted radio celebrity Rev. Sam Roberson discusses the history of gospel music, and the Gaston 5 performs it's various forms.

Saturday, June 21, 7 p.m.

JAZZ: Jimmy Wilkins and the New Life Orchestra performs selections from the big band era, emphasizing the influence that the Duke Ellington and Count Basie orchestras had on the development of jazz music.



B.B. KING



BERRY GORDY

In 1961, the Distant are debuted on Gordy's label as the Temptations. Mary Wells releases "Bye Bye Baby" and Motown signs up Marvin Gaye who later teams with Tammi Terrell. The Primettes who were too young then, signed two years later and were renamed the Supremes.

In 1963, Little Stevie Wonder's "Fingertips, Part 2" becomes Motown's second #1 hit across the country and its' music crosses boundaries

of black and white, from young and old.

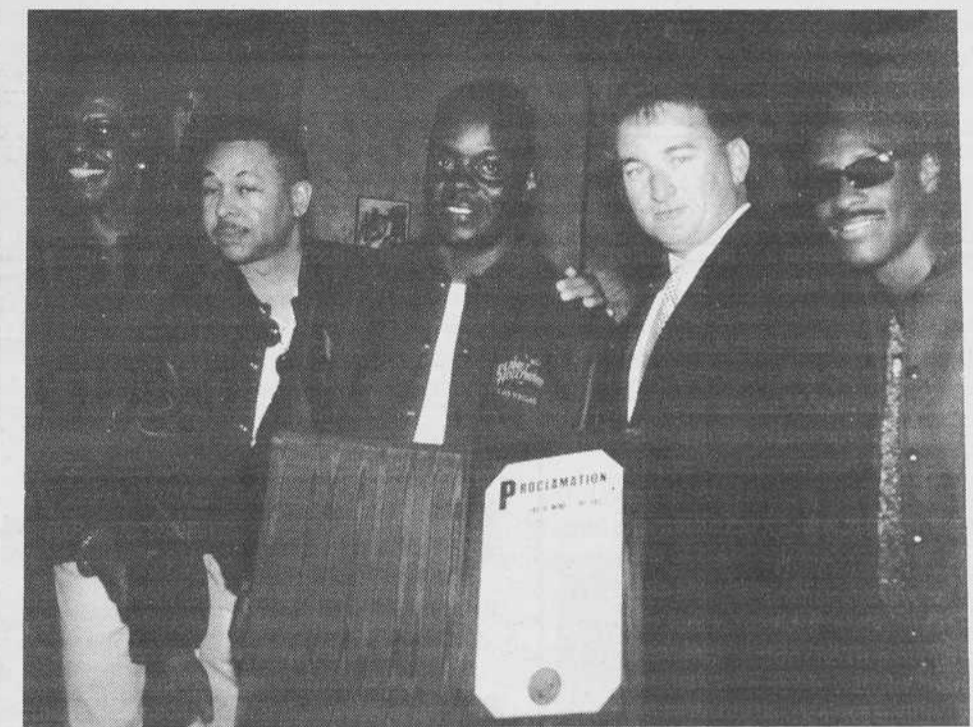
Music for the most part had to come from genuine talent and ability. "The beats were original and the originality is what makes classic music so popular today," said local businessman Terrance Ferguson. "Music back then had lyrics that everyone could sing and enjoy with very little codes and/or buzz words," said Ferguson, a partner in Design Associates, a new interior design business.

Betty Wright, B.B. King, the Persuaders, Lenny Williams, the Isley Brothers, The Stylistics, the Chilities, Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, Teddy Pendegrass, Kano, Marvin Gaye, Phyllis Hyman, George Clinton, Roger and Zapp, Earth, Wind and Fire, One Way, Kool and the Gang, Con Funk Shon, Barkays, Cameo, The Gapp Band, the Intruders, Wild Cherry, Rick James and Teena Marie are just a list of oldies that are quite popular in the Las Vegas Valley, air personalities said.

Most agree classic music is on the rise and it is refreshing to have it back again. Picture might fade and memories may go dull, but your song will never desert you.



The Temptations as pictured on the 1972 album, Solid Rock.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Councilman Michael McDonald honored members of EWF, including Phillip Bailey, center, during the group's recent appearance at Planet Hollywood Las Vegas.

EWF cares about the music

By John T. Stephens, III
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Super harmonies, R&B horns, multi-instrumentalist, and polished vocals are the trademark of the group "Earth, Wind and Fire." The band has been making beautiful, classic music for more than 20 years. During a recent Las Vegas engagement the group paused for a brief interview.

Earth, Wind and Fire has endured as long as they have as a popular classic group because they care about each other and the music, they said.

The band has a spiritual bond which is reflective of their earlier album covers. They take great pride in the music they are playing and the lyrics they are singing.

Maurice White is the founder and leader of the band which debuted in the early 1970s.

In a 1993 interview with Billboard magazine, White said he, "wanted to form something right in the footsteps of where jazz musician Ramsey Lewis was coming from ... something that was musical, yet still entertaining, and something where the subject matter touched your heart."

Over time, White accomplished his goal with hits like "Shining Star," "That's the Way of the World," "Getaway," "Got to Get You into My Life," "Reasons," "Serpentine Fire" and "Boogie Wonderland" to name a few. White is not currently touring with Earth, Wind and Fire but is writing and producing for the group in the studio.

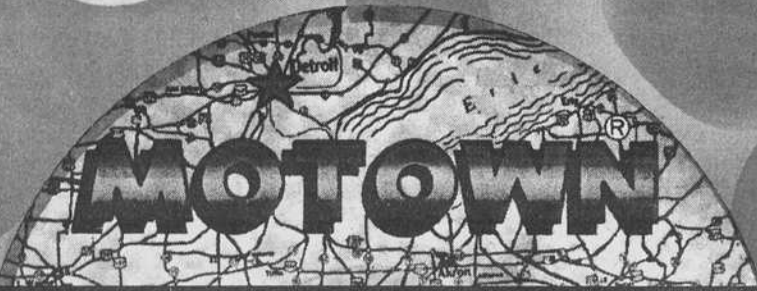
In his absence, Earth, Wind and Fire has incorporated new talent into their band. The group

is reportedly releasing a new album next month. The recording is described by Phillip Bailey, "housing of elements which make up the prior albums. The communication of a positive message which are the roots of Earth, Wind and Fire."

The new release is a collaborative effort: the band members writing songs, which Maurice White then produced.

The new sound recording is to integrate a younger music with Earth, Wind and Fire's classic rhythms of gospel, jazz and R&B. The group plans on returning to Las Vegas in August with Phillip Bailey, the Emotions, Larry Graham and Sinbad all tentatively signed to the show.

"We are flattered that people keep returning to our shows."



The MOTOWN SOUND

Several of the album covers from Motown's heyday are as famous as some of the music.

