

Flash Back: Archie Bell & The Drells



LISTEN
Tighten Up



Archie Bell & the Drells was an American R&B vocal group from Houston, Texas, and one of the main acts on Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff's Philadelphia International Records. The band's hits include "Tighten Up", "I Can't Stop Dancing" (both 1968), "There's Gonna Be A Showdown", "Girl You're Too Young" (1969), "Here I Go Again" (also a UK hit in 1972), "Soul City Walk" (1975), "Let's Groove", "Everybody Have A Good Time" (1977), and "Don't Let Love Get You Down" (1976).

Flash Back: **Odyssey**



LISTEN

Native New Yorker

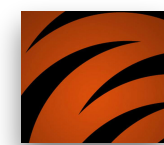


Odyssey is originally a New York, United States-based singing group, best known for their 1977 hit "Native New Yorker," and a series of other mainly dance and soul hits in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Now based in the UK, the band is led and fronted by Steven Collazo and continues to perform and record.

The group began as the Connecticut-born "Lopez Sisters" group, featuring Collazo's mother, Lillian Lopez (Lillian Lopez Collazo Jackson; November 16, 1935 – September 4, 2012), Louise Lopez (February 22, 1933 – January 28, 2015), and Carmen Lopez (born July 12, 1934), the latter having left the group before Odyssey, as the act would come to be known after her departure, was conceived.

Career

Filipino bassist and singer Tony Reynolds joined the group soon after "Native New Yorker" reached no. 21 on the *Billboard* Hot 100, no. 5 in the UK Singles Chart and was later covered by Frankie Valli. A string of albums and singles followed and the group managed another R&B chart hit, "Inside Out", written by Jesse Rae, produced by Jimmy Douglass and featuring music performed by session musicians. It peaked on the US charts at no. 12 and in the UK went to no. 3 in 1982. Reynolds, for unknown reasons, left after the first album and was replaced by Fayetteville, North Carolina native William "Bill" McEachern, who remained with the group throughout the remainder of its RCA Records output. During that time, Brooklyn-born Steven Collazo joined the group as keyboardist, vocalist and musical director. Tony Reynolds died on February 2, 2010 in Jamaica, Queens, New York.



Flash Back: Vanity 6

Vanity 6 was an American female vocal trio assembled by American musician Prince in mid-1981.

Background

Formation

In 1981, Prince, himself a rising musical star, suggested that his three female friends—his girlfriend Susan Moonsie, Boston native Brenda Bennett, and Jamie Shoop form a girl group that would be called "The Hookers". Prince's vision was that the three women would perform in lingerie and sing sensual songs with lyrics about sex and fantasy. Prince had been wanting to mentor a girl singer or group since the late-1970s when he saw the film *A Star is Born* with Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson.

The original trio recorded a few demos before Prince met the then named Denise Matthews, a model and Canadian B movie actress, in January 1980. Matthews was Rick James' date at the American Music Awards when Prince persuaded her to join his girl group. Prince was so taken by her charisma that he decided she would be the perfect frontwoman for his "Hookers" project. Matthews was eventually re-christened Vanity. Prince had originally suggested that she use the stage name "Vagina," but instead they agreed upon "Vanity." Other versions of the story suggest that it was Prince himself who coined the name "Vanity," as he said that looking at her was like looking in a mirror at the female version of himself. Around this time, Prince and Vanity began a romantic relationship. With Vanity's arrival, Shoop was dropped from the group.



WATCH
Nasty Girl



Flash Back: The Miracles

The Miracles (also known as **Smokey Robinson and the Miracles** from 1965 to 1972) were an American rhythm and blues vocal group that was the first successful recording act for Berry Gordy's Motown Records, and one of the most important and influential groups in pop, rock and roll, and R&B music history. Formed in 1955 by Smokey Robinson, Warren "Pete" Moore, and Ronnie White, the group started off as the Five Chimes, changing their name to the Matadors two years later. The group then settled on the Miracles after the inclusion of Claudette Robinson in 1958. The most notable Miracles line-up included the Robinsons, Moore, White, Bobby Rogers and Marv Tarplin.



WATCH

The Tracks of My Tears



Flash Back: The Flamingos



LISTEN

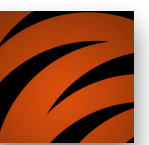
I Only Have Eyes For You



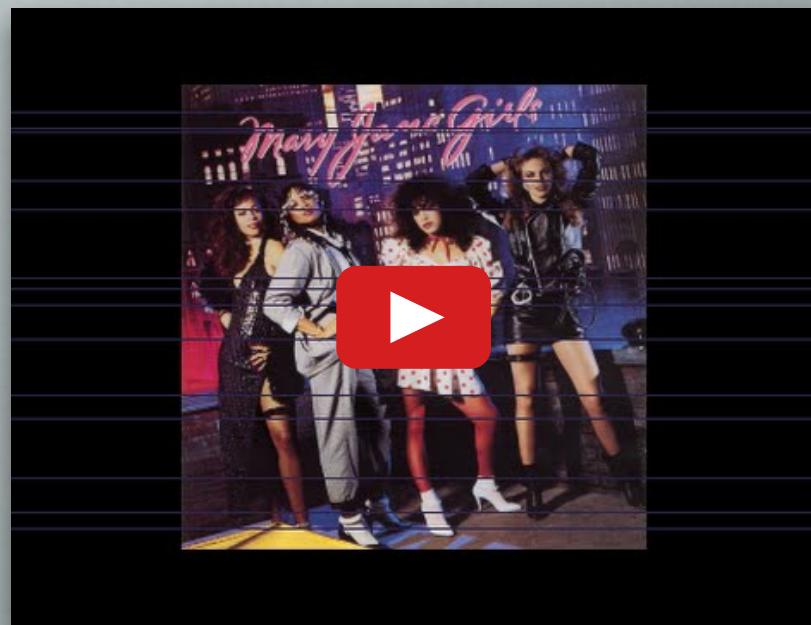
The Flamingos are a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame-inducted doo-wop group from the United States, most popular in the mid- to late 1950s and best known for their 1959 cover version of "I Only Have Eyes for You". *Billboard* magazine wrote: "Universally hailed as one of the finest and most influential vocal groups in pop music history, the Flamingos defined doo wop at its most elegant and sophisticated."

Early quintet

Jacob Carey (Jake) and Ezekial Carey (Zeke), bass and 2nd tenor, respectively, formed the group in Chicago, Illinois, after meeting cousins baritone Paul Wilson and first tenor John E. "Johnny" Carter at a Hebrew Israelite congregation. Earl Lewis (not the Channels lead) soon joined, and after a series of name changes (**The Swallows**, **El Flamingos**, **The Five Flamingos**), wound up being known as the Flamingos. Sollie McElroy soon replaced Lewis (who joined the Five Echoes). The Flamingos' first single (for Chance Records), "If I Can't Have You", was a moderate local success, as was the follow-up "That's My Desire", but it was Johnny Carter's composition of "Golden Teardrops", with its complex vocal harmonies and Carter's soaring falsetto, that cemented their reputation as a top regional act of the day.



Flash Back: **Mary Jane Girls**



LISTEN
All Night Long



The **Mary Jane Girls** were an American R&B, soul and funk group in the 1980s. They were protégées of singer Rick James. They are known for their hit songs "In My House", "All Night Long", "Candy Man", and their cover version of "Walk Like a Man". Joanne "Jojo" McDuffie was the lead singer, the others filling out the group's style and appearance. On the studio recordings, McDuffie was backed by session vocalists rather than the other Mary Jane Girls. The Mary Jane Girls released two albums in the 1980s and recorded a third which was never released.

Flash Back: MFSB



LISTEN

Love is the Message



MFSB, officially standing for "Mother Father Sister Brother", was a pool of more than thirty studio musicians based at Philadelphia's famed Sigma Sound Studios. They worked closely with the production team of Gamble and Huff and producer/arranger Thom Bell, and backed up such groups as Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, the O'Jays, the Stylistics, the Spinners, Wilson Pickett, and Billy Paul.

In 1972, MFSB began recording as a named act for the Philadelphia International label. "TSOP (The Sound of Philadelphia)" also known as the *Soul Train* theme was their first and most successful single. Released in March 1974, it peaked at number one on the US *Billboard* pop and R&B charts. "TSOP" was influential in establishing the disco sound. The track sold over one million copies, and was awarded a gold disc by the RIAA in April 1974.

Flash Back: **The Spinners**



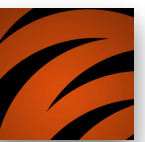
LISTEN

"Could It Be I'm Falling in Love"



The Spinners are an American rhythm and blues vocal group that formed in Detroit, Michigan, in 1954. They enjoyed a string of hit singles and albums during the 1960s and 1970s. The group continues to tour, with Henry Fambrough as the only original member.

The group is also listed as the **Detroit Spinners** and the **Motown Spinners**, due to their 1960s recordings with the Motown label. These other names were used in the UK to avoid confusion with a British folk group also called The Spinners. In 2015, they were nominated for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.



Flash Back: The Five Stairsteps



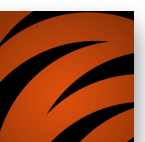
WATCH
"O-o-h Child"



The **Five Stairsteps**, known as "The First Family of Soul," were an American Chicago soul group made up of five of Betty and Clarence Burke Sr.'s six children: Alohe Jean, Clarence Jr., James, Dennis, and Kenneth "Keni", and briefly, Cubie. They are best known for the 1970 song "O-o-h Child", listed #402 on Rolling Stone's 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.

History

The Chicago group was dubbed "First Family of Soul" because of their successful five-year chart run; the moniker was later passed on to The Jackson 5. Initially a teenage five-member brothers and sister vocal group made up of the children of Betty and Clarence Burke, The Five Stairsteps, named by Mrs. Burke who thought her kids looked like stairsteps when lined up according to their age, featured lead singer Clarence Jr., Alohe, James, Dennis, and 13-year-old Kenneth ("Keni"). Most of the members attended Harlan High School. Clarence Sr. was a detective for the Chicago Police Department. He backed the group on bass guitar, managed them, and co-wrote songs with Clarence Jr. and Gregory Fowler.



Flash Back: The Weather Girls

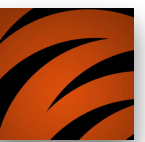


LISTEN
"Just Us"



The Weather Girls is an American musical duo. Formed in San Francisco, California in 1977 as **Two Tons O' Fun**, the duo, consisting of singers Izora Armstead and Martha Wash, originally served as Sylvester's backup singers. Later changing their name to **The Two Sons** and finally The Weather Girls, the duo reached their peak in popularity in 1982 with the international hit "It's Raining Men", which sold 6 over million copies worldwide and was included the following year in their album *Success*.

The duo disbanded in 1988; however, Armstead premiered a new version of The Weather Girls in 1999, together with her daughter Dynelle Rhodes. Following Armstead's death in 2004, the duo has no original members left. The group consist now with Dynelle Rhodes and Dorrey Lynn Lyles.



Flash Back: Ohio Players



WATCH
"Fire"



Ohio Players were an American funk, soul music and R&B band, most popular in the 1970s. They are best known for their songs "Fire" and "Love Rollercoaster". Gold certifications, records selling at least five hundred thousand copies, were awarded to the singles "Funky Worm", "Skin Tight", "Fire", and "Love Rollercoaster"; plus to their albums *Skin Tight*, *Fire*, and *Honey*.

On August 17, 2013, Ohio Players were inducted into the inaugural class of the Official R&B Music Hall of Fame that took place at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Flash Back: Gladys Knight & the Pips



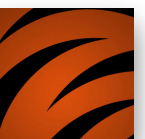
WATCH

"Midnight Train to Georgia"



Gladys Knight & the Pips were an R&B/soul family musical act from Atlanta, Georgia that remained active on the music charts and performing circuit for three decades.

Starting out as simply **The Pips** in 1952, derived from a cousin's nickname, the founding members were Gladys Knight, brother Merald "Bubba" Knight, sister Brenda Knight and cousins William and Eleanor Guest. After a couple years performing in talent shows, the group signed with Brunswick Records in 1957, recording a couple of singles that failed to chart. Brenda Knight and Eleanor Guest were eventually replaced by another cousin, Edward Patten and a non-relative, Langston George in 1959. This lineup produced the group's first hit single, "Every Beat of My Heart". After the single was released on three different labels, they changed their name to *Gladys Knight & the Pips* in 1961. Langston George left the same year and Gladys Knight left in 1962 to start a family with musician Jimmy Newman. Knight rejoined in 1964 and this lineup continued until the group's disbandment in 1989.



Flash Back: Chic



LISTEN

"Good Times"

Chic (***SHEEK***; currently **Chic featuring Nile Rodgers**) is an American band that was organized during 1976 by guitarist Nile Rodgers and bassist Bernard Edwards. Its commercially successful disco songs include "Dance, Dance, Dance (Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah)" (1977), "Everybody Dance" (1977), "Le Freak" (1978), "I Want Your Love" (1978), "Good Times" (1979), and "My Forbidden Lover" (1979). The group regarded themselves as a rock band for the disco movement "that made good on hippie peace, love and freedom". In 2017, Chic was nominated for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for the eleventh time.

Flash Back: The Platters



WATCH
"The Great Pretender"



The Platters is an American vocal group. They were one of the most successful vocal groups of the early rock and roll era. Their distinctive sound was a bridge between the pre-rock Tin Pan Alley tradition and the burgeoning new genre. The act went through several personnel changes, with the most successful incarnation comprising lead tenor Tony Williams, David Lynch, Paul Robi, Herb Reed, and Zola Taylor. The group had 40 charting singles on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart between 1955 and 1967, including four no. 1 hits. The Platters were one of the first African American groups to be accepted as a major chart group and were, for a period of time, the most successful vocal group in the world.

Flash Back: Destiny's Child



WATCH
"Bootylicious"



Destiny's Child was an American girl group whose final and best-known line-up comprised Beyoncé Knowles, Kelly Rowland, and Michelle Williams. Formed in 1997 in Houston, Texas, Destiny's Child members began their musical career as **Girl's Tyme**, formed in 1990, comprising Knowles, Rowland, LaTavia Roberson, and LeToya Luckett among others. After years of limited success, they were signed in 1997 to Columbia Records and Music World Entertainment as Destiny's Child. Destiny's Child was launched into mainstream recognition following the 1999 release of their best-selling second album, *The Writing's on the Wall*, which contained the number-one singles "Bills, Bills, Bills" and "Say My Name". Despite critical and commercial success, the group was plagued by internal conflict and legal turmoil, as Roberson and Luckett attempted to split from the group's manager Mathew Knowles, citing favoritism of Knowles and Rowland.

Both Roberson and Luckett were soon replaced with Williams and Farrah Franklin; how-



Flash Back: The Crystals



WATCH

"Da Doo Ron Ron"



The Crystals are an American vocal group based in New York, considered one of the defining acts of the girl group era in the first half of the 1960s. Their 1961–1964 chart hits, including "There's No Other (Like My Baby)", "Uptown", "He's Sure the Boy I Love", "He's a Rebel", "Da Doo Ron Ron (When He Walked Me Home)" and "Then He Kissed Me", featured three successive female lead singers, and were all produced by Phil Spector. The latter three songs were originally ranked #267, #114, and #493, respectively, on *Rolling Stone* magazine's list of The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time. However, two songs were dropped from the magazine's 2010 update.

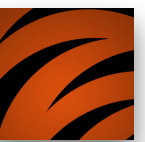
Flash Back: Sly and the Family Stone

LISTEN

"It's A Family Affair"



Sly and the Family Stone was an American band from San Francisco. Active from 1966 to 1983, the band was pivotal in the development of funk, soul, rock, and psychedelic music. The group's core line-up was led by singer-songwriter, producer, and multi-instrumentalist Sly Stone, and included Stone's brother and singer/guitarist Freddie Stone, sister and singer/keyboardist Rose Stone, trumpeter Cynthia Robinson, drummer Gregg Errico, saxophonist Jerry Martini, and bassist Larry Graham. The band was the first major American rock group to have an "integrated, multi-gender" lineup.



Flash Back: The Jones Girls



LISTEN

"Who Can I Run To?"



The Jones Girls were an American R&B vocal trio of sisters from Detroit, Michigan, United States. Consisted of Brenda, Shirley and Valorie Jones, The Jones Girls first signed and recorded for GM Records in 1970. The trio were best known for their singles during the late-1970s through the 1980s; most notably 1979's "You Gonna Make Me Love Somebody Else". After a six-year tenure with GM, They then recorded for Philadelphia International Records with Gamble & Huff.

Flash Back: Parliament-Funkadelic



LISTEN

"Give Up The Funk
(Tear The Roof Off The Sucker)"



Parliament-Funkadelic is an American funk, soul and rock music collective headed by George Clinton. Their style has been dubbed P-Funk. Collectively the group has existed under various names since the 1960s and has been known for top-notch musicianship, politically charged lyrics, Afrofuturistic philosophy, outlandish concept albums and memorable live performances. They influenced numerous post-disco and post-punk music groups of the 1980s and 1990s.

Flash Back: The Raelettes



LISTEN

"Into Something Fine"



The Raelettes (or occasionally **The Raelets** or **The Raeletts**) were an American girl group from the 1950s to the 1990s, formed, as the name suggests, to provide backing vocals for Ray Charles. Separate from Charles, the Raelettes had a number of pop and R&B hits, although they never gained fame for their singles. Several members later went on to solo careers.

Flash Back: Earth, Wind & Fire



LISTEN

"That's the Way of the



Earth, Wind & Fire (EWF) is an American band that has spanned the musical genres of R&B, soul, funk, jazz, disco, pop, rock, Latin and African. They are one of the most successful bands of all time. Rolling Stone Magazine described them as "innovative, precise yet sensual, calculated yet galvanizing" and declared that the band "changed the sound of black pop".

Flash Back: Sisters With Voices



WATCH
"Weak"

Sisters With Voices, better known as **SWV**, is an American female R&B, Grammy Award-nominated vocal trio from New York City, New York. Formed in 1986 as a gospel group, SWV became one of the most successful R&B groups of the 1990s. They had a series of hits, including "Weak", "Right Here/Human Nature", "I'm So into You", and "You're the One". The group disbanded in 1998 to pursue solo projects, and reunited in 2005. As of 2015, they have sold more than 25 million records, making them one of the best selling girl groups of all time.

Flash Back: The Staple Singers

LISTEN

"I'll Take You There"



I'll Take You There
Staple Singers
Best Of



The Staple Singers were an American gospel, soul and R&B singing group. Roebuck "Pops" Staples (1914–2000), the patriarch of the family, formed the group with his children Cleotha (1934–2013), Pervis (b. 1935), and Mavis (b. 1939). Yvonne (b. 1936) replaced her brother when he was drafted into the U.S. Army, and again in 1970. They are best known for their 1970s hits "Respect Yourself", "I'll Take You There", "If You're Ready (Come Go with Me)", and "Let's Do It Again", which with one exception ("I'll Take You There") peaked on the Hot 100 within a week from Christmas Day.

Flash Back: The Stylistics



LISTEN

"People Make the World Go Round"

The Stylistics were a Philadelphia soul group in the 1970s. They formed in 1968, consisting of singers Russell Thompkins, Jr., Herb Murrell, Airrion Love, James Smith, and James Dunn. All of their US hits were ballad characterized by the falsetto of Russell Thompkins, Jr. and the production of Thom Bell. During the early 1970s, the group had twelve consecutive R&B top ten hits, including "Stop, Look, Listen", "You Are Everything", "Betcha by Golly, Wow", "People Make the World Go Round", "I'm Stone in Love with You", "Break Up to Make Up", and "You Make Me Feel Brand New".

Career

Early years

The Stylistics were created from two Philadelphia groups, The Percussions and The Monarchs. Russell Thompkins Jr., James Smith, and Airrion Love came from the Monarchs, and James Dunn and Herbie Murrell came from the Percussions. In 1970, the group recorded "You're a Big Girl Now", a song their road manager Marty Bryant co-wrote with Robert Douglas, a member of their backing band Slim and the Boys, and the single became a regional hit for Sebring Records. Producer Bill Perry spent \$400 to record the number in the Virtue Studios in Philadelphia. The larger Avco Records soon signed the Stylistics, and the single eventually climbed to number seven on the US *Billboard* R&B chart in early 1971.

Flash Back: The Pointer Sisters



LISTEN
"Yes We Can Can"



The Pointer Sisters are an American R&B singing group from Oakland, California, that achieved mainstream success during the 1970s and 1980s. Spanning over four decades, their repertoire has included such diverse genres as pop, disco, jazz, electronic music, bebop, blues, soul, funk, dance, country and rock. The Pointer Sisters have won three Grammy Awards and received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1994. The group had 13 US top 20 hits between 1973 and 1985.

The group had its origins when sisters June and Bonnie Pointer began performing in clubs in 1969 as "Pointers, a Pair". The line-up grew to a trio when sister Anita Pointer joined them. They scored a record deal with Atlantic Records and released several unsuccessful singles. The trio grew to a quartet when sister Ruth joined in December 1972. They then signed with Blue Thumb Records, recorded their debut album, and began seeing more success, winning a Grammy Award in 1975 for Best Country Vocal Performance for "Fairytale" (1974). Bonnie left the group in 1978 to commence a solo career with only modest success.

Flash Back: Rufus



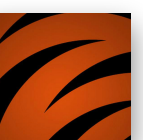
LISTEN
"Pack'd My Bags"



Rufus was an American funk band from Chicago, Illinois best known for launching the career of lead singer Chaka Khan. They had several hits throughout their career, including "Tell Me Something Good", "Sweet Thing", and "Ain't Nobody".

Origins

In 1968, The American Breed (Gary Loizzo, Al Ciner, Charles (Chuck) Colbert and Lee Graziano) had a top ten hit with the classic rock single, "Bend Me, Shape Me,". After much success, Colbert and Graziano (without Loizzo who pursued a successful production career) created a new group, adding later day "Breed" members Kevin Murphy on (keyboards) and Paulette McWilliams (vocals), plus James Stella (vocals) and Vern Pilder (guitar) from the bar band "Circus". They re-emerged in 1969 under the name "Smoke". In 1970, after switching their management to Bob Monaco and Bill Traut, the group's name changed again to "Ask Rufus", the name taken from the title of the advice column in Mechanics Illustrated. At this point, Ciner came back to replace Pilder and Willie Weeks was added on bass after Colbert left.



GREAT GROUP SERIES



WATCH
"Maybe"

The Chantels were the second African-American girl group to enjoy nationwide success in the United States, preceded by The Bobbettes. The group was established in the early 1950s by students attending St. Anthony of Padua School in The Bronx. The original five members consisted of Arlene Smith (lead) (October 5, 1941), Sonia Goring Wilson (born Millicent Goring) (1940), Renée Minus White (1943), Jackie Landry Jackson (May 22, 1941 – December 23, 1997) and Lois Harris (1940). They derived their name from that of a rival school, St. Frances de Chantal.

Flash Back: Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes



WATCH

"Wake Up Everybody"



Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes were an American R&B/Soul vocal group, one of the most popular Philadelphia soul groups of the 1970s. The group's repertoire included soul, R&B, doo-wop, and disco. Founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the middle of the 1950s as **The Charlemagnes**, the group is most noted for several hits on Gamble and Huff's Philadelphia International label between 1972 and 1976, although they performed and recorded until Melvin's death in 1997. However, the remaining members of the Blue Notes have reunited twice for two Soul Train Cruises, one in 2013 and another one in 2015, during the fourth sailing. Despite group founder and original lead singer Harold Melvin's top billing, the Blue Notes' most famous member was Teddy Pendergrass, their lead singer during the successful years at Philadelphia International. In 2013 and 2015, The group reunited when The Centric Network presented the Soul Train Cruise, and The Blue Notes reunited for both events, although they only performed during the fourth sailing in the 2015 event.

Flash Back: The Sylvers



WATCH
"Boogie Fever"

Formed in Memphis, Tennessee, USA, and originally known as the Little Angels, the Sylvers were a family act tutored by their former opera singing mother, Shirley Sylvers. Her children, Leon Frank III, Charmaine, Olympia-Ann and James, started performing at local talent shows in Memphis, before moving to Harlem, New York - providing a more sympathetic audience for their pop R&B. Tours followed with Ray Charles and Johnny Mathis during school holiday breaks, until in the early 70s they relocated from east coast to west coast, taking up residence in Watts, Los Angeles, and calling themselves the Sylvers.

Flash Back: The 5th Dimension



WATCH

"Up, Up and Away"



The 5th Dimension is an American popular music vocal group, whose repertoire includes pop, R&B, soul, jazz, light opera and Broadway—the melange was coined as "Champagne Soul."

Formed as **The Versatiles** in late 1965, the group changed its name to the hipper "The 5th Dimension" by 1966. They became well-known during the late 1960s and early 1970s for their popular hits: "Up, Up and Away", "Stoned Soul Picnic", "Medley: Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In (The Flesh Failures)", "Wedding Bell Blues", "One Less Bell to Answer", "(Last Night) I Didn't Get to Sleep at All", and *The Magic Garden* LP.



Stoned Soul Picnic
(Digitally Remastered 1997)

The 5th Dimension
Up, Up And Away

LISTEN

"Stoned Soul Picnic"

Flash Back: The Marvelettes



LISTEN

"Please Mr. Postman"



The Marvelettes was an American girl group that achieved popularity in the early- to mid-1960s. They consisted of schoolmates Gladys Horton, Katherine Anderson (now Schaffner), Georgeanna Tillman (later Gordon), Juanita Cowart (now Cowart Motley), and Georgia Dobbins, who was replaced by Wanda Young (now Rogers) prior to the group signing their first deal. They were the first major successful act of Motown Records after the Miracles and its first significantly successful girl group after the release of the 1961 number-one single, "Please Mr. Postman", one of the first number-one singles recorded by an all-female vocal group and the first by a Motown recording act.



WATCH

"Don't Mess With Bill"

Flash Back: The Commodores



WATCH
"Easy"



LISTEN
"Brick House" (Long Version)

The **Commodores** are an American funk/soul band, which was at its peak in the late 1970s through the mid 1980s. The members of the group met as mostly freshmen at Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in 1968, and signed with Motown in November 1972, having first caught the public eye opening for The Jackson 5 while on tour.

The group's most successful period was in the late 1970s and early 1980s when Lionel Richie was the co-lead singer. The band's biggest hit singles are ballads such as "Easy", "Three Times a Lady", and "Nightshift"; and funky dance hits which include "Brick House", "Fancy Dancer", "Lady (You Bring Me Up)", and "Too Hot ta Trot". In 1986 the Commodores won their first Grammy for the song "Nightshift".

Flash Back: Labelle



WATCH

"Lady Marmalade"



Labelle was an American all-female singing group who were a popular vocal group of the 1960s and 1970s. The group was formed after the disbanding of two rival girl groups in the Philadelphia/Trenton areas, the Ordettes and the Del-Capris, forming as a new version of the former group, later changing their name to **The Blue Belles** (later **Bluebelles**). The founding members were Patti LaBelle (formerly Patricia Holt), Cindy Birdsong, Nona Hendryx and Sarah Dash.

As The Bluebelles, and later **Patti LaBelle and the Bluebelles**, the group found success with ballads in the doo-wop genre, most notably "Down the Aisle (The Wedding Song)", "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "Over the Rainbow". After Birdsong departed to join The Supremes in 1967, the group following the advice of Vicki Wickham, changed its look, musical direction, and style and reformed as **Labelle** in 1971. Their funk rock recordings of that period became cult favorites for their brash interpretation of rock and roll and for dealing with subject matter that was not typically touched by female black groups. Finally after adapting glam rock and wearing outlandish space-age and glam-rock costumes, the group found success with the proto-disco smash "Lady Marmalade" in 1974, leading to their parent album, *Nightbirds*, which achieved gold success. They are notable for being the first contemporary pop group and first black pop group to perform at the Metropolitan Opera House. They were also the first black vocal group to appear on the cover of *Rolling Stone* Magazine.