



## Say It Loud! A Celebration Of Black Music In America

VH1 Music Studio  
Cable in the Classroom

Lessons for High School Music and Social Studies Classes

Episode 4: Express Yourself

Lesson 3 of 5

The Motown Dynasty (1969-1980)  
Part 2

### Objective

- Students will recognize the contributions of selected artists
- Students will identify musical characteristics of Motown music
- Students will recognize specific Motown song titles

#### *National Standards for Music Education*

6. *Listening to, analyzing, and describing music*
9. *Understanding music in relation to history and culture*

### Materials

- VHS VCR player
- Television
- CD player
- Paper and pencil

- Videotape of Say It Loud: Black Music In America, Episode 2: In Pursuit of Dreams
- Recordings of Motown hits such as:
  - "I Can't Get Next To You," rec. by The Temptations
  - "Someday We'll Be Together," rec. by The Supremes
  - "I Want You Back," rec. by The Jackson 5
  - "Get Ready," rec. by Rare Earth
  - "ABC," "The Love You Save," rec. by The Jackson 5
  - "The Tears of a Clown," rec. by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles
  - "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," rec. by Diana Ross
  - "Just My Imagination (Running Away With Me)," rec. by The Temptations
  - "What's Going On," "Inner City Blues," "Mercy, Mercy Me (The Ecology)," rec. by Marvin Gaye
  - "Papa Was A Rollin' Stone," rec. by The Temptations
  - "Let's Get It On," rec. by Marvin Gaye
  - "Keep On Truckin'," rec. by Eddie Kendricks
  - "Touch Me In The Morning," rec. by Diana Ross
  - "You Are The Sunshine of My Life," "Superstition," "You Haven't Done Nothin'," "Boogie On Reggae Woman," by Stevie Wonder
  - "Love Hangover," "Do You Know Where You're Going To," rec. by Diana Ross
  - "Sir Duke," "I Wish," by Stevie Wonder
  - "Got To Give It Up (Part 1)," by Marvin Gaye
  - "Three Times a Lady," "Still," "Sail On," rec. by The Commodores
  - "Can't Slow Down," rec. by Lionel Richie

## Procedures

1. Play a Motown song (see Materials list for examples) as students enter the classroom and get settled. Start a discussion of the role of songwriters and producers. The songwriting/producing team, Holland-Dozier-Holland was responsible for many Motown hit songs. What were some of their responsibilities? Accept such responses as composing the melodies and harmonies (songwriter), writing the lyrics (songwriter), matching the songs with the artists (producer), supervising the recording session (producer), preparing the artist for the recording session (producer) and assisting the artists with all aspects of performance of the music during the recording session (producer).
2. Many Motown artists wrote their own songs. Who were they (Please see recordings under Materials list and note that some songs are "recorded by" and some are "by"(written by). Accept such responses as Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye. Discuss with students ways that Motown music changed as a result of this. Accept the following responses:
  - The length of the songs changed and many from the 1970s and 1980s are longer in length.
  - The content of the lyrics changed and many social and political messages were included.
3. In June 1972, Motown closed its Detroit operations and moved to Los Angeles. The company expanded into the television and motion picture industries. Stress the fact that this company started with a very small budget of borrowed capital in 1959. Hard work and persistence can reap positive rewards.

4. The Motown dynasty created popular music "icons." What is an "icon?" Who are they? What role did/do they play in American culture? Accept such names as Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder. Discuss their achievements and contributions.

Here are some examples:

Stevie Wonder (1950- )

- Recorded first hit, "Fingertips, Part. 2" at age 13
- One of first to use modern recording technology which allowed him to perform most of his instrumental accompaniments on the album *Music Of My Mind* in 1972
- One of first to experiment with extensive use of electronic music synthesizers for album *Talking Book* in 1972
- Winner of many awards including several Grammy recognitions
- Active in social causes such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the antiapartheid movement in South Africa, and leader in the effort to institute a national holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Michael Jackson (1958- )

- Became leader of The Jackson 5, brothers singing/dancing group at age 5
- Featured in numerous television appearances, including animated series
- Recorded first solo hit album, *Got To Be There* at age 21
- Featured in musical film, *The Wiz* in 1978
- Wrote or co-wrote many songs from his phenomenally successful recordings from 1979-present, including the best-selling album in history, *Thriller* (up until 1982)
- One of first MTV icons
- Recipient of numerous awards including an unprecedented eight Grammys for *Thriller*
- Advocate of social causes such as animal rights

## References

- Edwards, David and Callahan, Mike. *The Motown Story*, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/gordystory.html>.
- Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia 2001, <http://encarta.msn.com>

This lesson was developed by Dee Spencer, professor of music at San Francisco State University and Willie Hill, president-elect of MENC: The National Association for Music Education and director of the University Fine Arts Center at University of Massachusetts-Amherst in collaboration with



and

**MENC: The National Association for Music Education**