



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

To Accompany:
Episode 2: Pursuing The Dream
Episode 4: Express Yourself
Early Motown-The 1960s
Part 1

Objective

- Σ Students will recognize the relationship between a specific geographical region and the development of a recording industry leader
- Σ Students will recognize the contributions of selected artists
- Σ Students will identify musical characteristics of Motown music
- Σ 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
- Access to the Detroit Historical Museum's Motor City Curriculum found at www.detroithistorical.org/html/learning/motorcity
- Videotape of Say It Loud!: A Celebration Of Black Music In America, Episode 2: Pursuing The Dream
- Recordings of early Berry Gordy songs such as, "To Be Loved," "That's Why" and "Lonely Teardrops" rec. by Jackie Wilson
- Recordings of early hits such as:
 - "Please Mr. Postman" rec. by The Marvelettes (1961)
 - "Shop Around" rec. by The Miracles (1961)
 - "Stubborn Kind of Fellow" rec. by Marvin Gaye (1962)
 - "Fingertips, Part 2", rec. by Stevie Wonder (1963)
 - "Come and Get These Memories" rec. by Martha and the Vandellas (1963)
 - "You've Really Got A Hold On Me" rec. by The Miracles (1963)
 - "Micky's Monkey" rec. by The Miracles (1963)
 - "Pride and Joy" rec. by Marvin Gaye (1963)
 - "Heat Wave" rec. by Martha and the Vandellas (1963)
 - "Quicksand" rec. by Martha and the Vandellas (1963)
 - "Baby I Need Your Loving" rec. by the Four Tops (1964)
 - "Where Did Our Love Go?" "Baby Love," "Come See About Me," "Stop! In the Name of Love," "Back In My Arms Again," rec. by The Supremes (1964)
 - "My Guy" rec. by Mary Wells (1964)
 - "My Girl" rec. by The Temptations (1965)
 - "I Hear A Symphony," rec. by The Supremes (1965)
 - "I Can't Help Myself, " rec. by The Four Tops (1965)
 - "I Heard It Through The Grapevine," rec. by Gladys Knight and the Pips (1967)
 - "You Can't Hurry Love," "You Keep Me Hanging On," rec. by The Supremes

Procedures

1. Play a selection of early Berry Gordy songs (see Materials list for examples) as students enter the classroom and get settled. Tell students that they are listening to an example of music that originated in Detroit and was written by Berry Gordy. You may refer to the following information:

- Berry Gordy was born in Detroit on November 29, 1929 and wrote hit songs, "To Be Loved," "That's Why," and

"Lonely Teardrops" for Jackie Wilson when he was in his 20s.

- Berry Gordy, founder of Motown wrote many of his early songs while working on a Ford auto assembly line.

2. Write the word "Motown" on the chalkboard. Ask students to explain the relationship between the word "Motown" and the city of Detroit. (Refer to the Detroit Historical Museum's Motor City Curriculum, Lesson Plan 1: The Impact of the Automobile for possible responses).

3. Write some of the following names on the board: Smokey Robinson, The Miracles, The Primettes (the original name of The Supremes), The Supremes, Diana Ross, Mary Wells, Marvin Gaye, The Marvelettes, Nick and the Jaguars (the first white group to record for Motown), Holland-Dozier-Holland (a songwriting team), Martha and the Vandellas, Stevie Wonder, The Four Tops, Rare Earth, The Temptations, Gladys Knight and the Pips, The Jackson 5, Michael Jackson, The Commodores, Lionel Ritchie. Ask students which names they recognize.

4. Play an excerpt focusing on "Motown" from the program Say It Loud!: A Celebration Of Black Music In America, Episode 2: Pursuing The Dream and/or Episode 5: Express Yourself

5. Write the word "dream" on the chalkboard. Ask students to define the word. Explain that Motown began as a very small company. You may refer to the following information:

- Berry Gordy produced his first song in 1957 when he was 28 years old
- Gordy started his first record label, Tamla, with an \$800 loan in 1959
- Many artists, such as The Miracles, The Supremes (originally The Primettes), and The Marvelettes were "discovered" in talent shows while they were in high school

6. Play excerpts from "Fingertips, Part 2" by Stevie Wonder. Explain that this recording was Stevie Wonder's first hit and was one of Gordy's first Motown hits. Include the following information about earlier successes:

- Gordy's first record to reach the #1 on the pop charts was "Please Mr. Postman" by The Marvelettes (1961)
- That same year "Shop Around" by The Miracles reached the #2 position on the pop charts; this was the first Tamla record to sell 1 million copies
- The success of Motown was solidified with "Baby I Need Your Loving" by the Four Tops in 1964

7. Discuss and demonstrate distinctive musical elements of the early "Motown Sound."

The song, "Fingertips" by Stevie Wonder, was recorded live and was completely improvisational. Discuss the definition of improvisation. Explain that anything that is spontaneous reflects improvisational skill. Use verbal conversations as an example (telephone conversations). Include other elements as call & response, backbeat, shuffle feel, and close vocal harmony. Mention the role of the tambourine in the music and the close relationship of the "Motown Sound" with gospel roots.

For detailed information about the "Motown Sound" and specific musical examples please see:

Edwards, David and Callahan, Mike. The Motown Story, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/gordystory.html>.

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