

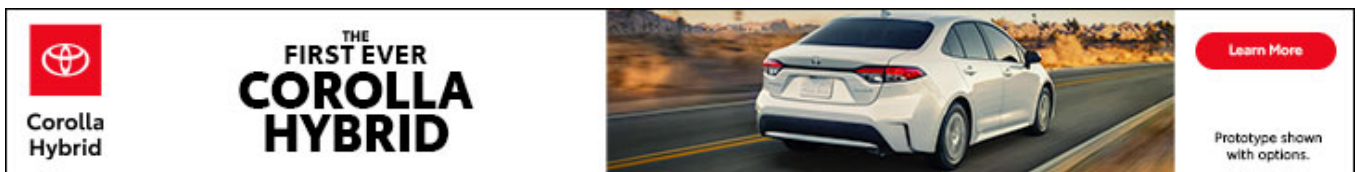


15 SONGS BY WOMEN OF MOTOWN WHO CULTIVATED R&B

By Brianna Rhodes

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Rhythm and Blues music has always been and continues to be celebrated within the Black community. It brings people of all ages together to enjoy soulful sounds from our favorite artists, including the Women of Motown.

The Women of Motown are a pop and R&B blueprint through their catchy tunes, sensual tones and empowering words. Motown women, including Mary Wells, Diana Ross & The Supremes and India.Arie, offer the world a glimpse of their emotions through their music and artistry.

These women encapsulate what R&B is and have played a dynamic role in not only the evolution of Motown but the growth of popular R&B music throughout the years. That's why it's important to pay homage to these dynamic figures.

Check out this list of the women and their legendary songs that have impacted R&B, highlighting the evolution of Motown with such artists as Zhané and Erykah Badu.

1. "Please Mr. Postman" - The Marvelettes (1961)

This iconic [song](#) continues to "hold universal appeal," according to Classic Motown's [website](#). "Please Mr. Postman" became Motown's first pop No.1 hit and set the foundation for Motown's success for years to come.

The Marvelettes helped Berry Gordy's record company receive nationwide attention and popularity with this single. Even today, artists continue to remake the song by adding their own twists. The Marvelettes became a phenomenon when this song was first released and it's amazing to see it continue to thrive in the 21st century.

2. “(Love Is Like A) Heat Wave” - Martha & The Vandellas (1963)

“(Love Is Like A) Heat Wave” became Martha & The Vandellas' first mega-popular song, making it their **first Top 10** hit and the songwriting trio Holland-Dozier-Holland's first Top 5 pop smash.

“(Love Is Like A) Heat Wave” helped define the “Motown Sound”; Martha & The Vandellas were the first Motown group to receive a Grammy® nomination for Best Rhythm & Blues Recording.

3. “My Guy” - Mary Wells (1964)

Released in the spring of 1964, this **song**, written and produced by Smokey Robinson, became Motown Records' first worldwide hit.

Wells and Smokey's Miracles were among the first Motown stars to introduce songs that would come to represent “Hitsville U.S.A.”

4. “Where Did Our Love Go” - The Supremes (1964)

The Supremes changed the face of music when they were introduced to the world in the 1960s. Diana **Ross**, Mary Wilson and Florence Ballard mesmerized the world with their beauty and voices, becoming the first American Group to have five consecutive No. 1 songs, including “Where Did Our Love Go.”

By the end of the 1960s, the group had 12 No. 1 hits. The Supremes reached much success throughout their career and paved the way for many girl groups that followed them.

5. “Dancing In The Street” - Martha & The Vandellas (1964)

“Dancing In The Street” is Martha & The Vandellas' most successful song, reaching No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 charts in 1964. This song is one of the record label's most-played hits throughout its 60-year history. Although not originally intended for Martha & The Vandellas, Martha sang the song as if it were made especially for them, jolting the group into superstardom.

6. “Come See About Me” - The Supremes (1964)

This song was the **third** No. 1 hit for The Supremes in the U.S and one of the many hits written for the group by Holland-Dozier-Holland. The heartfelt song was somewhat different from others normally performed by the talented trio; the lyrics of the song describe Diana Ross in an unfortunate spot, “sometimes up / sometimes down”, because she gave up her friends to be with a guy, “and now he's gone too.”

7. “Stop! In the Name of Love” - The Supremes (1965)

This Grammy-nominated song, a Billboard Hot 100 No.1, is the third single from The Supremes on this list.

“Stop! In the Name of Love” gained worldwide popularity from its **choreography**, based on the group’s “traffic cop” movements, which became a worldwide phenomenon. It’s an instantly recognizable move that is still being performed today.

8. “You Can’t Hurry Love” - The Supremes (1966)

This 1966 single is the group’s seventh Billboard Hot 100 No.1 hit. “You Can’t Hurry Love,” also written by Holland-Dozier-Holland, was reportedly **inspired** by “(You Can’t Hurry God) He’s Right On Time,” a song by gospel group Dorothy Love Coates and the Gospel Harmonettes.

9. “Someday We’ll Be Together” - Diana Ross & The Supremes (1969)

This is the final hit song for Diana Ross & the Supremes. It was, fittingly, the final No. 1 song of the 1960s, reaching No. 1 on the Hot 100 chart in December 1969, shortly after Ross made her announcement that she was leaving the group to go solo. It was the group’s 12th **chart-topper**.

10. “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough” - Diana Ross (1970)

This song, originally sung by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell, became the first No.1 hit for Diana Ross as a solo artist in 1970. The single, written by Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson, was the first of the artist’s five solo No. 1 songs while at Motown.

11. “Square Biz” - Teena Marie (1981)

“Square Biz” was one of Teena Marie’s most popular songs during her long-spanning career.

The funky, upbeat classic **peaked** at No. 12 on the Billboard Club Play charts and No. 3 on Billboard’s Black Singles list.

12. “Groove Thang” - Zhane’ (1994)

This R&B duo reached much success in the 1990s. With the release of their debut album, **“Pronounced Jah-Nay”**, the group had several Top 40 singles from the album, including “Groove Thang,” “Hey Mr. D.J.,” and “Sending My Love.” The album went platinum and reached No. 37 on the Billboard 200 and No. 8 on the R&B Album charts.

13. “On & On” - Erykah Badu (1997)

This song heralded the arrival of Badu and remains one of her most popular hits. Her highly successful debut album, *Baduizm*, released in 1997, also featured the hits “Next Lifetime” and “Appletree.”

14. “Where My Girls At?” - 702 (1999)

702 is one of the many popular girl groups from the 1990s. “Where My Girls At?” was released in 1999 as a single from their second album and was written by Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott. The upbeat, feel-good song was **originally** intended for TLC but, after the group passed on it, Elliott handed it over to 702.

15. “Video” - India.Arie (2001)

India.Arie has been at the forefront of reframing how we see women and has helped women from all over the world embrace their natural beauty. “Video” became a pop Top 40 single and received several Grammy® nominations including Record of the Year, Song of the Year, Best Female R&B Vocal Performance and Best R&B Song. The soulful songbird has had numerous hits and is known as one of Neo-Soul’s biggest successes.

Without a doubt, the Women of Motown have had an immense impact on the cultivation and longevity of the R&B genre. Want to listen to the lovely melodies by these legendary women? Check out Motown’s Strength Courage and Wisdom playlist on Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora and YouTube Music **HERE**



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