



TRAILBLAZERS IN MUSIC: CHECK OUT 8 SONGS MUSICAL ARTISTS HAVE SAMPLED FROM WOMEN OF MOTOWN

By Brianna Rhodes

Photo: Classic Motown

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The Sound Of Young America wouldn't be known for what it is today without the trailblazing Women of Motown.

Throughout its 60-year existence, Motown Records made an impact on the world thanks to music genius and founder, Berry Gordy. It's important to note though, that the African-American owned label wouldn't have reached so many monumental milestones without The Supremes, Martha Reeves & The Vandellas, Mary Wells, The Marvelettes, Tammi Terrell and Gladys Knight. The success of these talented women proved that women voices needed to be heard through radio airwaves everywhere.

As a kid, you were probably singing melodies created by these women around the house with family members or even performing the songs in your school's talent show, not even realizing how much of an impact these women made on Black culture and Black music.

This is why it's important to acknowledge these women during the celebration of the label's 60th anniversary.

The legendary reign of the Women of Motown began back in 1960, with then 17-year-old musical artist Mary Wells with her debut single, "Bye Bye Baby." Wells, who wrote the song herself, helped Motown attain its first Top 10 R&B hit ever. Wells continued to make history

with her chart-topping single, “My Guy” becoming Motown’s fourth No. 1 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 and the company’s first major U.K. single.

The impact of female artists continued to shine with The Supremes, becoming the first American group to have **five consecutive number one hits** with “Where Did Our Love Go,” “Baby Love,” “Come See About Me,” “Stop! In The Name Of Love” and “Back In My Arms Again.”

There were other No. 1 hits like “Dancing In The Street,” and “Heatwave” by Martha & the Vandellas. Another female artist, Thelma Houston, also made history with “Don’t Leave Me This Way” as it became the first Motown single to reach No. 1 on the Pop, R&B and Dance charts.

With their soulful voices, their melodic grooves and catchy tunes, the Women of Motown proved why Motown’s headquarters was called Hitsville U.S.A. They paved the way for some of our favorite artists to shine in music decades after their songs were released. The sounds of their music laid the blueprint for future songs to be recreated by other artists, which is why the Motown Sound will live on forever. Learn more about Motown and its history [here](#).

Check out a list of classic songs in the Motown catalog that has been remade by some of your favorite artists today, all thanks to the legendary Women of Motown.

1. “I’m Coming Out” - Diana Ross

[Listen to “I’m Coming Out”](#)

This 1980 hit from Diana Ross’ Diana album was sampled on the track “Mo Money, Mo Problems,” by The Notorious B.I.G featuring Puff Daddy, Mase and Kelly Price in 1997. The song was featured on The Notorious B.I.G’s second album, **Life After Death** which became a **Billboard #1 single**.

[Listen to the remake HERE](#)

2. “Every Little Bit Hurts” - Brenda Holloway

[Listen to “Every Little Bit Hurts”](#)

Brenda Holloway’s soulful **1964** single was covered by Alicia Keys on her live album, Unplugged in 2005.

[Listen to the remake HERE](#)

3. “Please Mr. Postman” - The Marvelettes

[Listen to “Please Mr. Postman”](#)

“Please Mr. Postman” was Motown Records’ first No. 1 on the Billboard pop charts in 1961 and has since been covered by multiple artists in various genres of music. The Beatles covered the song for their 1963 album, With The Beatles and rap artist Juelz Santana sampled the song in his 2006 single, “Oh Yes”.

[Listen to the remake HERE](#)

4. “Upside Down” - Diana Ross

[Listen to “Upside Down”](#)

This Diana Ross certified gold hit became her fifth solo No. 1 song on the Billboard Hot 100. The song has been sampled by rapper MC Lyte for her single "Cold Rock a Party" featuring Missy Elliot in 1996. Salt-N-Peppa also sampled “Upside Down” for their song, “Upside Down (Round and Round),” which was featured on the Space Jam soundtrack the same year.

[Listen to the remake HERE](#)

5. “All Night Long” - Mary Jane Girls

[Listen to “All Night Long”](#)

The drum, bass, and lyrics of Mary Jane Girls 1983 hit, “All Night Long” has been sampled by numerous artists since its release in 1983. Elements of the single has been heard in “Smooth Operator” by Big Daddy Kane, “Around the Way Girl” by LL Cool J, “Tonight's Da Night” by Redman, “Tell Me” by Groove Theory, “Hey Lover” by LL Cool J featuring Boyz II Men and “Mary Jane” by Mary J. Blige. Over 100 other songs have also been sampled, according to [whosampled.com](#).

[Listen to the remake HERE](#)

6. “I Heard It Through The Grapevine” - Gladys Knight and The Pips, The Miracles

[Listen to “I Heard It Through The Grapevine”](#)

“I Heard It Through The Grapevine” was first recorded by the Miracles in 1966 and then recorded by Gladys Knight and the Pips in 1967. Marvin Gaye made the single the hottest song of the new year in 1969, becoming the first Billboard pop No. 1 single of 1969.

[Listen to the remake HERE](#)

7. “Neither One Of Us (Wants To Be The First To Say Goodbye)” - Gladys Knight & The Pips

[Listen to “Neither One Of Us \(Wants To Be The First To Say Goodbye\)”](#)

Released in 1973, this No. 2 chart-topping hit was sampled by neo-soul artist Angie Stone in 1999. “No More Rain (In This Cloud)” was featured on Stone’s Black Diamond album.

[Listen to the remake HERE](#)

8. “I Love Your Smile” - Shanice

Listen to “I Love Your Smile”

One of the most recent remakes of a Motown song was done by popular R&B artist Chris Brown. Brown sampled Shanice’s 1991 single "I Love Your Smile" for his 2019 single, “Undecided,” which is featured in his newly released album, Indigo.

Listen to the remake [HERE](#)

Women of Motown paved the way for artists of all genres in almost every decade since the 1960s. Their work and timeless music defied the odds and broke down barriers for artists. Women of Motown were so instrumental in the evolution of music and why their legacy should always be recognized.

Want to hear more of Women of Motown’s hit songs? Listen to your favorite female artists on Motown’s Strength, Courage, & Wisdom playlist, with songs such as “Please Mr. Postman” by The Marvelettes, “Every Little Bit Hurts,” by Brenda Holloway, along with the 90s and new millennium hits, such as “On & On,” by Erykah Badu, “Video” by India Arie, to celebrate the magical women who helped Motown be known how it is today.

Find the playlist on Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora, and YouTube Music [here](#).



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