

Motown, Part Two, Syllabus: suggested listening, reading and viewing

This course covers the golden age of Motown 1965-80. It is part two, the sequel to part one, and will concentrate on a handful of individuals and groups who helped to spread the label as the driving force behind American popular music in that period, who piggybacked on the people who created and established Motown, namely Berry Gordy and Smokey Robinson. The course will do this through several media: lectures, photographs, slide shows, recorded music, film clips, question and answer sessions, and the use of live music. The instructor will play piano, guitar and sing, and will choose appropriate examples from each genre.

Week one: Divided Soul; The evolution and genius of Marvin Gaye, and how Motown affected the political and social climate of America, and vice-versa. This class will cover his early days as the studio drummer for Anna records, to the glorious middle period as Motown's hit-making go-to male artist, to his enlightenment and spiritual awakening in the 1970's, to the darkness of the final chapter of his amazing life.

Listening:

That Stubborn Kinda Fellow (Tamla, 1963)

Moods of Marvin Gaye (Tamla, 1966)

What's Goin' On, Marvin Gaye, (Tamla, 1971)

Let's get it on (Tamla, 1973)

Reading:

Divided Soul: The Life of Marvin Gaye: David Ritz:

Mercy, Mercy Me: The Art, Loves, and Demons of Marvin Gaye by Michael Eric Dyson

<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/honor-thy-brother-in-law-a-visit-with-marvin-gaye-19720427> (rolling stone interview, 1972)

<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/the-spirit-the-flesh-and-marvin-gaye-19740411> (rolling stone interview, 1974)

Viewing:

Marvin Gaye DVD the real thing : in performance 1964-1981

The TAMI show, 1964

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Week two: The Inner Visionary: Stevie Wonder: the child was father to the man. How a 12-year-old blind musical prodigy parlayed an uncanny talent and drive into one of the greatest careers of any American musician—ever. How Stevie Wonder changed with the times, always at the forefront and cutting edge of not just music, but culture as well. We will look at his career: 1961–69: Sixties singles 1970–79: Seventies albums and classic period 1980–90: His commercial period.

Listening:

Recorded Live: The 12 Year Old Genius (Tamla 1963)

I Was Made to Love Her (Tamla 1967)

My Cherie Amour (Tamla 1969)

His classic trilogy:

Talking Book (Tamla, 1972)

Inner Visions (Tamla 1973)

Fulfillingness' First Finale (Tamla 1974)

Reading:

Signed, Sealed, Delivered: The Soulful Journey of Stevie Wonder, Mark Ribowsky

Viewing:

rock and roll hall of fame 25th anniversary, w/ Jeff Beck and Sting

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Week three: The writers and producers: Holland-Dozier-Holland, Mickey Stevenson, Norman Whitfield, Ashford/Simpson: The people behind the songs and the incredible arrangements and productions,; how the songs were written and how the records were made; Motown's famous "quality control" system to pick hits.

Listening:

Heaven Must Have Sent You, 3-disc set of their hits, and then some

Greatest Songs Written By Holland, Dozier, Holland—one disc, 20 songs.

Reading:

Where Did Our Love Go? The Rise & Fall of the Motown Sound, Nelson George

Motown: Music, Money, Sex, and Power, Gerald Posner

Viewing:

Standing in the Shadows of Motown (2002)

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Week four: The 1970's: Motown moves to LA: Jackson Five, Commodores, Lionel Ritchie, Diana Ross, Rick James, Berry Gordy sells Motown in 1988.

Listening:

Diana Ross Presents The Jackson 5 (Motown, 1969)

ABC (1970, Motown)

The Very Best of the Commodores, (various labels, 1995)

Diana Ross' Greatest Hits (Motown, 1976)

Reading:

To be Loved, Berry Gordy 1994

Diana Ross: A Biography Hardcover – 2007 by J. Randy Taraborrelli

Viewing:

The Jacksons, an American Dream, 1992, TV series, starring Angela Bassett