

SPECIAL ISSUE

ISSN 0034-1622

# Record World

PART II

## Motown's



January 26, 1980

*Diana  
Ross*





Mr. Berry Gordy  
Chairman of the Board  
MOTOWN INDUSTRIES  
6255 Sunset Boulevard  
Hollywood, California 90028

Dear Berry:

Congratulations on the occasion of Motown's 20th Anniversary and for having maintained the standard of unparalleled excellence in the record industry for two decades.

Wishing you the very best in the decade of the 80's, and may you continue to meet challenges as you did in the 60's and 70's.

Motown Industries has been outstanding in the fields of economics and culture; and in the realm of its social responsibility, it has not been matched.

Best wishes for a most enjoyable celebration, and good luck for continued success in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

*Tom Bradley*  
TOM BRADLEY  
MAYOR



January, 1980

# H

How do you build a global entertainment empire? Most financial analysts would recommend a blueprint calling for seven-figure lines of credit, platoons of well-heeled executives, the requisite number of blue chip creative properties, and the high-powered contracts needed to protect those investments.

Yet Berry Gordy, Jr. founded just such an enterprise with a loan of \$800, a handful of loyal family and friends, and a dream of a new black pop style that would speak as eloquently to suburban whites as it did to the black youth of the Detroit inner city where Motown was born. Propelled by Gordy's fierce conviction, and consummated in the vital music he helped the first generation of Motown artists realize on stage and in the studio, the Motown Sound became one of the most influential forces in the history of popular music.

Emanating from radios and record players across the country, that sound had created its own classic proportions within a few short years of Motown's formation: cascading bass lines, insistent percussion, lush orchestrations and, above all, a tradition of emotional yet always melodic vocal performances were the constants of a style that still respected the individuality of its superstars-to-be, early Motown artists like Smokey Robinson and The Miracles, Diana Ross and The Supremes, The Temptations, Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder.

Like other musical approaches with strong black roots, the Motown Sound quickly invited imitation.

helping spawn the soul boom of the late '60s. Perhaps more significant, though, was the frank emulation of emerging pop and rock artists, who heard the balance of rhythm and beauty behind those early records as an achievement transcending lines of class and ethos.

Today, those artists, along with successive generations of Motown performers such as The Commodores, Rick James, High Energy, Jermaine Jackson and Bonnie Pointer, among others, have made Motown as recognizable a trademark as Coca-Cola around the world. In the process, Motown itself has grown from a small independent record company to a major entertainment corporation—the largest black-owned and operated venture in the world—with interests in television, movies, theater and, most recently, audio technology.

**A**s seen through the eyes of its founder and the artists and executives behind its success, Motown's evolution has assuredly tapped new veins of innovation in marketing, promotion and career development. Ultimately, though, the Motown story is one of creativity—the combination of "rats, roaches, talent, guts and love," as Berry Gordy, Jr. once termed it—overcoming barriers of cultural and economic adversity.

In paying tribute to Motown Records as it begins its 20th anniversary, *Record World* thus looks at the future as well as the past, at hope for coming opportunities as well as well-earned satisfaction over past achievements.

## **Record World Salutes Motown**

For nearly 2 decades Motown Industries has been a source of inspiration to recording artists, writers, producers -- the total Black Music Industry.

Motown was the source that planted the idea of success in the industry for black people. It was the premiere force in Black Music.

No industry tribute is too large for Motown and Berry Gordy. Motown has made "hit" careers, not just hit records. Artists such as Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, and Marvin Gaye have given Motown infinite life...they are classics, as well as role models for aspiring artists.

Motown should be commended for their perseverance and foresight in developing not just a record company, but a total entertainment complex.

I am proud that there is a Motown, and on behalf of the Black Music Association, I would like to take this opportunity to offer our congratulations to Berry Gordy and those Motown team members who have contributed to the establishment and development of Motown into the institution that it is today. We look forward to Motown's continued success and involvement with Black Music.



Kenneth Gamble,  
President



**BLACK MUSIC ASSOCIATION**

1500 LOCUST STREET, SUITE 1905, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19102 (215) 545-8600

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**And All Our**

**Dear Friends**

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**On Their**

**Twentieth**

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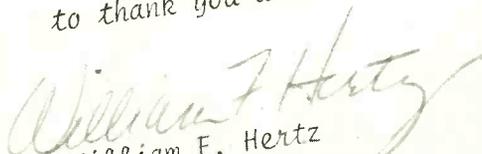


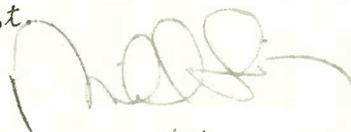
PRESENTED TO

MOTOWN RECORD CORPORATION

On behalf of its 1,000 members, the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce congratulates Motown Record Corporation on their 20th anniversary.

For the past decade, Motown Record Corporation has been a vital component to the successful record industry in Hollywood and a constant contributor to the Hollywood community and the Chamber. We take this opportunity to thank you and wish you all the best.

  
William F. Hertz  
President

  
Michael Sims  
Executive Director

January 4, 1980

6324 Sunset Boulevard • Hollywood California 90028 • (213) 469 8311

# CONGRATULATIONS ON 20 YEARS OF MOTOWN MAGIC



DIANA ROSS  
'The Boss'



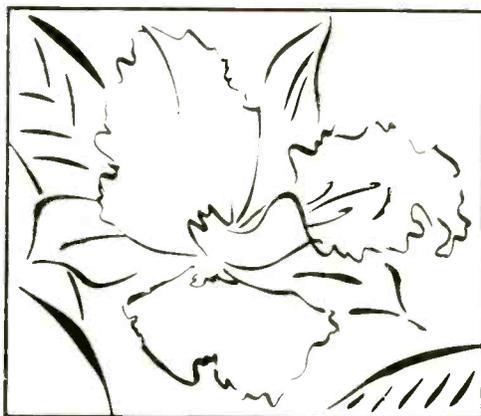
THE GREATEST MUSIC COMPANY IN THE WORLD

# CONGRATULATIONS ON 20 YEARS OF MOTOWN MAGIC

STEVIE WONDER'S

Journey Through

*The Secret Life of Plants*

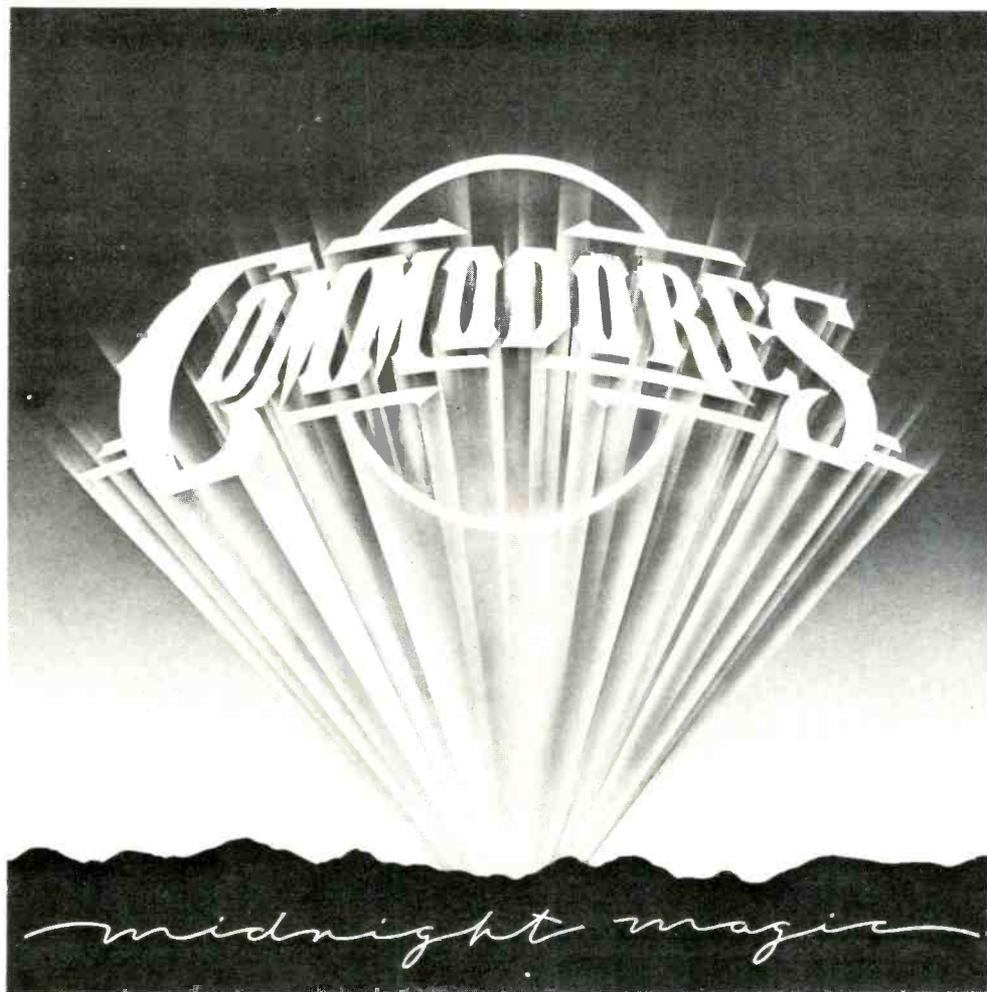


STEVIE WONDER  
'Journey Through The Secret Life Of Plants'



THE GREATEST MUSIC COMPANY IN THE WORLD

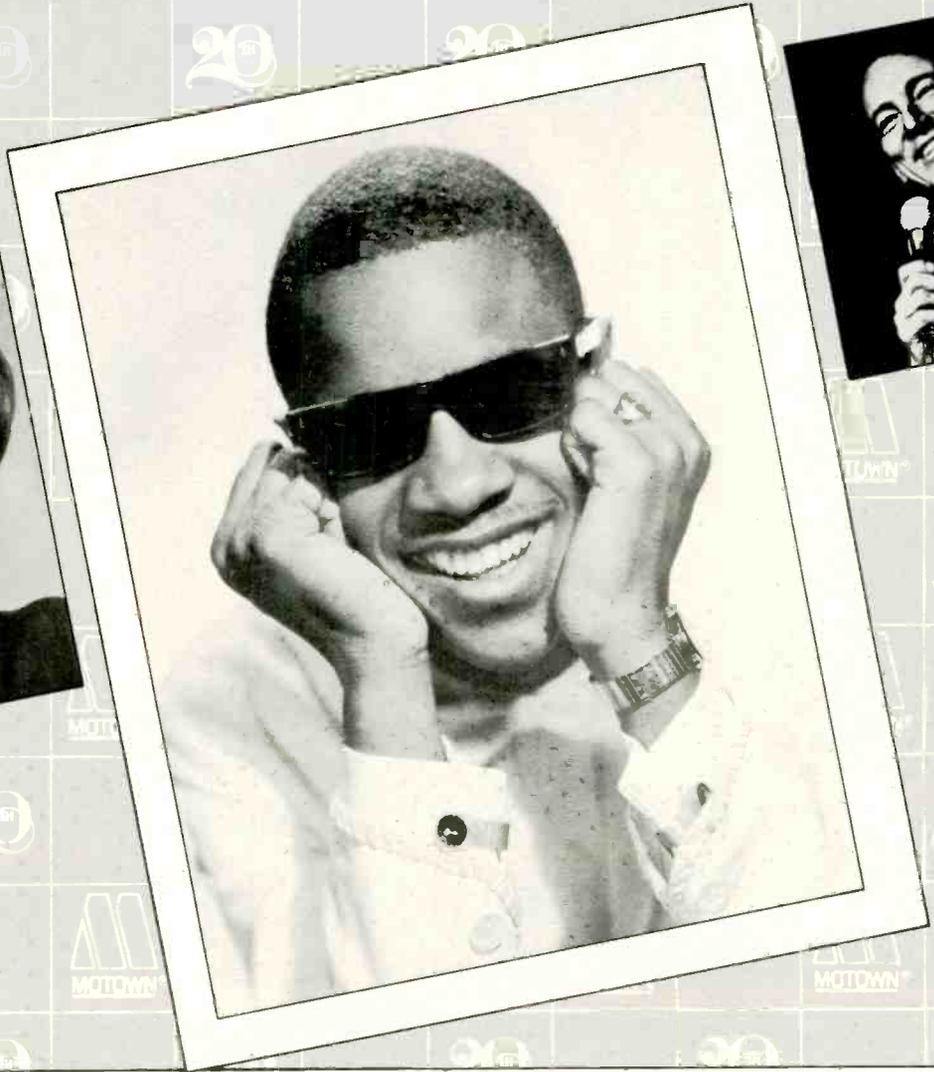
# CONGRATULATIONS ON 20 YEARS OF MOTOWN MAGIC



THE COMMODORES  
'Midnight Magic'

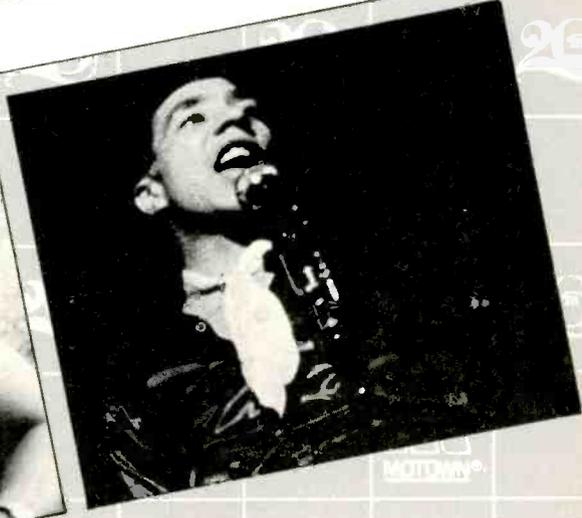


THE GREATEST MUSIC COMPANY IN THE WORLD



MOTOWN 20th

# Motown Memorabilia



**Record World**

# Motown: A Dream, A Sound, A Revolution

By JUNIUS GRIFFIN

**B**ack in 1960, long before the term "inner city" became a cultural litany, one of the most productive talent searches ever conducted began in Detroit's slums. Just as John F. Kennedy launched his highly touted New Frontier, Berry Gordy, with equal deliberation, started scouring Detroit's teeming black neighborhoods, where many thought that hopelessness was more prevalent than talent.

Motown wasn't founded or started in the usual sense: it was born as the by-product of a man's dream and his genius. Now entering its third decade after 20 years of phenomenal growth and corporate development, Motown's creative product continues to re-

fect the cultural complexities and social changes of an era in which its music has gained international repute as a stylized reflection of Afro-American tradition.

Essentially, what Mr. Gordy originally brought to Motown was an ability to attract talented people in the black community and to recognize tunes, lyrics and audio effects that would appeal to both black and white listeners.

Initial financing for that dream, and the genius behind it, came in the form of an \$800 loan from his family. The future Motown chairman would later confide, "At the time I wrote 'Money,' I was broke, and I had a girl friend or two who were telling me how much they loved me, but you know it meant nothing. Therefore the line came: 'Your love gives me such a thrill, but your love

don't pay my bills.'"

Like nearly all of the performers, writers and producers behind Motown's success, Mr. Gordy was himself born and raised in Detroit's inner city, and it was from this environment that The Motown Sound grew from its urbanized black roots. As introduced in the grooves of its earliest hits, that sound traced the transformation of dream into reality: "Money," "Shop Around," "Please Mr. Postman," "Playboy," "Stubborn Kind Of Fellow," "You've Really Got A Hold On Me," "Pride And Joy," "Finger Tips," "Come And Get These Memories" and "(Love Is Like A) Heat Wave" signalled that transformation by establishing Motown's style globally.

One key to that success story—and a testament to a very spe-

cial friendship—was the bond between Berry Gordy, Jr., and William "Smokey" Robinson, himself a talented and versatile artist, songwriter and executive. It was Smokey who persuaded Mr. Gordy to manufacture and distribute his own records. Smokey also wrote and recorded Motown's first million seller, "Shop Around." By the late '60s, Robinson would be lauded by no less a figure than Bob Dylan as "America's best living poet," and by The Beatles (who helped launch their own legend with versions of several Motown hits) as "the poet laureate of the world."

Even before those accolades, Robinson would display the versatility that also garnered him kudos as an executive in later

(Continued on page 44)

FROM MY  
**Fingertips**

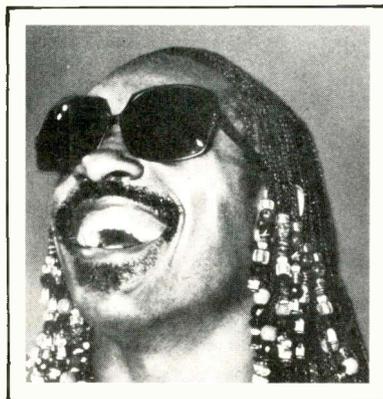
TO MY  
**Innervisions**

WHATEVER MY  
**Journey,**  
**Motown**

HAS ALWAYS BEEN  
**Where I'm Coming From**

WITH MY  
**Songs In The Key Of Life.**

CONGRATULATIONS,  
**Stevie.**



## Berry Gordy and The Motown Story

By SAMUEL GRAHAM

If there is a single thread that runs through every interview conducted for this special section, it can be summarized in just two words: Berry Gordy. Without exception, Motown employees and artists alike point to the company's founder and guiding light as the single most important factor in Motown's 20-year success story. In the following Dialogue, one of Mr. Gordy's very infrequent interviews, he discusses many aspects of his career: the unlikely inspiration for his songwriting; his work with Jackie Wilson and others in the pre-Motown days; the origins of Motown itself, and the arrivals of several of the label's most important and durable artists; the company's expansion into new areas in the last two decades; some of his hopes and dreams for the future, and a good deal more. Through it all, what is most apparent is Gordy's emphasis on human qualities before financial ones, and his philosophy that success without happiness is an empty proposition at best. Motown may have been built, as he says, on "rats, roaches, talent, guts and love"—but without Berry Gordy, there would have been no foundation at all.

**Record World:** There are covers of some of your classic tunes being made all the time, especially "Money." Have you heard some of the newest ones?

**Berry Gordy:** I have not.

**RW:** I think you might enjoy them, particularly a rather strange version of "Money" by a group called the Flying Lizards.

**Gordy:** Yeah, I would love it. Once a songwriter, always a songwriter—and plugger. So you always delight in hearing a new version of something you created. You never get too big for that.

**RW:** What were your earliest days as a songwriter like?

**Gordy:** Well, long before that ("Money"), I had read in a magazine that you could get your songs written up on sheet music by paying 25 dollars, or whatever it was, and I got a song of mine written up called "You Are You." I had been inspired very much by seeing a movie with Danny Thomas, on the life of Gus Todd—I've forgotten the name of it now. Doris Day was in it, and I wrote this song for Doris Day after seeing the movie. So I was inspired by her and Danny Thomas, of all people.

In those days, when you were really broke, you didn't have time for love or anything else, and in trying to write a song, I wanted to start off writing something that was very unique and different. Everybody was writing love songs; I was basically a dreamer of love songs, and that's what I wanted to write, too. But wanting to write love songs and also living in the real world—in what is called the ghetto now—and listening to the earthy problems of life, I tried to mix that in with the love and the feeling.

**RW:** From a musical standpoint, your influences included several jazz musicians. How did they figure in your writing?

**Gordy:** Well, as I said before, I was a dreamer, and having seen this picture I was impressed with the songwriting aspect of it, how you create songs. But I was always a jazz lover, and I still am a jazz lover. I used to admire certain people, like Charlie Parker, who was too brilliant to be commercial. I loved Billie Holliday; I met her once, and I loved her music and what she was saying—that made it really possible for me to get into her personality in the film ("Lady Sings the Blues"), because I admired her so much. But in terms of other jazz people, I liked the ad-libbing ability, which is really another form of songwriting, of Charlie Parker, or Sonny Stitt, Lester Young, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Art Tatum; while they were playing the same song, they improvised much of it, as true jazz artists still do. So I think it all sort of wraps up into one cycle of influence and inspiration.

**RW:** You mentioned the Danny Thomas movie as an inspiration for your earliest songs. Do you perhaps remember the first song you ever wrote?

**Gordy:** The first commercial song that I wrote was "Money." I was very broke at the time. I was sort of embarrassed, and my family was somewhat embarrassed, because when people asked me what I did for a living, I would say, "I write songs." Their friends had sons and daughters that were becoming doctors, lawyers, the things that had great status, and my mother and father were always some-



Berry Gordy, Jr.

what embarrassed when I would tell their friends that I wrote songs. "I know," they'd say, "but what do you do for a living?" I'd say again, "I write songs," and they'd ask if I'd made any money yet. I'd say, "No, not yet, but I will."

**RW:** You wrote songs for Jackie Wilson at one point, too. How did that happen?

**Gordy:** My sister sent me to a publishing company where the owners managed Jackie Wilson. They liked my songs and my ideas, so I got involved with that. We wrote the first six or seven Jackie Wilson hits: "Reet Petite," "To Be Loved," "Lonely Teardrops," "That's Why I Love You So" and two or three others. A guy named Dick Jacobs, I believe it was, over at Decca Records would always call me when they would record a song for Jackie; for "Lonely Teardrops," they actually flew me into the company to be in on the session. I enjoyed working with Dick Jacobs quite a lot. Or at least I enjoyed talking to him—he always gave me a lot of credit, which built my ego up quite a lot. But I didn't actually make money from those songs that I was writing, because by the time I got my royalties, I owed everybody in town, especially my family. I was broke up until the time I wrote "Money;" even though I had many hits, and there were other writers who had many hits, we just didn't have profits. And coming from a business family, my father and mother always

(Continued on page 32)



# Happy 20th Anniversary Motown Glad To Be Associated with you

**Your friends in Japan**



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Second thoughts can shape careers, as Michael Roshkind can attest: After travelling to Detroit to look over a prospective public relations client, he was startled to find the young company's address led him to a two-story frame house in a black suburb, neighbored by a funeral parlor. Roshkind headed back to the airport without entering, but by the time he got there, he'd changed his mind about leaving. His interest piqued, he told the cabbie to head back toward the ghetto.

That unassuming address was to become the focal point of Roshkind's own business life within a year, for it housed a fledgling Detroit record company that earned the building its distinction as "The Home of Hitsville" — Motown Records. When Mike Roshkind finally did call on Motown, he met its founder, Berry Gordy, Jr., and the rapport was immediate. Roshkind was retained as public relations consultant to the company, with the added role of confidential assistant to Gordy.

At that time, Roshkind was a successful public relations executive who, like Gordy, had grown up on city streets. A New York City native, Roshkind had underwritten his college education by accepting an athletic scholarship to Northwestern University; because his parents could have carried financial responsibility, he wasn't eligible for a formal academic scholarship, so he attained acceptance through his sprint swimming, entering Northwestern at the age of 15—the youngest freshman in its history, up to that point.

Majoring in journalism, he graduated to take a job as an NBC page. If the initial salary wasn't exactly princely (\$16 a week wasn't lavish, even in those relatively uninflated days), it led Roshkind to an early career in broadcasting. Taking a copy boy's post, he was able to move over to writing, working as a sports writer before moving over to ABC as a news editor in 1943. There he worked with newscasters Walter Winchell and Drew Pearson, later moving up to a post as director of special events and sports. His ABC tenure was interrupted by two years service with naval intelligence, based on a carrier in the Pacific; after receiving the Navy Cross, he returned to ABC, where he stayed until 1950.

That year saw Roshkind leaving to become assistant vice president for radio and television at Weirtraub Advertising Agency (today known as Norman Craig & Kummel, Inc.), spending two years there before moving on to A.A.



## Michael Roshkind Looks Back, Looks Ahead

By SAM SUTHERLAND

Schecter Associates, a public relations firm. In 1963, he was tapped by Irving L. Strauss Associates as executive vice president and full partner in the firm. Even as his career moved forward, Roshkind continued to sustain an interest in politics by taking periodic leaves of absence to serve as a broadcast consultant to Adlai Stevenson during his 1956 presidential campaign, to John F. Kennedy during the '60 campaign, and later to Lyndon Johnson.

Characteristically, though, Roshkind still cracks that his crowning political achievement was "my being on the Nixon 'enemy list.'"

That dossier understandably made Roshkind comfortable with top corporate accounts, and when he first crossed the paths of Motown and Berry Gordy, his public relations clients included CBS, Newsweek, Hunt Foods, the old New York Herald Tribune and other top-rated prospects. Yet it was to be Motown, based at its inauspicious suburban headquarters, that would come to dominate Roshkind's life. A year after taking over the label as a client, he became a full-time employee, assuming a vice presidency with

the company, which by then had grown to a \$10 million business.

By the late '60s, both Motown Records and its chairman, Gordy, were broadening their horizons. What followed next was a series of moves as ambitious as the label's original formation—but now carrying far higher stakes. Explains Roshkind, "What happened then was grounded in my relationship

**“Almost from the moment I became associated with Motown, and certainly by 1971, Berry and I had developed a very strong bond, not just one between employer and employee.”**

with Berry. Almost from the moment I became associated with Motown, and certainly by 1971, Berry and I had developed a very strong bond, not just one between employer and employee." In fact, Gordy's late mother had often referred to Roshkind as one of her own sons, ignoring the executive's color difference.

"We had each other's mutual respect," Roshkind continues,

"and I was also handling a lot of personal business for Berry by now, which was very flattering in terms of what it said about his trust in me." At this juncture in the early '70s, then, Roshkind relied on that bond to advance what he felt was Motown's next challenge—diversification.

"I told Berry that he built Motown from this small, Detroit record company on a platform of creativity. That was the company's strong suit, and always had been. And I felt, at that point, there was no reason we couldn't channel that same creativity into a broader spectrum of entertainment. If we were in Hollywood, we should be moving into film; we should be looking into television, into Broadway, into every other avenue."

With Motown now relocated to New York and Los Angeles, Gordy himself had already anticipated Roshkind's suggestion. "He'd already been thinking along those lines, he told me," says Roshkind, adding, "Berry, of course, was two steps ahead of me."

If Roshkind's proposal proved less startling to Gordy than his top aide had expected, its outcome saw the the former Motown Records vice president undertaking a much broader array of responsibilities. Motown Industries was formed as a separate entity, supervising both the original Motown Records Corp. and a new series of embryonic divisions that have since yielded Motown Productions, its television and film arm, and, most recently, Motown Sound Systems, which manufactures audio equipment. The label's music publishing arm, Jobete, was the other separate division of the expanded Motown structure.

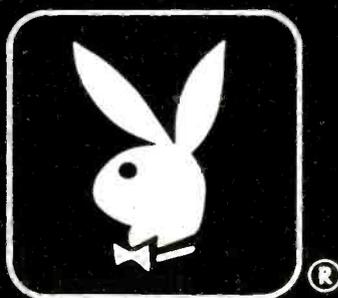
And, within Motown Industries itself, only two executives were installed: chairman Gordy and Roshkind, who became vice chairman and chief operating officer of the company at its formation in 1974. Although its main opera-

tional base at that time had been New York, where the management team had moved two years earlier, Gordy himself was on the west coast, where Motown's interests were gradually relocated during this period.

However gilded Motown's reputation as a label was at the time of its expansion, its neophyte stature as a multi-media combine (Continued on page 72)

Congratulations, Berry!  
Playboy salutes Motown Records  
on their  
20th anniversary.

*Hugh Hefner*



**N**ow in his second decade as a member of the Motown executive team, Mike Lushka is a highly successful marketing specialist whose own career has spanned Motown's transformation from Detroit-based record company to west coast multi-media giant. Like Motown, Lushka can look back on a personal success story that began at street level and has since brought him to an executive post.

Now the label's executive vice president and general manager for marketing, he got his start working in the warehouse at Arc-Jay-Kay Distributors, one of Motown's earliest distribution outlets, in 1963. After his tenure there was interrupted in 1965 by a two year stint in the Army, Lushka returned to the trade in 1967 when he took a post with Trico, the rack jobbing firm. Tapped by Motown as a regional sales manager, he made the transition to label marketing with understandable enthusiasm.

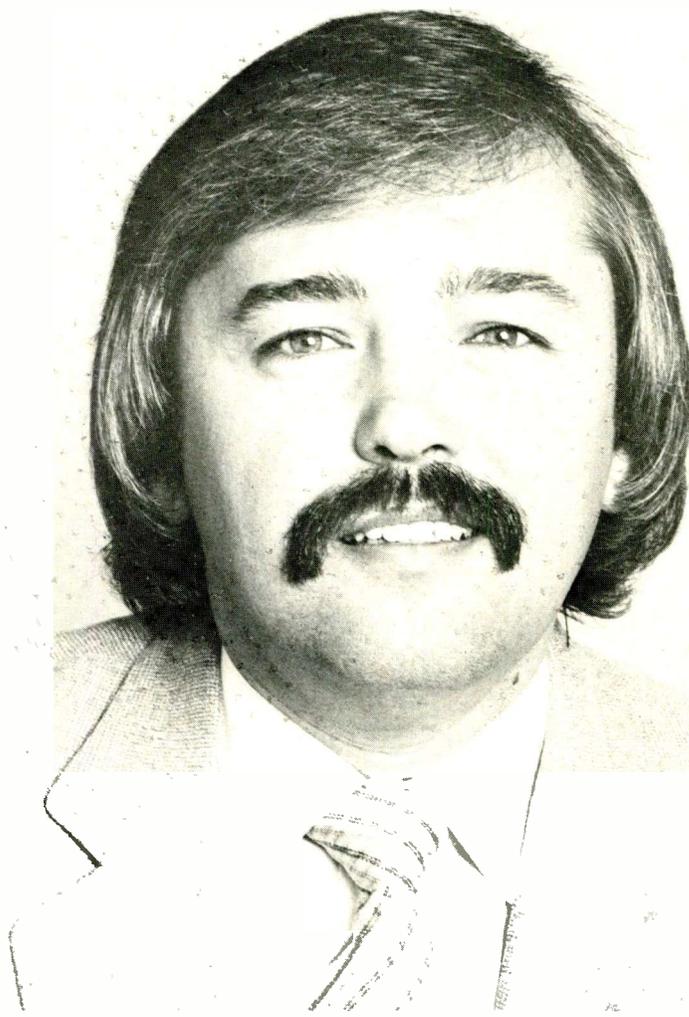
"Being from Detroit and going to work for Motown was like a dream come true," explains Lushka. "Motown has always been regarded as something very special there, so it was both a privilege and an honor."

If Motown had, by then, insured a prominent niche in industry history for its commercial success, Lushka remembers it as still comparatively small at that time. "I didn't like the money when I got there," he says with a laugh, "but I felt the opportunity was great, just great. When I worked at Arc-Jay-Kay, we were handling Motown, so I knew there was tremendous potential.

"When I went to work for Motown, though, it was still largely a singles-oriented company," he continues, recalling the Motown roster circa 1969. "Consequently our marketing effort at that point was still more directed to singles."

The turn of the decade saw that domination shifting throughout the industry, though, and Lushka's evolution from regional to national sales coincided with a corresponding shift in Motown's market strategy. "As the business began to change toward albums, we began to reorient our marketing approach to albums," he would later assert. "We began racking up our first major album smashes as titles like the 'TCB' package with The Supremes and The Temptations, and the first Jackson Five LP, hit. The J-5 record, as I recall, went well over a million units in about three months, which was very big at that time.

"We realized albums were going to be a way of life in the '70s, but at the same time we knew we needed to keep breaking singles



## Mike Lushka: Major Force at Motown

By SAM SUTHERLAND

just as effectively as before in order to expose our album product."

The emerging album market, with its emphasis on more conceptually unified works, was to prove one test Motown's artists were eminently qualified to meet. Some of the label's most successful singles artists quickly made the leap to longplayers. "We hit the concept trail with Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye, and records like 'Music Of My Mind' and 'What's Goin' On,' and as a result we entered a plane where we were handling projects that, due to their conceptual nature, offered more than just one or two directions in which to take our marketing effort."

Although Motown was changing with the times, Lushka notes that the business itself was still much smaller in terms of its work force, and that factor demanded greater versatility on the part of executives. "It was a small big company," he says. "We had just four people doing sales, and it was really a combination of sales and promotion in terms of our involvement in exposing product both at retail and on radio.

"I didn't really have a specific

region in the beginning, because we didn't have a large enough staff to do that. Instead, I would go where it was needed, reacting to active markets and not just being limited to one area. It gave you a broad base of experience, one that enabled you to see what both small and large markets could do in terms of promotion and sales, and the volume possible.

### Marketing Fundamentals

"That really taught me a lot about the fundamentals of marketing on a national scale."

If Motown's staff was smaller, Lushka says today its basic retail marketing priorities were already established. One key goal was strong store merchandising. "Motown has always been very involved with instore merchandising, not so much in terms of the amount of display material we put out as how it's put to use. Whether it's a question of instore displays, or instore airplay, or both, it's a question of coordinating store activity with radio plays, and tying instore activity and radio together with good time buys.

"It's not a question of how

much you spend, but how you spend it," he continues. "In the early '70s, Motown was among the first companies to get really heavily involved with developing and designing display bins capable of holding several hundred pieces of our product for one or more of our artists."

Another marketing technique Lushka feels has proven consistently effective is Motown's series of artist anthologies and multi-artist hits collections. "I think Motown has been in the forefront of repackaging product," he explains, adding, "I don't really like that term, though. We try to make our packages more valid conceptually.

"Our greatest hits packages, 'best of' collections of major label hits, and artist anthologies [the Anthology series that has been ongoing since the early '70s] have all been steady sellers, and have contributed significantly to our bottom line. I think the business as a whole may be coming back to that approach now, too; I know our own experience in the last few years points that way, because the last two titles we've released in the Anthology series have gone over 400,000 units each."

While Lushka may be proud of Motown's marketing skills, he ultimately traces the company's success to its artists. "Motown has always been oriented toward its artists and their creativity," he explains, "and, given a really good piece of product, we feel we can market and promote just that much more effectively." That sense of priorities has shaped not only the company's approach, but its size, and Lushka cites this emphasis on creativity as a founding concept. "I think what Berry originally set out to do here still holds: We've kept our roster small, and periodically trimmed it down, marketing fewer artists but realizing more sales follow-through.

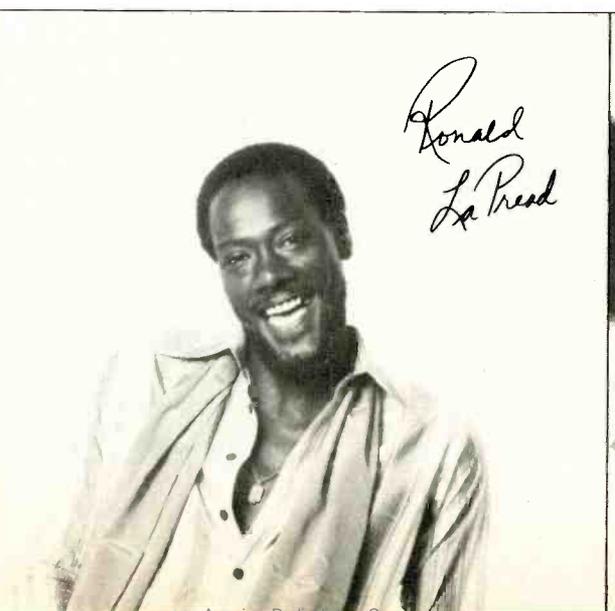
"That's not a question of keeping it small, so much as one of keeping it to a size where we can handle the product effectively. And our philosophy is that every record we release is a number one record, and it's up to us to make that happen."

For the future, he sees the company broadening its musical base beyond its current pop and black base. "We experimented with other avenues before," he says candidly, "in areas like the mainstream pop market and country, with some success, though not always as great as with other areas. But in the '80s, I think we'll be able to move into other areas—whether it's new wave rock, or some other emerging style—and break acts and make

(Continued on page 54)



To our friends  
at Motown,  
May you "Sail On"  
for another 20 years



**J**obete Music executive vice president Robert Gordy had one principal directive from his brother Berry when he came to Motown's publishing arm in the 1960s. Berry said, 'Hey, you've got to keep us number one,'" says the younger Gordy. And with the fabulous track record earned by this company—the top chart publisher for 14 straight years, according to Robert—it's readily apparent that he has succeeded admirably.

Gordy's ascendance to Jobete's helm was hardly an overnight affair. He was originally an artist himself, in fact, using the pseudonym Robert Kayli; a Kayli master called "Everyone Was There" was sold to the Carlton label by none other than Berry Gordy, Jr. more than 20 years ago. "There were a few others after that, but they didn't sell," laughs Robert. "They called me 'one hit Kayli.'"

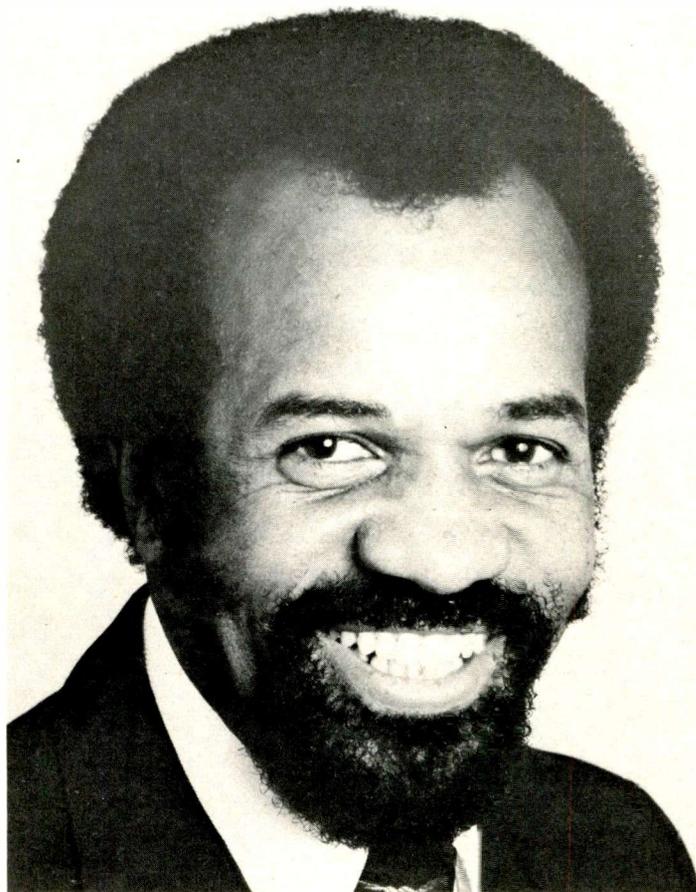
#### First Responsibilities

Robert had been working for the post office when he first came to Motown. His initial job in the new company was an engineer, he recalls: "I didn't know anything about it (engineering), but I got a job under Mike McLean—they paid me 65 cents an hour, which shows you how much I knew. But we felt Mike was a genius, and he certainly taught me a great deal. At that time he was building the first eight-track machine in the east; I put together the electronics, learned how to read the schematics, helped with the writing and so on.

"From there," Gordy continues, "I moved to being a recording engineer—I was Motown's first stereo engineer." He also did some production work for the likes of the Supremes, the Temptations, the Isley Brothers ("Take Some Time Out for Love") and even comedian Soupy Sales. Robert downplays his experience behind the controls, remarking that "in those days, credits weren't a big thing. You did the work, the record came out—most of the time, at least—and that was about it."

By the mid-60s, Gordy was an administrative assistant in his brother's office, heading up quality control. The Gordy's sister, Lucy Gordy Wakefield, had been running Jobete (named for Berry's three children, Joy, Berry and Terry), but when she died in 1965, the responsibility of taking over Motown's publishing wing fell to Robert.

"It was a trial by fire," he remembers. "I really had to learn publishing on the job. When Lucy died, in fact, Berry first rejected my offer to go into Jobete. 'What do you know?' was his reaction; but I said, 'Believe me, I'll learn.'"



## Robert Gordy Keeps Jobete on Top

By SAMUEL GRAHAM

From that point on, Robert notes with justifiable pride, "We were the number one chart publisher for the next 14 years. And I must admit, with the writers we had — Holland - Dozier - Holland, Ashford and Simpson, Smokey, and later Stevie—that wasn't all that hard. And the artists: Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross, the Four Tops, Martha Reeves, Gladys Knight, all of 'em."

Jobete, like the rest of Motown, would undergo rapid and extensive growth in subsequent years. "We started our professional department in about '66," says Gordy, "and in about '67 Archie Levington became our general manager. He taught me a few things about publishing that were good for our continued growth. From the time he came in, we began concentrating more on covers of our copyrights."

That emphasis on covers was one of the hoped-for results of Jobete's establishing a professional department, says Robert, "so that we could make Jobete a more diversified profit center." To say that the company has been successful in that effort would be a considerable understatement. On the basis of such Gordy-inspired promotional devices as "The Top Ten Story in Sound" (an album excerpting many of Motown's famous songs for the

benefit of other producers and artists) and "the follow-up by our professional people in L.A. and New York," Gordy points out, "just about every major group or individual artist who has covered outside material has used Jobete

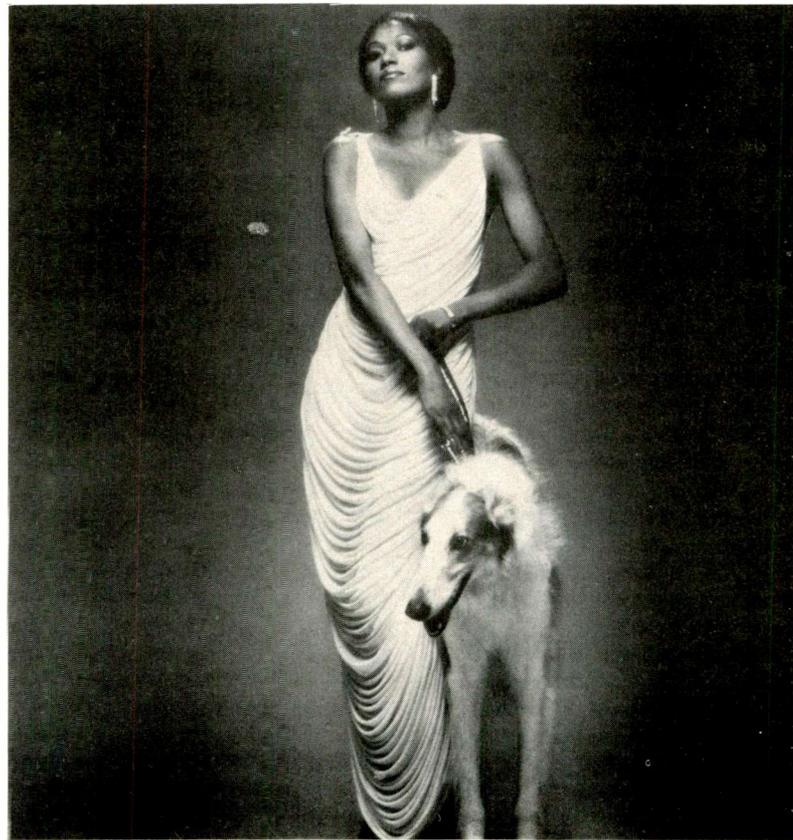
copyrights"—including such luminaries, as Tony Bennett, Johnny Mathis, Frank Sinatra, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Linda Ronstadt and countless others. The promotional LPs—which Gordy indicates "were geared to take the place of many professional people that we would have to have hired otherwise"—were so successful, in fact, that Gordy currently has plans to update "The Top Ten Story in Sound."

When Robert assumed Jobete's executive vice presidency in 1970, "my main directive, as it was when I first started, was simply to keep us number one. My next thrust," he adds, "was to bring in writers, strictly writers who weren't producers as well. And establishing ourselves in Los Angeles was a prime target, too, which is why the company moved west. We wanted to get into movie music, which we did with songs like 'Ben' and 'The Happening.'" Jobete now has a movie/television department, incorporated in the firm's professional activities and headed by Natalie Ellington.

More of Gordy's views on songwriters: "Personally, I looked for the pure writer, the 'writer writer,' who can write a great song, one that isn't geared to a particular artist and his style and can become a standard. A song like that is much more vital to a publisher, because it continues to live rather than just being a hit today and gone tomorrow.

"One of the main values of our catalogue, I think, is that it has stood the test of time. For instance, 'Shop Around' was a number one hit in 1960, and then it

*(Continued on page 90)*



Bonnie Pointer

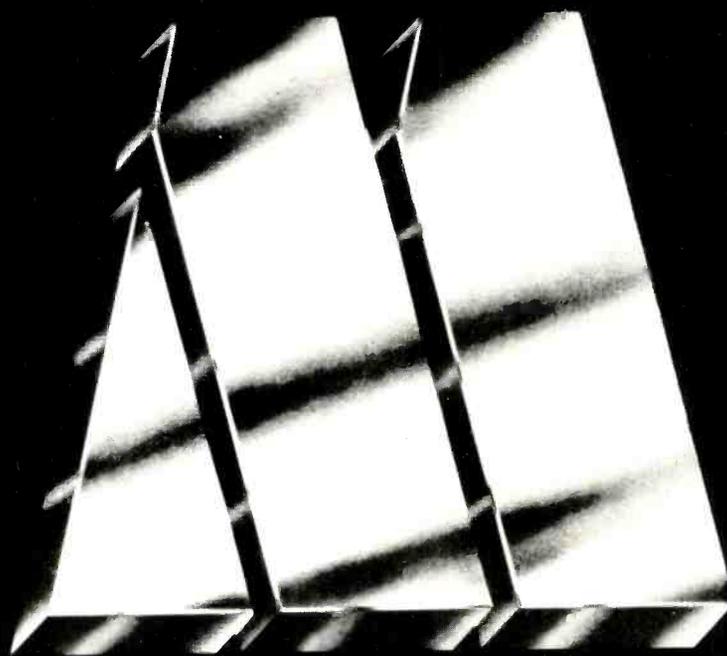
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# cre•a•tive

(krē'āt'iv) *adj.* [M.L. *creativus*]

1. having or showing imagination and artistic or intellectual inventiveness 2. **Motown Records Creative Department.**



**W**ith the exception of Berry Gordy, Jr., virtually no one has helped to shape the Motown style more than William "Smokey" Robinson. A member of the label's creative team since Motown's inception, Smokey has been an important artist, producer, songwriter and executive during that association.

Pop fans' first introduction to Robinson's work came, of course, through The Miracles, which Smokey formed with four friends from his Detroit neighborhood when he was just 13. Four years later, during an audition set up for Jackie Wilson's manager, Robinson first met Berry Gordy. The year was 1957, and it marked the beginning of a partnership between the two that has continued through 22 years.

#### First Hit

The Miracles' first single, "Got A Job," appeared the following year on the End label, licensed through Gordy's production company, but the group's first hit came with "Bad Girl," released locally in Detroit on Motown, and marketed elsewhere by Chess Records. Even then, Robinson found himself involved in a wide range of assignments.

"I was there at the formulation of the company," Robinson recalls. "Everyone functioned in every capacity. It took a great deal of business genius on Berry Gordy's part, and he always brought on better people when he could afford to. We did have a lot of talented people working around there."

But Smokey himself was more than just an artist. Early in his association with Motown, his other talents became apparent, leading to additional duties as a writer and producer. His first production task was a record for Mary Wells, and in the years since, he has produced sides for many Motown acts.

As the years went by and Motown grew, so did Robinson's responsibilities, which eventually extended into business as well as music. How did he accomplish so varied a career? "I started so young. I was just out of high school. When you get involved with something that grows day by day, it becomes second nature.

"If I had to do it again, it would be quite impossible."

In 1963, Smokey stepped beyond the artistic sphere to get more deeply involved in the running of Motown. With his appointment as a label vice president, Robinson began to actively seek new talent. "Originally, my office was designed for the induction of new talent into the company," he would later say. "Most



Smokey Robinson with his wife, Claudette

## Through The Years With Smokey Robinson

By PETER FLETCHER

of the people signed in the early '60s were signed by me. The group that I'm proudest of from those days is Diana Ross and The Supremes."

Like many of those earliest signings, The Supremes were people that Smokey had known locally and grown up with. He attended high school with members of The Temptations, and grew up on the same block with Diana Ross and Aretha Franklin. Those years also yielded what Robinson now says was his proudest moment in a career that has boasted many.

That moment? "The very first gold record on 'Shop Around,'" says Smokey. "We were performing at a state fair in Michigan, and Berry Gordy came up to present us with the record. There have been so many great moments in my connection with Motown, but when you are a recording artist, you dream of having a gold record. It was a great day for Motown, too; it put the company on the map."

Robinson himself has done more to put Motown on the map than record hits, though. His suc-

cess as a songwriter has been reflected by the wide variety of other performers who have covered his songs, and here, too, Robinson traces his skills to a head start. "I've always tried to write songs," he explains. "I wrote my first song when I was six years old, and I've always loved to sing and write songs. When I met Berry, I had a song-

his family from Detroit to Los Angeles along with the rest of Motown. "I had had it with show business, thoroughly," he would later recall. "By the time I left The Miracles, the only thing I enjoyed about performing was being with that group."

The hiatus enabled him to regain his enthusiasm, though, and with his batteries recharged, Robinson began to feel creative stirrings. "It was an inner desire on my part to get back in," he later remembered. "I would go to concerts and feel the urge to perform again. My wife was very encouraging, too."

Thus, in 1975 Smokey Robinson reappeared, starting a solo career that has since spawned eight albums and seen the multi-talented artist broaden his portfolio with film and television work. In addition to his own records, he has worked with his backing band, Quiet Storm, on a solo work, and during the late '70s Smokey embarked on his first film scoring project for the movie "Big Time." He also moved to the other side of the camera for featured roles on "Police Story" and "Police Woman," but these assignments haven't blunted Robinson's ongoing musical development, as amply demonstrated this year by the success of his latest single, "Cruisin'," and the hit album, "Where There's Smoke."

What has enabled Smokey Robinson to enjoy so successful a career in a business filled with overnight sensations and one-hit wonders? One tool may be a valuable lesson he attributes to Berry Gordy, Jr. "His idea was to have black people sing, and not sing the blues," asserts Smokey. "Black people had always sung the blues, and it was not acceptable as a mass music to the whites. Berry's idea was to go into the mainstream of music. He told me, 'You want your songs to have the possibility of being standards.'

"When one proves itself in that

**“My life is mostly work, but I feel so blessed that I am working. There is nothing that I can think of as an occupation that I would rather do.”**

book with about 100 songs in it; he went over my songs and told me what I did wrong. He was a great teacher."

While his years with the Miracles made his supple voice a familiar one to pop listeners, the years of steady touring took their toll on Smokey, and in 1972 Robinson and The Miracles went their separate ways. For the next three years, Smokey relaxed, moving

light, it makes me feel so very good."

The future will doubtless hold more challenges, and more achievements, for Robinson, and he welcomes both. "I work very hard," he admits. "My life is mostly work, but I feel so blessed that I am working. There is nothing that I can think of as an occupation that I would rather do."

*A  
PART OF  
MOTOWN  
STILL REMAINS  
IN DETROIT*

**THE HANDLEMAN CO.**

**JOHN S. KAPLIN**

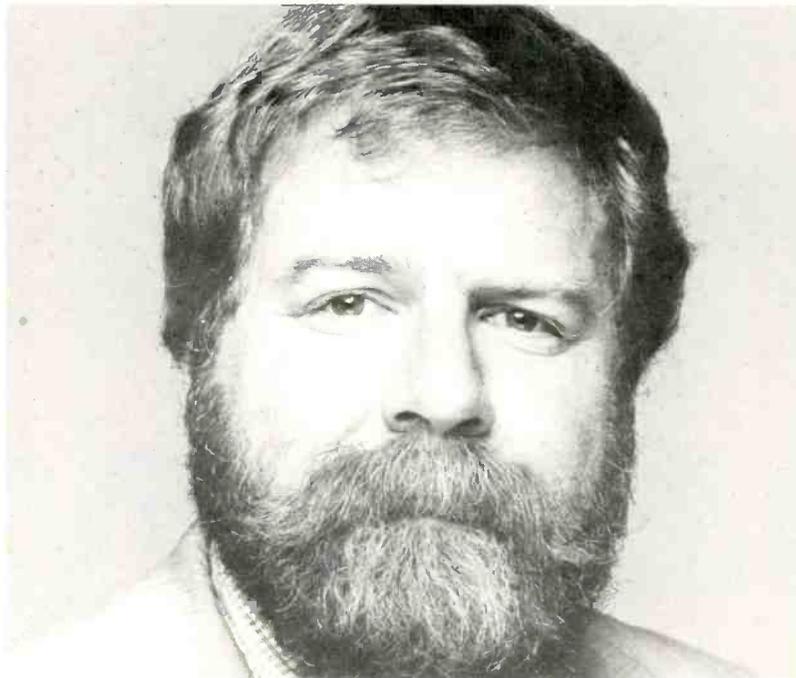
**DAVID HANDLEMAN**

**TOM SCHLESINGER**

Industry observers viewed the arrival of veteran A&R executive Don Ellis as a major coup for Motown when the label confirmed Ellis' appointment as executive VP, creative, at mid-year in 1979. With a portfolio of broad-ranging pop interests from his earlier label assignments, Ellis has underscored Motown's determination to broaden its musical image.

As for Ellis himself, he's at least as excited about Motown as those admiring pundits. "Anytime I've made a move in my career, it's been for the challenge, and that was the case here," he explains. "I've had a chance to do A&R in the past, of course. Here I'm involved in A&R itself, A&R administration, graphics—I can be involved with a project right up to that point where it falls into the direct marketing sphere. I think it's a logical arrangement. We don't have that nebulous body of people that would fall between the creative and marketing ends elsewhere."

That attitude is especially understandable in light of Ellis's own background in marketing, not only at the label level but in the industry's front line as a retailer. His trade experience began with retail posts in Detroit, followed by his move to Discount Records, managing the chain's Madison



## Don Ellis Finds a New Challenge

By SAM SUTHERLAND

outlet and later moving west to take over its highly visible, frequently innovative Berkeley, Ca., store.

When CBS purchased the Discount Records operation, Ellis

moved to its Epic Records division as merchandising director. He subsequently took an assignment in artist development for the sister label, Columbia, and from there gravitated toward A&R, first

for Epic and ultimately with Columbia. Prior to joining Motown, Ellis had become Columbia's first west coast based national A&R head.

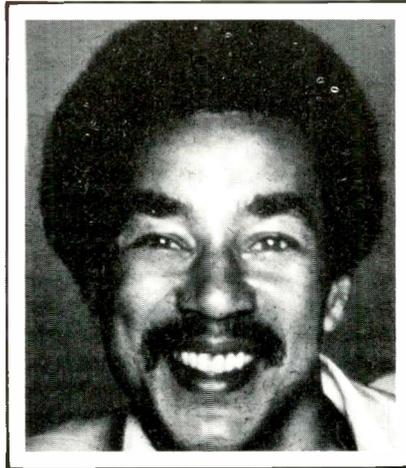
"What I viewed as my job coming into Motown was to tighten the roster and make it as compact and solid as we could," he says of his new post, "to concentrate on getting a good flow of superstar product while still developing new artists." While his own rock and pop credentials have augured a more aggressive stance for Motown in those areas, Ellis himself is quick to stress the label's original base in contemporary black music.

### Leadership

"I felt it was important to maintain our leadership in that area," explains Ellis. "And, as we start the '80's, I think it should be obvious that we've sustained that leadership. In my mind, and in Berry's, what I'm charged with doing here is to expand our base, and attain that same kind of success in all areas of music."

While emphasizing the industry wide need to consolidate new styles gradually, Ellis sees a wide range of potential ventures for Motown. "I wouldn't rule out anything. It's obvious we should try to extend our success in the pop field first. I don't think we'd

(Continued on page 90)



*Thank you God  
for letting us soar  
beyond our wildest dreams.*

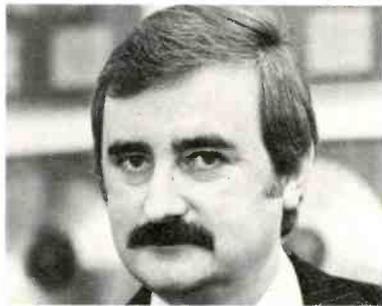
*Smokey Robinson*

**M**otown's International vice president, Peter Prince, works from London, supported by general manager James Fisher, also in London, and International director Lee Armstrong in Los Angeles. All territories outside the United States and Canada are administered by this division, including Jobete Music.

Peter Prince, who joined Motown just over one year ago, has been in the record business for twenty-two years. His last appointment prior to joining Motown was as A&R director of Pye Records, and some of his early days were spent at EMI Records where he was responsible for Motown promotion in the U.K.

"One of the great delights of taking up the international post at Motown was that it united me with a catalogue and certain artists I had worked with and admired during my EMI days. That was in the early sixties, when I was a promotion manager and my own musical tastes were very much in line with what Motown—or Tamla Motown as it was then known—were producing. I worked on product by people like the Supremes, Jimmy Ruffin, Martha and the Vandellas, Stevie

## Peter Prince on Motown's Intl. Strength



Peter Prince

Wonder, the Four Tops, Temptations, promoting it on radio and television, and arranged their first promotional visits to England.

"In those early days Motown was a unique specialist label which managed to cross over into the pop market with a great deal of success, and very quickly. In doing so it became a well-respected label among A&R men, and a much-loved label by a very large public. Then, as now, Motown artists are the best possible ambassadors for their label on a worldwide basis. In fact, the artists on Motown are positive living proof of a very unique happening in the record industry

... unique because the feeling and enthusiasm for the company embraces the top management, and continues through the company to the artists themselves. It's rare that the commercial and artistic side of a company can be so much at one, but it happens all the time at Motown.

"Internationally, the most important part of our function is to maintain close liaison with our licensees throughout the world,

is indicative of Motown's continued strength that such new artists should join the impressive roster of established names in keeping the label such a forward-moving force in the record industry. It has always been vital for record labels to break new talent, thus enriching solid catalogue, and never more so than in today's troubled market. In this respect Motown has been better placed than many of its rivals, in remaining so healthy commercially.

"My year with Motown has been an exciting one, and I have had the opportunity of meeting

**For the future . . . I feel that we will extend the Motown message even further, possibly in a bigger way to the Iron Curtain countries . . .**

whether it be in bringing in artists, or co-ordinating the release of product. EMI is at the moment undoubtedly Motown's biggest licensee, holding licenses for many territories ranging from Finland to New Zealand. Co-ordinating these releases as close as possible to America could easily present problems, but we are fortunate in knowing that our licensees have local knowledge of public tastes and so together we can work at putting out the right product at the right time. It's very much a question of keeping people informed.

"The Motown sound is unique and immediately identifiable, something that I always felt was one of the label's strongest points in making it what it is today—a household name just about everywhere. The talent was there, it continues to be there, and it grows. Recently we received great back-up to record sales from tours by the Commodores, Diana Ross, Marvin Gaye, Mary Wilson, Smokey Robinson, Tata Vega, and, with a name new to Motown but not to record buyers, Billy Preston, and Syreeta. It

licensees and sub-publishers, some of whom I have known for many years. Travelling obviously takes up a lot of my time, but keeping up personal contact with licensees is vital. It is also important to have the right people around you in the department, and I'm fortunate in having a small but enthusiastic staff who manage to work together as a team, and who really care for Motown.

"For the future, internationally, I feel that we will extend the Motown message even further, possibly in a bigger way to the Iron Curtain countries where already some of our artists are popular, in places like East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia. Music is, after all, an international language, and the Motown identity is so strong that there's practically nowhere in the world that the label and its artists are not known. The company has a very solid base on which to build for the future. There will be new acts and existing ones that will never lose their popularity on record or on tour. I foresee a very exciting decade ahead."

**Congratulations  
on your  
20th Anniversary**

**Richard Friedman  
AdSCO, California**



Jr. Walker & The All-Stars

Twenty years  
and  
still the champ.

Congratulations!



## Dialogue

(Continued from page 16)

talked about the bottom line, and simple things—and the bottom line is profit. You know, are you making money or not? So while I was famous among my peers for writing these great songs, I didn't have any profits.

**RW:** "Money" was one of the first ones that you actually produced yourself, as well as wrote. Would it be safe to say that prior to that, you hadn't been exactly overwhelmed with the way the songs you had written had turned out when produced by someone else?

**Gordy:** That was not true in the case of Jackie and Dick Jacobs. But the reason I wrote songs was because I loved writing. The reason I produced songs was because I didn't like the way they were being produced, other than (the ones with Wilson and Jacobs). And because I was not making a profit, I felt that I would have to sell them, too. Hence I got into selling the records, and Motown was formed.

The point is, I would just as soon have been a songwriter, and stayed there. But through my experiences as a writer, I found that the songwriters were not getting what I consider was a fair shake. They were not making money. So my idea was that if songwriters could make money, how wonderful, and how big a company could grow. Then Jobete was formed, and I met a guy named Smokey Robinson. I felt that if a songwriter was treated properly and fairly—and if he loved writing songs and was free to write songs—then he would stay with you forever. And of course, Smokey was the first songwriter, and is still with me today.

**RW:** Then the need to realize a profit for yourself was the primary reason for beginning your own company.

**Gordy:** Yes, and as I said, also for other songwriters, and other producers, and other people who were just like me out there—who really had no one that they could turn to—and also for artists, who had no one to help develop them as artists and as people. I felt that if people grew as human beings as well as becoming stars, they could then, ah, "make it," and continue to make it. If they grew into a star without growing as a human being, they couldn't make it for long.

**RW:** When you started the label, were there any models you had for the type of company you envisioned, or did you invent your own rules as you went along?

**Gordy:** We just had certain things that we believed in. We believed in making quality records, or making the records that were commercial but were also good. We had no real models, other than all the other record companies who had hits; if a company had a hit, that was a company that I looked at. Of course, it's hard to pick even one company, but I remember there was Nat King Cole and the Capitol people over there that I liked—I thought they had a lot of feeling and soul. There was the label that at one point came up with hit after hit after hit . . . I think it was Liberty Records—Bobby Vee was on there. And there were a lot of blues labels. There was a guy named Don Robey from the south, a black record company, who I had sent some songs to several years before; I always enjoyed writing blues, and since they had quite a few blues artists there, when I would write a blues I'd send it to them.

**RW:** Were there any ideas of your own that you thought were especially radical at the beginning?

**Gordy:** I just always thought that there were no rules. If it sounded good, I thought it was good. I used to have fights with the Detroit Symphony guys, because sometimes when I asked them to play a particular riff they were insulted, because they said the music wasn't right, and you couldn't do this or that. They'd say, "But you just can't play this chord against that chord," and I'd say, "Well, it sounds right, and I don't care about the rules, because I don't know what they are." Many of them would play it anyway, and mostly they would all enjoy it—after we'd hear it back, they'd shake their heads in amazement. And when they heard it played on the air and it was a hit . . . I mean, I would get calls from these guys and they would say, "Hey, you were right. Anytime you need us for a session . . ." At first, they were very stuffy, because it wasn't written specifically on paper, so I would have to hum it out—it's hard to write syncopation on paper, anyway. But my basic philosophy is that anything can be done.

**RW:** Had you looked at Motown from the start as a black label for a black audience, or did you hope from the beginning for what's now called the "crossover" audience?

**Gordy:** I never thought about that in the beginning; I really never thought that far ahead. I was just concentrating on songs that were human songs, that made people laugh, cry or whatever. Love is love. We put no labels on anything, and we just never thought that far

I just always thought that there were  
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it was good . . . my basic philosophy is  
that anything can be done.

ahead; I was not that scientific. I mean, Diana Ross and the Supremes' song "Where Did Our Love Go" was just a universal thing, and "Baby Love" was universal. People said, "Hey, this is crossover, this is pop, this is this, this is that." All we knew is that it was bringing in receipts. (Laughs)

It helped when we had several songs of ours recorded on the second album of the Beatles: "Money" and "Please Mr. Postman" and "You Really Got a Hold on Me." I met the Beatles personally and found out that they were great fans of Motown and had been studying Motown music, and they went on to become some of the greatest songwriters in history. We were absolutely delighted.

As far as the Detroit sound, the Motown sound, was concerned, we had a little basement and believed in writing things that were meaningful and recording them in our studio. We probably didn't have good enough equipment to make it sound like the other companies, so we had a different sound. Like the Beatles—they were doing R&B music and so forth, but because of their British accents, they took it to another place.

**RW:** As you said, the so-called "Motown sound," the classic sound, was something that happened accidentally because of the particular equipment that you had.

**Gordy:** Together with, as we used to say, "rats, roaches, talent, guts and love," because that's just what it was. Those days were very inspirational.

**RW:** Aside from the intangibles what were the principal components of the "sound?" Were there particular things that you wanted to emphasize in your records, like a strong bass line?

**Gordy:** Yes, we always liked a strong bass line. And we always liked a lot of tambourine in our records—I just happen to like the sound of tambourines, and I felt they added a very commercial feeling to the sound. But it got so that we got bored with it after a while, because every record would have some form of that, that sort of lively, electric type of feeling to the sound. But it was more than that; I think it was more the togetherness of the people. The equipment was there, but it was more of a philosophy, and a freedom. I think people got caught up in this philosophy and this love for what they were doing, and the freedom to create whatever they felt without going by rules and regulations. Most of the writers and producers had no formal education—and none of them, to my knowledge, had gone to Juilliard—but (they had) the freedom and the ability

(Continued on page 48)



The Commodores

Thanks, Motown.  
Without You, Today's  
Music Would Have  
No Soul.  
Congratulations  
On Your 20th Anniversary.

Marc Kreiner  
And The

**MK**

Family

**“**If I were ever to go to the hospital,” says Diana Ross, “and I had to write down who I’d contact in case of an emergency, I’d write Berry’s (Gordy) name. That’s how I feel about him. I feel like he would be responsible and do the right thing as far as my life is concerned. He’s a great human being, a very responsible person. He’s someone that I can rely on totally; he’s played a very important part in my life.”

Ross continues to muse about Gordy, a man she describes as a “brother, father, mentor, guru and lover”: “He’s a unique human being, a wonderful person. He has a very winning personality, people like him a lot.”

#### Hard Work

“And it’s no accident that Berry is in the position that he is, and runs the kind of company that he does. It wasn’t luck. He worked very hard. He knows about having an idea and taking that idea through whatever stages are necessary for completion. He has an incredible talent for working with people and getting the job done. He’s part of my family, it’s as simple as that.”

The idea of Motown-as-a-family is a concept many people refer to when speaking about the label’s early days. Ross looks back on her first years with the label very fondly. “Everything was very personal. Walking into Motown was like walking into a corner store where you know everybody, instead of walking into a big cold supermarket. It’s like going into a restaurant where the owner works himself. It’s personalized. You know the food will be good and fresh.”

#### Early Years

Ross started “hanging out” around the Motown studios while still in high school. She and the other Supremes spent their afternoons and summer vacations at Motown. She lived down the street from Smokey Robinson; it was through Robinson that she first met Gordy. “It was a lot of fun,” she says. “It gave us something to do in the afternoons; we had a purpose in our lives.”

■ Record World would like to thank the following for their extraordinary contributions, without which this special issue would not be possible: Michael Roshkind, Mike Lushka, Junius Griffin, Bob Jones, Lee Armstrong, Steve Jack, Peter Prince and Frank Ostrowiecki.



## Diana Ross Salutes Berry Gordy and Motown

By JEFFREY PEISCH

It was a few years between Ross’s introduction to Motown and the Supremes’ first hits. “The time in-between, when we weren’t popular yet was a real learning experience,” says Ross. “They (Berry and the others) really groomed us, helped us decide where we wanted to go and what kind of image we wanted. It was during this time that the style of the Supremes was developed. They assisted us in every manner possible—not just professionally, but personally, because if you’re from a poor background, you don’t know anything about clothes, dressing, hair, make-up and things like that. It was real artist development.”

#### Guidance

“Berry made sure that we got all the right guidance. Artists in this business, especially when they’re young can be taken advantage of so easily, trying to figure out how the money comes from the records, and what’s legal and what’s illegal. I feel that

any of the TV shows over here yet, we had only done the Dick Clark tours and the Motown Revue shows, where we weren’t the headliner. We hadn’t done the ‘Shindig’ shows yet. But going to Europe was the most amazing culture shock. Berry and Berry’s sister went with us and everyone was so excited to see us, it was a great moment for everyone. It was something we had dreamed of since we were kids. We drove through England, and saw all the things that we had read about in school but never imagined to be real.”

#### Maturing

In recent years, Ross has been guided more by her own instincts. “Since I have matured enough where I feel like I can think on my own, it’s almost like a child breaking away from a parent. I feel that I can get a lot done in a different manner than he (Gordy) does often. So we disagree on certain things, but I respect his opinion about things and he respects mine. Berry is such a perfectionist that he can drive you crazy sometimes. At one time it was very hard for me to decide what I wanted to do.”

#### Changes

Ross is entering the ‘80s excited and confident. “I have a pretty good idea about what I want to do. I’m tasting what I feel like doing. I think my ‘30s are going to be the best time of my life. I’m looking forward to it. I’ve been through the ‘60s and ‘70s with a lot of changes in my music, and I feel that I’ve matured in the record business. I’m excited about what I’ve learned yet I like simplicity.”

It’s no accident that Berry is in the position that he is. He has an incredible

talent for working with people and getting the job done. He’s part of my family, it’s as simple as that.

we were all lucky in the beginning with being helped in all these areas.”

#### High Points

In a career that has included myriad hit singles, TV specials, feature films and numerous awards and honors, Ross says that her most memorable experience came before most of the glory. “The high point of my career was the Supremes’ first trip to Europe,” she says. “‘Baby Love’ was a hit over there before it was here.

“At that time we hadn’t done

#### Future

Much like Peter Townshend, Ross feels a strong responsibility to her audience. “I have a wonderful relationship with audiences,” she says. “They’re my buddies. If I have a 25-year-old fan, I’ve probably been a part of his life for 20 years, and his parents were probably listening to my music when he was young. There’s a responsibility in being Diana Ross which is completely different from my responsibility as a mother of three kids or just as a woman.”

A black and white photograph of Marvin Gaye. He is wearing a shiny, dark, zip-up jacket with a white stripe at the waist and yellow and white stripes on the cuffs. He has a beard and is smiling broadly with his arms raised in the air. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

*You're the  
wonderful  
one!*

*Happy Twentieth.  
Marvin Gaye.*

**A**s one of Motown's most innovative and prolific artists, Stevie Wonder can look back on his 18 years with the label and fondly recall what it was like to begin a career with a company that was itself in its infancy. At age 11, Stevland Morris was coming to the attention of the local people around Detroit. And when it was time to consider going to a record company, people were readily giving the youngster free advice.

"I had heard a lot about Berry Gordy around our community," Wonder remembers, "as being a very important black man and a very big person in the record business. There were only two people that I could go with; Johnny Mae Matthews—she had a company in Detroit—and Berry Gordy." Ronnie White of the Miracles introduced Wonder to the company in 1961 and he signed with them in that same year. "When I first met Berry I didn't know that he was the same guy that I had heard a lot about. But I did know that he was a black man and someone who was making a good positive direction in the black community. Anybody that would let me come into their studio and let me play drums and vibes and



## Stevie Wonder's Innovations at Motown

By KEN SMIKLE

piano and guitar and bongos and so many other things I knew he had to be a good person."

It wasn't long before Stevie's talents flourished at Motown and in 1963 Little Stevie Wonder was number one on the charts with his first single, "Fingertips." The subsequent years were spent learning and improving his talents and developing his now well known insistence for perfection. It would pay off with a consistent string of successful recordings.

**Looking at how many trends were set from this music from Detroit . . . Motown's effect was incredible on the music industry.**

After releasing "Uptight" in 1965, Wonder wanted to do some things outside of the norm by recording his version of "Blowing In The Wind," in 1966. It proved to be a move in the right direction when the song reached top 10 on the charts. This was the beginning of Wonder's recognition as the label's leading innovator. But while he became famous for innovation, he speaks with great respect of what the "Motown sound" achieved.

"Motown, in comparison to companies now, in terms of being a factory, was like a baby. Companies today, in my thinking, are far more like assembly

lines shooting hundreds and hundreds of acts out. And maybe fifty or so will ever be heard about or become successful. The catalogue of Jobete has to be second to none, as far as successful music from the early sixties to the early seventies. Looking back on what I've seen happen and looking at how many trends were set from this music from Detroit, I don't say this because of being with Motown. Motown's effect was incredible on the music industry."

Wonder's own effect on the music scene was no less incredible. He closed out the first ten years of his career with such hits as "I Was Made To Love Her" and "For Once In My Life." When he became 21 in 1971 he assumed total artistic control of his music. This was the beginning of a new plateau in his development. The results were seen in 1972 when he released the "Music Of My Mind" and "Talking Book" albums.

When asked if he feels that his constant pursuit of new ideas is what changed the company's thinking about such innovations he replies, "I like to think that the combination of time and the desire of the artists to be as creative as possible had some bearing on that. What I was asking for was not out of the ordinary. It was out of the ordinary for what Motown had been doing, and as being part of the family that it had created."

At the age of 29 Stevie continues to pursue his needs for innovation and excellence. His current "Journey Through The Secret Life of Plants" album has been rightfully hailed as a masterpiece. When asked what things might have been like if he had not been with Motown, or had left the company, he laughingly replies, "It could have been 'You're Stevie Won-

der, you can get anything you want to get. Do you want to go in the studio and record toilet commodes and tune them? Whatever you want to do, buddy, you can do. Of course, it better be a hit! I'm sure that is what would have been said if I was with another record company.

"I feel good with Motown. Maybe some time from now a black kid somewhere will say that that was a black company with some major black artists. I think that's important for kids to feel that they can get into businesses and be as fortunate as Berry Gordy has been."



Let's keep making beautiful music together. Bonnie Pointer.

**F**or the Commodores it all began in Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1968, where the six college musicians casually embarked on a mind-boggling career.

After the group's initial meeting with Benjamin Ashburn, who at that time was an executive for Schenley, the liquor conglomerate, as well as an independent public relations marketing analyst, the Commodore commitment began to take shape, and spread into a decade packed with hit music.

When signed to Motown, as the label's first self-contained group, Ashburn announced their professional debut in 1971, while the Commodores toured with the Jackson Five. According to Ashburn, "By this time we had been together three years, and our once-hobby interest had turned full cycle. I wanted the Commodores to be taken seriously from their first concert. I marketed the Commodores as I did with any other product I was selling, and we treated the business as a business."

Few black bands emerge in the forefront of the pop musical scene without a certain alienation from their R&B roots, but for Motown's Commodores, their new mass appeal included new and old audiences, and has steadily been reinforced. Every Com-



## Motown: A Catalyst For The Commodores

By LAURA PALMER

modore single released since 1976 has achieved gold status, with the exceptions of "Too Hot Ta Trot," and "Three Times A Lady," which were both certified double platinum. The Commodore catalogue

consists of nine albums, which have all reached gold, platinum or double and triple platinum levels. Much of their success can be attributed to the group's decade of stability, maintaining the original band, manager and label for the last 11 years.

Commodore member, William

I can now relate to the empire he created. As young guys in the music business, Motown offered us the doorway to success. They were the second believers in our dreams. Benny Ashburn and the Commodores were the first believers, yet we had no idea of our talents. All we had was a strong desire to be somebody. From that it has been a hand-holding exercise, and we have learned virtually every aspect of the entertainment business," said Richie.

According to Milan Williams, Motown represents an ideal for children to follow. "Motown has created something the second generation can be proud of. My main concern is with the community, and Motown began as a community organization. If they don't have someone to look up to, kids won't be able to cope. We have to pave a way for people to follow, as Motown paved a way for us, as well as other black musicians."

Walter "Clyde" Orange, the only music major in the group, allowed that only 11 short years ago, the Commodores didn't want to be solely in music, but, he said, "with the insight and backing of Benny Ashburn and Motown, our ideas were public projects, and now the Commodores have become an influence all over the world."

The remaining Commodore members, Ronald LaPreard and Thomas McClary, both stated that

**Motown has been like a savings and**

**“ loan institution which has secured my family and me for the rest of my life. ”**

(Wak) King commented, "Motown has enabled us to become Commodores in the real sense of the world. They are the venues from where we were able to create. Initially, we were basically non-writers, but shortly learned from our manager that in order to create we needed control of our total environment, including the production and arrangements of our own material."

Lionel Richie, who is often referred to as "ballad king," compared the Commodores' growth to that of the Motown organization. "Motown has been a role model as far back as I can remember. I grew up with the Motown sound, and we now have the pleasure knowing that our evolution as a group has been in many respects similar to Motown's evolution. We've become a successful group, as Motown has become an outstanding educational record corporation.

"Before I was signed to Motown, I respected Berry Gordy as a business dynamo, and now I

respect the man twice as much. they had never dreamed of the opportunities that Motown provided them with. LaPreard noted that "Motown served two main purposes to me, the first being that Motown represented the first successful black entertainment organization, which showed me that a black man can get into the business and make it from the ground floor; and, second, that it was possible for two major black enterprises to 'make it.' Both Motown and the Commodores are business-oriented corporations."

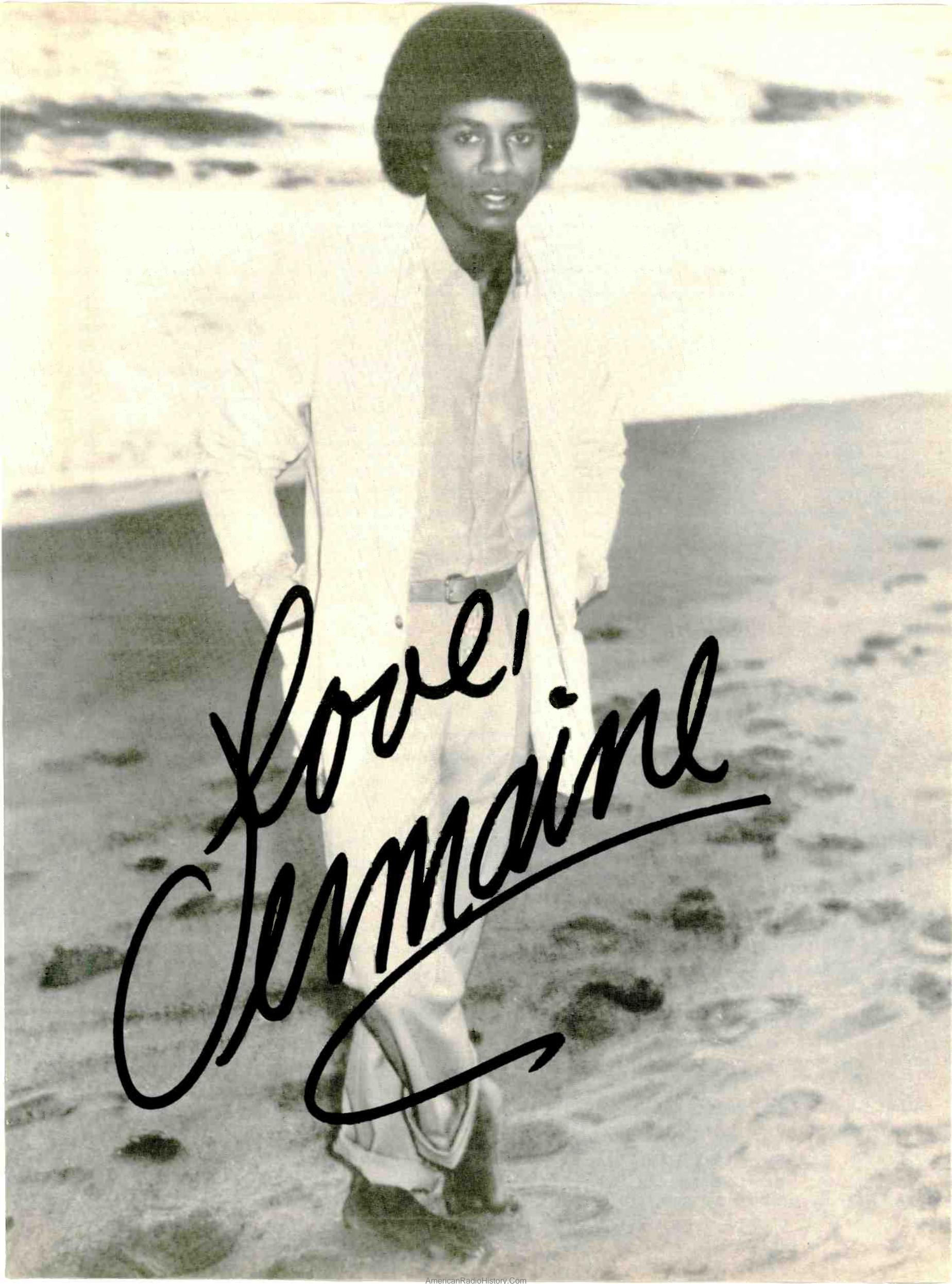
McClary noted that Motown has been a catalyst in terms of getting him into the position of at least competing with all the other entities in the music industry. "We've had a diverse education from our manager and Motown. Motown has been like a savings and loan institution which has secured my family and me for the rest of my life, and there are very few jobs that can support you with the same things."



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## Fuller Gordy: Continuing To Open Doors

By SAM SUTHERLAND



Fuller Gordy

The view from his Sunset Boulevard is decidedly different from the Detroit neighborhood where Motown first made its mark, but Fuller Gordy still remembers the early days clearly.

Now vice president, administration, for Motown Industries, Fuller was actually more of an outsider during those first years in business, when younger brother Berry Gordy, Jr., launched Motown as an independent record company. "I guess I was the last family member to join," Fuller recalls, "because I had my own printing business at that time, in partnership with a sister and brother-in-law.

"I thought I was going to get rich in the printing business," he adds with a chuckle, indicating his current involvement with the entertainment business.

Instead of printing, though, the record business soon intervened—and not necessarily by plan. When his sister departed to join the embryonic Motown operation, she soon found a need for an accountant, and persuaded Fuller's remaining partner—her husband—to join Motown as well. "Then she got our secretary," Fuller notes, adding that several more employees were to leave, attracted by the excitement of the

young company.

Fuller Gordy's own company handled printing for the label, and soon the eldest Gordy brother saw for himself the excitement building around the Hitsville offices. He eventually decided to close down his printing business and join the still skeletal staff as

procurement manager, taking an office in the basement of the Hitsville building which he shared with a secretary and a stock clerk.

"It's been a tremendous experience," he says in retrospect, "just watching it grow. And I guess I've always felt a part of it, even before I was actually working for them. When I see how that acorn has grown to a great oak, I'm amazed at just how rapid that growth has been."

I think we've opened a lot of doors, as

“we went from the record business to the movie business and beyond...”

Becoming part of that story in 1965, Fuller was there to see Motown's superstars tasting their earliest successes. There were pre-success stories as well: "I can remember when Marvin Gaye would have to borrow five or ten bucks for the weekend," he says, smiling, by way of illustration.

His own goal during the mid-'60s was to broaden his involvement in setting up the fledgling company, and to implant some of the organizational methods he had utilized in his own business experience in order to attain greater efficiency. After Motown outgrew its original Hitsville complex and the adjacent apartment complexes later added to house the label's growing staff, Fuller took over supervision of the stock and supply rooms in the new Woodward Ave. headquarters, a ten-story facility.

"It was the beginning of a well-run, larger business operation," he says today of the move to Woodward Ave. "It was still a group of employees that were like a family—I can remember when we'd have a 'weed picking party' in the lot before starting work some days—but our business methods became better."

In 1973, Motown moved west, and Fuller Gordy, by then overseeing facilities, purchasing and personnel, stayed in Detroit to supervise the move. "When I'd cleared out the building, I moved myself," he recalled.

That relocation, and Motown's concurrent expansion into film and television, posed new challenges in Los Angeles. "It's been like a terrific dream," he explains. "Having prided ourselves on our

business, having lived in the ghetto and having had to work all our lives to get ahead, it's even been a little frightening . . .

"I think it's still difficult, maybe even more difficult, to continue that kind of growth having reached the heights we have."

Today, Fuller Gordy says his primary goal continues to be further consolidation of Motown's existing staff and operations, and ongoing implementation of good business methods to insure cost-effective growth. In the early days, he notes, "We weren't as concerned about the economics of it all, and frankly didn't see the need for certain controls then because we didn't really need them at that point. It's much more

of a business now, but we still have much of that original family feeling here. I still think we're very special in that respect."

His own attitude toward supervising Motown's operations underscores that spirit: "I do feel that, today, in dealing with employees, the whole approach is different. I'm a humanitarian, and I want to be able to deal with employees as human beings, as well as workers." Thus, in updating policies and procedures "to prepare for another plateau," he continues to assert Motown's special relationship with its people, as well as its positive influence on young blacks who see the company's success as evidence of new and broader career horizons.

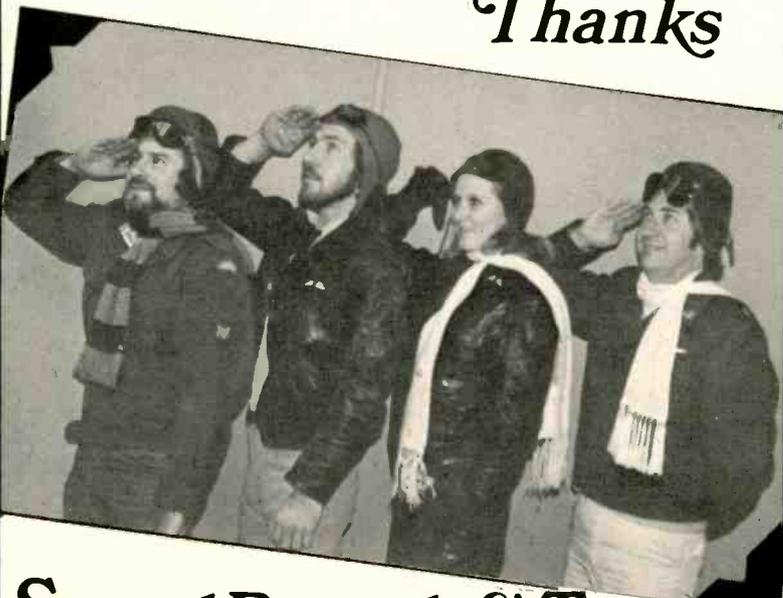
As for the label's founder, Berry Gordy, Jr., Fuller concludes, with a grin, "It's been an experience for me to work for my younger brother. With him being the boss, sometimes we'll disagree over particular methods or decisions, but—even though he is my brother—he's also the most amazing person I've ever met.

"We've been called unorthodox, and we've made a lot of mistakes. But we've also made a lot of progress. . . . Nobody has taken so many unknown acts and turned them into superstars, after taking them under our wing, developing and grooming them, and guiding them toward success . . .

"I think we've opened a lot of doors, as we went from the record business to the movie business and beyond . . . I think it's impossible to describe all the things Motown has meant, not only to us, or to black youngsters, but to white youth, and to other businesses as well."

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years. Enhancing both Robinson's legend and Motown's as well was the song, "My Guy," which signalled his success as a producer. Of that song's featured artist, Mary Wells, and his own involvement, he would later recall, "The first artist that I really had a chance to produce a record on and write for on my own was Mary Wells. I recorded her from 1959 to '61 or '62.

"I would say that she was like the real starter for me. It was a gas. It gave me a new frame of mind so far as the business went: I mean, I began to like producing as much as performing and singing. The song, 'My Guy,' which was the last song I recorded with her, took off immediately. It went to number one, and I was very happy."

In the early days of Motown, a million record selling year was considered successful. Hits like "My Guy" and others recorded by Smokey and The Miracles, Marvin Gaye, Martha Reeves and The Vandellas, Diana Ross and The Supremes, The Temptations, Junior Walker and The Four Tops would eclipse that early standard to give Motown a tradition of gold and later platinum records.

Even during the mid-'60s, though, when Motown was still a young company, the label had the reputation in many quarters of being the master purveyor of the "Detroit Sound." In truth, there was never an identifiable "Detroit Sound," only The Motown Sound itself—later dubbed "The Sound of Young America" by the company. Black youngsters from the inner city beat a path to Gordy's door, many of whom he initially turned away until they had graduated from high school.

## Motown History

(Continued from page 14)

Others he gave a job so that they might earn while they developed their artistic potential. In that way, Motown gained an added reputation as a family, not just a record company.

Among the future superstars who would get their first encouragement from Gordy and Motown were, in addition to Smokey, Diana Ross, Martha Reeves, Marvin Gaye and The Temptations. Early songwriting successes came not only from Robinson, but from the team of Holland, Dozier and Holland and, of course, Berry Gordy, Jr., himself.

Although Motown is lauded today as the world's largest and most successful black-owned and operated business, few observers view it as an institution whose economic successes, no matter how dazzling, are eclipsed by the cultural contributions Motown has made to popular music. Yet as the careers of those artists listed above, along with such giants as The Marvelettes, The Spinners, Gladys Knight and The Pips and The Jackson Five, attest, Motown's music has exerted an influence sweeping through popular styles of the '60s and the '70s—and now poised for the '80s.

During that first Motown decade, the streets of Detroit would continue to yield an abundance of talent. In 1963, The Four Tops, comprised of Renaldo Benson, Abdul Fakir (better known as

Duke), Lawrence Peyton and Levi Stubbs, went to Berry Gordy, Jr., and said they, too, wanted to join Motown. That year also saw Motown's gross sales climbing to a multi-million dollar level, with close to 80 percent of that volume attributed to single hits. Even with this momentum, it was still a struggle to gain financial stability without restricting the creative freedom that would eventually lead to Motown's phenomenal growth. Thus was The Motortown Revue inaugurated, boosting Motown's presence in the album market with two Revue albums, and giving valuable public exposure to both developing acts and Motown's already established stars.

This was also the year that Motown opened its first Hollywood office to handle A&R and publishing activities, and established a west coast base for talent recruiting and recording operations. Motown had become the world's largest independent recording company, finishing third in single record sales behind such established giants as RCA and Columbia. The very next year, 1964, Motown more than doubled its sales.

1964 was indeed a sweet year

for Motown: Diana Ross and The Supremes scored heavily with "Where Did Our Love Go," The Temptations reaped their first million-seller, "My Girl," penned by Smokey Robinson, and Gladys Knight and The Pips began making waves. By that time, nearly 10 percent of the top 100 singles nationally were emanating from Motown, which sold an estimated 12 million singles and three million albums that year.

Berry Gordy, Jr., then president, would explain the phenomenon this way: "In our first five years, we built steadily with good planning. Albums were just one of the company's long-range steps designed to insure continuing development and growth. The distinctive flavor of our product had by this time made the Motown Sound known around the world, and the Motown success story was equally familiar."

1965 was another banner year for Motown, and Gordy continued laying the groundwork for the company's expansion in the coming years. Of major significance was the opening of the New York office to coordinate night club and television appearances, and to handle corporate public relations. Sales of all Motown products increased that year, and the label issued its first prerecorded tapes. Critical acclaim for its success came from all quarters, with the press describing the sound as one of the hottest selling properties out of De-

(Continued on page 58)



Jr. Walker



Marvin Gaye



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**M**otown's inhouse studio operations have come a long way since the label's earliest Detroit sessions, both literally and figuratively: the past decade has witnessed both a rapid technological evolution as well as Motown Industries' move west, and both processes are mirrored today in its Romaine Avenue recording facility in Hollywood.

Motown's current state-of-the-art operation attests to the increasingly complex multi-channel technology now available, but even in the label's first years, when monaural pop recording was giving way to the world of two-channel stereophonic recording, Berry Gordy and the songwriters, arrangers and production colleagues that came together under the Hitsville banner placed an emphasis on understanding and applying new recording techniques through their own studio. The stylized production finish that resulted from that mix of musical and technical priorities came to identify the Motown Sound as much more than an inspired line of ad copy.

Guy Costa, vice president in charge of studio operations at Motown, recalls the past decade as a transitional period in which

## Guy Costa: Studios Keep Improving

By SAM SUTHERLAND



Guy Costa

Motown's original inhouse emphasis has gradually broadened to include an increasing list of non-label clients as well. Yet even as Motown's western studios have shifted sites and equipment, the atypical stability and longevity seen throughout the company has

characterized its studio staff, many of whom have been with Motown for over a decade.

Costa himself first began working in the Los Angeles area in 1968, helping to start a facility with his undeniably musical family (his uncle is veteran arranger and conductor Don Costa). It was there that he first met Berry Gordy.

"Berry came to the studio with Diana Ross and an unknown new act called the Jackson Five, to cut some demos," Costa remembers. "That, of course, turned into

**When Berry gets involved in a film or record, he wants to be able to really play with it, to get fully involved in that project in a comfortable and familiar surrounding...**

something else altogether: those sessions produced their first hits." The Costa recording studio was sold in 1969, and while Guy Costa was working with Michael Butler on the original production of "Hair," Gordy approached him to become a consultant to Motown. Costa took over supervision of the label's Detroit studio, just as Gordy himself was mapping out the company's move west.

"It was during that period of time that we started the relocation to Los Angeles," says Costa, who adds that the studio crew was among the last to leave Motor City for the west coast.

After leasing Henry Russell Studios as an early home for Motown West, a facility since taken over under the management of Sunwest Recording, the company acquired the current Romaine site. That move, in '71, climaxed a long stretch during which Costa found himself commuting from the old Detroit facility to Los Angeles.

In the new building, Motown found an existing facility that had only opened its doors for business four months prior to Motown's acquisition. Although the site already offered two working studios, Costa and his team of studio staffers would subsequently undertake two extensive renovations, the most recent of which was completed just before the new year.

With the addition of a second

floor and subsequent subdivision to add a third studio, a producers' lounge, a patio, a musicians' lounge and other amenities, Motown has evolved into a versatile recording center boasting three full recording studios, a fourth mixdown and post-production control room and full 24-track capability throughout.

The studios range from the smaller, intimate scale of the Dawn room, designed for vocal recording, small ensembles and post-production, to the medium-sized Sunrise facility and the operation's largest room, the Sunset studio, which is amply scaled for large string and brass dates.

The Twilight room, principally designed for post-production work rather than actual recording ("I cut my teeth in New York, doing commercials," notes Costa by

way of explaining the room's development as a vehicle for commercial and post-production applications well-suited to Twilight), completes the complement of recording environments.

Motown's main rooms have been updated to include 3M M79 24-track recorders throughout, with Neve/NECAM computerized mixing/recording consoles. With extensive rewiring of the facility, renovation of maintenance and improvements, Costa estimates an investment of roughly two million dollars over the past nine months.

To Costa, Motown's willingness to undertake so extensive a program is another testament to Berry Gordy's long-term commitment to inhouse creative control. "When Berry gets involved in a film or record, he wants to be able to really play with it, to get fully involved in that project in a comfortable and familiar surrounding he can work in as long as he needs to," explains Costa who agrees that Gordy's own credentials as a producer have been a major factor in getting the green light for the studio's ongoing renovations and improvements.

With Motown Records consolidating its roster in the mid-'70s, Costa says the studio's schedule is no longer completely filled with label projects, and during the past year outside business has grown to represent about 25 percent of Motown's activity.

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## Dialogue

(Continued from page 32)

to think, create, and get some self-confidence, self-awareness, and be able to communicate.

The problems in the world today, they don't change all that much, and there were problems then. They (the people at Motown) had a choice of sitting in a studio creating something that would make them feel good and proud; or they could be out robbing somebody's house or taking dope or doing some of the things that people do when they're bored or they don't feel the self-esteem that one should feel.

**RW:** Do you recall any special incidents about your initial meetings with some of the Motown stars, like Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Marvin Gaye and so on?

**Gordy:** Many of them came by word of mouth, or through the Miracles, who were our first group. Diana Ross and the Supremes lived down the street from Smokey Robinson. The Temptations, at the time, were called the Primes; the boys would stand on the corner and sing their songs, their doo-wops and that rock 'n' roll stuff, so the girls got their own group, which they called the Primettes and later changed to the Supremes.

Marvin Gaye I noticed at a party we were having at Motown. He was sitting there playing the piano. He was a jazz singer, and a jazz musician, but he had also been with a rock 'n' roll group. He really loved the top hat, tails and cane numbers, "Me and My Shadow" and that sort of thing; he always wanted to be a balladeer. Hearing him sing, I told him he should do some really popular, pop stuff—popular in the sense that it sells, not popular in the sense that it was so-called "white music." He liked what he was doing, though, so he put out an album called "Hello Broadway." Very nice songs, but no one bought it. But there was this writer who wrote "Hello Broadway," named Ron Miller, who eventually wrote many big hit songs, one of which was "For Once In My Life," which was probably one of the most consistent copyrights we have.

Stevie Wonder came in from an audition one day when he was just a little kid, nine years old or so—I think he probably also came through either the Miracles or Smokey Robinson—and he had a little

I felt that if people grew as human beings as well as becoming stars, they could then 'make it,' and continue to make it. If they grew into stars without growing as human beings, they couldn't make it for long.

baby voice. He had some good ideas and was very enthusiastic, so we liked him very much and started working with him. He was about 12 when he did "Fingertips" at the Apollo Theater. They made a mistake in the song, and stopped, but there was so much applause that they started singing it again. The bass player didn't know what key they were in, so he said, "What key? What key?" Somebody told him what key it was, and they went back into the song. I heard a live recording of this and someone said, "We'll have to edit that out." But I said, "No, that's terrific. That's great. If that's going to cause it to be a hit or not to be a hit, we're in trouble anyway, so we might as well leave it in there." So we started leaving a few mistakes in records, because it's real. We tried to stick with real things, from the soul and the heart.

**RW:** Did you see early on, even when Stevie was a raw kid, that he was going to be capable of the kind of epic works that he's been turning out in the '70s?

**Gordy:** No, I never did. We just knew that he was a bright, smart, wonderful human being—and there again is the kind of people we've always loved working with. We had no idea of the commercial value of Stevie Wonder. In those days, he had to have so many people around him: he had to have a schoolteacher, and a couple of other people—it was always a very expensive project to take Stevie on the road, or taking him anywhere. But in our case the motivation was success, rather than short-term money. We did things that proved to be not very wise later, but we had a philosophy and a program and we stuck with it. It worked with some and it didn't work with others.

**RW:** Were you surprised when he came up with "Music of My  
(Continued on page 84)

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## YOU ARE THE SUNSHINE OF MY LIFE

Moderately, with feeling

Words and Music  
STEVE WONG



Chorus: You are the sun shine of my life.

## I CAN'T HELP MYSELF

(Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)

Words and Music  
BRIAN HOLMES  
LAMONT EDIE

## STILL

Words and Music by  
LIONEL RUTH

## SEND ONE YOUR LOVE

Moderately

## MY EYES ADORED

Alla Breve

## HEAT WAVE

(A. K. A. Love Is Like A Heat Wave)

Words and Music by  
LINDA HOLLAND, JAMONI DREZLER  
and BRIAN HOLMES

When - ev - er I'm with him  
calls my name soft

## MONEY

(That's What I Want)

## DANCING IN THE STREET

Words and Music by  
MARVIN GAYE,  
WILLIAM STEVENSON and  
IVY JOHNSON

Call - in - our - tion  
in - vi - sion  
a round the world  
the na - tion.  
are you

## FOR ONCE IN

# ted history.

## SHOP AROUND

Words and Music by  
BERRY LORRY and  
WILLIAM "SMOKEY" ROBINSON

## PLEASE MR. POSTMAN

Words and Music by  
FRANKFURT,  
FREDMY GOODMAN and  
GEORGIA TRIMBING

## I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

Words and Music by  
NORMAN WHITEFIELD and  
BARRETT STRONG

## NEVER CAN SAY GOODBYE

Words and Music by  
CLYTON DAVIS

## ISN'T SHE LOVELY

## SAIL ON

## REACH OUT AND TOUCH Somebody's Hand

Words and Music by  
NICHOLAS ASHFORD and  
VALERIE SIMPSON



MUSIC COMPANY, INC.

## Jobete's Future Is Jay Lowy's Concern

By SAM SUTHERLAND



Jay Lowy

**A**s a veteran of both music publishing and the record business, Jay Lowy can reflect on the growth of Motown and its Jobete publishing arm in light of both creative and financial progress. And, taken from either vantage point, Lowy doesn't hesitate in dubbing Jobete "the best contemporary music catalogue."

The company's vice president and general manager should know. A 25-year career in music began with independent promotion on the west coast, but Lowy had already moved into music publishing just five years later—in 1959—as a professional manager for Robbins-Feist-Miller. In March of 1966, he was promoted to general professional manager for that publisher, relocating to its New York headquarters.

Late the following year, he moved to a similar post with Famous Music, which, in turn, led to a renewed L.A. record trade post when Famous' label affiliate, Dot-Paramount, tapped Lowy as vice president, a&r, in March of '69. The executive again shifted his base, moving back to California, where Jobete brought him abroad in 1972.

Lowy left Jobete not long after, assuming the post of president and chief operating officer of Capitol-EMI's publishing interests, but in 1976 he returned to the Jobete fold as vice president and general manager. Today, he's obviously proud of that association.

"Jobete simply has the most respect from contemporary popular artists," explains Lowy. "It has developed the most dynamic writers of the '60s and '70s, which is, of course, confirmed by the amount of catalogue that continues to be used on records, for television and in films."

To Lowy, one key to that ongoing acceptance is Jobete's success in sustaining long-term relationships with some of its earliest writers, notably Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and the Holland-Dozier-Holland catalogue. Adding momentum in recent years have been new writers developed by Jobete, including Lionel Richie, Rick James and other Jobete hitmakers.

"Producers and artists actively welcome material submitted by Jobete, which is frankly unusual," says Lowy. That response also underscores the company's maturation into a classic catalogue. "What was the greatest soul catalogue of the '60s has become the most recognized pop catalogue of the '70s; what began as hit songs, were exploited into major copyrights that are now treated as standards."

No secret formula lies behind Jobete's ability to consolidate its

copyrights. According to Lowy, the company's strategy has always emphasized the basics of music publishing. "It's basically a traditional publisher's approach," he asserts. "We approach every available avenue, exploiting through sheet sales, folios, film, television and commercial uses as well as recorded covers. We're cognizant of every use possible, and we explore each of those uses."

One tool that has proven especially useful is Jobete's sampler LPs. "We continue to release them periodically," explains Lowy. "Several publishers have attempted this, but we've been doing it on an ongoing basis." The success of those samplers, he adds, lies in the company's care in programming each disc to best suit the specific needs of artists and producers. "They're not just compilations of records," he notes. "We try to make them easy to listen to, while taking care to determine just how much of a given song should be included."

At its core, though, Jobete draws its longevity from the writers themselves, and Lowy notes that while most of the company's songwriters are also performers, Jobete maintains one of the largest overall staffs in the industry, including an active contingent of non-performing tunesmiths, such as Ron Miller, Ken Hirsch and Steve Milburn. That balance between self-contained writers and songwriters geared to supplying the needs of outside producers and artists has enabled Jobete to weather changes in the publishing business itself.

Notes Lowy, "The advent of the writer-performer had a tremendous impact on publishing. We

haven't been as affected, because we've continued to find covers throughout that shift, even from otherwise self-contained artists. It is not uncommon for us to have the only outside material on an

a particular artist, but to arrangers and producers.

Lowy concludes that Jobete's success to date only underlines the need for continual company and writer development. "As a result of Berry Gordy's design for the future," he asserts, "Jobete will continue to seek out and develop new writing talent, and use the base we've developed over the past 20 years as a springboard for the future.

"We have a broader writers'

**Jobete simply has the most respect from contemporary popular artists. It has developed the most dynamic writers of the '60s and '70s...**

album by a self-contained act."

That demand helps explain why Jobete's own inhouse demo studio "is going about 18 hours a day" three years after its installation. Helping to maximize the output from those sessions is a strong emphasis on working closely with each writer to insure that his or her material is being tailored not only to the needs of

base at this point. We're both soul and pop oriented, and we're now exploiting our songs to the country music market as well. Lionel Richie, for example, has certainly gained acceptance there for songs like 'Sail On' and 'Three Times A Lady.' And our realigned a&r department at Motown will also assist us in expanding our base."



Stevie Wonder

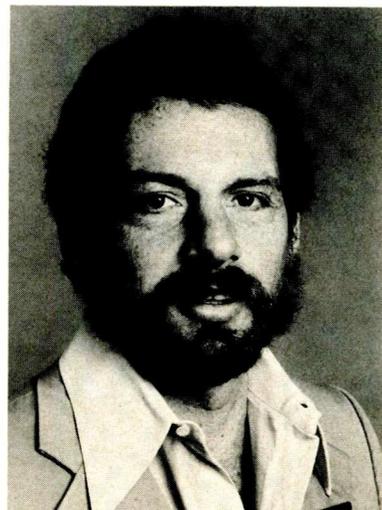
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Less than half a year into his job as Motown's senior vice president, promotion, Gary Davis has already fully absorbed the label's philosophy of artist development. "The idea is to create artists, not just hits," Davis says. "Motown's idea—and mine, too—is to sign artists and work them until they happen. It's simply the concept of believing in someone and building him as an artist."

Davis brings a wealth of experience to his new position. A veteran of some 15 years in the music industry, he began as a retail buyer for a discount house in San Francisco, moving next to the Capitol Records sales department for five years. Seven years at Warner Bros. followed, from 1969 to 1976, during which period he moved steadily from regional sales to regional marketing manager and ultimately national promotion director. Davis recalls with justifiable pride that such acts as Fleetwood Mac, the Doobie Brothers, America, Seals and



Gary Davis

Crofts, the Allman Brothers, Leo Sayer and a whole host of others were established during his tenure in Burbank.

## Gary Davis On Artist Development

After a year in personal management, Davis went to ABC Records, where he eventually assumed charge of "everything but A&R," including publicity, artist development, artist relations, creative services, sales and promotion. "In San Francisco," he recalls, "I had learned from some of the real innovators in the business, people like Russ Solomon, Bill Gavin and Tom Donahue, and I felt that to be a complete record man, a guy should call both radio stations and accounts. To be good in San Francisco, and respected, you had to know every phase of the business."

After leaving ABC, Davis spent another year in management, handling Billy Preston and Syreeta and working with Motown's Suzanne dePasse in what he calls "the marketing end of

management—sales, promotion and all the rest.

"One of the main things that attracted me to this company," Davis continues, "was the Motown sound, that great music. "It's amazing to me to be working with all of this really first-class talent." His main goal, as he sees it, is "to break down the barriers that say that Motown is only a black record company. Records these days are proving themselves to consumers of all colors, because it's not color that makes the music, it's the sound."

Davis recalls with particular satisfaction a recent promotion where winners were taken to the Bahamas to meet Stevie Wonder. "It was a once in a lifetime experience for them," he says. "You could tell just from the looks on their faces what a thrill it was to meet Stevie. And it made me feel good, too, because it shows me that Motown doesn't forget about the people who really matter, the people who buy the records. That kind of energy is the real Motown."

Steve Jack, Motown's recently appointed national sales manager, joined the Motown family in 1973, bringing with him sales and promotional experience from both Paramount and Metro-media Records. Having previously worked extensively in the southern and eastern markets in local and regional promotions, Jack made a smooth transition seven years ago when hired by Mike Lushka as Motown's first southern regional sales manager.

According to Jack, "The new position made it easier for everyone concerned. For example, the southern distributors finally had a Motown representative close at hand and not just as it related to my geographical location, because I was based in Atlanta, but because of my prior experience in

the southern market."

As the company's southern regional sales manager from 1973 to 1976, Jack was responsible for the sales, merchandising, marketing and advertising of Motown's product to distributors in Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas.

"It has been a rewarding experience because I had always wanted to work for Motown and more importantly because I had been a fan of their music since adolescence," he said. "It is probably the only company in the industry that has taken artists

## For Steve Jack, Longevity Pays Off

By LAURA PALMER

like Stevie, Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross and the Commodores from their beginnings in the entertainment field, made them superstars and maintained them at that level."

During the latter part of 1976, Jack was promoted to national album and tape manager. He fondly remembered that year because of the phenomenal success of Stevie Wonder's "Songs In The Key Of Life," album. "The week Stevie's album was released was by far the most exciting week I've ever experienced in the record business. The record created chaos on all levels. Distributors called every two hours to check

on their shipments, while retailers were waiting in line at their local distributors the day the album was to arrive. We shipped well in excess of platinum," he said, adding that "the supply simply couldn't meet the demand."

Attributing much of Motown's sales success to the people who comprise the company's sales staff, Jack said, "Longevity is the key to success, and the foundation on which Motown's sales force has been built has remained consistent for years. That is why our sales department works better as a unit than any sales team in the industry."

Now serving in the capacity of national sales manager, Jack feels that the level of excitement has again been rekindled. "We're entering a new decade and we are establishing a multitude of new acts, like Switch, Teena Marie, Tata Vega, High Inergy and Rick James."

## Mike Lushka

(Continued from page 20)

them successful."

Jazz is another field he sees the company entering with renewed focus. Yet, whatever the style, Lushka ties the Motown mystique not to musical pigeonholes but to the relationship between company and artists.

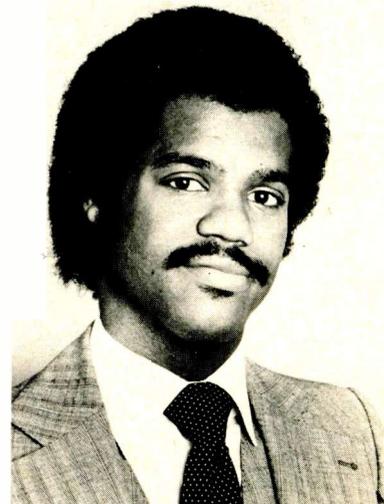
Equally important, he feels, is the company's personalized style. While noting Motown's relocation to its current west coast offices has freed the company from a more isolated stance during its Motor City days, Lushka feels the label's most recent successes underscore not only its grasp of cur-

rent marketing and promotion needs, but its concern for maintaining the one-to-one contact between company and trade as maintained during its first years.

"It's still a personal business, you know," he claims. "And we got away from that for awhile, just like everybody did. But a few years ago we began making a point of getting back to that one-on-one level of rapport. Ours is a feeling of sincerity when we deal with people, and that's a two-way street: If you deal straight with someone, they'll be straight with you."



Junius Griffin



Berry Gordy IV



**N**ot all of Motown's earliest employees played a direct role in shaping the immortal "Motown sound." There were plenty of behind-the-scenes stalwarts as well—the people who saw to such mundane matters as filling supply orders, billing and collection and other administrative functions. Their jobs were less glamorous, perhaps; but they were hardly less vital in creating the foundation for Motown's musical empire.

Fay Hale, Motown's vice president of production and inventory management, is one of those workers without whom many of Motown's greatest records might never have been released. Since joining the label in November, 1961, she has "done it all," in her own words: verified invoices, acted as a liaison between Motown and its pressing plants, supplied label copy, overseen shipments of product to foreign licensees and considerably more, including opening the company's west coast offices.

Fay had worked with Lucy Wakefield, Motown founder Berry Gordy's sister, in a governmental position; "It was a supply function," she says, "supplying food for Nike missile sites, for the National Guard, that kind of thing." That experience would later prove useful at Motown, she adds: "It helped me learn planning, organizing, following through and meeting deadlines. Both jobs involved controlled situations."

Mrs. Wakefield left the government to work full-time with her brother, and six months later Fay heard from Lacy again. "She said she was ready, and I said, 'Ready for what?'" laughs Hale. "She just said they needed me, so I came along. And I haven't looked

## Fay Hale: Behind-the-Scenes Veteran

By SAMUEL GRAHAM



Fay Hale

back.

"I knew nothing about the record business. As far as as Motown goes, I knew that the Marvelettes were hot at the time with 'Please Mr. Postman,' but I really wasn't familiar with the Marvelettes or any rock and roll music. Lucy said, 'You don't have to like the music—but you do have to remember names!' I've learned to appreciate the music now, but before I came here I didn't pay much attention to it."

In the early days, Fay — like many others—"filled in wherever it was necessary," including sales and production, billing and collection, personnel and purchasing and so on. She also came west in 1966 to open Motown's western headquarters with Shelly Berger. Until then, Hale's jobs

had been purely administrative; the L.A. move was "my first experience dealing directly with the artists."

Most people at Motown remember the big musical moments—"Shop Around," "Money," "Fingertips, Part One" and all the rest—but Fay Hale points to another highlight of the early days. "One of the biggest moments for me came in billing and collection, under Mrs. Wakefield, when we got our first million dollar collection month." That came about a year after her arrival at Motown. "We'd started getting into the album business, and that probably had a lot to do with it. Before, it had been mostly singles."

There were more glamorous moments as well: "I recall when the Supremes appeared at the Rooster Tail. It wasn't unlike going to the Copa—the Rooster Tail was the big place in Detroit, and their going there was a big thing, a major milestone."

Clearly, what Fay calls "the hustle and bustle of making the music" and "the glamor and glitter of the live shows" made their impressions, but she mostly recalls "just putting the records out on time." It was in her job as head of the processing department, in the mid-1960s, that she handled many of the functions described above: forwarding label copy information to the pressing plants, overseeing foreign product shipments, verifying invoices from the RCA pressing plant and a good deal more.

Hale's duties these days are "about the same, really. I just

don't personally do it anymore. Basically, I'm the liaison between the sales and creative divisions."

The fact that Fay doesn't handle some of her menial old tasks herself anymore says a good deal about the changes at Motown as a whole: as the company has grown so spectacularly, individual jobs are more specialized, and the variety of work to be done is far more diversified. Such growth is only natural, says Hale — "if we'd stayed the size we were, marveling over a million dollar month, we'd still be over on West Grand Boulevard in Detroit"—but it hasn't come without some loss of "the pride and family feeling we used to have. We'd pick dandelions out of the ground in front of Hitsville—we had pride in everything, from the music on down to the building. To a degree, that has endured, but not always enough, to me. The growth we've had, the necessity of bringing in more experienced people, has replaced it somewhat. But that feeling is still there when crises come up, I'm sure."

Some things don't change, however. "Berry Gordy is very loyal to the people who have stuck by him—sometimes to a fault, actually. He's a very compassionate man; that has always continued. I won't see him for months, but I'm sure he knows I'm around—and I certainly know he is!"

Motown's diversifying into movies and building its own pressing plants and tape duplicating facilities, Fay feels, have laid "the foundation for an even stronger company in the future." As for herself, "I have the feeling I'll be here indefinitely. That's what I'm working for. The first 20 years have been very good, so I think I'll be hanging in for the next 20.



Gladys Knight & The Pips



Mary, Cindy, Diana

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Also in 1965, Junior Walker rode "Shot Gun" on the Motown success wagon. Junior would remember that career-making single hit by saying, "I used to play at a little club where most of the cast came to dance and they were doing this new dance, and they hyped me. They said, 'Man, this is what's happening,' and I said, 'Whatcha call that?' They said, 'This is called The Shot Gun, and you got to write a song for this.' I said, 'Oh,'" The rest was chart-topping history.

Motown's enterprise, launched in the Space Age, had similarly limitless horizons, developed as a global concept unrestricted by ethnic or racial barriers. That year a Motown troupe, led by The Supremes, embarked on their first overseas tour, which coincided with the introduction of overseas distribution of the Tamla-Motown label through Motown's own licensees. With a world-wide network now emerging, Motown had earned Detroit a reputation as an active, viable center for popular music.

The company's growth continued in both sales and product diversification throughout 1966, and the next year, 1967, proved a crucial period in Motown's evolution. Motown had finally reached a plateau from which it could move effectively into major expansion and diversification into other entertainment industries.

1967 was also a year that saw vast and dramatic changes in the direction Motown would take in developing its posture in the community, and how that posture would evolve in the future. The creation of a Motown scholarship for musical excellence via the United Negro College Fund, and the Loucye Gordy Wakefield scholarship fund, a vital part of the Gordy Family Foundation, were significant steps in Motown's commitment to a program of creative social responsibility. Those programs were indicative of Gordy's credo, "Make your own success work to help others achieve their measure of success, and hope they, in turn, will do likewise." Success by now seemed to have been a contagious commodity at Motown, but beneath the public facade of its sophisticated, urbanized music was an even more sophisticated growth pattern that had been personally chartered by the corporation's young president.

Pacing that growth was the company's continued artistic growth. Charting the careers of Motown's artists in the '60s and '70s was not unlike thumbing through a music industry Who's Who, as Motown's enduring first generation of artists was joined, in turn, by new stars like The

## Motown History

(Continued from page 44)

Commodores, Rick James, Switch, Jermaine Jackson, Teena Marie, Bonnie Pointer, High Inergy, Apollo, Shadee, Billy Preston, Mary Wilson, Syreeta and others.

From that glittering array of stars in Motown's galaxy, there are some whose talent, even after two decades, knows no boundaries, and whose sustained success is unparalleled in the entertainment industry. Leading that category is Diana Ross, a true superstar in recording, television and the movies.

Miss Ross takes great pleasure in recalling that her first job at Motown was as a secretary. Her comments offer further credence to the idea that Motown was, indeed, a product of the inner city from the very beginning. As she once noted, "I moved to the north side of Detroit, and Smokey lived about four or five doors away from me, and to know that Smokey Robinson thrilled me to no end."

Diana would later recall that she used to sit and watch Smokey and The Miracles rehearse on the basement steps. "I told Smokey that I had a group and that any time he could listen to us, I would really appreciate it. It was Smokey who set up an audition for us to go to Motown, and the only reason Berry saw or heard of us was that he just happened to be passing through the studio at the time we were singing. Finally, after meeting Berry and try-

ing to get a contract with the company, they decided they might sign us if we'd go back and finish high school.

"I needed a job to help my family out, and also to get carfare to get me back and forth to the studio to do background sessions. Berry gave me a job, and for about three months I worked there."

Recalling those secretarial days, Diana confesses, "I didn't do a thing except straighten up his desk . . . It wasn't a real office anyway, because at the time Berry used the whole building for working, and everybody kind of gathered in this room. They had a dart board. I know The Miracles used to come in and throw darts. That was the big thing. Everybody would bet on who would come closest to the center mark, so it was a lot of fun at the time. It wasn't really work."

That career lasted only one summer, and coincided with Diana's frustrations at launching a career. "I gave up many times. In fact, every time I would get to the end of my rope, something nice would happen and I would end up singing again." Then she recorded "Where Did Our Love Go" with The Supremes. "Everybody liked it so much 'cause it was a very sexy, young sound, it was melodic, and it just repeated 'baby, baby, baby.'"

Berry himself also delights in talking about another superstar,

Stevie Wonder, and how, at the age of nine, he was brought in for an audition with the young recording executive. Gordy remembers that at that time Stevie still had a "little baby voice," but already displayed good ideas and great enthusiasm. According to Berry, when Stevie was about 12, he appeared at the Apollo Theater, performing "Finger Tips," and during the performance Stevie's bass player made a mistake and the band stopped.

Luckily, there was so much applause that the musicians began playing again, and the bass player was asking, "What key? What key," before getting back into the groove. When Berry heard a live recording of the tune—and, of course, the mistake—someone promptly said, "We'll have to edit that out." The Motown chief, however, disagreed, and said, "No, that's terrific. That's great. If that's going to cause it to be a hit or not to be a hit, we are in trouble anyway, so we might as well leave it in there."

Later he would assert, "It was at that point that we started leaving a few mistakes in records, because it's real. We try to stick with real things, from the soul and the heart."

Such mistakes would lead to titanic careers such as that enjoyed by Wonder, now one of popular music's most honored and successful artists, whose influence has since extended to the rock and pop mainstream, punctuated by gold and platinum record awards and multiple Grammy conquests. The evolution of his music, from "Finger Tips" to "The Secret Life of Plants," can easily be equated with the evolution of the Motown Sound.

Yet another early Motown star who has gone on to open new musical fields while sustaining his broad popularity is Marvin Gaye, and like his colleagues from Motown's first years in Detroit, his recollections underscore the close ties between Motown's family of artists, songwriters, producers and executives. Reminiscing about one of his biggest early single hits, Gaye would report, "Holland, Dozier and Holland came to me one day and said, 'Gee, Marvin, we have a great thing here,' and I said, 'Gee, I need something.'"

"Diana and The Supremes were in the studio, so I said, 'Let's use them for back-up voices.' Diana thought that was great—she loves that sort of thing, she's so groovy, and said, 'Yes, I'd love to get in on that'—and so Diana and the girls did the background and I recorded it."

Those artists thus helped provide the foundation for a company that, by 1970, was poised for even greater strides forward

(Continued on page 98)



Diana Ross

**A**s vice president of Motown Records' creative department, Iris Gordy's responsibilities include talent acquisition, product development and A&R (artists and repertoire).

Though the pace is quick and the pressure intense, she balances the pros and cons of a situation and renders a decision; she has neither the time nor the incentive to procrastinate or waiver in her judgments. When she must select producers for certain recording artists or determine whether an album will prove to be a viable commodity, she is careful not to make, what she labels, "vacuum decisions." As she explains, "I have made it a habit to align myself with at least one important person upon whom I can bounce off ideas and frustrations."

Her mentor is her uncle, Berry Gordy, creator of Motown Records. It was he who initiated her into the "business" when she was a teenager back in Detroit, and who recognized her instinctive grasp of "what works and doesn't work musically." Though she started out as a clerk in A&R, it wasn't long until she became the assistant to the head of the product evaluation department. In time she was promoted to assistant of the vice president of the creative division and eventually

## Iris Gordy Moves Up With Motown



Iris Gordy

attained the status of vice president.

She migrated to the West Coast when Motown expanded its operation and opened offices in Hollywood in 1973. She relishes the creativity that flourishes in this city and is grateful that she has had an opportunity to produce parts of albums. "I must admit I'm a perfectionist in the studio, but I try to get the job done in a reasonable amount of time".

Speaking of the direction of Motown and music in the future, she says "Motown has always been fortunate enough to produce great music, much of which was very danceable. Therefore, even with the decline of disco, as we have come to know it, we will continue to produce music that is enjoyable, inspiring, able to make listeners happy, and make bodies move. So whatever direction the industry takes we will be there leading the way."



Edna Anderson



Lee Colton



Rebecca Giles

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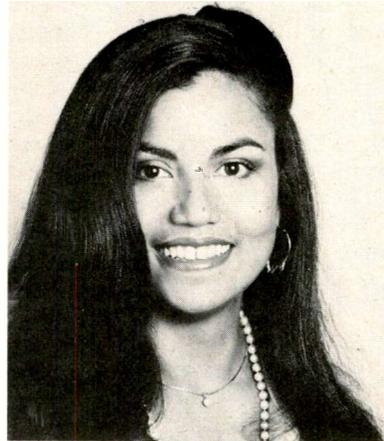
**A**sked about her record business experience prior to joining Motown, Suzanne dePasse LeMat breaks into a grin. "Since this is the only company in the business I've worked with, none," she replies, and goes on to explain how her own success with the company mirrors the instincts—and some of the contradictions—of the label's founder, Berry Gordy, Jr.

In 1967, Suzanne dePasse was working as a talent coordinator at Cheetah in her native Manhattan, a post that would lead to broader live talent opportunities and, at year's end, Motown itself. Although her studies at Syracuse University and later at Manhattan Community College promised a successful professional career after graduation, she left to enter entertainment, working first with Cheetah and then promoter Howard Stein.

"I had met Cindy Birdsong of the Supremes, after she replaced Florence Ballard," Ms. LeMat recalls of her first contact with the label, where she now resides as vice president and special creative assistant to chairman Berry Gordy, Jr. "I met her while I was working with Patti Labelle, and after that, whenever she was in town, I'd take her to all the happening places—back then, clubs and discotheques like Ondine's and Ar-

## Suzanne dePasse LeMat: Creative Administration

By SAM SUTHERLAND



Suzanne dePasse LeMat

thur's."

One night, while accompanying Cindy Birdsong, she met Berry Gordy, Jr. "I'd rented a limousine," she now recalls, "because in those days it was still hard to get a taxi if you were black. Cindy asked if she could ride with us, and Berry—being the chauvinist he is—apparently thought I was a go-go dancer."

The job is a good-natured one in retrospect, for, as Ms. LeMat later stresses, Motown's top execu-

tive has invited more women to assume top level posts at the company than any other label chief. If there was friction at that first meeting, the outspoken young talent booker clearly saw Gordy's mission and respected his roster's talents.

On New Year's Eve of '67, she found herself broaching problems she perceived in Motown with its leader. "I'd had problems booking Motown acts up to that point," she recalled, "so I approached Berry and told him he really needed to straighten out his talent coordination."

Gordy agreed—and offered Suzanne dePasse the job. Initially creative assistant to Gordy himself, she moved to Detroit, and despite her lack of formal record industry training, found herself moving quickly into new areas of talent development for Motown. Her first major assignment was to meet with Gordy and his staff in Cherry Hill, N.J., to discuss Smokey Robinson's live show.

"I think what happened was that, up to that point, Berry thought I was bright but didn't know what I was going to do," she remembers of that meeting, which set something of a pattern

"I think the first glimpse I had of the potential offered me here came during the planning stages of the first Supremes and Temptations TV special," she recalls. "There we were in a meeting with both groups and the producer, George Schlatter, and in the middle of the meeting Berry just got up and walked out. The idea was that I should simply take over from there."

That display of faith was both exhilarating and understandably unnerving, she adds, but typical of Gordy. "He's always been kicking me out of the nest to go and try something. This man has always believed in me. He's a tough man to work for; I'm here to tell you that I've felt the presence of his foot on a prominent area of my derriere on a number of occasions.

"But if you can stand the head, you're permitted to grow."

For Suzanne dePasse LeMat, that prospect has been measured since by her expansion into a broad range of creative development duties. Appointed a vice president of west coast creative in the early '70s, she subsequently took over that department on a national basis; at one point, she found herself supervising A&R, graphics, studio operations and sessions.

"I can tell you when I took over that job," she explains of her move into creative, "I had absolutely no idea how a deal was

**I couldn't sit here and tell you there aren't chauvinistic situations to deal with, but Motown has more women in top positions than any other company I can think of.**

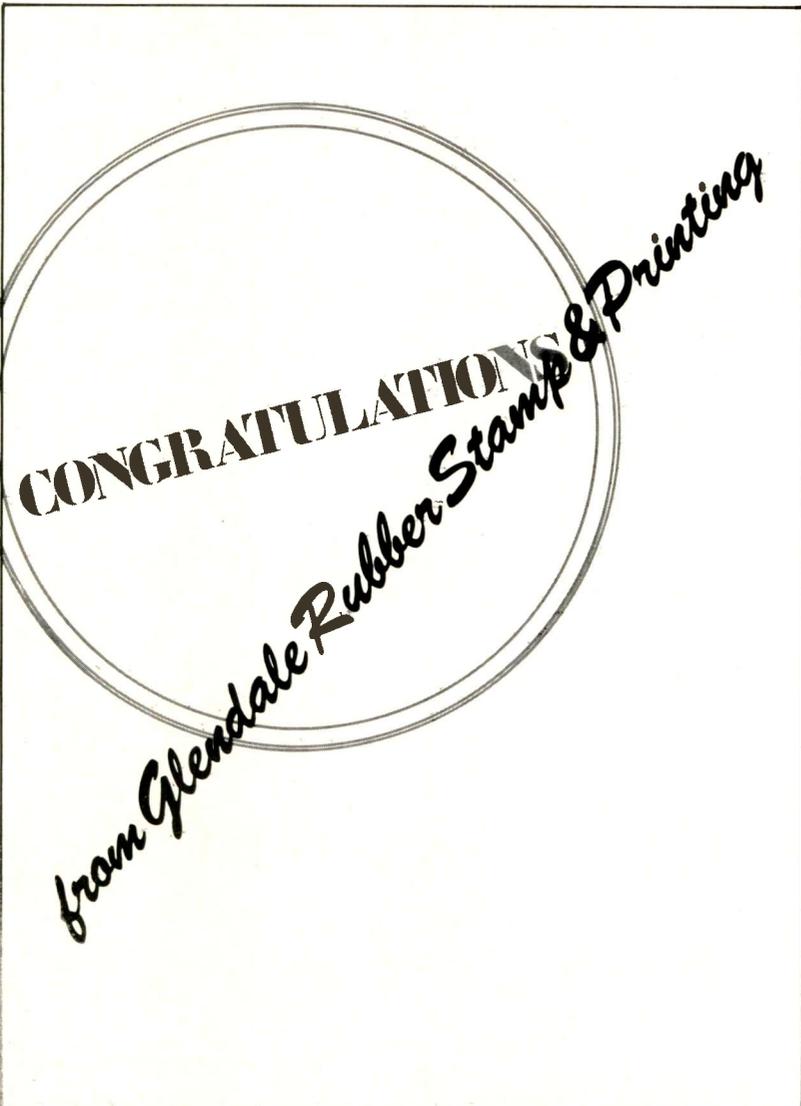
for future experiences with Gordy as a mentor. That approach would be characterized by his willingness to let executives tackle new, even unfamiliar obstacles when their underlying ideas impressed him.

"The evolution of the job was shaped by the fact that Berry was more confident about my abilities than I was," she explains, going on to recount her move a year later to Los Angeles, where she was among Motown's first 10 staffers. If the move was disorienting—she'd only just begun adjusting to Detroit when she was among Motown's first 10 staffers. If the move was disorienting—she'd only just begun adjusting to Detroit when she was queried about the L.A. post—Suzanne dePasse was willing. The gamble soon paid off.

struck, no idea how the pie was split up for royalties, no idea what happened to a record after the tape leaves the studio and heads toward the marketplace."

That willingness to let her test her executive skills has clearly tempered Ms. LeMat's perception of the industry's usually chauvinist stance with respect to women. "I couldn't sit here and tell you there aren't chauvinistic situations to deal with," she says candidly, "but Motown has more women in top positions than at any other company I can think of. And certainly I have been given an almost unbelievable amount of responsibility, and the power and rewards that go along with it."

Today, she notes that while her original creative involvement has become increasingly administrative (Continued on page 96)



**Happy  
20th  
Funk-  
a-ver-  
sary!**



**Rick James and The Stone City Band.**

**G**wen Gordy Fuqua began in the industry as a songwriter along with her older brother Berry. "We were all musically inclined, and Berry and I would often work as a team writing songs in the late '50s for Jackie Wilson, among others. I always wanted to be in the record business, and I knew Berry was interested, so I was constantly asking him if he was ready to venture into the business full time, but at that time he wasn't ready."

With some heavy coaxing from Smokey Robinson, in less than two years Berry Gordy decided to follow his dream and create Motown Records. The Gordy family believed it would be big from day one. According to Gwen, "Although our family was poor, my parents taught us all to believe in ourselves and in God. We couldn't have succeeded without the support from Mom and Pops Gordy."

"From the beginning my sisters, Loucy Wakefield and Esther Edwards, and myself worked on all phases of the company. We worked from trial and error at that time, and did whatever there was to do. I brought Lamont Dozier, David Ruffin, Marvin Gaye, Johnnie and Jackie Bristol, Harvey Fuqua, and Shorty Long to the label.

## Gwen Gordy Fuqua Works in All Phases

By LAURA PALMER



Gwen Gordy Fuqua

"At first I headed up the artist development department. There we worked with Maxine Powell—the greatest groomer for girls in Detroit—on the Supremes' stage techniques, personal appearances and grace. I began travelling with the Supremes as their chaperone and also handled their wardrobing. When I wasn't with the girls, I was out driving in my car, playing our records. This led me into the promotion of records.

"After that, I headed up the publicity and public relations de-

partments. By that time, the company was well on the way to becoming a huge success and we began bringing professionals like Michael Roshkind to the label."

Once the company moved to Los Angeles, Gwen moved to the finance department, where she served as VP for eight years. She complained that her new position confined her to her seat. This cramped her style, not to men-

tion that sitting is a quick and efficient way to gain weight. She said, "It just didn't make sense for me to be so stationary. So when Mom and Pops came to L.A. I decided to get back into the streets again."

Once again Gwen was involved in production and artist development, and found success with her first project, High Inergy. "It is such a super feeling when you've done something that has happened," she said. "We're all much stronger now and everybody has learned so much, partly because we profited from our mistakes, but mostly from God. If you trust in him it will work anyway."



Peter Nelson



Alan Selke

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**TO MOTOWN**



**ON THEIR 20th ANNIVERSARY”**



**FROM BILLY PRESTON**

**AND SYREETA**

The past 20 years have seen Motown Records mature from a small, singles-oriented company to one that uses singles as a tool for album sales. Miller London, Jr. has been in a unique position for the past 11 years to see the change. London, Motown's national director of single sales and manager of retail accounts first joined Motown in 1969 as a regional sales manager, and in the years to follow he has moved steadily up the sales ladder, attaining his present position in 1975.

Commenting on the change, London said, "The most important change I've seen happen is that now we are accepted as an album-oriented company. The album market change came when the Temptations started selling albums—that transition started around 1968. It's developed now to where we are like any other record company."

#### Stevie Wonder

"The key to our success," London feels, "is the success that Stevie Wonder had when he made the transition in his sound and when Marvin Gaye did his concept albums like 'What's Goin' On'."

London, a native of Detroit, first came into contact with Motown from church singing with members of the Ardantes, a vocal group that later sang backup on many of the early Motown sides. While working in a retail store in Detroit, London met Joe Louis,

## Miller London: Growth & Change Are The Keys To Success

By PETER FLETCHER



Miller London

a Motown regional sales manager. It was the latter who helped Miller land his first job with Motown.

In 1972 Miller became a singles sales manager, his first experience in the singles business. When Motown made its move to Los Angeles in 1972, London came

west as assistant to national single sales manager Gordon Prince. When Prince left in 1975, London took over the top singles sales post. The additional responsibility of retail accounts manager came about one and a half years ago.

#### Distribution

Motown, which is distributed by independents, moved to solidify its distribution with fewer independents covering a bigger territory. Because of this there was a need for closer relations between Motown and individual accounts, London said. "When we cut back on the distributors we needed someone to be a liaison between retail accounts and Motown."

With the shift by Motown towards album sales, London has been instrumental in changing the role of the single in the company's sales strategy. "Singles sales started to fall off for us about two and one half years ago, at the same time they did for the rest of the industry. The consumer changed and radio changed: more money was avail-

able for the consumer to buy albums, and radio started programming a lot more tunes. We've always maintained that bottom line singles buyer, the juke box operator and the younger consumer," London added.

But in the last year London has seen several other important changes, not the least of which is the impact of the 12-inch single on the marketplace. "When the 12-inch first came out, it skyrocketed; but when the price went up on it our seven-inch sales went up. The consumer is going to wait to see if there is more than one tune on an album before they plunk down seven or eight dollars. In the last six months our seven-inch sales are up 50 percent."

#### Singles

In the beginning the single was Motown, but now it is looked at in a different way, said Miller. "The single has always been a tool. As the album business picked up we saw the single as a tool to break an artist. That's how singles will continue to be important to our company," London said in between phone calls from customers.

London has seen a huge change in Motown in his eleven years. He remembers a smaller company in Detroit, with a staff that was very close. But there are other memories as well. "One year we were so hot: we had singles by Gladys Knight, the Jacksons, Marvin, Stevie and two hits by the Temptations. At that time we

(Continued on page 90)



Mary Wilson



Syreeta



Apollo



Patrick Gammon



Teena Marie



Mira Waters



Tata Vega



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TATA YEGA



From all of us to all of you: Keep on keepin' on!

**S**helley Berger began his association with Motown Records in 1966, and was largely responsible for the management of Motown's earliest acts.

"Motown offered very young, talented high school graduates an education in the entertainment business. Detroit was simply not an entertainment center, but what Motown created in Detroit is incredible in itself," said Berger.

The philosophy of Motown's management was twofold, according to Berger: "It was not just about making money for Motown and their artists, but also to develop a totally cohesive concept fitted for the individual artist's career development."

Berger recalled that "what is now called artist development in the industry is limited in scope compared to Motown's interpretation. It was purely a department that went far beyond the traditional industry titles and molds. This department worked out the details in the artists' shows, their delivery and gradual emergence as entertainers and eventual stars. My objective was to build a career of longevity for the artists, in order to help record sales. The artist's career was always a priority, because we knew we would make hit records, and hit music to insure the longevity of the artists."

Motown's Supremes were the first major black act booked in New York's Copacabana. "The Copa was the thing," Berger said, "everybody wanted the Copa." This event signaled a turning point for the black entertainers on the nightclub circuit.

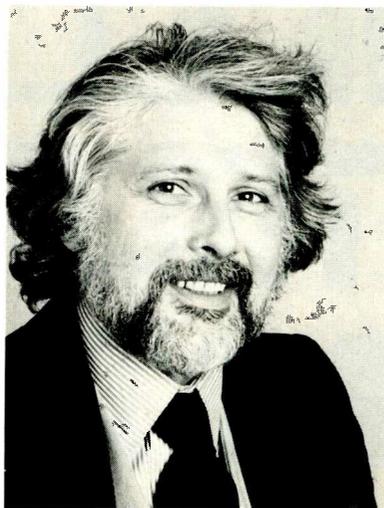
Berger remembered times when nearly 100 or so folks from Detroit would come to a Motown artist's performance — with Motown picking up the tab. It was necessary then, Berger said, to propel the artists. Motown offered another form of tour support — which then amounted to 25 thousand dollars a week including crew and roadies salaries.

In the early '60s at Motown, television shows were simply not interested in the black recording artist. Yet breaking artists like the Supremes, The Temptations, and The Miracles, among others, in places like the Copa only increased Motown's persistence while pushing for their artists' mass audience exposure.

"The 'Ed Sullivan Show' was the launching pad in the entertainment business," said Berger. "But Sullivan's show was only interested in the artists' singing their hit records. This was a snag for Motown, because with The Supremes, who constantly made hits, we held our breath while Berry Gordy dealt with Sullivan's people, requesting that they do

## Shelley Berger Recalls the Early Days

By LAURA PALMER



Shelley Berger

one of their hits and also include other lesser-known material."

As planned, by 1967 the other television shows also were booking Motown's artists. "They began to realize that Motown artists were renowned and came equipped with everything and more," according to Berger.

"When we did the Sullivan show, which was broadcast live, we were concerned with the quality of the artists' presentations. To prevent worry about the balance of the sound Berry Gordy requested pre-recorded orchestration and background vocals for their artists' performance on live television. They were amazed at the terrific sound." He added, "From that time on, shows were sending artists into the studios to pre-record their material."

Motown's reputation grew as more and more black musicians turned to the label when scouting for a deal. "Motown was the only thing that the black community and consumer knew regarding black product," Berger said.

The inspiration for Motown's expansion into television specials came from an idea born out of the "Ed Sullivan Show." Berger explained that "Motown would book the Supremes with the Temptations on the same night. As this technique caught on, Motown then did it again with the Temptations as headliners, and introduced Martha Reeves and the Vandellas to the spotlight."

By 1968, producers George Schlatter and Ed Friendly produced Motown's first television special. The "T.C.B. Special" ("Taking Care of Business") starred the Supremes and the Temptations. The special was very highly-rated, with Motown's second special, "Gettin' It Together

On Broadway," following shortly behind.

This type of national coverage was what Motown needed and deserved for their talented roster, and this led to the stars of Motown expanding into an even broader scope of the entertainment business.

"Berry Gordy and Motown's acts were constantly breaking new grounds," according to Berger. "With the ammunition of one hit after another, Motown acts like Smokey Robinson and the Miracles opened the doors of Hollywood's Whiskey A-Go-Go; the Temptations were the first act to be booked into the Roxy."

Prior to the sixties, the idea of bringing artists on college campuses was practically unheard of, said Berger. He said, "This provoked a study made by Clive

**“ Our philosophy is that there is a right way and a wrong way, and then there is a Motown way. ”**

Davis, while at Harvard University, to determine the impact of black music on the American public. What evolved was a mass marketing plan for black-oriented music, which in turn increased the availability of jobs for blacks in the industry."

Berry Gordy, according to Berger, has the ability to feel for what the public hears and wants to see. He is constantly looking ahead and breaking new ground.

By 1969, Berger said, "Motown had the closest thing imaginable to a set formula for hits and a formula of what we do for our artists." It was in 1969 that Motown signed the Jackson Five. By 1970, the Jackson Five had experienced three hit records, but



Billy Preston

Berger held back on touring the youngsters until he could guarantee them 25 thousand dollars a night.

Later in 1970, the Jackson Five were booked into Los Angeles' Forum for 25 thousand, and sold out the place.

Things like this help explain why there is only one Motown. Berry Gordy had the guts of a Mississippi gambler. This job, Berger said, "is not about me, because it is more than a job. It is a way of life. Our philosophy is that there is a right way and a wrong way, and then there is a Motown way."

Together with Motown's mastering facility at 6464 Sunset Boulevard, the label's studio operations are now being viewed more autonomously within the company's structure as well. Apart from the commitment already represented by the renovations at the Romaine studio complex, Costa notes that Motown's mastering rooms have also been updated with new Telefunken and Neumann gear, yet he and Motown's engineering and technical staff will continue to investigate

emerging new recording technologies. Digital recording technologies, already investigated by Motown producer Jeffrey Bowen through sessions with Bonnie Pointer at L.A.'s Record Plant, is one obvious field for future involvement, but Costa is quick to note that Motown is also exploring possible uses for half-speed mastering, as well as the interim uses for certain hybrid analog recording systems now being seen as transitional options until the full advent of digital technology.

To insure that Motown will be ready to utilize whatever technology emerges in the future, recent tests have included a three-way inhouse comparison of the Sony, Soundstream and 3M digital designs. A second test, evaluating digital and analog systems, is also planned.

Even as Motown and Costa ready themselves for the next technological wave in professional recording, they're also marking the label's anniversary by underscoring the creative tradition behind that sense of technological evolution: in January, the Romaine complex was officially renamed in honor of the original Hitsville studio and label offices facility in Detroit. It's an apt new use for the old trademark given the facility's up-to-the-minute command of recording techniques.

*We salute Motown*



*on its 20th anniversary. O.R. Elder*

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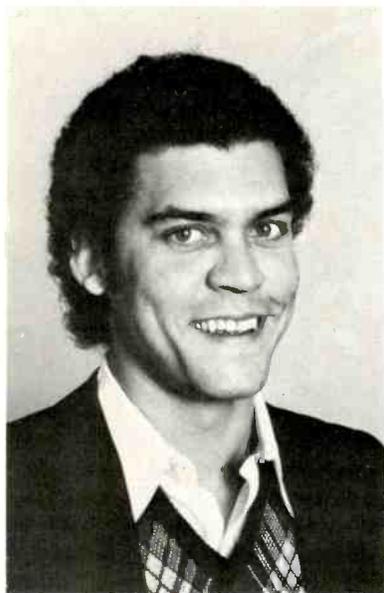
**A**lvin 'Skip' Miller's association with Motown Records began around 1965, when he was a small concert promoter in the New York area, often booking Motown acts. His entertainment career was interrupted in 1968 when he was drafted in the Military.

Around 1970, Miller met with Suzanne dePasse, a friend and earlier associate in the New York club circuit, to discuss career possibilities. Shortly thereafter, Suzanne suggested to Miller that he study sales and marketing. It wasn't long before Miller was at work in a Motown distribution plant as a purchasing agent of records and tapes. "From that exposure, I was offered two jobs, one at Motown and one at Warner Bros. My decision was simple, because from day one I'd dealt with Motown Records. I grew up on the Motown sound," he said.

On June 12, 1972, Miller was appointed western regional sales manager, which included markets from California to Florida. One month later, Motown Records moved west, and according to Miller, "with that came a tremendous restructuring in the sales and marketing division. Prior to that," he said, "Mike Lushka and Miller London were the only two field managers. The revisions resulted in a much more effective

## Skip Miller: 'A New Era Is Coming'

By LAURA PALMER



Skip Miller

method for all involved. It put more people in the field." Miller believes that "any salesman at Motown can get a record added on radio, distributed and sold, because we at Motown are the strongest small staff in the industry."

With Motown's revitalized field staff in order, Miller concentrated

on promotion and sales for the company. "Yet," he said, "I was also director of artist relations and director of advertising, which lasted nearly six months.

"The Commodores actually was the first project I was involved with at Motown. I'd dealt with them before I came to the company. Now, artists like Switch, Rick James, Tata (Vega), Teena (Marie) and (Billy) Preston began the new 'stable' of Motown artists for the second 20 years."

When it comes down to selling records, Miller emphasized that he is only as good as his staff. "I don't consider the 'ego' of the promotion guy who has gotten a lot of airplay a valid ego trip. You can't do it by yourself; it takes the arms and legs of a well greased machine that functions properly. Promotion is a very sophisticated game, and basically we all think alike, but with some semblance of creativity."

According to Miller, creativity is the head of any successful record company. "(Berry) Gordy has been first with many things," said Miller. "We were told that we were nuts to distribute a 12-inch disco

mix, but we knew we could get it played."

The support of the radio community has been instrumental, Miller stated, adding that "Motown has established longevity and acceptance on all levels."

By 1976, Miller was promoted to national R&B promotion, while at the same time director of A&R. Within two years, he was named director of national promotion for the entire company.

"I wanted to be the best promotion man in the industry—I've had the best teachers in the business," Miller said, adding that "we know we have to work twice as hard because we're dealing with black products, but Motown is known for quality products. We put out less and better releases, and all around it makes for more effective feedback."

Motown is represented all over the country at events like NARAS, NARM and college forums. "We're preaching a positive image," Miller stated. "We make Berry Gordy's dreams come true, and we don't deal in negatives at all."

In the early part of 1979, Skip Miller was named VP of promotion, and he thanks Suzanne dePasse, Tony Jones, Berry Gordy and Bunky Sheppard for giving him the basic concepts of the record industry. Miller closed with, "the circle has closed and a new era is coming, with new and better things coming."

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**Stone love, Mary Wilson**

## Michael Roshkind

(Continued from page 18)

posed problems. Admits Roshkind today of the initial reception, "It was terrible. First, Motown is a black-owned corporation, the largest in the world, and the motion picture business has always been lily-white."

Compounding that friction was Gordy's initial choice of a movie project, "Lady Sings The Blues," which recounted the bittersweet rise of an earlier black pop entertainer, Billie Holiday. That and subsequent productions—including "Mahogany" and "The Wiz," Motown's entry into Broadway, "Pippin," and Motown's first television ventures—would see Motown employing more blacks than any productions in prior entertainment history.

More than the color line blocked Motown's path, though, as Roshkind is quick to point out. "We were the new kids on the block: all of a sudden, 'Lady Sings The Blues' came along, and was shaping up as a major motion picture." Then being financed through a deal with Paramount, the picture was signalling Motown's feature debut in a relative spotlight of industry attention. "Berry, being the kind of man he is, was worried that Paramount would sacrifice creativity for financial or marketing reasons. So he bought back all the rights."

For Roshkind and Berry, that gamble would pay off with five Oscar nominations, while also launching Diana Ross as a top box office draw—among the few female stars who can today command over a million dollars a picture.

If his "employer" was in the limelight during those initial Motown film projects, Roshkind himself was quietly orchestrating the administrative priorities created under the company's new multimedia plan. With Gordy himself working outside Motown's Sunset Boulevard offices most of the time, it is Roshkind who has assumed chief operating responsibility for Motown's estimated 300 staffers—a post that finds the vice chairman handling "more phone calls than a bookie," and running a gauntlet of daily meetings to review both creative and financial aspects of Motown's operations.

Today, Roshkind is confident that Motown's diversification will continue to open new spheres for growth. Of the transition to musical entertainment interests, he asserts there has been no loss of balance or interruption in overall coordination. "The record company was still intact at the time of our move into those areas," he notes, "and we never

lost sight of the fact that the label was where the company's growth originally came from. Although the other sectors are now generating profits, Motown Records remains its heart.

"We're always adding to our major personnel. That's why we hired Don Ellis as executive vice president in charge of creative, bringing him aboard after 11 years with CBS. I think we have the best marketing executive in the business in Mike Lushka. Those are just examples, though. We have some great people in our record company, many of who have been with us for many, many years.

"I think that's why we're the hottest label on the street today."

Beyond Motown Records' success, 1980 will see new film, television and theatrical ventures as well. Roshkind reports Motown Productions' upcoming schedule as including a four-hour mini-series for NBC, a six-hour mini-series for CBS, and a three-hour television movie, "The Gene Tierney Story," that will star Jacqueline Smith. Berry Gordy will also direct a major motion picture during the coming year, which he will also write, and Roshkind notes that the company is also developing a possible Broadway musical contender.

Of that bustling forecast, and Motown's music business clout via its lucrative publishing arm and a charm-active recording roster, Roshkind says, "Certain things stand out in the philosophy of how we do what we do here. We try to turn any minuses in a project into pluses; we don't like to hear it said that something 'can't be done.'"

By way of illustration, he recalls the furor surrounding Motown's second theatrical feature, "Mahogany," and its title song, written by Michael Masser and sung by Diana Ross. Recounting the Motion Picture Academy's initial refusal to consider that work in its nominations because "the song wasn't acceptable because of 'quality standards,'" Roshkind says, "Needless to say, Berry went through the roof, and I followed him not long after.

"So Berry huddled with the Academy directors, and laid out his objections to their position. And the Academy, somewhat to our surprise, agreed almost immediately." The directors then proposed changing the rules for the following year's balloting, to amend the obstacles Gordy had encountered.

"Berry wasn't satisfied, though," says Roshkind. "This was the year

We try to turn any minuses in a project

“ into pluses; we don't like to hear it ”  
said that something 'can't be done.'

'Mahogany' was out, not next year." Motown pressed its case further, and, for the first time in the history of the Oscar voting procedure, the requested amendments were made in time for that year's voting. As a result, the song was nominated, and Diana Ross asked to perform it on the Oscar telecast.

"We said, 'Sure,'" Roshkind remembers with a smile, "and then I realized we'd agreed too quickly: Diana was going to be in Amsterdam that night, and couldn't attend the ceremony."

This time it was Roshkind who chose to ignore the supposed limits of possibility. With Gordy's approval, he suggested the Academy beam Ross' performance live via satellite from Amsterdam—during the actual Oscar telecast. Again, the Academy agreed, and for the first and only time in Oscar history, viewers watched a performance being held a hemisphere away.

That meant Roshkind got the dubious privilege of freezing alongside Ross on Amsterdam's streets at 4:30 in the morning—the time of the show being broadcast many time zones away.

Looking back on Motown's evolution in its first 20 years, Roshkind sees the company's

strengths as mirrored by the loyalty of its artists and employees alike. "One of the things that's always bugged me a bit is that because Motown is a family organization—and I'm not talking just about the Gordys, but about the whole feel of this company—whenever an artist or major executive leaves, it's treated as big news. Elsewhere it would be business as usual.

"What I'd like to point out is that we have something no other company can approach: we have major artists who've been with us for more than 15 years, major talents like Diana Ross, Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder . . . I think the esprit de corps here is higher than ever and so much more so than anywhere else I know of."

As for the future, Roshkind projects, "I think Motown will continue to be more and more diversified. We'll probably become more of a true conglomerate as that occurs." As for new, emerging media, he confirms that Motown's entry into the audio hardware trade is only one of several possible future outlets. Video software, the changing distribution paths of commercial TV and movies, and as yet unseen

(Continued on page 96)



Rick James

# **SUCCESS . . .**

- A. Degree or measure of succeeding
- B. A favorable termination of a venture
- C. The attainment of wealth, favor or eminence
- D. One that succeeds

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## Ron Wakefield Takes the Initiative

By SAMUEL GRAHAM



Ron Wakefield

From there he moved to Motown's management company (a separate firm whose clients were all Motown artists), where Wakefield was Ewart Abner's assistant. "Most of our artists were unknown," he recalls, "and in order to establish them it was necessary to give them some guidance. The management company took care of business, bookings, overall exposure—like any other management company."

That too proved to be just another stop along Wakefield's way; he next was put in charge of Overseas Production, the Motown arm handling foreign appearances and all that went with them. "Motown was pretty well into overseas activity by then—it had grown before I got there—so there was a lot to do. I dealt with a lot of promoters, people like Norman Granz, who booked the Supremes; Tats Nakashima, one of the leading Japanese promoters; and Arthur Howes, a European promoter and one of the first who really dealt with our company."

Ron talks of some of the unusual aspects of taking Motown

acts abroad: "In Europe, the crowds are much smaller; they would average about 3000, so you'd have to do a couple of shows per night. But people were very receptive. The fact that (live) music wasn't as common there—it wasn't something that was happening every week, as it was here—made more attention to be paid to it. Most of our acts, like the Supremes, Edwin Starr and Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, were well received. They were the thing here, and the growing thing there."

On the more practical side, traveling overseas posed some unusual problems, "things like currency, passports, different electrical currents in the halls, that sort of thing. One of the biggest problems was dealing with various monies; we had to use each country's own currency. We did a lot of one-nighters, too, and transportation wasn't always easy. The logistics were tough."

In the early 1970s, Wakefield moved to Motown's creative division (similar to many labels' A&R departments, overseeing the placement of artists with producers and so forth), first in Detroit and later in Los Angeles when the company moved west. "I was put into the administrative part of the division," says Ron, "contracting

(Continued on page 96)

In many respects, Ron Wakefield typifies the kind of employee Motown has had since the company's inception. A 16-year Motown veteran, Wakefield—currently director of administration in the creative division—has found himself working in at least five different departments over the years. "All you have to do is take the initiative," he says, "and you'll find there's an awful lot to do"; and although he's referring specifically to his present gig, he might as well be discussing his entire tenure at the label.

Ron Wakefield remembers the actual day he came to Motown: July 3, 1963. A sometime saxophonist, he had been working in a Detroit print shop when he answered Berry Gordy's call to join the burgeoning Motown organization. "I had talked with Berry," Ron says, "and he said, 'You know, you should come and work.' I wasn't real excited about it, actually, but they had an opening as a copyist in the arranging department, so I took it." He also continued to play, joining the likes of Marvin Gaye, Martha and the Vandellas and the Spinners on the road.

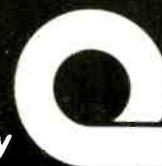
Wakefield's next stop, about a year and a half later, was Motown's artist coordinating department, newly created by Berry Gordy after a trip overseas. "It

was an area that was really needed," says Ron. "Artists had to learn their routines, their new material, make records, do photo sessions and interviews, and so on—I coordinated all that, so their time could be utilized to the fullest."

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**S**he graduated from a music school in Detroit—after majoring in harmony, theory, composition and the other essentials—making her about the only one

around familiar with music's formal side. She plays 11 instruments, used to write and perform her own songs, and led the vocal group that sang on some of Motown's most famous early records. She wrote many of the lead sheets for those records; she even had weekly music classes for some of the singers and players, teaching them the rudiments of reading and so on. She was the label's first string arranger, and later its first executive vice president—at age 22. She helped set up Jobete Music, and headed the publishing arm in its early years.

There's more—lots more. Ray Singleton, to say the least, has accomplished plenty in some 20 years in and around Motown. It's safe to say, in fact, that the Motown story might well have been a less happy and successful one if she hadn't been around.

Ray met Berry Gordy in 1958, she recalls, after she had won an amateur singing contest in a Detroit nightclub. "The emcee recommended that I go and see Berry, who had some acts. I went by his place and auditioned with my sister. He watched and everything, and then said, 'What else can you do?' That's how impressed he was," she laughs.

"I had about 100 songs that I'd written—most of them were lousy, but they were songs. I'd been writing since I was about twelve. I guess Berry thought the songs could have been better . . . but I went on to work with him and his talent. Basically, I set up the harmonies for the vocals, wrote the lead sheets, worked on continuity, the hooks in the songs, that kind of thing."

Singleton's other activities included organizing and leading the Rayber Voices, the backup group who sang with Martha and the Vandellas, the Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and many others. She also wrote string arrangements for players from the Detroit Symphony, first used on Eddie Holland's recording "Jamie." Ray recalls, "They (symphony players) respected me, even though my training only went through high school, not college. And they also helped me a great deal with things that I did wrong—some of my notes were as big as grapefruits, for example."

Holland's "Jamie," like most of the early Motown releases, was recorded at the seminal Hitsville Studios in Detroit. "I actually found Hitsville," says Ray, "while I was married to Berry. That house was unbelievable, because it al-

## Ray Singleton: 'Mother Motown'

By SAMUEL GRAHAM



Ray Singleton

ready had a studio (one that had been used for photography) built on the back." It was there that the "Motown sound" took shape. "It was a completely natural sound," she explains. "All we did was put up some theater curtains and maybe a rug. There was nothing contrived about it. All of the rhythm players—like James Jamerson, Eddie Willis, Ivory Joe Hunter—had this natural talent that Berry and I could really relate to. That was the original, the funky Motown sound."

Needless to say, Singleton was on hand for a lot of classic sessions. "All of them were hot," she says, but her eyes really light up when she comes to Barrett Strong's "Money." "Now that one was really hot. We worked on the tune for three days straight, 72 takes, and we never even left the studio. It took that long to really get the feeling, but no one got tired, because that feeling was so fabulous. I played bass foot pedals on it." It was recorded with just three tracks, she notes—cut completely live save for the lead vocal.

Singleton, like many of the other Motown stalwarts, remembers that in those days, "People did whatever it was necessary to do. Everybody did something, from maintaining the exterior of the building, painting and so forth, to what we called 'snack time,' when someone had to cook and serve lunch. My specialty was chili, so I usually did the cooking. Smokey Robinson usually was the one who had to mop up," she adds with a laugh.

"The salaries back then were very interesting. Smokey was making three dollars a week. But you know, this is how interested ev-

eryone was in just being a part of it and watching it grow. It was fun, something that was in our blood, not just a job. It was a bunch of people who really believed, working together for a specific goal. It was a happening."

So happy were those communal early days, in fact, that Ray calls the success that Motown soon enjoyed "almost a side issue. The money, or being successful, actually cut down on the fun a little bit. It was a different atmosphere—people started looking out for themselves, more than for each other. I was very dismayed with that."

Singleton set up and ran Jobete Music until about 1963. "All of the songs went into Jobete, so I had to get contracts for everyone. I ran it until it got really big," at which point she moved east and opened Motown's New York office. It was there that she signed George Clinton's Parliaments, better known these days as P-Funk.

After a couple of years in the Big Apple, Singleton left the record business for some six years, returning to Motown in about 1971. "It was foreign to me then," she admits. "Everything was so

big—the atmosphere was totally big business, which was sensational, but I just wasn't used to it. But I just decided that I'd be one of those people who would die here. I am and always have been a Motown person; they used to call me Mother Motown. As I said, it was in my blood."

These days, Ray has found her niche again. "I spent a few years trying to find somewhere where I could be comfortable. It turned out to be this group Apollo—I know what they can do for this company."

Apollo, who record for the Gordy label, is very much a family affair. Their leader is Kerry Gordy, Berry and Ray's son; another of Ray's sons, Cliff Liles, plays bass. What's more, Apollo does a cover of the Contours' classic "Do You Love Me"—which was written by none other than Berry Gordy, Jr.

"I think I have the kids' total respect," says Ray, who's worked with Apollo for about two years now. "They realize that the people who are experienced are not just old school, we really know what we're doing."

"In a way, I've evolved full circle. I'm very happy with what I'm doing now. And Berry and I have remained great friends through all the changes. We laugh about the old days, and we're glad that we have these kids who show so much promise. It turned out to be a very happy ending."



Vintage Temptations

RECORD WORLD JANUARY 26, 1980

PART II

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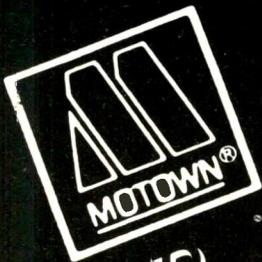
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**K**aren Hodge, VP of Jobete Music Publishing, came to Detroit looking for work in 1965. Although it is not often that industry related jobs are found through employment agency referrals or in the Detroit area, for that matter, Karen found both when she was hired by Motown's earliest administrator and creative consultant Esther Edwards.

Fifteen years ago, Hodge's responsibilities at Motown were confined to basic clerical and administrative tasks, but they were quickly expanded. "My very first assignment," recalls Hodge, "was dusting off records, filing and general typing. But just at that point, Motown was preparing to launch the foreign label—which at that time was separate from the domestic operation. The foreign operation was actually my first major involvement at the company as well as my introduction to publishing. Shortly after I was exposed to the publishing division, the company's foreign and domestic arms merged and I was promoted to head of publishing. In that capacity I was responsible for the development of that cycle, as well as maintaining the business affairs and correspondence between our foreign affiliates and so forth."

According to Hodge, "One of

## Karen Hodge: The Well-Versed Publisher

By LAURA PALMER



Karen Hodge

the most substantial moves that signaled Motown's ability to function on a large scale was when the company converted the tracking system and song identification numbers to the computer. This transfer of information took a couple of years, which required working with every department within Motown."

The expansion at Motown continued, Hodge stated, "In an unprecedented move in the area of publishing. We developed our own company, composed of 97 staff writers, and switched from BMI to ASCAP, producing Stone/Diamond, and Stone/Agate publishing."

The feeling was different in

those days, Hodge said, adding that "people delved into projects together. Our accomplishments meant more to us then. It was a very close-knit operation, and definitely a very unique set up. What we had in those days was appreciation for what it was we were doing."

The most massive project during the early days of Motown

**We don't rely on hype for our catalogue because we have an extremely gifted group of artists. The statements these artists made through songs in the '60s are still valid statements today.**

was the move to Los Angeles, Hodge said, but her baby was the formation of Jobete.

"I'd stand on the highest mountain and toot the loudest horn to acknowledge Jobete's catalogue. Jobete has a catalogue that is second to none. When you look at Smokey, Holland-Dozier-Holland, Marvin, Stevie and all that talent under one roof, it is

simply unbelievable. We don't rely on hype for our catalogue, because we have an extremely gifted group of artists. The statements these artist made through songs in the 60's are still valid statements today."

Hodge explained that every week Motown staffers would be called in for a creative meeting, chaired by Berry Gordy. According to Hodge, he'd ask, "If you had a dollar, would you buy a sandwich or this record? Mr. Gordy had a high regard for everyone's genuine reactions, regardless of who they were, or who they were supposed to be,

and he actually considered every statement made regarding his product."

Gradually, Hodge, who was literally a child when she began at Motown, built up enough courage to actively pursue her true career objectives. She did this by letting Esther Edwards know that she wanted her job, and by 1976, Hodge had truly earned it.

**R**obert Coleman, Motown's director of purchasing and facilities, has been instrumental in the past growth of the company; and his legacy will play a part in Motown's future as well. Not only has Coleman been responsible for overseeing the growth of Motown's offices and studios in this country, but his three grandchildren, Joy, Berry and Terry Gordy, are the wave of the future.

Coleman first came to Motown in May of 1968 as director of purchasing and facilities, but that was not his first involvement with the company. He had seen its earliest moments at the house on West Grand Blvd. in Detroit.

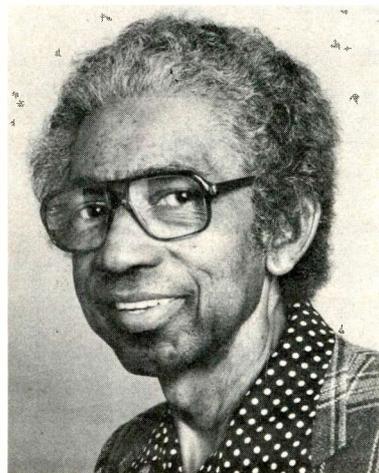
When he joined the company, it was housed at Motown Center, a ten story building on Woodward Ave. in Detroit.

"The growth was so fast and phenomenal," he says. "It seemed like every time you looked around they added a house. In the latter part of 1967, Motown started its move to Motown Center."

As the company and its facilities grew, Berry Gordy needed someone to manage them all, so he brought in Coleman. His toughest job came between 1971 and 1972, when Motown made its move from Detroit to Los Angeles.

## Robert Coleman and The Wave of the Future

By PETER FLETCHER



Robert Coleman

Motown moved into several floors of 6464 Sunset. "We had offices on 5, 7 and 11, and we added office space as we brought people out. As we got the space I would make the arrangements to transfer a department. The complete relocation package was handled by me. It was a lot of fun to see it progress, but it was quite a challenge."

Motown is now located on three and three-quarter floors at 6255 Sunset, also in Hollywood.

In addition to taking care of

Motown's offices, Coleman now oversees Motown's recording studios.

What sticks out most in Coleman's mind about Motown's past? "The rapid growth of the company sticks out more than anything else. The success of the hits that came out in the '60s and '70s enhanced that growth. Also the rapid growth of artists into superstars."

Motown has come a long way from West Grand Blvd., but Coleman knew from the earliest days that something special was happening. "Back in the early '60s, I made a tour of the offices. When I saw the dedication of the people

at that time I knew that great things were going to happen. Every person was involved—it was a family. The producers helped one another, the writers helped one another, and the performers helped one another."

For the future, Coleman predicts further strong growth for Motown and able leadership with a third generation of Gordys. "I see during these days of belt-tightening that the future of the company is solidifying. The future looks good—the youth will take over. With the belt-tightening and the youth, the company will be around for quite a few years yet."

"All the grandchildren are involved in the company. The youngest is still in high school so he works during the summers. Every one of them is learning the aspects of the entertainment business so that they can be a part of the future."



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**E**sther Gordy Edwards' first realization that her younger brother would be such a success in life came when he was about 14 years old. "I remember Berry being the most positive and aggressive person, totally confident," she said. "He had a job shining shoes in downtown Detroit where he would often be run off the street by older and larger competitors. But the positiveness of him made me want to help the force along, in whatever he wanted to do."

Mrs. Edwards traces that basic instinct of support back to the Gordy family philosophy. "Whatever we did, we knew that we at least had nine genuine supporters who would go up with you or down with you, Mom and Dad being the most substantial supporters that we had."

Esther was with Berry before the formation of Motown. "I was his secretary when he was a song writer for Jackie Wilson, around 1957. During that time, he had many different partnerships and when he decided to start the company it began with the personal management of Marvin Johnson and Smokey Robinson & the Miracles. I was the gal Friday, secretary and coordinator of that management company," she said.

According to Edwards, "Tamla began first, then Motown. At that

## Esther Gordy Edwards: From the Beginning

By LAURA PALMER

point I was a non-paid employee. I had a business with the family as well as an appointed political position, so consequently I could work free."

In 1959, there were only a handful of staffers at Motown and most of them were creative, explained Edwards. "The creative staff's salaries were between seven to 10 dollars a week, and that included their other work."

By 1960 the company became incorporated, yet the staff remained relatively small. "We had about ten to 15 people on staff," she said, adding that "most of them were recording artists, so I continued to work in all areas, along with my sister Lucey Wakefield, who was Motown's first sales chief, and my husband, George Edwards, who served as Motown's first comptroller."

Mrs. Edwards personally managed all the artists on the Motown label for the first 10 years. "I recall that Mary Wells was Motown's first hit artist, while the Temptations were the first all-male group on the label. But when the Marvelettes released 'Please Mr. Post-

man' the girls had never been on a bus, let alone a stage, so that was definitely interesting."

Edwards was also the legal department in Motown's early beginning. She said, "I was able to explore the possibilities of making exclusive catalogue deals with our foreign distributors and licensees."

"In 1963 we went to Europe to meet with prospective licensees. On the trip home, Berry made me the representative of foreign operations. So between 1959 and 1969 I was involved with both the

foreign operation and catalogue as well as personal management."

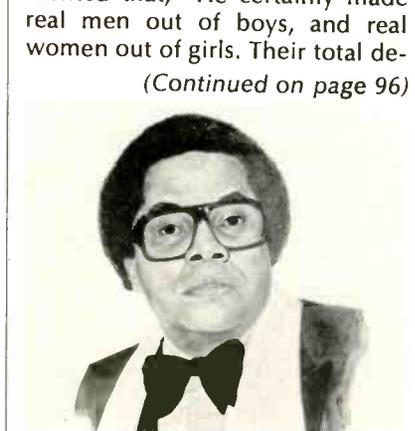
During the mid-'60s, when the acts were gaining overwhelming popularity, Edwards travelled around the world representing Motown in the Far East, Manila, the U.S.S.R., Finland, Helsinki, Vienna and other European countries. According to Edwards, the period she served as ambassador was one of her most rewarding experiences. "I can say that most of that would have been very difficult had it not been for my dynamite staff, which included Karen Hodge and Emily Dunn. I've had many fulfilling experiences, and I feel very fortunate."

Esther is fully aware of her brother's natural talent for the development of others, and commented that, "He certainly made real men out of boys, and real women out of girls. Their total de-

(Continued on page 96)



Arnold Orgalini



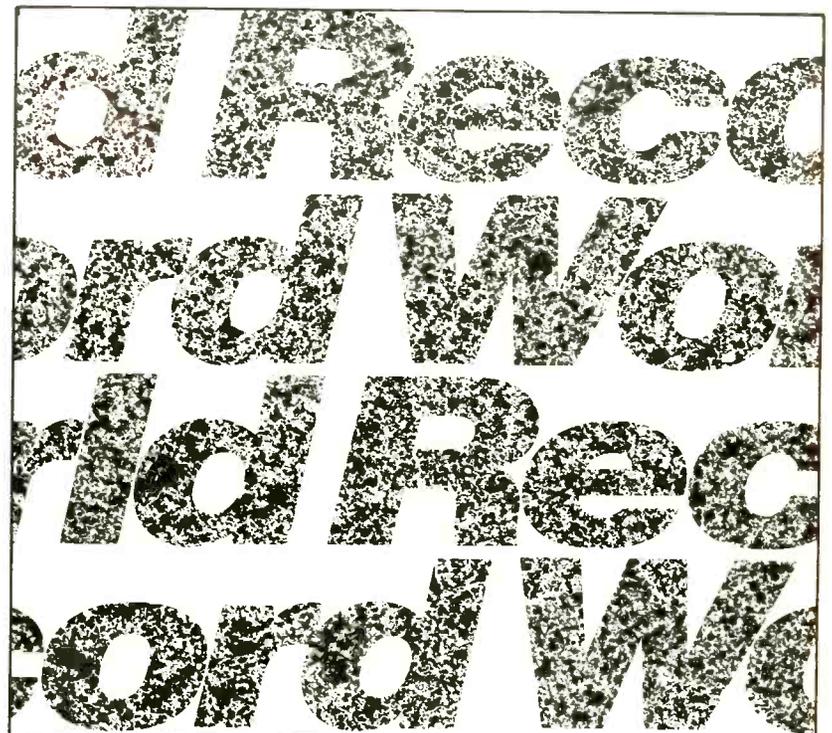
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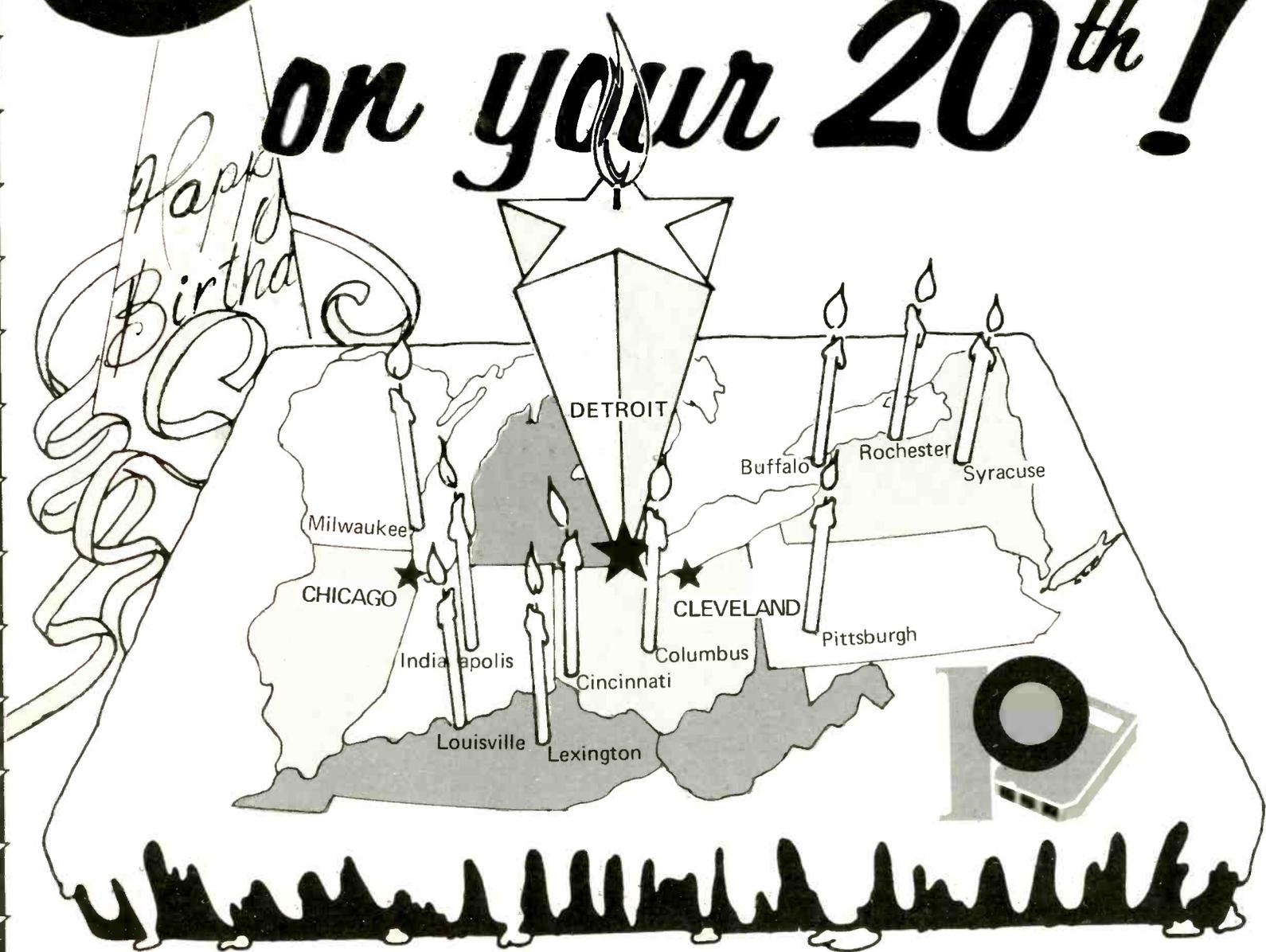
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# Happy Birthday Motown



from Motown International

## Dialogue

(Continued from page 48)

Mind," "Talking Book" and some of the others?

**Gordy:** Yes, I was somewhat surprised. He was leaning toward that area, but I was, frankly, surprised and delighted. Even at that, though, Stevie and I remain very, very close, and I still listen to his music before it's released. It's sort of a ritual.

**RW:** A few years ago, Motown and Stevie Wonder agreed to a contract that was pretty well unprecedented in the industry. Did you feel that you were setting an example with that deal? Was it particularly timely at that point?

**Gordy:** I felt that he had grown extremely strong, and at that point he was worth that kind of money. I felt it was a bargain, because I knew what he could do, what he was as a human being, and I know how he spends money and time on making his records. In other words, it is almost impossible for Stevie to put out a bad record, because of his fortitude, his insight. It doesn't matter what it costs. I felt I could not get hurt with Stevie, where with some of the other artists who are motivated by money, or who had not grown as much as a human being as Stevie had, I would be very skeptical of doing something like that. We made this deal because we felt it was fair, and so far it has turned out to be very fair. Everybody is happy with it, and when you make a deal and everybody is happy, then you have made a success.

**RW:** In the early days, Motown, unlike many other small, independent labels, put a real premium not only on the music, but, as you say, on the development of the people, the development of the artists as human beings as well as performers. Motown seemed to have an artist development philosophy very early on.

**Gordy:** I don't think that economics would ever let it be like it was with us again. We had a whole artist development department, and everyone had to go through that department. But now that everyone has not only a mind of their own but also an attorney's mind and an agent's mind as well, it's not the same atmosphere, because it's more money-motivated, and it really doesn't pay to do some of those things.

**RW:** It would seem, though, that when you had it the way it was, artist development was really one of the keys to Motown's developing such a strong identity of its own.

**Gordy:** Of course. And we still have variations of it, because we do recognize that it counts. But, unfortunately, with the way the times are, and the economic pressure and the lack of knowledge of many of the advisors of the artists, it's just impossible to do good for people who don't want it done for them. You can't force somebody; after all, everybody's free. But when you're in an isolated situation, it's a little easier to develop, because it's a way of life. But when you come to California, it is not a way of life, and there are other things that artists spend time doing, and perhaps making more short-term money. You can't argue with that and tell somebody to concentrate on the long-range program. Or you can do that and find yourself in a suit, because just as you get them to a point of great strength, you no longer have a contract. So certain things are just not feasible and not practical.

**RW:** What you've said reaffirms that it was always important to Motown to have artists where you can project what their careers are going to do beyond the next couple of hit records. On the other hand, when disco became popular in the '70s, Motown, like many other labels, released some disco records. As one who was as responsible as you were for really defining what "dance music" was in the '60s, did you feel that disco would have longevity and that the artists who produced it would have really viable, long-term careers?

**Gordy:** I never thought that disco, as "disco," would survive; but there have also been disco records that are great records. "Bad Girls," by Donna Summer: I think that record would be a hit today, tomorrow or next year. There's good music and there's bad music. If you have good music and it happens to be in a disco form, it may help, but if people get bombarded with a beat, then we lose sight of the song. When we did, for instance, "Love Hangover," or "Don't Leave Me This Way" and those things, those were disco records, but they weren't called just disco records. You can play those today up against any disco record and they will be disco; but they were also great songs, great records.

**RW:** As far as Motown's expansion to other areas is concerned—things like movies and television, your own pressing facilities, or even the move west from Detroit—all of them seem to have been part of an overall plan for the company to become a "full-service" entertainment company. Are you satisfied with the company's growth?

**Gordy:** First of all, I am never satisfied with anything. Well, I don't

... it is almost impossible for Stevie (Wonder) to put out a bad record, because of his fortitude, his insight. It doesn't matter what it costs.

want to say never—I'm hardly ever satisfied with anything. But I think we're fulfilling our dream of having all of these things together. Our success in the movie business has been very, very gratifying to me, especially with a couple of movies that I was personally involved in. Particularly "Mahogany," in fact, because "Mahogany" really had a tough, tough time with the reviews, and I had a tough time directing the picture, never having directed before. And firing a director: I was under extensive fire for that. You know, how dare I do such a thing? I think the challenge of that was the greatest of all; since that time I've talked to various young people who have seen the two pictures, and I've been extremely gratified that they changed the lives of so many young people who believed that they had something again, their self-esteem and self-confidence and self-determination. When I can accomplish something like this, it is more than a success.

So, I'm happy with the form our company has taken. Still, we have the resources to do all these things not only as well but better than anyone else, and we intend to do them. I think that we're just at the tip of the iceberg right now. We took this first 20 years to really establish and build a strong foundation for moving very heavily into these areas.

I consider a cycle: one where you go for x amount of years, and the artists, say, starts out very naive, very innocent, and then they turn into monsters at a point; then they go through a phase for a few years and turn back into nice people again. We all go through these various cycles, ones that take five years or so; then you're back where you started and you look at your success, where you've been, the changes you've been through and the mistakes you've made, and how not to make them in the next five-year period. So we've had four of those now. I think that after four of them, we sort of know the record business, and we sort of know the entertainment business—and we sort of know the artist business, the people business, what an artist will do at a given time and why. After four cycles, I think we've paid our dues and are now ready to move to further, additional plateaus.

**RW:** Have you set any tangible goals for the next cycle?

**Gordy:** Well, it can certainly be important to say, "Hey, we want to be a 100 million dollar company by this time," or a 200 million  
(Continued on page 88)



Marvin Gaye

Spence Berland/Senior Vice President

Mr. Berry Gordy, Jr.  
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**H**al Davis and Motown go back to 1962. In fact, to try to chronicle Motown's west coast activities without his contributions would be virtually impossible.

Davis, who has produced innumerable gold and platinum records for Motown with such artists as Diana Ross, the Jackson Five, Marvin Gaye and Thelma Houston, was half of a two man operation that opened and operated the company's first west coast office.

"I got here in 1960 from Cincinnati," Davis recalls. "I was a singer, songwriter and producer. I first met Berry (Gordy) in 1962. He was out here at a convention at the Ambassador Hotel, and he was looking for someone to run a west coast office for Motown. I had my own record company that had a number one record with 'Amazon', by Giselle Hawkins. I was one of the hottest young cats coming up. Jack Gibson told Berry about me.

"At the time, to survive, I was cooking for the county," Davis continues. "When I went to meet Berry, I came right from the county with dough on my fingers. I met Berry and he was impressed; I had everybody out here signed up. My record company was set up in the front room of my house and my publishing company was set up in the bathroom. Berry related to that. That and my hustle got me into the job. The next week I got the letter from Motown telling me I had gotten the job.

"A friend of mine, Mark Gordon, who Berry also picked to run the west coast office, went back to Detroit for the Berry Gordy test," Davis laughs. "When we got out of the cab I put my foot down and felt the street vibrating with the bass line of 'Dancing In the Street.' It was Holland and Dozier, laying down tracks in the basement.

"We started at 6290 Sunset by setting up all the facilities for producers. At that point we had a number one artist Stevie Wonder; this is when he was 'Little Stevie Wonder.' Stevie came out to the coast, so one day we went out to the beach. Stevie had never been to the beach. He just sat there taking in all the sounds, and out of that came 'Castles In the Sand'. It started our association with Stevie.

"Next came 'Harmonica Man', which was a smash that set me up as a producer. Then we got involved in the American International soundtracks. That was Motown's and Stevie's first picture, and it opened the door for the Motown office. We got out of the trial basis; we had really proved ourselves."

At 23, Davis was well on the

## Hal Davis: A History of Gold & Platinum

By PETER FLETCHER



Hal Davis

way to a successful career with the company, but he already had ten years of experience in the music business. He began as a singer (at 13) in his home town of Cincinnati. Henry Stone, who now runs TK Records, was Davis' manager. "What really helped us were the streets, and the experience we had before we met Berry," says Hal. "Had we not done that street work and promotion, I doubt we would have survived. Mark was the manager of the office and I was his assistant. In those days we did it all. When you weren't working, you were down at the airport picking people up. I was an ambassador for Motown."

After Davis' initial success running the west coast office, he started a period of talent searching which kept him on the road most of the time. "I brought celebrities to Motown to do albums, for the prestige thing. I did it for about two or three years."

Later in 1967, Berry Gordy told Davis about a singing group from Gary, Indiana, the Jackson Five. "They were little kids, the youngest about seven," Davis says. "I liked them, but they were afraid of me in the beginning, because I always wore a beret and mirrored glasses. We came out with 'ABC', and it was a smash, but I wanted to do something different. So I met with Clifton Davis, who wrote the tune 'Never Can Say Goodbye', and the next night I was in the studio doing the tracks. Some of the people in the company were afraid of it because it was legit, it wasn't bubblegum.

"I had the Jacksons' last number one record before they left

here. The bubblegum thing had sort of petered out, so I got a tune called 'Dancin' Machine', with a lot of electronic sounds. This was the beginning of disco—it sold about four million copies."

Along with a handful of producers, Davis has been instrumental in shaping the Motown sound. His string of platinum and gold records and Grammy nominations attests to his skill. But what is it that makes Motown records so distinctive? "The drums and the bass, and the way the record is mixed, is the whole key. It's always been the secret. Part of Berry's philosophy was to have a great drum sound and a great bass line and to mix it down so it sounds good on a little speaker. In those days we were under Berry Gordy's hand. We still follow the same style of cutting. The most complimentary thing is to hear the Rolling Stones use the bass line from 'Love Hangover'."

It was "Love Hangover," which Davis produced, that became Diana Ross' only song to stay number one for two weeks; "I'll Be There," by the Jackson Five, was Davis' longest running num-

ber one record. It was number one for six weeks and stayed in the top ten for 16 weeks.

Davis won a Grammy for producing Thelma Houston's "Don't Leave Me This Way"—but it was a record that barely got made. "We were doing the session and it was three minutes before six," he recalls. "The union man came in and told us we only had three minutes. We didn't have a rehearsal or anything, we just did it. It was so hot that I called Berry and woke him up. He wasn't feeling too well and was mad that I woke him up, but I took it over to his house to play it for him. He told me 'It better be good, or you're fired'. But as I played it for him I saw his face light up.

"When we had that team going it was unbeatable. It was a hit factory. It's hard to find a team like that: the Hollands, Dozier, Freddie Perren, Norman Whitfield, Berry . . ."

As one of the longest-running producers with Motown, Davis now finds himself working with the younger producers, teaching them the lessons he has learned over the years, teaching them his style. "I shape my groove by the act. It doesn't just take me—it takes the act, too. I have to relate to them and they have to relate to me. It's worked for me. My records have always set precedents. And I want my records to set precedents in the future."



Jermaine

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## Dialogue

(Continued from page 84)

dollar company, or whatever you want to say; but there are many ways you can do that that would be destroying you as a human being. I did a speech at Babson College recently. It was an entrepreneurs hall of fame; they started it for the first year and I was selected among four other people from around the world, like (Ray) Kroc from McDonald's and a couple of other very successful entrepreneurs. I spoke on happiness after success, which is a lot more important to me than success. The key to life, the way I feel, is happiness. So I take that into consideration in every calculation that I make—happiness not only for me, but for the people who surround me. So in setting a goal or a projection, there are a lot of factors that go into it. Of course, happiness is one of them, and I think that in the world today there are those who never took this into their calculation, so they become extremely successful and extremely unhappy.

**RW:** In a New York Times article in 1974, it was Suzanne dePasse who said that the next five years from that point would see "tremendous change" at Motown. Can the same be predicted for the next five years, do you think?

**Gordy:** Well, everything changes all the time. We're changing every day; we know we're going to change, and we've changed a lot in the last five years, I think, in terms of manpower, people and philosophy—we've locked it in. We have 20 years of understanding where mistakes were made, and I'd rather look at our mistakes than our successes, because success will happen itself; that's not hard to deal with. You mention Suzanne dePasse—she's certainly one of the people who helped develop this philosophy, and she has been a protege of mine for many years. And there's many others like her in the company who are very strong. We have talented people here, and that's why I said we are sort of at the tip of the iceberg, and we can go into any area. We have a couple of Broadway shows in mind, for instance. If they're hits, that's a whole new business again. So we are, I think just very happy with what is happening, and for the next five years, who can tell? There's a lot of planning and program-

ming and thinking and managing that we have to do. It's an impossibility for me to tell you specifically what we'll be doing, because we don't know. And hey, if a war breaks out, everything changes.

**RW:** The label has consistently been able to bring along new talent, such as the Commodores, Rick James or Apollo. a group that features your own son. Do you see any others coming along?

**Gordy:** I think Apollo is one of the most exciting groups on the scene. I was quite proud and excited to see them on the "Dinah!" show, and they were just spectacular; but that comes from my son's mother, Ray Singleton, who is just a terrific musical person—and she came from our old artist development training.

Syreeta, Stevie's ex-wife, has been with us for many years, and is one of the greatest singers in the business today; we've stuck with her and worked with her because she happens to be one of my favorites of all times. And of course, Billy Preston is with the label now, and I just heard a few minutes ago that their record together jumped 40 places in the charts, which I was just ecstatic about. So we believe very heavily in new things. We have a group called Switch that's new and I think is one of the most phenomenal groups around; I think they'll be a major force in the business in just a short time. There's also Shadee, who I think is very unique, and I'm very excited about Jermaine Jackson's new album, who happens to be my son-in-law—he's also producing Switch right now, as a matter of fact. I personally love working with new people—it's like a school, and whatever happens to them, whether they leave the company or stay with the company, I get great joy in personally teaching and helping and advising.

**RW:** Despite the fact that you have a number of artists who've been with the label for years, new talent, an ongoing program of new artists coming along, would have to be the lifeblood of your or any other company.

**Gordy:** I agree. I don't like to mention things before they happen, but we intend to go heavily into rock acts, and a lot more white acts on the label, which is something we have been planning for some time—and we plan on doing it right. We've attempted at other times, but as I said, with each cycle you learn, and you see what's happening and what mistakes have been made at other companies. For us, it took this kind of foundation-building, and then we can go off into

(Continued on page 96)

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for making  
a dream  
come true.

*Queenie L. Harris*



High Energy

## Don Ellis

(Continued from page 28)

try to lock up country or MOR, for example, as initial priorities . . . But jazz is an obvious area we should be able to make an impact in."

Toward that end, he adds, Motown has already released its first fusion entry via Dr. Strut, which recorded its debut album for the label this year. "There'll be more," he promises. "We'll have another group called Flight, who are now working under the supervision of Lee Young, Sr., and that's just the beginning."

Young, vice president of A&R administration, is just one of the executive team Ellis works closely with. Other key figures include

John Cabalka, director of art and graphic design, and the general creative staff headed by executive director Gerry Griffith.

Ellis also hails the label's other key creative units, headed by Suzanne dePasse LeMat, Iris Gordy, Jeffrey Bowen and Hal Davis as complementing his own work, and stresses Motown's close ties with its Jobete publishing arm as another vital asset.

"When you're outside and you look at Motown, your perception may be very different from what you discover when you get inside," summarizes Ellis, who admits he was unaware of the scope of the label's creative sector before joining. "I frankly wasn't prepared for just how good this company is. The level of spirit and enthusiasm is simply remarkable."



Sterling



Mandre

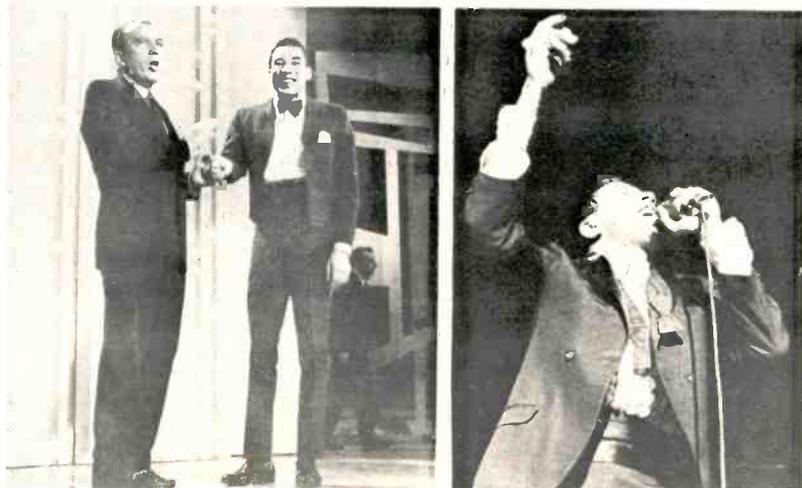


Dr. Strut



Stylus

## Smokey and The Miracles



## Robert Gordy

(Continued from page 22)

was a hit again just a couple of years ago" (for the Captain and Tennille).

These days, Gordy notes, "the trend has changed to writers becoming producers themselves. A writer almost has to come into the production arena himself to get his material produced now." To that end, many publishers have started production companies. "We've had some productions from here, such as High Energy's 'Skate to the Rhythm' or the Shadee album."

At the same time, Jobete has enjoyed what Gordy calls "the tremendous increase in TV and movie music—especially for per-

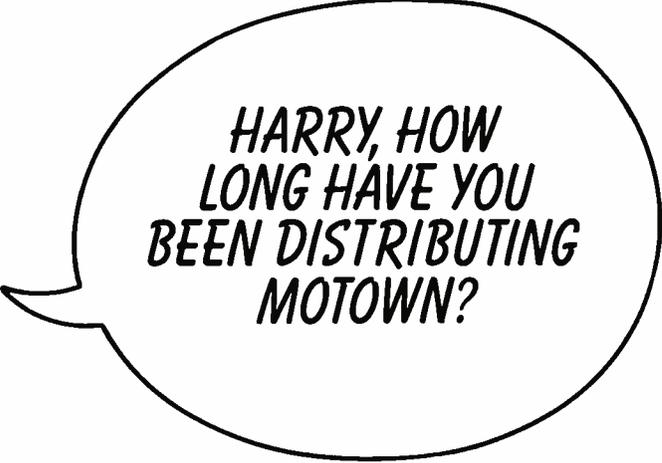
iod pieces, since our music was such a force in the '60s." Partly for that reason, he adds, "we're seeking to revitalize the importance of our catalogue writers. We have a project with the Holland-Dozier-Holland catalogue right now; we're celebrating and acknowledging their past success, and even though they're not with us anymore, they're writing some new songs for the catalogue. This is a vehicle for writers who've had great success and are still doing well now, but not as well. By revitalizing the catalogues and doing some current things as well, we think we can make the magic work again."

## Miller London

(Continued from page 64)

had eight pressing plants just doing singles for us. I had one week that I sold one million copies of one single, Marvin Gaye's 'What's Goin' On'. It was just a tremendous experience. We did about two and one half million singles altogether that week. On Thursday afternoon, Ewart

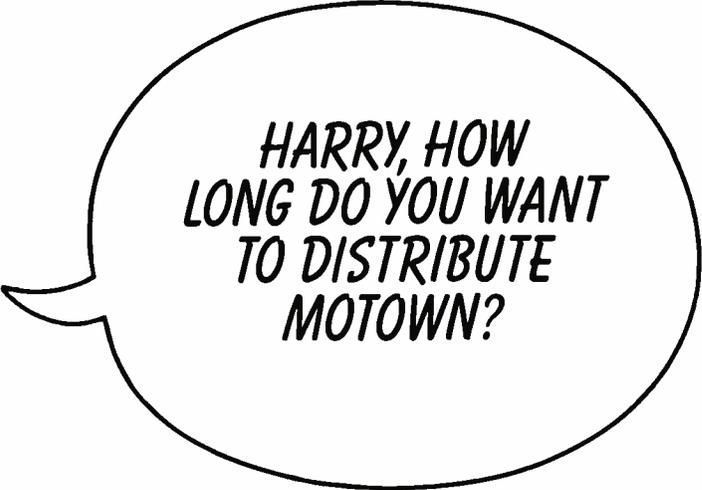
Abner, who was then the president of Motown, came in with a long face. I said, 'What's wrong? We sold 2,500,000 singles this week!' He said, 'It's because these two bottles of champagne are so heavy.' And he put the bottles down on my desk. It was one of my most memorable moments."



**HARRY, HOW  
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BEEN DISTRIBUTING  
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**TOO LONG  
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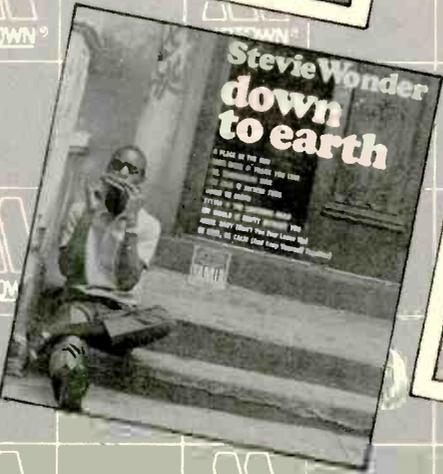
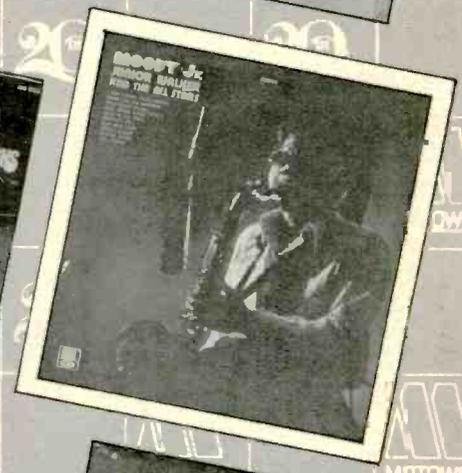
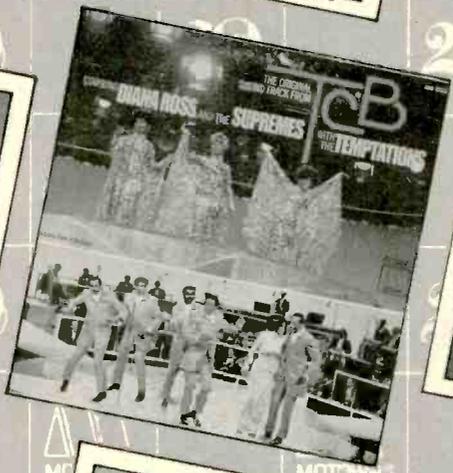
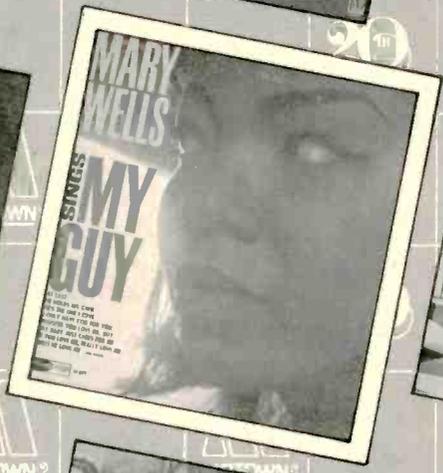
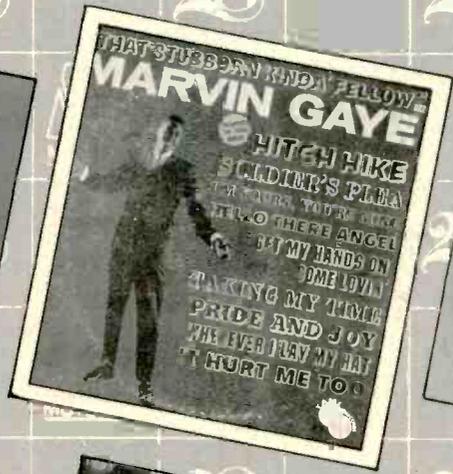
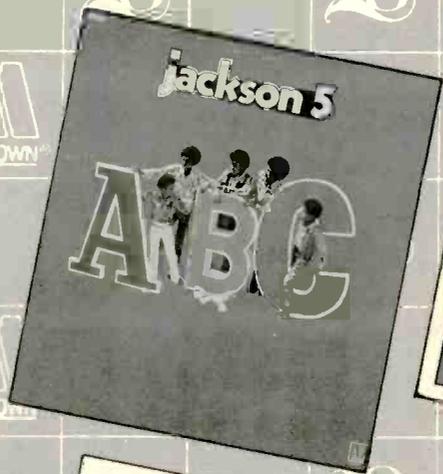
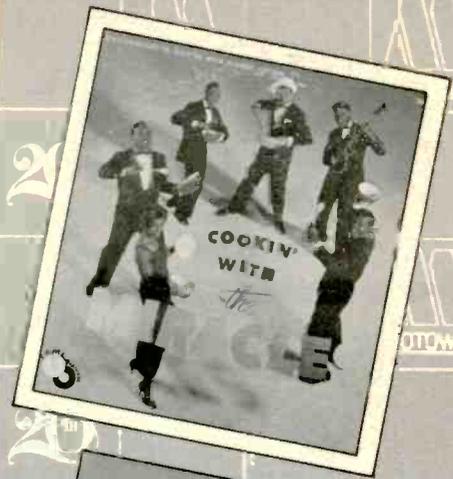
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LONG DO YOU WANT  
TO DISTRIBUTE  
MOTOWN?**



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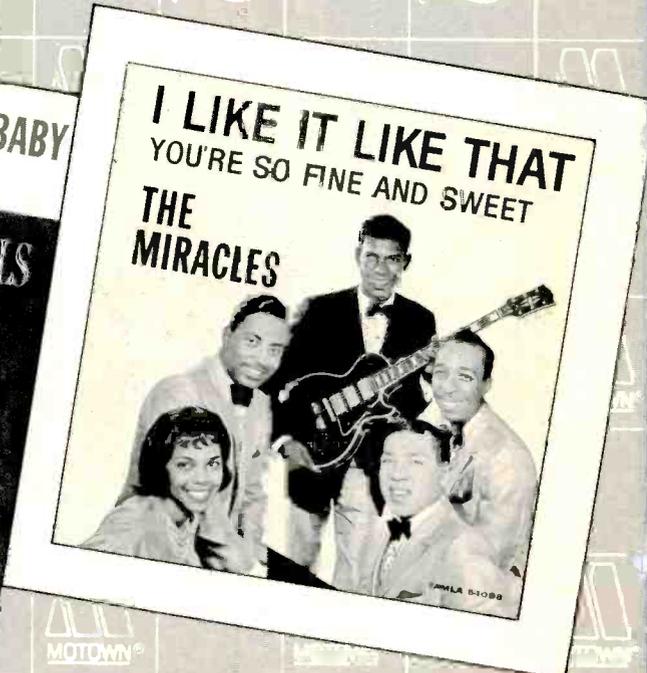
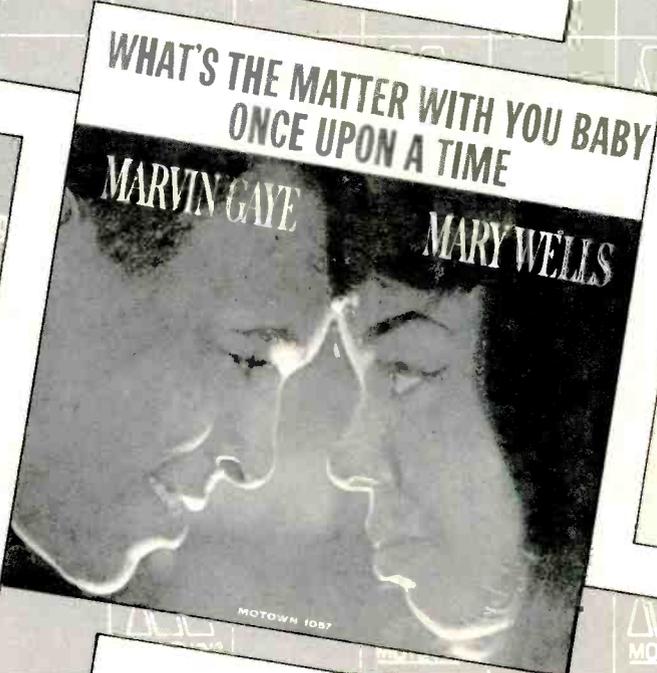
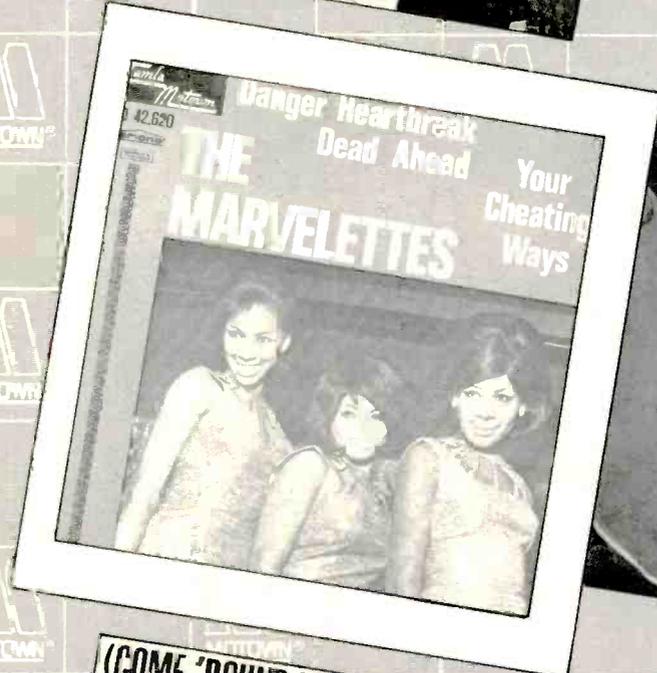
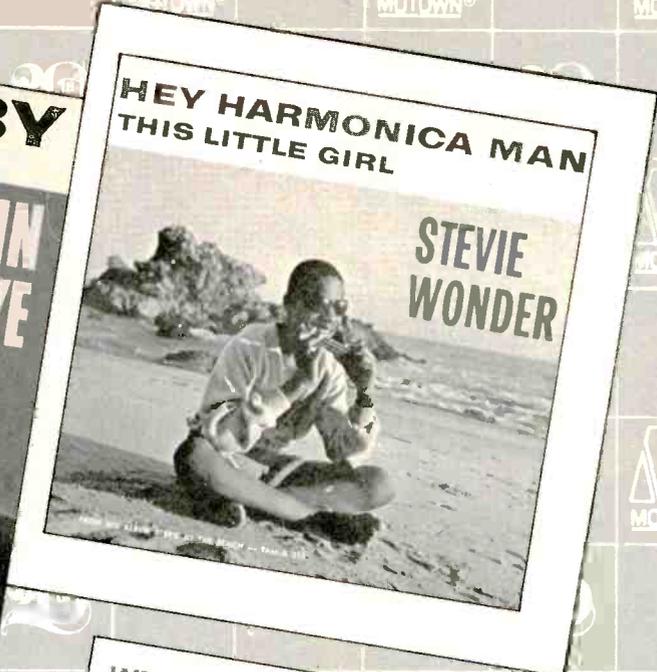
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CONGRATULATIONS MOTOWN ON 20 YEARS OF SUCCESS



# Vintage Motown Albums...





Vintage Motown Singles...

Record World



## Suzanne dePasse LeMat (Cont. from page 60)

tive rather than directly creative—she originally drew half her pay as a songwriter, and also worked as one of the scriptwriters behind Motown's screen hit, "Lady Sings The Blues"—current responsibili-

## Ron Wakefield (Continued from page 74)

musicians, reviewing paperwork, setting up budgets, just the necessary, everyday administrative functions. These days I deal basically with money—we prepare an operating budget every year, and monitor it throughout the year."

In his creative division job, Ron feels "more stable," in large part because he's no longer on the road as regularly. "It becomes routine, sure, but there's always something new to do. In this division, you're always dealing with things like publishing, finance, actual recording, lots of things. There's always something to learn; it's an excellent place to get a full view of the entire entertainment industry."

The specialization required in Wakefield's department gives him cause to reflect on some of the changes in the organization over the last 16 years. "Before," he says, "you had to be able to do many things just to survive, whether it was your field or not. As we grew, we found a need for

more employees to specialize—we have a separate personnel director now, and a separate contract department in this division, for example.

"That's the major change in Motown, I guess: a higher level of expertise is required now. In those days, there was a certain closeness that the circumstances now don't really allow for. It's more spread out now, so there isn't as much close communication as there used to be. But things changed out of necessity."

All in all, Wakefield feels that Motown "has more than held its own, especially for an independent company. There are a lot of labels now, but Motown still has its own sound. I think Berry is the main factor, the guiding force—he's an individual, which I think has filtered down within the company." What's more, many of the original artists are still on hand. "They helped build it, they grew with it, and the company is part of them. It's a personal thing."

ties, which include special projects for such top acts as Diana Ross, allow her latitude. With Tony Jones, she is co-managing two label acts, Billy Preston and Syreeta, in a separate venture she describes as "a benevolent conflict of interests," one stemming, she says, from the recognition of the "compatibility of goals for both artist and company." Film and video are both areas she plans to explore in the future, but for now, she's more than busy helping both superstars like Ross and new projects like the team of Scherrie Payne and Susaye Green,

both former Supremes.

### Future Challenges

Recently married to actor Paul LeMat, she also hopes to revive her own writing in the future. Whatever the future mix of administrative and creative challenges, though, she remains loyal to Motown: "To summarize my feelings about Motown—and it comes out sounding rather sappy, I know—it has never been a question of the money, or the position. It's a question of learning from and working with Berry Gordy.

"I'll be here as long as Berry wants me here."

## Dialogue (Continued from page 88)

that area without losing any of the areas that we already have.

**RW:** As you know, I'm sure, Mr. Gordy, there are a number of legends that have been built around you, one of which is that you're a very private man. Do you find that your privacy has always been pretty well respected?

**Gordy:** Yes. I do enjoy my privacy, because as I said, it's very hard to be happy after success. But I don't consider myself to be over-private. I'm just not interested in building myself up, or in doing anything but the simple things that I enjoy. I'm very happy with what I'm doing, and I hope to continue doing exactly that. I'm not going to change it for anything in the world.

## Esther Gordy Edwards (Cont. from page 80)

velopment was very obvious under the direction of Berry and Motown. Yet, everybody was great and just so loving and loyal, until it was very easy to take directions and be directed. That is what made Motown a strong and successful situation. We had a whole lot of unity, and it is hard to divide and conquer, so we succeeded because of mutual trust and faith."

### Senior VP

Esther Edwards is currently senior vice president of the Motown Corporation. While her schedule is not quite as hectic as it had been in Motown's first 10 years, (primarily because Motown is no longer actively involved in artists' personal management) Edwards continues to oversee Motown's Detroit operation.

## Michael Roshkind (Continued from page 72)

breakthroughs are all of vital significance in his view. "I'm not sure people in entertainment fully realize that technology has been the yardstick of this industry: when sound pictures came along, it changed the whole course of the film business; when the record industry came up with something called a long-playing record, that whole industry changed, ushering in new styles of production and new demands on artists. Then there's something called television, which almost killed the film business because it chose to ignore this new medium, and has since altered not only movie-making, but how the record industry operates.

"Now we have videotapes and videodiscs. These things dictate, to a large extent, where you'll go in the future . . . Who really knows what's in the future . . . Who really know's what's in the

offing? But whatever it is, we'll meet it.

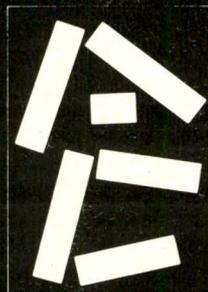
"Among other things, we'll be building up a soft goods bank, filming or taping our artists in concert and at studio sessions, so that we'll be ready for that visual market as it develops."

In summary, "Synergism is a very crucial idea around here," in Roshkind's opinion, one borne out by Motown's emphasis on developing inhouse every facet of an artist's career. Helping to spur that growth is Motown's atypical flexibility as a private company, enabling Roshkind and Gordy to implement decisions with a single phone call or meeting.

That responsibility on Roshkind's part once led to a pact with Gordy that serves as a fitting capsule of the two men's relationship. "Berry said, 'If you ever get sick, I'll take care of you.' He wasn't just talking about money."

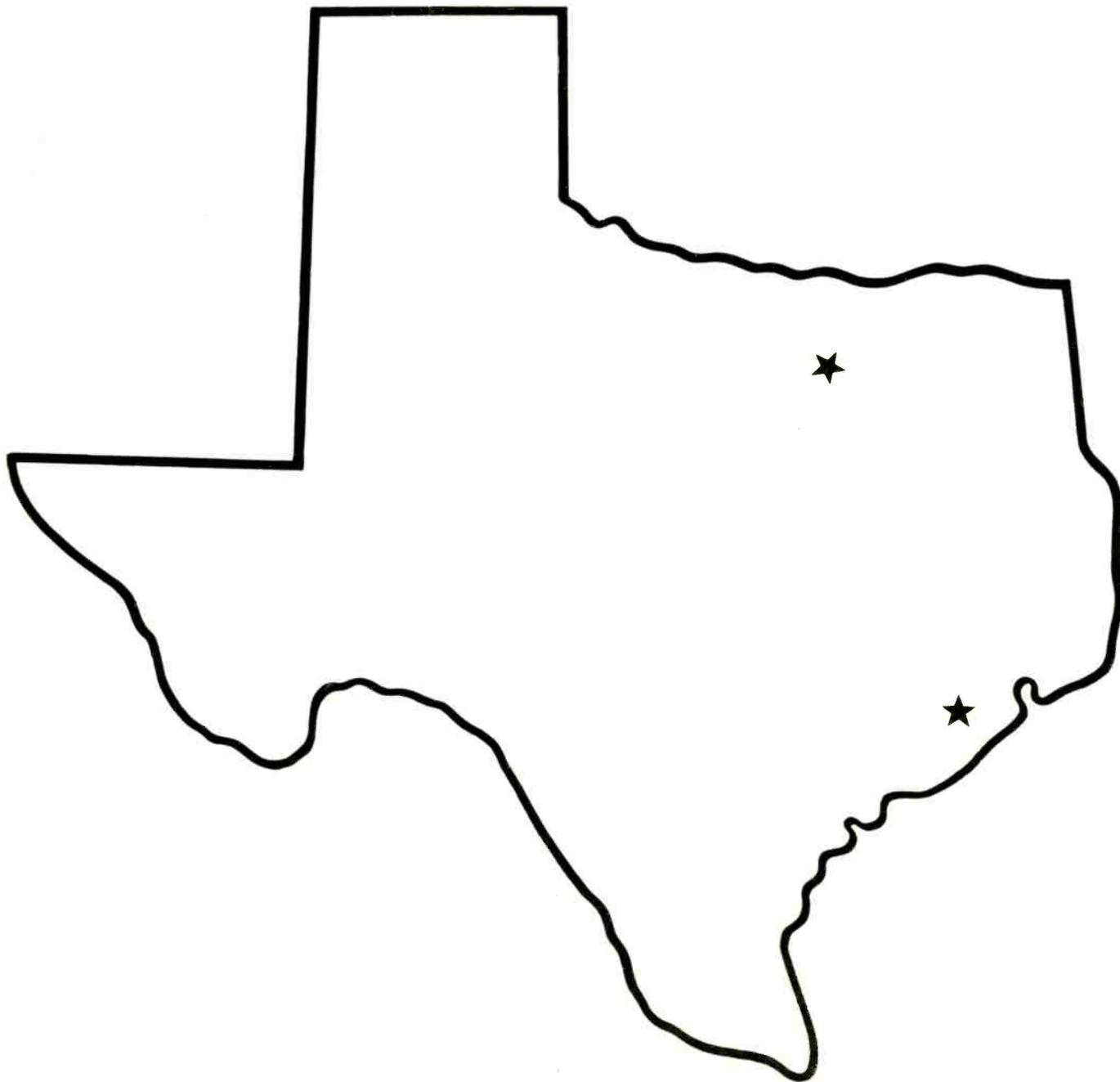
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and substantial expansion, not only within Motown Records, but throughout the entertainment industry. With Motown now represented in Los Angeles, New York and abroad, the company embarked on a series of critical new projects that would, by decade's end, create a true multi-media corporation with interests extending into a whole range of new projects carrying the Motown aegis.

Behind that ambitious growth would be a team of innovative executives and employees as well as Motown's now legendary roster and its stable of new artists being developed by the company. Much has been written then and since about Motown's ability to attract talented performers, but little has been said about the ability of the man that founded the Motown dynasty for attracting talented executives to develop and market its artists' creative product without interfering with their art.

Toward that end, Berry has had the close and expert advice of Michael Roshkind, a key factor in Motown's progress for well over a decade. Now vice chairman and chief operating officer of Motown Industries, Roshkind helped map out Motown's journey through the '70s, culminating in its current diversified strength.

Neither of these executives is addicted to the status quo, and, with Roshkind at his side, Berry, in 1970, left Motown's roots in Detroit and, not unlike the pioneers of old, headed west. From Detroit's West Grand Boulevard to a penthouse on Hollywood's Sunset Strip, Motown's chairman again aimed for the stars. This time, it was television and movie production, not just hit records.

As he did in Motown's formative days as a record company, Berry placed as much emphasis on creativity as on sound busi-

## Motown History

(Continued from page 58)

ness preparation—a commitment that would initially invite skepticism in film industry circles at this music business legend's audacious bid for screen success. That the movie neophyte should insist on guiding Motown's first motion picture project right up to its release may have dismayed the film establishment, but the Midas touch again prevailed, and Berry became a triple winner: "Lady Sings The Blues," a provocative and soulful story of Billie Holiday's life, was brought to the

screen under Gordy's tutelage, and in her movie debut performance, Diana Ross gave an Academy-caliber accounting of herself on screen, enhancing her musical legend with a new and formidable box office appeal.

"Mahogany" would later capture another dimension of Diana's acting ability—and spawn a major hit in its title song, as performed by the film's leading lady — while signalling Berry's even greater creative involvement, this time directing.



Stevie Wonder

By the mid-'70s, Motown itself had moved its main headquarters to Los Angeles, where Gordy was now fully established, and concurrent with Motown Records' continued success, its film and television divisions made Motown Industries as widely-known as its label. Even as Motown musical acts like The Commodores again demonstrated the company's penchant for mass appeal music crossing stylistic and ethnic boundaries, new screen projects like "The Wiz," again starring Diana Ross, who herself proved a wiz in the pivotal role of Dorothy, paced Motown's growth.

Thus has Motown grown since its introduction of a musical approach, The Motown Sound, that the company's chairman has characterized as a combination of faulty equipment and "rats, roaches, talent, guts and love, because that's just what it was."

As for the future—the '80s—Berry expresses happiness with the form that his company has taken, and says with great assurance, "We're just at the tip of the iceberg."

"We took the first 20 years to really establish and build a strong foundation—we all go through various cycles, ones that take five years or so—then you are back where you started and you look at your success, where you've been, the changes you've been through and the mistakes you've made, and how not to make them in the next five year period."

"We have had four of those now. I think that after four of them, we sort of know the record business and we sort of know the entertainment business, and we sort of know the artist business and the people business. I think we have paid our dues, and are ready to move on to additional plateaus."

**T**wenty years ago, a series of unassuming two story structures, on both sides of West Grand Blvd., in Detroit, Michigan, housed the headquarters for Hitsville Records—the growing Gordy empire.

Today, the campus-like row of houses, which once rocked with bustling activity from superstars like the Supremes, Smokey Robinson & the Miracles, Stevie Wonder, and Marvin Gaye, among numerous others, houses the Motown museum, managed by Esther Gordy Edwards.

As Motown's true historian, Edwards has assembled countless clippings, pictures and plaques, dating back to 1959, when Tamla first came into existence. The walls are covered with chrono-

## Motown's Museum Recaptures A Wealth of Memories

By LAURA PALMER

logical accounts of the company's strides forward, with many documented in collage form by renowned artist Carl Owens.

### Memorable Photos

One of the most notable and unique pictures displayed is of little Stevie Wonder, who is perched under a shaded elm tree, (which was located directly in front of the house, and is no longer in existence, yet fondly remembered by every early Motown act), playing his harmonica. With his head bent slightly forward, the 11 year-old Wonder

was undoubtedly imbued in his music from the very beginning. Another memorable photo, prior to 1965, is of the Gordy children, Hazel, Berry and Terry, who are in the company of the Beatles. The old adage, a picture is worth more than a thousand words is appropriate here.

Other memories captured in the museum included Berry Gordy's ownership certificate of the house on W. Grand Blvd., pictures of the Supremes as nuns in the Tarzan television series—which introduced the girls to acting, a wall dedicated to Smokey's hit

catalogue, early Temptation costumes, as well as photographs of countless balls, parties and artist signings.

### Original Recording Studio

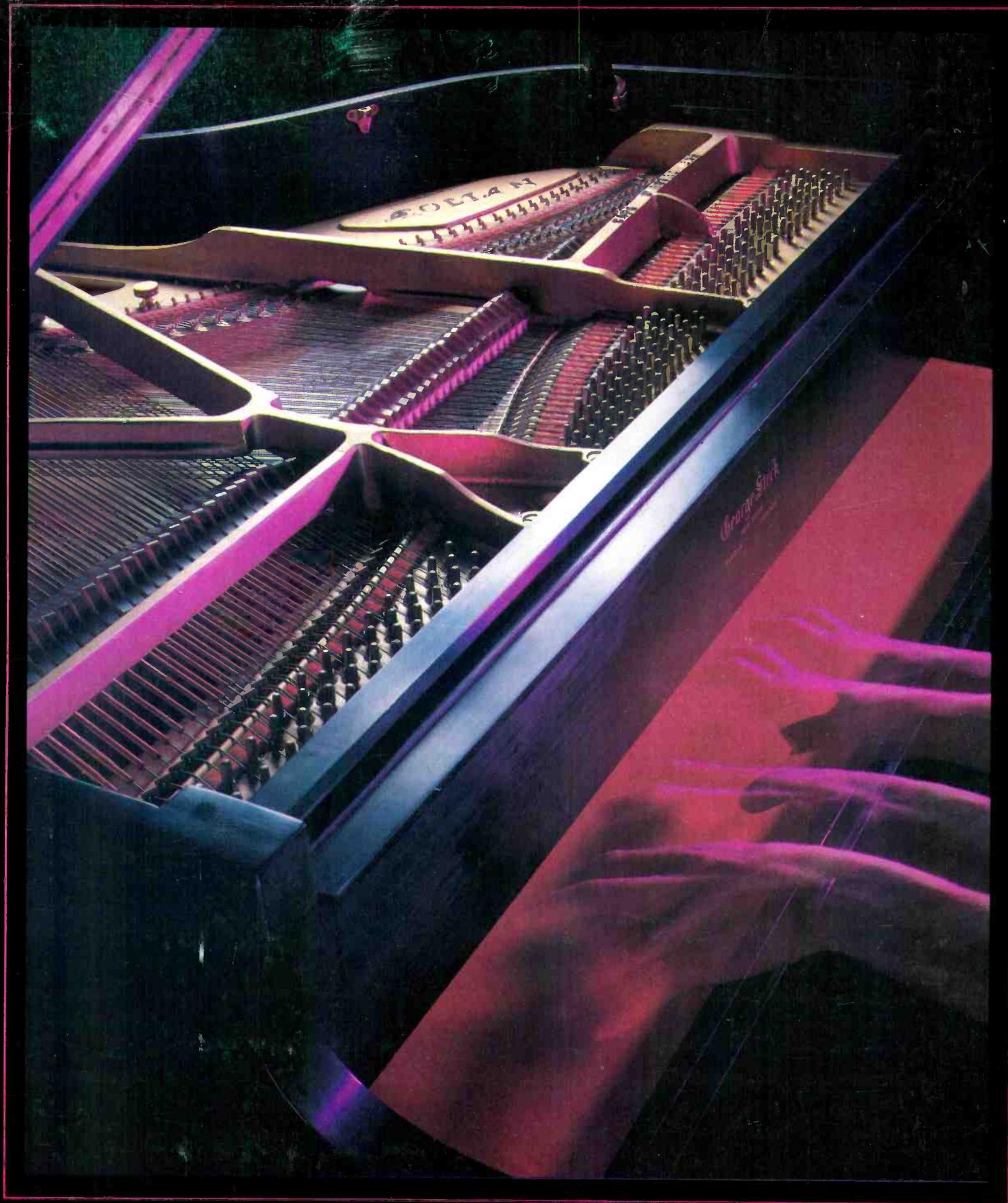
Lesser known Motown acts like Barbara McNair, Soupy Sales, Bobby Darin, Kiki Dee, Hugh Masekela, Diahann Carroll, Luther Allison and Lesley Gore are also documented in Motown's museum.

Interestingly enough, the two-track recording facility located on the ground floor of the museum remains intact, and is used only for rehearsal space now, but the studio still accomodates severe cases of the munchies. The candy machine in the control room contains candy at a reasonable 1960-ish price, 10 cents a bar.

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