

TEMPTATIONS

Title: Temptations Live

Label: Motown

Release Date: 1967

Medium: CD

Availability: Very Good

Venue: The Roostertail, Detroit, MI

Recording Date: October 3, 1968

Lineup: David Ruffin - Vocals
Eddie Kendricks - Vocals
Paul Williams - Vocals
Otis Williams - Vocals
Melvin Franklin - Vocals
Cornelius Grant - Guitar
Bill Upchurch - Bass
Norman Roberts - Drums
Johnny Trudell - Trumpet
Maurice Davis - Trumpet

George Bahannon - Trombone
Don White - Trombone
Floyd Jones - Trumpet
Billy Horner - Trumpet
Teddy Buckner - Alto sax
Ernie Rogers - Alto sax
George Benson - Tenor sax
Angelo Carlisi - Tenor sax
Thomas Bowles - Baritone sax, flute

Set List: Medley: Girl (Why You Wanna Make Me
Blue/The Girl's All right With Me/ I'll
Be In Trouble/I Want A Love I Can See
What Love Has Joined Together
My Girl
Yesterday/What Now My Love
Beauty Is Only Skin Deep
I Wish You Love
Ain't Too Proud To Beg

Old Man River
Get Ready
Fading Away
My Baby
You'll Lose A Precious Love
Baby, Baby I Need You
Don't Look Back
The Way You Do The Things You Do

The Temptations were one of Motown's most significant recording acts through the sixties and seventies. Their influence on the label was second only to the Miracles, who set the standard for all Motown acts. They were also one of the most successful male vocal group of the sixties and early seventies, regardless of label. Their flawless harmonies, razor sharp choreography, and powerful lead singers set the standard for vocal groups everywhere. They were also very successful.

As of 2018, the Temptations have placed 51 albums on the pop albums chart. Thirty of them cracked the pop top forty, with 12 peaking inside the top ten. They have owned the r&b albums chart, with 17 hitting number one. They have been equally as successful on the pop singles chart, charting 53 singles. Thirty eight of these cracked the pop top forty, with four hitting number one. Like with their albums, they have owned the r&b singles chart, with 15 number ones. Four of their albums have been certified platinum, with another 11 certified gold. Amazingly, eleven of their singles have generated sales in excess of one million unit while another six have generated sales in excess of two million units.

The Temptations were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 1989, The Michigan Rock And Roll Legends Hall Of Fame in 2005, and the R&B Music Hall Of Fame in 2013. They received a Lifetime

Achievement Grammy Award in 2013. They were inducted into the Vocal Group Hall Of Fame in 1999. They have had 24 member over the years and are still active as of October, 2018.

The roots of the Temptations go all the way back to the forties, when Eddie Kendricks and Paul Williams sang together in church. Kendricks was born Edward James Kendrick on December 17, 1939 in Union Springs, Alabama). He was one of five children born to Johnny and Lee Bell Kendrick. While still a child, his family moved to Birmingham, Alabama where he met and began singing with his best friend, Paul Williams. Williams was born on July 2, 1939 in Ensley, Alabama. He was the son of Rufus and Sophia Williams. His father was a gospel singer in the Ensley Jubilee Singers.

The two first met while in elementary school. Both boys loved to sing and began to sing in the church choir together. In 1955, the two teamed with Kell Osborne (born March 12, 1939 in Birmingham, Alabama) and Willy Waller to form the Cavaliers. Waller left in 1957 and the remaining trio decided to relocate to Detroit, Michigan to break into the music business. Under the direction of Milton Jenkins, they changed their name to the Primes. Jenkins also created a female counterpart, called the Primettes, who would later evolve into the Supremes.

The Primes were popular and Kendricks quickly became a matinee idol. While the Primes were establishing themselves on the Detroit music scene, another singer, Otis Williams, was also establishing his name. Otis Williams was born Otis Miles Jr. on October 30, 1941 in Texarkana, Texas. His parents separated shortly after his birth and he was raised by his mother, Hazel Louise Williams. When his mother moved to Detroit, Michigan with a new husband, Otis stayed behind in Texas and was raised by both of his grandmothers. He finally rejoined his mother in Detroit in 1951.

Adopting his mother's last name for his stage name, Otis formed a series of vocal groups. He formed Otis Williams and the Siberians in 1958 with Elbridge Bryant (born September 28, 1939 in Thomasville, Georgia), James Crawford, Vernard Plain, and Arthur Walton. They recorded a single called "Pecos Kid" for a small local label owned by a disc jockey Bristol Bryant. Shortly after, the group changed their name to the El Domingoes. At this point, Melvin Franklin replaced Arthur Walton on bass vocals and Richard Street replaced Plain on lead vocals.

Franklin was born David Melvin English on October 12, 1942 in Montgomery, Alabama. When his mother married and moved to Detroit with her new husband, David stayed behind and was raised by his maternal grandmother. He joined his mother and his stepfather in Detroit in 1952. After taking on his stepfather's last name, he joined a number of local vocal groups, including the Voice Masters, which also included Lamont Dozier and David Ruffin. He also became friends with Richard Street, who was born Richard Allen Street on October 5, 1942 in Detroit, Michigan.

After adding Franklin and Street, the group signed with Northern Records and changed their name once again to The Distant. They recorded two singles, including "Come On" (1959) and "Alright" (1960). Between the two releases, Albert Harrell replaced Crawford. "Come On" sold well locally and was nationally distributed by Warwick Records. After releasing "Alright", the group changed their name to Otis Williams & The Distant. While the Primes and the Distant were rival groups, all the members were friends. Berry Gordy Jr was aware of both of them and offered the Distant a recording contract. While they were able to get out of the Northern Records deal, Harrell and Street did not want to sign with Gordy Jr. and the group fell apart.

In 1960, Kell Osborne moved to California and the Primes broke up. Kendricks and Paul Williams returned to Alabama. When The Distant also fell apart, Otis Williams got in touch with Kendricks and offered him a spot in a new group that he was forming to sign with Gordy Jr. Kendricks agreed on the condition that Paul Williams also be offered a spot. Of course, Otis Williams agreed and the two moved back to Detroit.

The new lineup, which consisted of Otis Williams, Elbridge Bryant, Melvin Franklin, Paul Williams, and Kendricks christened themselves the Elgins. They auditioned for Motown in March, 1961. Gordy Jr. signed them to his imprint, Miracle Records. However, before they could record anything, Gordy Jr. discovered that there was another group using the same name. So, a combination of Billy Mitchell, Mickey Stevenson, and the two Williams came up with the Temptations.

The group debuted with a single, "Oh Mother Of Mine" (1961), which was released on July 24, 1961. They followed with "Check Yourself" (1961) on November 7, 1961. Otis Williams helped to write both songs with Bryant get a songwriting credit on the second. Neither song charted but both were popular in Detroit. After Gordy Jr. shut Miracle down, he reassigned the Temptations to his Gordy subsidiary. Their next single, "(You're My) Dream Come True" (1962) was released on March 16, 1962. It featured Kendricks on lead vocals for the first time and made the r&b singles chart, peaking at number 22. The group landed a spot on the Motortown Revue tour, which gave them further exposure.

Unfortunately, the group took a step back with "Mind Over Matter (I'm Gonna Make You Mine)" (1962) and "Paradise" (1962), which was released on March 16, 1962. Neither cracked the pop singles top one hundred and both failed to make the r&b singles chart. The lack of success lead to some changes. The fledgling group was assigned to Smokey Robinson, who would produce and write their few songs. Also, Paul Williams was promoted to lead singer along with Kendricks.

Their next single, "I Want A Love I Can See" (1963) was released on March 18, 1963. The Robinson penned song is one of the few in their catalog to feature Paul Williams and Bryant on lead vocals. They followed with "Farewell My Love" (1963), which was released on June 25, 1963. It also featured Paul Williams on lead vocals. Once again, neither did anything on the charts and the group became known as "The Hitless Temptations" within Motown.

With his confidence shakened, Gordy Jr. had them record a song, "I'll Love You Till I Die", and planned to release it under a new name, The Pirates. Wisely, he changed his mind and the song was not released. In late 1963, Bryant attacked Paul Williams for the second time that year during a Christmas performance. He had grown increasingly frustrated with the lack of success and already had a day job as a milkman. He was subsequently either fired or quit on his own, depending on who's account you believe. For some time before, David Ruffin, who had been in the Voice Masters with Franklin, made it known that he would like to join the group. He was hired and the change turned out to be the catalyst that the group needed.

David Ruffin was born Davis Eli Ruffin on January 18, 1941 in Whynot, Mississippi. He was the third son of a Baptist minister. Tragically, his mother passed away only 10 months after his birth. His father remarried in 1942 and formed a family gospel group, traveling around the south. They were so good that they opened for mainstream acts like Mahalia Jackson and The Five Blind Boys Of Mississippi. Ruffin sang whenever and wherever he could, whether it was at church or talent shows. His father wanted him to also join the Ministry and at the age of 14, he was sent to Memphis, Tennessee with another minister to pursue that vocation.

However, Ruffin had other ideas and by the age of 15, was singing in Hot Springs, Arkansas with a jazz musician named Phineas Newborn Sr. That led to a spot in The Dixie Nightingales in the late fifties. He then replaced Johnnie Taylor in the Soul Stirrers. When fellow singers Sam Cooke and Jackie Wilson turned to secular music, Ruffin decided to do the same. At the age of 16, he was under the guardianship of Eddie and Dorothy Helen Bush. They took him to Detroit, Michigan, where his older brother, Jimmy, was already pursuing a musical career while also working at Ford Motor Company.

Once in Detroit, David released a couple of singles in 1958 under the name Little David Bush. He first met Gordy Jr in 1957 and wound up moving in with his father, who was a contractor. Ruffin helped out on construction projects and also became an apprentice at Anna Records, a Chess distributed label run by Gordy's daughter, Gwen Gordy Fuqua and Billy Davis. He eventually wound up in the Voice Masters, where he met Franklin and Lamont Dozier. They recorded a couple of singles. Ruffin also signed with Anna Records as a solo act.

When Bryant had his meltdown, the Temptations had been touring with Jimmy Ruffin. He told David that the group needed a tenor and the young man contacted Otis Williams directly. He auditioned for the group in late 1963 with his brother and was hired, largely because of his performance skills. Jimmy returned to his solo career and would later crack the pop top ten with "What Becomes Of The Brokenhearted" (#7-1966). David's first recording session with the group was January 9, 1964.

With their new lineup intact, the Temptations continued to work with Robinson. Their first single with the new lineup was "The Way You Do The Things You Do" (#11-1964), which was written by Robinson and fellow Miracle Bobby Rogers. It was released on January 23, 1964. The song crossed over to the pop charts, nearly cracking the top ten, and topped the r&b singles chart. The Temptations never looked back.

Later that same year, they scored with "I'll Be In Trouble" (#33-1964), which was released on April 29, 1964, and "Girl (Why You Wanna Make Me Blue)" (#26-1964), which was released on August 20, 1964. The former was their first with producer/songwriter Norman Whitfield, who had written the song with Edward Holland Jr. Kendricks sang lead on all three singles. The two songs peaked at numbers 22 and 11 on the r&b singles chart. The B side of "I'll Be In Trouble" was "The Girl's Alright With Me". It also made the r&b singles chart, peaking at number 39.

On March 20, 1964, the group released their debut album, *Meet The Temptations* (#95-1964). Oddly, it only contained "The Way You Do The Things You Do" along with older material recorded when Bryant was in the group. While Kendricks was the featured lead singer, Robinson was convinced that he had a budding star with Ruffin. He decided to write a song that would feature his unique, smooth yet gruff, voice. That song would become one of the most iconic songs in music history.

"My Girl" (#1-1964) was released on December 21, 1964. It was written by Robinson and fellow Miracle Ronald White. As planned, Ruffin sang lead vocals. Initially, Robinson wanted to record the song himself with the Miracles, but the member of the Temptations convinced him otherwise. The song quickly topped the pop and r&b singles charts. It also was nominated for a Grammy, a first for Motown. The song also charted in England, peaking at number 43. It generated sales in excess of two million copies.

The group followed with "It's Growing" (#18-1965), which was released on March 18, 1965. It was written by Robinson and yet another Miracle, Warren Moore. The song cracked the pop top twenty singles chart and peaked at number 3 on the r&b singles chart. It also peaked at number 45 in England. Again, Ruffin sang lead. "Since I Lost My Baby" (#17-1965) followed on June 1, 1965. It was also written by

Robinson and Moore and Ruffin sang lead. It peaked at number 4 on the r&b singles chart. The B side was “You’ve Got To Earn It” (1965), which was sung by Kendricks. It peaked at number 22 on the r&b singles chart.

The Temptations closed 1965 with “My Baby (#13-1965), which was released on September 30, 1965. It was written by Robinson, Rogers, and Moore and was more uptempo than their previous releases. It peaked at number 4 on the r&b singles chart. The B side, “Don’t Look Back” (#83-1965), featured Paul Williams on lead vocals. It pulled off the rare double, making the pop singles chart on its own and peaking at number 15 on the r&b singles chart.

The group also released two albums in 1965, *The Temptations Sing Smokey* (#35-1965) and *Temptin’ Temptations* (#11-1965). The first was released on March 22, 1965 and included “My Girl”, “It’s Growing”, and “The Way You Do The Things You Do”, which had also appeared on their debut album. The album topped the r&b albums chart. The second was released on November 1, 1965 and included chart songs from 1964 and 1965. It also topped the r&b albums chart.

At this point, the Temptations were the hottest male act at Motown. They appeared on numerous television shows, including *Ed Sullivan*, and were one of the few American acts who could stand up to the British Invasion artists. The group had another huge year in 1966. The Robinson penned “Get Ready” (#29-1966), was released on February 7, 1966. It featured Kendricks on lead vocal and cracked the pop top thirty singles chart, while topping the r&b singles chart. When released in England in 1969, it peaked at number 10.

“Ain’t Too Proud To Beg” (#13-1966) followed on May 3, 1966. It was written by Whitfield and Eddie Holland, who had worked with the Temptations one time before. Whitfield was anxious to do further production with the group and presented the instrumental track to Eddie Holland. While Holland liked it and agreed to write the lyrics, he knew that the group belong to Robinson and held little hope that the song would be released. In fact, he was initially right. Gordy Jr. passed on it in favor of “Get Ready” but as a consolation to the visibly upset Whitfield, told him that it would be the Temptations next single if “Get Ready” did not crack the pop top twenty. When it didn’t, he was true to his word.

The Ruffin led song topped the r&b singles chart and peaked at number 13 on the pop singles chart. It generated sales on one million copies. It also peaked at number 21 in England. On June 15, 1966, the group released their fourth studio album, *Gettin’ Ready* (#12-1966). It included both hit singles and was their best selling album to date. It nearly cracked the American pop albums top ten, topped the r&b albums chart, and peaked at number 40 in England.

Now with Whitfield manning the production seat, the group followed with “Beauty Is Only Skin Deep” (#3-1966) on August 4, 1966, and “(I Know) I’m Losing You” (#8-1966) on November 2, 1966. Both were sung by Ruffin and both topped the r&b singles chart. They also charted in England, peaking at numbers 18 and 19. They also both generated sales in excess of one million units. The band’s first compilation, *Greatest Hits* (#5-1966), was released on November 16, 1966. It was a huge hit. It cracked the pop albums top five, topped the r&b albums chart, peaked at number 17 in England, and generated sales of two million copies.

Whitfield turned over the group to his protégé, Frank Wilson, who produced and co-wrote their next single. “All I Need” (#8-1967) was released on April 13, 1967. Once again, Ruffin sang lead. It cracked the pop top ten and peaked at number 2 on the r&b singles chart. Whitfield returned for their next two

singles as producer and songwriter. “You’re My Everything” (#6-1967), which was released on June 13, 1967, featured Ruffin and Kendricks on lead vocals. It peaked at number 6 on the pop singles chart, number 3 on the r&b singles chart, number 26 in England, and generated sales in excess of one million copies. “(Loneliness Made Me Realize) It’s You I Need” (#14-1967) followed on September 26, 1967. All five members shared lead vocals. The song cracked the pop singles top fifteen and peaked at number 3 on the r&b singles chart.

On March 6, 1967, the group released their first live album, *Temptations Live!* (#10-1967). It was recorded on 10/3/1966 in Detroit. It cracked the pop top ten albums chart and topped the r&b albums chart. It also peaked at number 20 in England. They followed with the studio album, *With A Lot O’Soul* (#7-1967) on July 17, 1967. It also topped the r&b albums chart, cracked the pop albums top ten, and peaked at number 19 in England. As if that wasn’t enough, the group scored with *The Temptations In A Mellow Mood* (#13-1967), which was released on November 27, 1967. It also topped the r&b albums chart and peaked at number 13 on the pop albums chart.

It seemed like nothing could slow the group down. They started 1968 with another blockbuster, “I Wish It Would Rain” (#4-1967), which was released on December 21, 1967. Once again, Whitfield produced it and co-wrote the song with Barrett Strong, a former Motown artist, and Rodger Penzabene, a Motown staff writer. The Ruffin led song cracked the pop top five singles chart, topped the r&b singles chart, peaked at number 45 in England, and generated sales in excess of one million copies. The lyrics were written by Penzabene, who was distraught that his wife had cheated on him. He would commit suicide on New Year’s Eve, 1967, nine days after it’s release. The B side, “I Truly, Truly Believe” (1967), also made the r&b singles chart, peaking at number 41.

Whitfield, Strong, and Penzabene also wrote their next hit, “I Could Never Love Another (After Loving You)” (#13-1968), which was released on April 18, 1968. It also topped the r&b singles chart and peaked at number 47 in England. It also generated sales of one million copies and was sung by Ruffin. The group’s seventh studio album, *The Temptations Wish It Would Rain* (#13-1968), was released on April 29, 1968. It cracked the pop albums top fifteen and topped the r&b albums chart.

While the Temptations were one of the most successful recording artists in all of music, problems centering around David Ruffin’s increasing erratic behavior were rapidly becoming a serious issue. The singer traveled to shows separately from the rest of the group, in his own private mink lined limousine. When Motown changed the name of the Supremes to Diana Ross & the Supremes, Ruffin had lobbied Gordy Jr. to do the same and name the Temptations David Ruffin & the Temptations. He also demanded that Gordy Jr open the accounting books in regard to the group’s earnings.

On top of all of this, Ruffin was using cocaine heavily. He started missing group meetings, rehearsals, and in some cases live shows. The other four members decided that something had to be done by the summer of 1968. When Ruffin missed a June, 1968 supper club show in Cleveland to attend a show by his girlfriend, Barbara Gail Martin, they officially fired him on June 27, 1968. They immediately replaced him with the Contours’ Dennis Edwards (born Dennis Edwards Jr. on February 3, 1943 in Fairfield, Alabama).

Edwards’ father was a Reverend in an Alabama church. The young boy sang in the church from the age of two forward. When the family moved to Detroit in 1953, he continued to sing in his father’s church and eventually directed the choir. While still a teen, Edwards joined the gospel group, The Mighty Clouds Of Joy and studied music at the Detroit Conservatory Of Music. He gradually became attracted to rhythm and blues music to the dismay of his parents, who would not allow secular music to be played in their home.

In 1961, he formed a soul/jazz group called Dennis Edwards and the Fireballs. They released one single before Edwards served time in the military. Once out, Edwards auditioned for Motown in 1966, where he was put on retainer. Later that same year, he joined the Contours after their lead singer, Billy Gordon, got sick. During 1967, the Contours frequently opened for the Temptations. In late 1967, Gordon returned and Edwards was once again put on retainer. However, Kendricks and Otis Williams were impressed with Edwards right from the start and the three became friends. When things finally reached a breaking point with Ruffin, Motown and the group were comfortable offering him the spot.

Edwards first show with the Temptations was on July 9, 1968 in Valley Forge, PA. However, Ruffin crashed the stage mid show, generating significant applause from the audience. He continued to do the same thing at various shows over the next month to the point that the all involved decided to rehire Ruffin. Once again Edwards returned to Motown without a group but this time with the promise of a solo contract. Ruffin was scheduled to rejoin the group for a show in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Unbelievably, he showed up late and was permanently fired. Edwards returned once again and would lead them for the next several years.

In October, 1968, Ruffin sued Motown, demanding a release from his contract and an accounting of his earnings. The case was eventually settled out of court. As part of the settlement, Ruffin had to honor his initial solo contract with Motown, which was separate from the contract that the other four Temptations were operating under. He wound up releasing nine solo albums and a slew of singles but never came anywhere close to the success he had with the Temptations. On June 1, 1991 he died in Philadelphia, PA because of an adverse reaction to cocaine. While his death was ruled an accident, his family suspected foul play.

The group's last new single with Ruffin was released on July 16, 1968. "Please Return Your Love To Me" (#26-1968) featured Kendricks on lead vocals. The Whitfield, Strong, Barbara Neely composition cracked the pop singles top fifteen and peaked at number 4 on the r&b singles chart. Edwards' first album with the group was *Live at the Copa* (#15-1968), which was released on December 9, 1968. It peaked at number 2 on the r&b albums chart. However, his first studio recordings with the group were part of a genius plan that Motown had devised to combine their two most successful groups on an album and television special.

Between May 3, 1968 and September 13, 1968, the Temptations and the Supremes worked on a new album. Those sessions began when Ruffin was still with the group and ended with Edwards. In September, 1968, the two groups filmed a television special before a live studio audience. The program would air on December 9, 1968 on NBC television under the title TCB, which was an acronym for Taking Care Of Business. Just before the special aired, Motown released the first song from the project, "I'm Gonna Make You Love Me" (#2-1968), on November 21, 1968. The song was written by Kenny Gamble and Jerry Ross and had been released by Dee Dee Warwick and Madeline Bell.

With Kendricks and Ross on lead vocals, the song soared up the charts. It peaked at number two on the pop singles chart, number 2 on the r&b singles chart, and number 3 in England. It has generated over two million sales. The album, *Diana Ross & The Supremes Join The Temptations* (#2-1968), was released on November 8, 1968. It also peaked at number two on the pop albums chart, topped the r&b albums chart, topped the albums chart in England, and was certified gold. A second single, "I'll Try Something New" (#25-1969), was released on February 20, 1969 and cracked the pop singles top twenty five and peaked at number 8 on the r&b singles chart. The song had previously been released by the Miracles in 1962.

To further capitalize on the union of the two groups, Motown released the soundtrack from the television show as *TCB* (#1-1968) on December 2, 1968. It topped both the pop and r&b albums chart, peaked at number 11 in England, and was certified gold. During a single week in December, 1968, Motown had five of the top ten singles in America on the charts at the same time with songs from Diana Ross & The Supremes, The Temptations, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, and the combined Supremes/Temptations. Also, the corresponding albums by each artist also ranked in the top ten, with the top two spots occupied by the Supremes/Temptations studio album and television soundtrack.

While all of this was going on, the group released their first single with Edwards. "Cloud Nine" (#6-1968) was released on October 25, 1968 and immediately set an entirely new style for the group. Written by Whitfield and Strong, the song was a psychedelic soul classic and won a Grammy Award for Best Rhythm & Blues Group Performance, Vocal or Instrumental.. The song was heavily influenced by Sly & The Family Stones's "Dance To The Music", which Otis Williams loved. While Whitfield initially resisted writing and recording a song in that style, he soon gave in. "Cloud Nine" featured wah wah guitars, a hard driving beat, and alternating vocals by all five members.

The song nearly cracked the pop singles top five, peaked at number 2 on the r&b singles chart, peaked at number 15 in England, sold over one million copies, and made the group relevant given the changes in the music industry at the time. The group followed a similar style on "Run Away Child, Running Wild" (#6-1969), which was released on January 30, 1969. Once again written by Whitfield and Strong, the song also peaked at number 6 on the pop singles chart, topped the r&b singles chart, and generated sales of one million copies. It directly addressed the dangers of children running away from home.

While the single version of the song was five minutes long, the album version stretched to over 9 minutes, with an extended instrumental section that featured Earl Van Dyke's organ, Joe Messina's electric guitar, and Dennis Coffey's distorted wah wah guitar work. Once again, it showcased their ability to adjust to the times, with a topical piece of music that fit the album format perfectly. Both songs were featured on a new studio album, *Cloud Nine* (#4-1969), which was released on February 17, 1969. It was certified gold in the States and peaked at number 32 in England.

The group followed with "Don't Let The Joneses Get You Down" (#20-1969), which peaked at number 2 on the r&b singles chart, and their classic "I Can't Get Next To You" (#1-1969), which was released on July 30, 1969. The single was written by Whitfield and Strong and again featured lead vocals from all five members. It topped the pop and r&b singles charts, peaked at number 13 in England, and generated sales in excess of two million copies.

After the overwhelming success of *TCB*, the Temptations got their own one hour syndicated television special in July, 1969. It was recorded earlier in the year and released as *The Temptations Show* (#24-1969) on July 10, 1969, the day the television special aired. It cracked the pop top twenty five albums chart and peaked at number 2 on the r&b albums chart.

Going to the well once again, Motown teamed Diana Ross & The Supremes with the Temptations a second time on *Together* (#28-1969), which was released on September 23, 1969. This time, it did not work as well, with the album only peaking at number 28 on the pop albums chart and number 6 on the r&b albums chart. However, it did sell well in England, where it peaked at number 28. The album did generate one chart single, a cover of "The Weight" (#46-1969), which was released on August 21, 1969. It peaked at

number 4 on the r&b singles chart. A second single, "Why (Must We Fall In Love)" (1970), was a hit in England, peaking at number 31. It was not released in North America.

On the same that the duet album was released, the Temptations released their next studio album, *Puzzle People* (#5-1969). It cracked the pop albums top five and topped the r&b albums chart. It also peaked at number 20 in England. The album was certified gold. A second television special with Diana Ross & The Supremes was also recorded earlier in the year and aired on November 12, 1969 on NBC. The recording was released a few days earlier as *Together* (#38-1969) on November 7, 1969. It barely cracked the pop albums top forty but did peak at number 4 on the r&b album charts.

The Temptations released another huge hit single on December 28, 1969. "Psychedelic Shack" (#7-1969) was yet another worldwide hit. The million seller cracked the pop top ten, peaked at number 2 on the r&b singles chart, and peaked at number 33 in England. They followed with "Ball Of Confusion" (#3-1970) on May 7, 1970. It cracked the pop singles top five, peaked at number 2 on the r&b singles chart, peaked at number 7 on the British singles chart, and generated sales in excess of two million copies. Both songs were written by Whitfield and Strong and featured multi lead vocals. "Ungena Za Utimwengu (Unite The World)" (#33-1970) followed on September 15, 1970. It cracked the pop top forty and peaked at number 8 on the r&b singles chart. All three songs were written by Whitfield/Strong and featured multi lead vocals.

The group also had a banner year in regard to album releases. *Psychedelic Shack* (#9-1970) was released on March 6, 1970. The gold seller cracked the pop albums top ten and topped the r&b albums chart. A new live album, *Live At London's Talk Of The Town* (#21-1970), was released on July 24, 1970. It nearly cracked the pop albums top twenty and peaked at number 5 on the r&b albums chart. *Greatest Hits II* (#15-1970) was released on September 8, 1970. The gold seller cracked the pop albums top fifteen, peaked at number 2 on the r&b albums chart, and peaked at number 28 in England. Finally, a new Holiday album, *The Temptations Christmas Card* (1970), was released on October 30, 1970. It peaked at number 4 on the Christmas albums chart and has sold well during subsequent holiday seasons. It has also been certified gold.

It was almost impossible to believe that anything would derail the band's momentum as they went into 1971. They had survived the loss of Ruffin like it was nothing and were selling anything they released no matter the format or style. On January 14, 1971, they struck once again with another Whitfield/Strong composition, "Just My Imagination (Running Away With Me)" (#1-1971). The song topped the pop and r&b singles charts, peaked at number 8 in England, and generated sales in excess of two million copies. However, just after the song was released, Kendricks decided to leave the group to pursue a solo career.

The genesis of the departure dated back to early 1970. Kendricks had been feuding with Otis Williams, who ran the group, over group related issues for some time. The main riff was money. Kendricks wanted the group to demand that Gordy Jr. open the books but both Otis Williams and Franklin were adamantly against this. In addition, Kendricks hated the psychedelic soul direction of the group's recent singles and longed for the days of ballads. The fights had escalated to include Franklin, who was Otis Williams best friend and strongest supporter. During a November, 1970 show at the Copacabana, the three had another fight about Otis Williams' performance and the die was cast.

Kendricks was the only member of the group to remain close to Ruffin, who he often talked with. When he described what was going on within the group, Ruffin told him that he would be better off without the

group. Ruffin had ulterior motives, as he wanted to start a new group with Kendricks and was still bitter over his dismissal.

At the same time, Kendrick's life long best friend, Paul Williams, was struggling with alcoholism and sickle cell anemia. The five singers performed "Just My Imagination (Running Away With Me)" and "Get Ready" live on *Ed Sullivan* on January 31, 1972. A few days later, during a run of shows at the Copacabana, Kendricks left the group for good.

With Paul Williams often unable to perform, the group had hired Richard Street (born Richard Allen Street on October 5, 1942 in Detroit, Michigan) to be his on demand fill in. Street had been a member of The Distant with Otis Williams and Melvin Franklin in the late fifties. He had also lead the Monitors since the mid sixties. Street traveled with the group to all their shows beginning in 1969 and would sing Paul Williams' backup vocals from behind the stage. When Paul was too ill to dance and sing his feature pieces on stage, Street would substitute for him. In April, 1971, Paul Williams finally was told by a Doctor that he needed to retire from the band due to a spot on his liver. With his best friend already gone, Paul hung it up that same month and Street became his permanent replacement.

Paul Williams would return to Motown in early 1973 to work on a solo album. He recorded some material with Kendricks but on August 17, 1973, he was found dead in an alley in his car with a gun near his body. The coroner ruled that his death was suicide but family members have disputed that conclusion, believing that foul play was involved. He had shot himself in the left side of the head with his right hand and two shots were fired from the gun, although only one killed Williams. In the wake of the suicide ruling, Motown did not release any of the new material he had recorded earlier that year.

With Street already in place well in advance of Paul Williams' departure, the challenge in front of the group was how to replace the distinctive falsetto of Kendricks. To do this, they hired Damon Harris (born Otis Robert Harris, Jr. on July 17, 1950 in Baltimore, Maryland). He had idolized the Temptations while growing up and sang in a group called The Young Tempts, later the Young Vandals, in the late sixties and 1970. A friend convinced him to audition for the group in April, 1971 while the group was playing a series of shows in Washington DC.

At the time, Ricky Owens (born Richard Edgar Owens on April 24, 1939 in St. Louis, Missouri), was going through an onstage audition. He was a member of the Vibrations. Harris first auditioned for Franklin, Street, and Edwards, who liked him. His second audition was with Otis Williams, who initially felt he was too young for the group. However, the other three held their guns and Harris was hired, with Owens going back to the Vibrations. Harris debuted with the group a few weeks later.

On April 22, 1971, the group released their 14th studio album, *Sky's The Limit* (#16-1971). It peaked at number 2 on the r&b albums chart and featured "Just My Imagination" and the Temptations original version of the soon to be hit song, "Smiling Faces Sometimes", which was released by The Undisputed Truth. The album was certified gold

While all this was going on, the group released their first single without Kendricks. "It's Summer" (#51-1970) was recorded by Otis Williams, Paul Williams, Edwards, and Franklin. The group had planned on releasing another Whitfield/Strong song, "Smiling Faces Sometimes" as their next single but scrapped those plans when Kendricks left. That song was given to another Motown act, The Undisputed Truth, and released on May 13, 1971. It became a huge hit, peaking at number 3 on the pop singles chart and number 2 on the r&b singles chart.

Without a tenor, Whitfield had to find a song that would fit the remaining four voices. That song was “It’s Summer”, which was released in May, 1971. It was the first Temptations song to not reach the pop top forty since 1963, which caused Kendricks and Ruffin to take a number of public shots at the group. Ruffin even went as far as suggesting that he, Kendricks, Edwards, and Paul Williams were going to start a new group.

Whitfield and Strong, with the full support of the group, fired back with the October 17, 1971 release, “Superstar (Remember How You Got To Where You Are)” (#18-1971). The top twenty pop hit single peaked at number 8 on the r&b singles chart, peaked at number 32 in England, and generated sales of one million copies. It was the first Temptations single to feature Street and Harris. The song was openly targeted at Ruffin and Kendricks, even though their names are not mentioned in the lyrics.

The song was featured on their next studio album, *Solid Rock* (#24-1972), which was released on January 11, 1972. It cracked the pop albums top twenty five and topped the r&b albums chart, but was not certified gold. The group immediately followed with a new single, “Take A Look Around” (#30-1972). It cracked the pop top thirty, peaked at number 10 on the r&b singles chart, and peaked at number 13 in England. However, their next single, “Mother Nature” (#92-1972), was a commercial disaster. It was released on June 1, 1972 and nearly did not make the pop singles chart. Also, it only peaked at number 27 on the r&b singles chart. The B side, “Funky Music Sho’Nuff Turns Me On”, also peaked at number 27 on the r&b singles chart.

The group desperately needed a hit and they got it with the iconic “Papa Was A Rollin’ Stone” (#1-1972), which was released on September 28, 1972. The multi million seller topped the pop singles chart, peaked at number 5 on the r&b singles chart, peaked at number 14 in England, and won three Grammy Awards. The Whitfield/Strong composition had been originally released by The Undisputed Truth, but their version stalled at number 63 on the pop singles chart. So, Whitfield re-recorded it with The Temptations and it became their biggest hit single.

Ironically, the song caused the start of a serious rift with Whitfield. The album version was over 12 minutes long with extended instrumental passages, which angered the group. The single version was edited down to 7 minutes. Whitfield also forced the group members to do multiple takes and was particularly hard on Edwards. The B side was an instrumental only version of the song, making the group members feel that they were now secondary to Whitfield’s own production. The group members also felt that their politically oriented message songs that Whitfield was writing were no longer appropriate. All this having been said, the song won the group a Grammy for Best R&B Vocal Performance by a Group. It also won Whitfield two Grammy Awards, for Best R&B Instrumental and Best R&B Song.

The two singles were featured on their new studio album, *All Directions* (#2-1972), which was released on July 27, 1972. The gold seller nearly topped the pop albums chart, peaking at number 2, topped the r&b albums chart, and peaked at number 19 in England.

On February 1, 1973, the group released a soul based single, “Masterpiece” (#7-1973). Written and produced by Whitfield, the top ten pop hit topped the r&b singles chart. Once again, the vocals do not begin until a long instrumental section is completed, which contributed to the growing rift between the producer and the group. It was featured on the studio album, *Masterpiece* (#7-1973), which was released on February 21, 1973. It cracked the pop albums top ten, topped the r&b albums chart, and peaked at

number 28 in England. The album version of the song is nearly 14 minutes long but only contains three minutes of actual singing.

The gold selling album also contained their next single, "Plastic Man" (#40-1973), which was released on May 10, 1973, as well as "Hey Girl (I Like Your Style)" (#35-1973), which was released on July 24, 1973. The two songs peaked at numbers 8 and 2 on the r&b singles chart. Yet another song, "Law Of The Land" (1973) was released as a single in England only and peaked at number 41. The group followed with a platinum selling compilation, *Anthology* (#65-1973), on August 23, 1973. It peaked at number 5 on the r&b albums chart. They also released their fourth live album, *The Temptations In Japan* (1973), in Japan only.

While the Temptations were storming the charts, former member Eddie Kendricks also had a huge year in 1973. "Keep On Truckin'" (#1-1973) stormed up the charts after being released in August and wound up topping the pop and r&b singles chart, while also peaking at number 18 in England. He followed with another worldwide smash, "Boogie Down" (#2-1973), which was released in December. It also topped the r&b singles chart, peaked at number 2 on the pop singles chart, and peaked at number 39 in England. He would release four more top forty singles during his career.

Whitfield's last album with the group was *1990* (#19-1973), which was released on December 7, 1973. It cracked the pop albums top twenty and peaked at number 2 on the r&b albums chart. While Whitfield did write a couple of ballads for the album, it still featured a nearly 14 minute long track and politically charged message songs like "1990" and "Ain't No Justice", which the group no longer wanted to perform. While the album sold reasonably well, it did not sell as well as recent releases. So when Otis Williams went to Berry Gordy Jr. to demand a change, he was receptive.

1990 yielded the group's first two singles in 1974. Not surprisingly, they were the two ballads on the album. "Heavenly" (#43-1974) and "You've Got My Soul On Fire" (#74-1974) did not do well on the pop singles chart, perhaps the strongest indication that Whitfield did having them moving in the right direction in terms of record sales in regard to the pop audience. However, they did sell well on the r&b singles chart, with both peaking at number 8. The group's first recording with their new producer, Jeffrey Bowen, was a single called "Happy People" (#40-1974), which was co-written by Bowen, Donald Baldwin, and Lionel Richie. It cracked the pop top forty and topped the r&b singles chart.

It was featured on their new studio album, *A Song For You* (#13-1975), which was released on January 16, 1975. The gold seller also contained "Shakey Ground" (#26-1975), yet another number one r&b hit single, as well as "Glasshouse" (#37-1975), which peaked at number 9 on the r&b singles chart. Both songs also cracked the pop top forty. The album also topped the r&b albums chart.

After the release of the album, Damon Harris was fired from the band for making inappropriate statements in public and replaced with Glenn Leonard (born Glenn Carl Leonard on June 11, 1947 in Washington DC). He had recorded with a series of groups including the Chancellors, Instant Groove, and True Reflection. Leonard was first featured on the album, *House Party* (#40-1975), which was released on November 4, 1975. It had been compiled from recordings made prior to, and after, the release of *A Song For You*. Therefore, it included tracks from both Harris and Leonard. The album just made the pop albums top forty and peaked at number 11 on the r&b albums chart.

House Party generated one single, "Keep Holdin' On" (#54-1976). It did not crack the pop top forty but did peak at number 3 on the r&b singles chart. Yet another studio album, *Wings Of Love* (#29-1976), was

released on March 10, 1976. It cracked the pop top thirty and peaked at number 3 on the r&b albums chart. The feature single was “Up The Creek (Without A Paddle)” (#94-1976). It barely made the pop singles chart and only peaked at number 21 on the r&b singles chart.

Sales got even worse with *The Temptations Do The Temptations* (#53-1976), which was released on August 16, 1976. Despite having more creative control than on any of their other albums, it bombed. It only peaked at number 53 on the pop albums chart and number 10 on the r&b albums chart. Worse yet, the feature single, “Who Are You (And What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life)” (1976) did not make the pop singles chart and only peaked at number 22 on the r&b singles chart.

Upset with the declining sales and the constant questions/criticisms hurled by Otis Williams, Motown opted not to renew their contract after the release of the album. Williams fired Edwards shortly after and replaced him with Louis Price (born Louis Bernhardt Price on March 29, 1953 in Chicago, Illinois). The group then signed a new record contract with Atlantic Records.

The group’s stay with Atlantic was short and unproductive. Their two albums, *Hear To Tempt You* (#113-1978) and *Bare Back* (1978) were completely ignored. Only first made the pop albums chart and they only peaked at numbers 38 and 46 on the r&b albums chart. Not one of their four singles made the pop singles chart. They included “In A Lifetime” (1977), “Think For Yourself” (1978), “Bare Back” (1978), and “Ever Ready Love” (1978). All four did make the lower reaches of the r&b singles chart, peaking at numbers 21, 58, 42, and 31 respectively. Atlantic quickly cut bait and released them from their contract in 1979.

Now without a contract, the group met with Berry Gordy Jr. and Smokey Robinson with hat in hand. The two agreed to resign them to Motown in 1980 but not without stipulations. First, Price left and was replaced by Edwards, who returned to the group. Gordy Jr. also wrote their comeback single, “Power” (#43-1980). It nearly made the pop singles top forty and peaked at number 11 on the r&b singles chart. However, a second single, “Struck By Lightning Twice” (1980), did not make the pop singles chart and only peaked at number 55 on the r&b singles chart. Both songs were featured on a new album, *Power* (#45-1980). It did not crack the pop albums top forty but did reach number 13 on the r&b albums chart.

A new holiday set, *Give Love At Christmas* (1980), was released on August 14, 1980. It has sold well over the years and would eventually be certified platinum. After contributing a minor r&b chart single, “Take Me Away” (1980) for the movie, *Loving Couples* (1980), the group released a new studio album, *The Temptations* (#119-1981). It peaked at number 36 on the r&b albums chart and yielded two minor chart singles, “Aiming At Your Heart” (#67-1981) and “Oh What A Night” (1981). Only the first made the pop top top one hundred and r&b singles chart, peaking at number 67 and 36.

With the sales still weak, the group and Motown decided on a bold new direction. They invited Ruffin and Kendricks to return to the group for a reunion tour and album. The album, *Reunion* (#37-1982), was released on April 7, 1982. The album cracked the pop top forty and peaked at number 2 on the r&b albums chart. A new single, “Standing On The Top – Pt. 1” (#66-1982), made the pop singles chart, peaked at number 6 on the r&b singles chart, and peaked at number 53 in England. It was recorded with Rick James. However, a second single, “More On The Inside” (1982), did not make the pop singles chart and only reached number 82 on the r&b singles chart.

Worse yet, the tour, which began in April, 1982, was a mess. Once again, Ruffin did not show up for a number of shows. Kendrick’s voice was suffering from years of chain smoking and Edwards and Leonard

were not happy with the entire venture. At the conclusion of the tour, Williams and Franklin let Ruffin and Kendricks go for the final time. They went on to tour as a duo.

The remaining five singers released a new album, *Surface Thrills* (#159-1983) on February 18, 1983. It had a more rock like feel and did poorly on the charts. It barely made the pop albums chart and only reached number 19 on the r&b albums chart. It only generated one minor chart single, "Love On My Mind Tonight" (#88-1983), which barely cracked the pop singles top one hundred and only peaked at number 17 on the r&b singles chart. Leonard was fired after the release and was replaced by Ton Tyson, who had sung with the Ethics and Love Committee.

For the next several years, the Temptations continued to release albums and singles to little success. Album releases included *Back To Basics* (#152-1983), *Truly For You* (#55-1984), *Touch Me* (#146-1985), *To Be Continued* (#74-1986), *The Temptations 25th Anniversary* (#140-1986), *Together Again* (#112-1987), *Special* (1989), *Milestone* (1991), and *For Lovers Only* (1995). These albums peaked at numbers 30, 3, 20, 4, 55, 12, 25, 88, and 43 on the r&b albums chart.

During this period, they only put four singles on the pop charts. They included "Sail Away" (#54-1983), "Treat Her Like A Lady" (#48-1984), "Lady Soul" (#47-1986), and the Rod Stewart led "The Motown Song" (#10-1991). The first three songs made the r&b singles chart also, peaking at numbers 13, 2, and 4. "Treat Her Like A Lady" and "The Motown Song" also charted in England, peaking at numbers 12 and 10. However, the group was inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 1989. Inductees included Otis Williams, Paul Williams, Franklin, Ruffin, Kendricks, and Edwards. Much to the chagrin of Otis Williams and Motown, Ruffin, Kendricks, and Edwards began a tour as a trio after the ceremony.

Oddly, the group continued to place singles on the r&b and British singles charts during this same time period. They included "My Love Is True (Truly For You)" (1985), "How Can You Say That It's Over" (1985), "Do You Really Love Your Baby" (1985), "Touch Me" (1986), "A Fine Mess" (1986), "To Be Continued" (1986), "Some One" (1987), "I Wonder Who She's Seeing Now" (1987), "Look What You Started" (1987), "Do You Wanna Go With Me" (1988), "All I Want From You" (1989), "Special" (1989), "Soul To Soul" (1990), "The Jones" (1991), "Hoops Of Fire" (1992), and "Error Of Our Ways" (1994). They peaked at numbers 14, 81, 14, 63, 63, 25, 45, 3, 8, 53, 16, 10, 12, 41, 68, and 86 respectively.

British chart singles from this period included "My Love Is True (Truly For You)" (1985), "Do You Really Love Your Baby" (1985), a reissue of "My Girl" (1986), "I'm Fascinated" (1986), "I Wonder Who She's Seeing Now" (1987), a reissue of "Papa Was A Rollin' Stone" (1987), "Look What You Started" (1987), "All I Want From You" (1989), "The Jones" (1991), and another reissue of "My Girl" (1992). They peaked at numbers 84, 88, 92, 84, 90, 31, 63, 71, 69, and 2 respectively.

The group continued to change members during this time period. Edwards left again in 1984 and was replaced by Ali-Ollie Woodson (born Ollie Creggett on September 12, 1951 in Detroit, Michigan). Woodson was fired in 1987 for consistent lateness and was replaced by Edwards, who returned for third time. After recording *Together Again* with Edwards, the group fired Edwards for the final time in late 1988, with Woodson once again returning.

Street left in 1992 after an argument with Otis Williams and was replaced by Theo Peoples (born Theoplis Peoples, III on January 24, 1961 in St. Louis, Missouri). On October 5, 1992, former member Eddie Kendricks passed away from lung cancer. By far, the most significant loss to the group was Melvin Franklin, who died on February 23, 1995 at the age of 52 from a heart failure after suffering a series of brain

seizures that left him in a coma. He was replaced by Ray Davis (born Raymond Davis on March 29, 1940 in Sumter, South Carolina). He had sung with The Parliaments and Parliament Funkadelic. Franklin contributed two songs for the new album, *For Lovers Only*, before he could no longer continue. Davis was featured on the rest.

The Davis era would not last long. In 1995, he was diagnosed with lung cancer and had to leave. He would pass away from the disease on July 5, 2005. He was replaced by Harry McGilberry (born January 19, 1950 in Philadelphia, PA). He had been a member of The Futures. Shortly after he joined, Woodson had to leave the group after being diagnosed with throat cancer. He was replaced by Terry Weeks (born Terry Wayne Weeks on December 23, 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama) in 1997.

The new lineup of Otis Williams, Ron Tyson, Theo Peoples, Harry McGilberry, and Terry Weeks toured throughout 1997. The group also charted a compilation, *The Ultimate Collection* (#137-1997), that same year on the pop albums chart. It peaked at number 60 on the r&b albums chart. In 1998, a four television miniseries called *The Temptations*, which was based on Otis Williams' 1988 autobiography, **Temptations**, ran on NBC on November 1 and 2. The miniseries was a ratings hit and was nominated for five Emmy Awards.

Earlier that year, they performed at Super Bowl XXXII as part of a 25th celebration of Motown. On August 18, 1998, they released a new studio album, *Phoenix Rising* (#44-1998). It nearly cracked the top forty pop albums chart and peaked at number 8 on the r&b albums chart. It generated three r&b chart singles, "Stay" (1998), "This Is My Promise" (1999), and "How Could He Hurt You" (1999). They peaked at numbers 28, 54, and 57 respectively. The album has been certified platinum.

Before the album was released, Peoples was fired because of drug addiction problems and replaced with Barrington Henderson (born Barrington Scott Henderson on June 10, 1956 in Washington, PA). He had sung with Lakeside and the Dramatics and was featured on one track on *Phoenix Rising*. He was featured on the Grammy Award winning album, *Ear-Resistible* (#54-2000), which was released on May 16, 2000. It peaked at number 16 on the r&b albums chart. It yielded one minor r&b chart single, "I'm Here" (2000), which peaked at number 40. It remains their last r&b chart single.

Since 2000, the group has only released four singles, with none of them making either the pop or r&b singles chart. Their latest is "Earned It" (2018). The group released two more albums on Motown, *Awesome* (#140-2001) and *Legacy* (#163-2004), before moving to New Door Records for *Reflections* (#80-2006) and *Back To Front* (#108-2007). The four albums also made the r&b albums chart, peaking at numbers 27, 18, 14, and 19 respectively. The group also charted another compilation, *My Girl: The Very Best Of The Temptations* (#167-2002).

The Temptations continued to be popular in England. Since 1992, they have charted three compilations, *Motown's Greatest Hits* (1992), *The Temptations At Their Very Best* (2001), and *Classic Soul Hits* (2008). They peaked at numbers 8, 28, and 8 respectively.

In 2003, Henderson was fired from the group and replaced with G.C. Cameron (born George Curtis Dameron on September 21, 1945 in Jackson, Mississippi). He had been a member of The Spinners. A short time later, McGilberry was also dismissed because of a drug habit. He was replaced by Joe Herndon (born Walter Gregory Herndon on January 5, 1949 in Washington DC). He had been a member of The Spaniels. McGilberry died on April 3, 2006 from an apparent drug overdose.

In 2007, Cameron left and was replaced by Bruce Williamson (born Bruce Williamson Jr. on September 28, 1970 in Los Angeles, CA). He had been a member of the funk band, BlackBerry Jam. On May 30, 2010, Woodson passed away after a long battle with leukemia. Damon Harris died from prostate cancer on February 18, 2013 followed by Richard Street, who passed away from a pulmonary embolism on February 27, 2013.

Williamson and Herndon both left the group in late 2015. They were replaced by Larry Braggs and Willie Green. Braggs was the lead singer for Tower Of Power from 2000-2013. Green had previously toured with Street and Woodson. On February 1, 2018, Edwards died from meningitis. The group's latest album, *All The Time* (2018), was released in 2018. As of October, 2018, the Temptations are touring behind it with numerous shows booked into 2019. The present lineup includes Otis Williams, Weeks, Tyson, Braggs, and Green.

In addition to their 1989 induction into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, the Temptations were inducted into the Vocal Group Hall Of Fame in 1999. In 2013, they received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and have won three Grammys as group performers. They were inducted into the Michigan Rock And Roll Legends Hall Of Fame in 2005. In 2013, they were inducted into the R&B Music Hall Of Fame. Rolling Stone magazine has ranked them at number 67 on their list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time.

The Temptations have released numerous compilations, but there are five standouts that offer listeners as much as they want. The best budget sets are the two *20th Century Masters - The Millennium Collection: The Best of the Temptations*, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2. The two Uptown/Universal sets, released in 1999 and 2000 respectively, include 11 tracks apiece. Motown has four sets that offer anything from 21 tracks to the Temps entire Motown catalog. Their 1997 set, *The Ultimate Collection*, includes 16 top ten singles among its 21 tracks. Motown's 2002 set, *My Girl: The Very Best of the Temptations*, contains a more expansive 36 tracks. The label's 2003 release, *Psychedelic Soul*, includes 24 tracks from the Edwards era. Finally, *Emperors of Soul*, Motown's 1994 five CD behemoth, includes 109 tracks. Each of these sets is available at a large music retailer.

The Temptations have released four live albums. Gordy's 1967 set, *Temptations Live!*, was reissued on CD in 1999 and includes 17 tracks. Gordy's 1968 release, *Live at the Copa*, contains 14 tracks. It had been out of print but was recently packaged (2000) with *A Lot of Soul* as a two piece set. Gordy's 1970 set, *Live At London's Talk Of The Town*, includes 18 tracks. Finally, Motown's 2004 release, *The Temptations In Japan*, contains 12 tracks recorded in 1973.

I have copies of the two sixties recordings. The earlier set is *Temptations Live!*, which was recorded on October 3, 1966 at the Roostertail Club in Detroit, Michigan. At the time, the group's lineup included Ruffin, Kendricks, Paul Williams, Otis Williams, and Melvin Franklin. The five men are accompanied by their traveling band, which included Cornelius Grant, Bill Upchurch, and Norman Roberts. They also are supported by an eleven piece horn section. Recording quality is very good considering the 1966 recording date. Like other live albums from this period, there's plenty of crowd noise but the singers and the band can be clearly heard.

The Temptations' appearance at the Roostertail Club was the last show of a seven part series that Gordy put together to showcase his Motown acts. The weekly series started with a performance by the Four Tops, followed by Jr. Walker & The All Stars, Marvin Gaye, Martha & The Vandellas, the Miracles, and the Marvelettes. Concert goers could attend all seven shows, held on consecutive Mondays, for the incredible

package price of \$15 per ticket. It may have been the best bargain in the history of pop music. This seven part series yielded five live albums for Motown and provided needed exposure for each of the groups.

The Temptations were clearly, as designated by their closing spot in the series of concerts, the most refined and successful live act of the seven groups. Unlike other vocal groups, all five of their members could sing lead and their backup band was outstanding. The rhythm section of Upchurch and Roberts was considered to be the best in the business and Cornelius Grant was one of r&b's guitar heroes. Consequently, it is not surprising that this set is outstanding. Each of the Temptations has a featured spot and the set hums with energy. Considering that the group was performing intricate dance steps while singing, it is remarkable that each song is performed so well.

Ruffin sings his heart out on near studio perfect versions of "My Girl" and "Ain't Too Proud To Beg" and is also featured on "Beauty Is Only Skin Deep", "My Baby", and "Don't Look Back". Melvin Franklin's rendition of the classic show tune, "Old Man River" is as good as anything you would find on Broadway. He also acts as the show's emcee. Paul Williams' covers of "Yesterday" and "What Now My Love" are powerful.

Eddie Kendricks is featured all over the set, singing lead on the first three songs of the opening medley, then pulling off hot versions of "Get Ready" and "The Way You Do The Things You Do". He is also featured on "What Love Has Joined Together", "I Wish You Love", and "Fading Away". Otis Williams is featured on "Baby, Baby I Need You", which is also the best overall group ensemble performance.

During each of these songs, the background harmonies are flawless and the band is terrific. The performance just hums with energy, something that could only be captured on a live recording. No matter what the group sings, and there are plenty of mainstream covers sprinkled among the Smokey Robinson hits, the performance never lags. The audience is also very vocal, adding to the general level of excitement.

Overall, *Temptations Live!* is a timeless set from a classic band that possessed as much talent as any vocal group of their era. It was richly deserving of its top ten status and must be a part of any comprehensive live music collection. Do not pass this one up.

Title: Live at the Copa

Label: Motown

Release Date: 1968

Medium: Album

Availability: Good

Venue: The Copacabana, New York City, NY

Recording Date: Summer, 1968

Lineup: Eddie Kendricks - Vocals
Dennis Edwards - Vocals
Paul Williams - Vocals
Otis Williams - Vocals

Melvin Franklin - Vocals
Cornelius Grant - Guitar
Bill Upchurch - Bass
Norman Roberts - Drums

Set List: Get Ready
You're My Everything
I Truly, Truly Believe
I Wish It Would Rain
For Once In My Life

Hello Young Lovers
With These Hands
Swanee
The Impossible Dream
Please Return Your Love To Me

I Could Never Love Another (After Loving You) (I Know) I'm Losing You

When David Ruffin left the Temptations in early 1968, many fans considered his departure to be a death blow. Although Eddie Kendricks sang as many of the lead vocals as Ruffin, David was the group's front man. He was the most popular member with audiences and he was most closely identified with their biggest hits. His loss seemed, on the surface, to be insurmountable. Given that, finding a suitable replacement and breaking him out of the gate on a positive note was an absolute priority for Berry Gordy and the group.

The group decided to replace Ruffin with former Contours lead singer Dennis Edwards. Edwards had a similar voice to Ruffin and had the same extroverted, strong personality. He would turn out to be the perfect replacement but at the time this album was recorded, Gordy and the group had to sell him to a somewhat skeptical public. It turned out to be much easier than anyone expected.

Edwards made his debut with The Temptations in a series of concerts. A show at the Copacabana in New York City was recorded and subsequently released. While it was the second Temptations live set in less than two years, it was a brilliant way to integrate him into the group. In one recording, Gordy proved that Edwards could equal Ruffin's performance on the older tracks like "I Wish It Would Rain", "I Could Never Love Another (After Loving You)", and "(I Know) I'm Losing You" and fit within a group context on songs like "Get Ready", "You're My Everything", and "Please Return Your Love To Me".

In point in fact, the Temptations have never sounded better. Edwards works the crowd as well as Ruffin ever did during two extended, knock down performances of "I Could Never Love Another (After Loving You)" and "(I Know) I'm Losing You", proving that he matched his predecessor in charisma.

As is the case with *Temptations Live!*, Kendricks is prominently featured, singing lead on "Get Ready", "You're My Everything", "With These Hands", and "Please Return Your Love To Me". Paul Williams handles two covers, "For Once In My Life" and "The Impossible Dream", as well as the group introductions. Melvin Franklin is featured on lead vocal on "I Truly, Truly Believe" and the group does great ensemble versions of "Hello Young Lovers" and "Swanee". On the later, virtually all members get a solo spot and the instrumental work from the group's backup band is outstanding.

The group is accompanied by long time sidemen Cornelius Grant, Bill Upchurch, and Norman Roberts, who front a large band that includes horns and keyboards. Upchurch, Roberts, and Grant are on fire, establishing a funky, hard driving base for the fast numbers while also providing appropriately subdued music for the covers. Recording quality is very good, with clear separation between the vocalists and the band.

Live at the Copa is just as good as *Temptations Live!*, making it another important recording in a live collection. The Dennis Edwards era would produce just as many hits as the Ruffin era and while this recording was made before any of them were released, it hints at the funky direction the group was heading. Fortunately, the set, which was out of print for many years, is available as part of a Motown two album teaming. In this case, it has been combined with *Lot Of Soul*. Get a copy while it is still available.

Title: The Temptations in Japan

Label: Motown

Release Date: 1973

Medium: CD

Availability: Very Good

Venue: Shibuya-Kokaido, Toyko, Japan

Recording Date: 1973

Lineup: Otis Williams - Vocals (Tenor/baritone)
Richard Street - Vocals (Tenor)
Damon Harris - Vocals (Tenor, falsetto)
Eugene Smith - Bass
Bill Neale - Lead guitar

Melvin Franklin - Vocals (Bass)
Dennis Edwards - Vocals (Tenor)
Cornelius Grant - Guitar
Aaron Smith - Drums

Set List: Plastic Man
I Can't Get Next To You
Love Woke Me Up This Morning
Medley
The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face
Hey Girl (I Like Your Style)

Cloud Nine
Band Introductions
A Song For You
Masterpiece
Just My Imagination
Papa Was A Rolling Stone

My third live recording of the Temptations is as essential as the first two. In the late sixties, the group adopted the psychedelic soul musical style created by producer Norman Whitfield specifically for the band. The new style did not sit well with Eddie Kendricks, who left in 1971 and was replaced by Damon Harris. By the time this set was recorded in 1973, the group had scored a series of major hits which are showcased on this recording. Initially, the set was only released in Japan before a limited edition of 5000 copies hit the record shelves in 2004. iTunes later picked up the set so it is now widely available.

The group's early seventies recordings featured multi lead vocalists and a funky backup band. On this recording, the group performs with the ace rhythm section of Eugene and Aaron Smith (not related), long time guitarist and band director Cornelius Grant, and lead guitarist Bill Neale, who had started playing with them in 1970. They are also backed by a full horn section. Recording quality is excellent.

The set list focuses on the group's later day songs, with many of the early hits featured in a short medley that includes one minute or so versions of "Get Ready", "My Girl", and "The Way You Do The Things You Do". In addition, they perform "I Can't Get Next To You" from *Puzzle People*; "Cloud Nine" and "Hey Girl" from *Cloud Nine*; "Just My Imagination" from *Sky's The Limit*; "Masterpiece" and "Plastic Man" from *Masterpiece*; "Papa Was A Rolling Stone", "The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face", and "Love Woke Me Up This Morning" from *All Directions*; and cover Leon Russell's "A Song For You". Recording quality is excellent.

Like many later day Temptations shows, Franklin serves as the MC and each member gets a solo spot. Also, many of these songs feature multi lead singers. The entire group gets into the action during great versions of "I Can't Get Next To You", "Masterpiece", and "Cloud Nine". All the members with the exception of Otis Williams share lead vocals on "Plastic Man" and "Papa Was A Rollin' Stone". Harris and Paul Williams are featured on "Just My Imagination".

Street is featured during a rousing rendition of Roberta Flack's "The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face". Harris gets a featured solo spot on "Love Woke Me Up This Morning" and tackles two of the songs in the medley. Paul Williams is featured on the torch ballad "Hey Girl". Edwards handles "My Girl" in the medley as well as "A Song For You".

The set gets off to a rousing start with a lively version of “Plastic Man”, which is heavy on the horns and wah wah guitar. The multi lead vocals are strong and the group sounds great, with perfect timing and verse trade offs. The group keeps the momentum going with an excellent, albeit short, version of “I Can’t Get Next To You”, which again features all five singers and the guitar work of Neale. Harris’ feature piece, “Love Woke Me Up This Morning” features some incredibly high notes. The medley also features Harris on “Get Ready” and “The Way You Do The Things You Do”, while Edwards tackles “My Girl”. It is one of the low spots of the set as the phrasing and timing seems off, particularly with Harris.

“The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face” is nothing like Flack’s version. The group gives it a full treatment, starting with Street’s excellent lead vocals, some exceptional group harmonies, and lots of horns. The same applies to “Hey Girl (I Like Your Style)” which features a great lead vocal from Paul Williams and more trademark group harmonies. Both guitarists are also featured. “Cloud Nine” is also given a truncated treatment but what’s there is solid. Like all the uptempo songs, the backing band is on fire, with the rhythm section of Eugene and Aaron Smith driving the piece.

After Franklin introduces the band, the group tackles Leon Russell’s “A Song For You”, which features Edwards on lead vocals. The piece would not show up on a Temptations studio album until 1975. It is given a big band, Broadway like opening which is interesting, before it settles into the expected ballad like pace. Edwards has a great feel for the song, the harmonies are very tight, and Neale is solid on guitar.

The set ends with three blockbusters. “Masterpiece” is performed mid tempo with lots of horns, guitar, and multi verse lead vocals. “Just My Imagination” features Harris and Paul Williams. It is much like the studio version, with a relaxed pace and great feel. The set ends with a seven minute plus version of “Papa Was A Rollin’ Stone”. If any one studio song captured the explosiveness and talent of this lineup, this was it. This ensemble performance is very good, with great horn work, the distinctive wah wah guitar, a tight bottom end, nice guitar work, and good lead vocals. However, the harmony sections seem to be lacking something. Still, it’s almost impossible not to like this song, no matter the version.

In the end, *The Temptations In Japan* is another essential live recording from the group. It includes the best of their early seventies material, which is critical if you want a full understanding of them. Since it is now readily available through iTunes, do not hesitate to pick it up.

My last recording of the Temptations was taken from a 1997 appearance they made in Aruba as part of a musical special hosted by the comedian Sinbad which was broadcast on HBO. At this point in their career, the Temptations were on the verge of a commercial comeback, which would take hold with the release of *Phoenix Rising* the following year. However, the Temptations had just gone through some hard times.

In the seventies, former members David Ruffin and Eddie Kendricks had died. Also, long time member Melvin Franklin had passed away in 1995, leaving Otis Williams as the only surviving original member of the group. Sales of their records was minimal and the group seemed to be constantly shuffling their lineup. At the time of this show, the members included Otis Williams, Ron Tyson, Harry McGilberry, Theo Peoples, and Terry Weeks.

With all of these problems surrounding them, the one thing that had remained consistent for the group was that they were a popular live act with an incredible catalog to draw upon during their shows. During this brief four song set, they trot out “The Way You Do The Things You Do”, “Just My Imagination”, “My Girl”, and “I Can’t Get Next To You”.

While ensemble shows that feature multiple acts are normally mediocre in quality, the Temptations pull off a great mini show. The five singers sound as good as ever, with near perfect renditions of the four songs. Tyson sounds eerily like Eddie Kendricks while Goodson takes on the leads originally sung by Ruffin or Edwards equally well. The harmonies are sharp, the back up band sounds good, and the songs are classics.

It is not surprising after listening to these tracks to find that the group was as well rehearsed and professional as ever. Unfortunately, this recording is the only nineties live material I can find of the group. To my knowledge, the Sinbad special has not been rerun on HBO but there is always the chance that the network will run it again. It is definitely worth recording, featuring other acts like Evelyn Champagne, the Isley Brothers, and George Clinton.