

SOUL MUSIC

Fromm Institute

Week Four: Soul in the Late 1960s

Recommended Listening:

James Brown: *Foundations of Funk—A Brand New Bag: 1964-1969* (Universal, 1996). The title is truth in advertising on this two-CD set, which includes funk landmarks like "Out of Sight," "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag," "I Got You (I Feel Good)," "Cold Sweat," and "Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)." His funk got more formulaic in the 1970s, but the story continues on the compilations *Funk Power 1970: A Brand New Thang* and *Make It Funky—The Big Payback: 1971-1975*.

James Brown, *Live at the Apollo Vol. 2* (Universal, 1968). Although Brown's *Live at the Apollo Vol. 1* (released in 1963) is far more famous, this is better, funkier, and his greatest live recording. Indeed at its best it's one of the finest live albums of all time, especially when he stretches the original versions into quasi-jams on the twenty-minute medley of "Let Yourself Go," "There Was a Time," and "Cold Sweat."

Jerry Butler, *The Philadelphia Sessions* (Mercury, 2001). In the late 1960s, Chicago soul star Jerry Butler revived his career by sweetening his sound via working with Philadelphia's Gamble-Huff production team. Both of the albums he did with them and more are on this compilation, which includes the hits "Only the Strong Survive," "Hey, Western Union Man," and "Never Give You Up."

Aretha Franklin, *30 Greatest Hits* (Atlantic, 1985). Hits that helped define not just soul music, but African-American life and emergent feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including standards like "Respect," "Chain of Fools," "(You Make Me Feel Like a) Natural Woman," and "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)." Franklin recorded a lot during this period and her albums were stronger than LPs by most soul artists were, so her Atlantic albums should be checked out if you're a big fan.

The Isley Brothers, *Story Vol. 2* (Rhino, 1991). It gets less interesting the deeper it goes into the 1970s and 1980s, but on the first disc of this two-CD set at least, it documents the Isleys moving from more standard '60s upbeat soul to funk on songs like "It's Your Thing," "That Lady," and "Fight the Power." They used hard rock-influenced guitar more often and more effectively than perhaps any other soul hitmakers.

The Jackson 5, *The Ultimate Collection* (Motown, 1995). The last superstars to emerge from Motown in the 1960s, the Jackson 5 combined teen and preteen appeal with exuberant contemporary soul grooves. This has their initial group of megasmashes ("I Want You Back," "The Love You Save," "ABC") and continues up through their early disco hit "Dancing Machine."

B.B. King, *Anthology* (MCA, 2000). Although he's justly known as an electric bluesman, King came closer to soul than most, especially between the mid-1960s and early 1970s. There isn't any really great anthology of King's work from these years, but this two-CD collection comes close, including his breakthrough 1970 pop hit "The Thrill Is Gone."

Gladys Knight & the Pips, *Anthology* (Motown, 1995). Though not the flashiest of Motown's singers, Knight was one of the best, and she and the Pips were reliable hitmakers for the label in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This two-CD compilation has them, including "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" and "Neither One of Us," though not "Midnight Train to Georgia," which they hit with just after leaving the label.

The Meters, *The Very Best of the Meters* (Rhino, 1997). There's a lot more from this band if you want it, but this is a good 16-song introduction to the group that brought New Orleans soul and R&B into the funk era with their guitar-organ blend and syncopated rhythms, usually on instrumentals.

Sly & the Family Stone, *The Essential Sly & the Family Stone* (Epic, 2002). Two-CD set of the hits and then some from the Bay Area group that combined soul, funk, and psychedelic rock, including the standards "Dance to the Music," "Hot Fun in the Summertime," "Everyday People," "Thank You," and "Family Affair."

Johnnie Taylor, *The Very Best of Johnnie Taylor* (Stax, 2007). Taylor was perhaps the biggest star to emerge at Stax in the late 1960s. This is a good value 23-song best-of, naturally including his most famous song, the 1968 Top Five hit "Who's Making Love."

The Temptations, *Psychedelic Soul* (Universal, 2003). Working with producer Norman Whitfield, the Temptations went deeper into psychedelic-influenced funk and social commentary than any other Motown act of the late 1960s and early 1970s, at least until Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder asserted their artistic independence. This two-CD compilation has key efforts along those lines like "Cloud Nine," "Psychedelic Shack," "I Can't Get Next to You," "Ball of Confusion," and "Papa Was a Rolling Stone." Keep in mind, though, that all along they were continuing to issue suave romantic hits like "I Wish It Would Rain" and "Just My Imagination," which you can hear on hits collections like *Anthology*.

Joe Tex, *25 All Time Greatest Hits* (Varese Sarabande, 2000). Although it reaches back to the mid-1960s (and Tex's career had started long before that), the bulk of this has his funky soul hits from the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though sometimes serious, these often injected ingratiating party humor, especially in "I Gotcha" and "Skinny Legs and All."

Ike & Tina Turner, *Bold Soul Sister: The Best of the Blue Thumb Recordings* (MCA, 1997). The Turners recorded prolifically for numerous labels, which seems to have made a good best-of for their late 1960s-early 1970s work difficult to assemble. But this is a good collection of 1969 material, though it doesn't draw more from rock as much as some of their slightly later recordings do, like their hit cover of "Proud Mary."

Various Artists, *The Brunswick Years Vol. 1* (Brunswick, 1995). Two-CD compilation of the most influential Chicago soul label of the late 1960s and early 1970s has notable hits and non-hits by Jackie Wilson, Tyrone Davis, Barbara Acklin, Young-Holt Unlimited, the Chi-Lites, and others.

Various Artists, *Love Train: The Sound of Philadelphia* (Sony/Legacy, 2008). Four-CD box set of Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff Philadelphia soul productions from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, including hits by all the stars associated with the sound: the O'Jays, the Delfonics, the Spinners, the Stylistics, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, MFSB, and others.

Various Artists, *Movin' on Up, Vol. 1: Songs from the Civil Rights Struggle* (The Right Stuff, 1994). Soul songs of civil rights and African-American pride from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, including stars like Sam Cooke, Curtis Mayfield, the Staple Singers, Nina Simone, and James Brown.

Various Artists, *Soul Shots Vol. 7: Urban Blues* (Rhino, 1988). Unfortunately this 1988 LP didn't make it into the CD format, but it's a good compilation of soul-influenced urban electric blues a la B.B. King's "The Thrill Is Gone." While a little beyond the main focus of soul in this course, those interested in soul-blues should check out work by some of the artists on this compilation, like Little Junior Parker, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Albert King, Buddy Guy, Little Johnny Taylor, Junior Wells, and Little Milton (and Freddie King, who isn't on this album). A good comprehensive various-artists collection of soul-blues from the 1960s and early 1970s would be a welcome project.

Various Artists, *Sweet Soul Music 1967-1969* (Bear Family, 2008-2009). This series has separate volumes for soul music of each year between 1961 and 1975, with thirty songs on each. These three volumes cover all facets of soul in the late 1960s, with detailed liner notes.

Various Artists, *What It Is! Funky Soul and Rare Grooves from the Vaults of Atlantic, Atco & Warner Bros. Records* (Rhino, 2005). Four-CD box of funk from 1967-77, emphasizing little known artists and relatively obscure cuts from famous ones.

Recommended Books:

B.B. King: There Is Always One More Time, by David McGee (Backbeat, 2005). Music-focused biography of B.B. King includes detailed analysis of his albums, among them the ones he did in a soul-blues vein in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Detroit 67: The Year That Changed Soul, by Stuart Cosgrove (Polygon, 2016). Divided into twelve chapters for each month of the year, this closely examines the artistically triumphant but internally turbulent year of 1967 at Motown Records. Less successfully, it also weaves in events shaking the Motor City outside of Motown in 1967, particularly Detroit's summer riots and the police misconduct that led up to it, as well as the boiling

rock underground led by the MC5 and their manager, John Sinclair. It's best when it closely examines controversial developments at Motown, particularly the firing of Florence Ballard from the Supremes and disputes which led the songwriting/production team of Holland-Dozier-Holland to leave the label.

Divided Soul: The Life of Marvin Gaye, by David Ritz (Da Capo Press, 2003). The most in-depth biography of the troubled soul star (who was shot to death by his father in 1984), by an author who worked with Gaye as a songwriting collaborator toward the end of the singer's life.

Funk, by Rickey Vincent (St. Martin's Griffin, 1996). The most in-depth study of funk, with writing on the scholarly/academic side.

Hit Me, Fred, by Fred Wesley, Jr. (Duke University Press, 2002). The memoir of a long-serving, long-suffering trombonist/musical director/arranger for James Brown illustrates how playing with Brown was both a great education and a great trial.

I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You: Aretha Franklin, Respect, and the Making of a Soul Music Masterpiece, by Matt Dobkin (St. Martin's Griffin, 2004). Somewhat brief, but worthwhile, book on the making of Aretha Franklin's first album for Atlantic Records (1967's *I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You*), which marked the turning point in her evolution to middle-of-the-pack soul singer to soul superstar.

Listen, Whitey!: The Sights and Sounds of Black Power 1965-1975, by Pat Thomas (Fantagraphics, 2012). The relationship between black power movements and soul, funk, rock, and jazz music between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, with many illustrations of rare records and posters.

Sly & the Family Stone: An Oral History, by Joel Selvin (Avon, 1998). The lack of a good biography of Sly Stone is one of the biggest such gaps in popular music. This isn't the thorough book he deserves either, but it has a lot of input from members of the Family Stone and others who worked with Sly, though not from Sly himself.

Recommended DVDs:

James Brown, I Got the Feelin': James Brown in the '60s (Shout Factory, 2008). The centerpiece of this three-DVD set — a show at the Boston Garden on April 5, 1968 — is one of the most important filmed musical performances of all time. That's not an overstatement. First, it captures Brown in full funk fury, with unbelievably athletic dancing and tight funk grooves (often on marathon medleys). Second, it was done just after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and televised in hopes that the program could quell the rioting in Boston, though tension from the audience over the event is quite visible at times, the crowd sometimes threatening to overrun the stage. On top of that, this also has another 1968 Brown performance (at the Apollo in New York); the magnificent set he did to close the 1964 concert film *The T.A.M.I. Show*; and a documentary about the Boston 1968 show.

B.B. King, *The Life of Riley* (MVD Visual, 2014). Two-hour documentary on one of the most famous bluesmen, whose output stretches from the late 1940s to the present. Less frenetically than most such documentaries, it traces his life story with bountiful interviews with King and associates, as well as snippets of performance footage from throughout his career.

Notable Figures (Excluding Star Musicians):

Al Bell: Co-owner of Stax Records starting in the late 1960s, which made him one of the most powerful African-Americans in the record business. Vital to the organization of the Wattstax festival.

Thom Bell: Producer and songwriter essential to the sound of some of the top vocal groups identified with the Philadelphia soul sound, including the Stylistics, the Spinners, and the Delfonics.

The Corporation: The unnamed Motown team (actually Berry Gordy, Freddie Perren, Deke Richards, and Alphonzo Mizell) responsible for producing the early Jackson 5 hits.

Kenny Gamble: With Leon Huff, half of the production/songwriting team behind many hit Philadelphia soul records, especially ones issued on the Philadelphia International label.

Leon Huff: With Kenny Gamble, half of the production/songwriting team behind many hit Philadelphia soul records, especially ones issued on the Philadelphia International label.

The JB's: James Brown's ever-changing lineup of backing musicians in the first half of the 1970s. The most famous was bassist Bootsy Collins; other notable ones including Bootsy's guitarist brother Catfish Collins, trombonist Fred Wesley, and saxophonist Maceo Parker.

The Memphis Horns: The duo of Wayne Jackson (trumpet) and Andrew Love (tenor saxophone) were usually the core or only members of this group, who played on many important Memphis soul records in the 1960s and the 1970s.

Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section: Session musicians working out of Muscle Shoals, Alabama, who played on many soul records of the 1960s and 1970s (as well as some rock and pop ones).

Norman Whitfield: The Motown producer who more than any other pushed the label to keep up with the times with more rock-funk-oriented arrangements and socially conscious material, especially with the Temptations.

Notable Places:

American Sound Studio: Memphis studio where much of Dusty Springfield's *Dusty in Memphis* was recorded, and also home to other soul sessions in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including material by Aretha Franklin and Joe Tex.

Sigma Sound Studios: Philadelphia studios strongly tied to the sound of Philadelphia soul, especially Gamble-Huff productions.

Notable Labels:

Brunswick Records: Home of Chicago or Chicago-produced soul acts such as the Chi-Lites, Tyrone Davis, Barbara Acklin, Gene Chandler, and Jackie Wilson in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

AV Clips:

Sly Stone: Dance to the Music (DVD)
Aretha Franklin: Natural Woman (DVD)
Aretha Franklin: Dr. Feelgood (DVD)
Otis Redding: Shake (DVD)
Otis Redding: Dock of the Bay (CD)
James Brown: Cold Sweat (DVD)
James Brown: There Was a Time (DVD)
The Miracles: I Second That Emotion (DVD)
The Temptations: I Wish It Would Rain (DVD)
The Temptations: Cloud 9 (DVD)
The Temptations: I Can't Get Next to You (DVD)
The Supremes: Reflections (DVD)
The Supremes: Love Child (DVD)
The Supremes: Someday We'll Be Together (DVD)
Gladys Knight & the Pips: I Heard It Through the Grapevine (DVD)
Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell: Ain't No Mountain High Enough (DVD)
Marvin Gaye: I Heard It Through the Grapevine (DVD)
Stevie Wonder: I Was Made to Love Her (DVD)
Stevie Wonder: My Cherie Amour (DVD)
The Flirtations: Nothing But a Heartache (DVD)
Bobby Freeman: C'mon and Swim (DVD)
Rodger Collins: She's Looking Good (CD)
Sly Stone: Everyday People (DVD)
Sly Stone: Hot Fun in the Summertime (DVD)
Sly Stone: I Want to Take You Higher (DVD)
Nina Simone: Four Women (DVD)
Les McCann & Eddie Harris: Compared to What (DVD)
Booker T. & the MGs': Time Is Tight (DVD)
Johnnie Taylor: Who's Making Love (DVD)
Dionne Warwick: Walk on By (DVD)

Isaac Hayes: Walk On By (DVD)
Rufus Thomas: The Breakdown (DVD)
Joe Tex: Skinny Legs and All (DVD)
The Meters: Cissy Strut (CD)
The Isley Brothers: It's Your Thing (DVD)
Ike & Tina Turner: I've Been Loving You Too Long (DVD)
Jackie Wilson: Higher and Higher (DVD)
Tyrone Davis: Can I Change My Mind (CD)
Curtis Mayfield: Choice of Colors (DVD)
Jerry Butler: Never Give You Up (CD)
The Delfonics: La-La Means I Love You (DVD)
The Jackson 5: I Want You Back (DVD)