

Online Podcast Series Launched by Motown 50

Written by Robert ID4607

Thursday, 15 January 2009 04:56 -

The legendary Motown Records celebrates its 50th anniversary this year with a series of promotions and releases from Berry Gordy's groundbreaking company and Universal Music Enterprises, including a series of online podcasts featuring rare and intimate conversations with the label's legends, producers, songwriters and singers, which started on Monday, Jan. 12 at www.classic.motown.com. The podcasts are also available on iTunes.

The year-long series of episodes gets underway with an interview featuring Smokey Robinson reflecting on Motown's early days, his relationship with Gordy and the impact the label has had on American culture.

Fresh episodes will debut bi-weekly, including those with founder Berry Gordy; Nick Cannon; the late Levi Stubbs of the Four Tops; The New York Times columnist Frank Rich; Smokey Robinson detailing the genesis of "Shop Around," the label's first million-seller; the Temptations' Otis Williams and the late Melvin Franklin; Stevie Wonder; Levi Stubbs and Lamont Dozier (of H-D-H fame) discussing "Reach Out I'll Be There"; KCRW's Garth Trinidad; Diana Ross; songwriters Pam Sawyer and Marilyn McLeod on the creation of Ross's hit "Love Hangover"; hip-hop pioneer and Universal Motown artist Q-Tip; Smokey Robinson and more of the Miracles; and songwriter/producer Dozier.

Upcoming segments will feature Marvin Gaye, the Jackson 5, the Commodores, film director Lawrence Kasdan (*The Big Chill*), and songwriter Diane Warren, among others.

These exclusive podcasts are just part of a year-long celebration of Motown's 50th and its lasting legacy, which included the Dec. 9 release of *Motown: The Complete No. 1's*, a

10-CD box set in the shape of the label's famed "Hitsville U.S.A." birthplace in Detroit, featuring more than 200 classic songs from 50 Motown artists that topped charts around the world, plus a 100-page photo booklet with rare images and an introduction by Smokey Robinson.

In addition, *NOW That's What I Call Motown!*, the latest compilation in the hugely successful *NOW That's What I Call Music!* Series—featuring 25 of the label's most beloved, timeless classic pop and R&B tracks—was released on CD and digitally January 13, as a joint venture

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from EMI Music, the Universal Music Group and its Motown Records division, and Sony Music Entertainment.

Check out www.classic.motown.com for more info.

Below is the link to iTunes, as well as a complete list of the first 15 “Motown 50” podcasts:

<http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewPodcast?id=301547030>

- 1) Smokey Robinson: Motown Reflections (1/12): The legendary artist/songwriter reflects on the label’s early days, his mentor Berry Gordy and the impact Motown continues to have worldwide.

- 2) Berry Gordy: A Tour of Hitsville U.S.A., May 1963 (1/27): In this rare interview, the Motown founder and a Detroit radio host walk through Hitsville on the cusp of the company’s runaway success.

- 3) Nick Cannon: Impressions of Motown (2/10): The actor/musician/producer and husband of Mariah Carey shares his earliest impressions of Motown.

- 4) Levi Stubbs: The Four Tops (2/24): The late lead singer, in a rare interview from the Motown Archives, talks about what made the group tick.

- 5) Frank Rich: The Nation’s Capitol, The Motortown Review and President Obama (3/10): The New York Times’ political columnist links Motown to the upheaval of the ’60s through personal recollections of the Motortown Review in his native Washington, D.C., while adding perspective on the election of President Barack Obama.

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- 6) Smokey Robinson, The Anatomy of a Hit: “Shop Around” (3/24): The singer/songwriter and Motown veteran tells the amazing story about the label’s—and his group the Miracles’—first million-selling single.

- 7) The Temptations (4/14): Otis Williams, Melvin Franklin and fellow Tempts discuss their beginnings and illustrious musical career in a rare archival interview from the '80s.

- 8) Stevie Wonder (4/28): In another rare archival interview, the superstar talks of his early days at Motown and the evolution of his music through the brilliant, then-new album Talking Book.

- 9) Levi Stubbs, Lamont Dozier and Paul Riser, The Anatomy of a Hit: “Reach Out I’ll Be There” (5/12): The threesome break down one of Motown’s biggest hits, a world-wide smash for the Four Tops.

- 10) Listening with Garth Trinidad (5/26): The KCRW tastemaker and renowned DJ gets put to the test listening to a batch of Motown songs, unlike any he has heard.

- 11) Diana Ross (6/09): In a rare '70s interview, Motown’s No. 1 diva tells her story in her own words.

- 12) Pam Sawyer and Marilyn McLeod, The Anatomy of a Hit: “Love Hangover” Part 1 (6/23): The songwriters of Diana Ross’ #1 dance smash discuss the birth of the tune, including rare session elements.

- 13) Q-Tip, The Anatomy of a Hit: “Love Hangover” Part 2 (7/7): The hip-hop pioneer and Universal Motown artist breaks down one of his favorite Motown songs, with more previously unheard elements from the master tapes.

- 14) Smokey Robinson and the Miracles (7/21): Smokey, Ronnie White and fellow members of

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the band discuss their long career and amazing body of work.

15) Lamont Dozier (8/4): The songwriter and producer, part of the famed Holland-Dozier-Holland team, reflects on the songs and artists that made Motown one of the greatest musical forces of the 20th century— and beyond.