



AND



From left top and clockwise: Wilson Pickett, New York City, 1981; Swamp Dogg; Aretha Franklin, New York City, 1982; Fred Wesley, 2011; Dr. Mable John. Photos: © Fredrich Cantor; Courtesy of Swamp Dogg; © Fredrich Cantor; Mark Puryear, Smithsonian Institution; Courtesy of Stax Museum of American Soul Music

Right side: The Dixie Cups® began performing rhythm and blues music in 1963; the group now includes original members Barbara A. Hawkins (right) and Rosa L. Hawkins (left), joined by Athelgra Neville. Photo by Richard Strauss, Smithsonian Institution



by Mark Puryear

In 1964 The Dixie Cups®, a female vocal trio from New Orleans, crooned out a cheerful version of “Chapel of Love” and knocked the Beatles from their number one spot on the pop charts. A year later, the trio released “Iko Iko,” a song first released in 1954 by James “Sugar Boy” Crawford as “Jock-A-Mo,” whose lyrics recount the meeting of two groups of Mardi Gras Indians. Since then, this song has been covered by artists from the Grateful Dead to Cyndi Lauper, and continues to move new generations with its infectious New Orleans rhythms. The career of The Dixie Cups, and their direct and indirect roles in carrying rhythm and blues (R&B) into mainstream consciousness, speaks to the enduring power of this music to transcend region and musical category and become a representative sound of the country.



Musical Crossroads

by Dwandalyn Reece

The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) was established by an act of Congress in 2003 making it the nineteenth museum of the Smithsonian Institution. Part of the NMAAHC's mandate is to remember and celebrate the African American experience, both as a story of a nation's people and as a lens into what it means to be an American. Scheduled for completion in 2015, the museum will be built on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on a five-acre tract adjacent to the Washington Monument. Currently, during the pre-building phase, the museum is producing publications, hosting public programs, and building collections such as the Civil Rights Oral History interviews with the Library of Congress.

NMAAHC is pleased to continue its collaboration with the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in producing *Rhythm and Blues: Tell It Like It Is* for the 2011 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The program is a natural outgrowth of the museum's programming in African American music. One of the museum's largest permanent exhibitions, *Musical Crossroads* will explore the history and cultural impact of African American music. Telling the story of African American music from the arrival of the first Africans to the present day, *Musical Crossroads* will explore the role music has played in African American life, its impact as a sustainer of African American cultural traditions, its use for social change, and its profound influence on American musical traditions.

Musical Crossroads will cover the diversity of African American music drawing upon a wide range

of musical genres, highlighting musical innovations, significant time periods and events along with historic performances to capture the music's impact and influence within the United States and abroad. Museum curators are currently seeking out a broad array of objects—musical instruments, recording equipment, handwritten scores, costumes, personal records, stage sets and props, and other memorabilia—to use in the exhibition and include in its permanent collection. Some items in the museum's collection such as Louis Jordan's manuscript for his hit, "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby" (1944), the organ and speaker set James Brown used on tour, or Dinah Washington's traveling case, are just a sample of the types of items the museum hopes to continue to collect.

For more than forty years, the Festival has helped millions of visitors remember and celebrate diverse cultures and traditions that fully embody the American experience. *Rhythm and Blues: Tell It Like It Is* follows in that tradition. This year we celebrate the birth of rhythm and blues (R&B), its diverse geographical roots, its role as the voice of Black communities, and its overwhelming influence on American popular music. The NMAAHC is honored to preserve and celebrate R&B as one of America's most enduring cultural treasures.

Dwandalyn Reece, Ph.D., is Curator of Music and Performing Arts at the National Museum of African American History and Culture. She is curating the museum's permanent music exhibition, Musical Crossroads.

(Left) The exterior design concept of the National Museum of African American History and Culture features the three-tiered corona.

Image courtesy of Freelon Adjaye Bond/Smith Group

(Right) James Brown's speaker cabinet and Harmonics Trek II electric organ are among the items in the National Museum of African American History and Culture's collection. Photo © Christie's Images Limited 2008, courtesy of Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

(Below) The stage costume worn by Jermaine Jackson of the Jackson Five, circa 1972, is part of the collection of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Photo by Shaan Kokin/Julien's Auctions, courtesy of Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture



The Dixie Cups are among the impressive line-up of artists participating in this summer's Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The *Rhythm and Blues: Tell It Like It Is* program is an exploration of the rich historical, cultural, and musical matrix of R&B. Through music and dance performances, workshops, and narrative discussions, this program considers R&B as a collaborative art form that is shaped by composers, performers, producers, and communities of listeners. Most importantly, it highlights how music provides a dynamic lens to explore the relationship of African American history and experiences to American popular culture.

The history of R&B and the breadth of what it encompasses—socially, commercially, and artistically—suggests that it is not monolithic. It tells a complex story of many strands and experiences. A distinctly African American music drawing from the deep tributaries of African American expressive culture, it is an amalgam of jump blues, big band swing, gospel, boogie, and blues that was initially developed during a thirty-year period that bridges the era of legally sanctioned racial segregation, international conflicts, and the struggle for civil rights. Its formal qualities, stylistic range, marketing and consumption trends, and worldwide currency today thus reflect not only the changing social and political landscapes of American race relations, but also urban life, culture, and popular entertainment in mainstream America.

The emergence of R&B as a music category reflects its simultaneous marginalization as a form of African American music and its centrality to the development of a wide repertoire of American popular music genres, most notably rock and roll. Three historical processes provide the framework for understanding the social and cultural contexts of the development of R&B: the migrations of African Americans to urban centers surrounding World War I and World War II, and the civil rights movement.



THE GREAT MIGRATION

The development of R&B is closely intertwined with the growth of twentieth-century African American urban communities in cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Memphis, and Detroit, which were geographical anchors for how these processes played out across the country. The expansion of these urban communities took place during two periods of migration from Southern regions of the United States. The first, known as the Great Migration, occurred from 1916 to 1930, in response to the collapse of cotton agriculture due to boll weevil infestation and the demand for industrial workers in Northern cities during World War I. In concert with these shifts in population from rural to urban, many forms of African American expressive culture, especially music, were able to make transitions into urban environments and the marketplace.

African American residents in these urban areas confronted a range of discriminatory housing and employment practices, including restrictive covenants and segregation. Confined to such areas as Chicago's South Side, Harlem in New York City, or near Central Avenue in Los Angeles, people in these residential neighborhoods represented all economic backgrounds and were served by a variety of business and commercial entertainment venues such as clubs, lounges, and theaters. A majority of the theaters were owned and operated as White businesses, requiring African American performers to secure bookings on the limited Theater Owners' Booking Association (TOBA) circuit.

It was during this period that large national organizations working to support the social and political concerns of African Americans—such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (1909), the National Urban League (1910), and later, the

Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (1925)—advocated for institutional change on a range of issues from voting rights to labor. As communities coalesced, cultural pride began to be increasingly expressed through music. In 1910, James Reese Europe established the Clef Club, a musicians' booking organization in New York City. He later served as bandleader of the "Harlem Hellfighters"—the 369th Regimental Band that was instrumental in bringing the syncopated sounds of African American music to European audiences during World War I. After returning from overseas, military bands like this continued to bolster the cultural pride and patriotism of African Americans. In 1919, the NAACP adopted a composition by brothers James Weldon and John Rosamond Johnson, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," composed almost twenty years earlier, as the "Negro National Anthem."

The advent of commercial recordings by and for African Americans can be dated to Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues" in 1920, an unprecedented commercial success. The music recording industry's marketing category "race records" was established to identify this market, the term borrowed from the African American vernacular use of "race man" during that era to express racial pride and solidarity. The music industry used "race records" as a catch-all category for most forms of African American music including jazz, blues, and religious music, and—following Mamie Smith's success—produced recordings by Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Ida Cox, Alberta Hunter, and other female vocalists in a similar blues style with the musical accompaniment of piano, horns, wind instruments, banjo, and percussion.

Some recordings in the "race records" category included genres that would become foundations for R&B, in particular blues, big band, and gospel. The blues piano and guitar duo Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell, with Carr's smooth vocals in the hit song "How Long, How Long Blues," later would influence R&B artists such as Charles



Brown and Ray Charles. In Chicago, boogie-woogie piano players Jimmy Yancey, Clarence "Pine Top" Smith, and other pianists developed the rolling bass lines that would influence R&B pianists such as Amos Milburn. Pianist and composer Thomas A. Dorsey's composition "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," now a standard, is considered a touchstone in the emergence of gospel. Working in Chicago with vocalist Sallie Martin, Dorsey crafted gospel by blending musical elements from blues into sacred

Like many African Americans who migrated to urban centers from the South, Fernando Jones's parents moved from Mississippi to Chicago in search of work. As a blues musician, Fernando shares his experiences through education programs for students from grade school to college. Photo courtesy of Fernando Jones

song forms. By the end of the 1930s, swing bands like Chick Webb's influenced artists such as Louis Jordan, who incorporated swing horn riffs into the jump blues.



THE SECOND MIGRATION AND RHYTHM AND BLUES

The early development of R&B occurred in tandem with the second migration of African Americans who moved from the Southern and rural regions of the United States during and after World War II. Between 1941 and 1950, the African American population of Western cities grew by 33 percent, with about 340,000 African Americans from such states as Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma settling in Southern California for employment in the region's expanded defense industries. Similar patterns of migration took place in the Midwest to Chicago and Detroit, and in the East to New York City. These expanding African American urban communities with increased economic resources presented a large audience hungry for social interaction with music and entertainment. Within these racially segregated communities, cross-generational groups of musicians and performing artists provided musical affirmation for these populations. The surge in L.A.'s African American population, for example, gave rise to a vibrant entertainment scene extending along Central Avenue that by decade's end would support no less than eight record labels specializing in R&B.

One important stylistic prototype in the development of R&B was jump blues, pioneered by Louis Jordan, with his group Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five. Originally from Arkansas, Jordan was a former member of Chick Webb's swing band that had dominated New York City's Savoy Ballroom through the 1930s, after which he moved to L.A., finding success there both as a musician and in films. Jordan's group, a combo ranging in number from six to seven musicians, consisted of three horns and a rhythm section, while stylistically his music melded elements of swing and blues, incorporating the shuffle rhythm, boogie-woogie bass lines, and short horn patterns or riffs. The songs featured the use of African



(Left) Johnny Otis (center), along with Mel Walker and "Little" Esther Phillips, toured as the California Rhythm and Blues Caravan in the late 1940s. Photo by James J. Kriegsmann, courtesy of Indiana University Archives of African American Music and Culture, Jack Gibson Collection

(Right) Jack "The Rapper" Gibson on stage with saxophonist Louis Jordan and his band in the late 1940s. Photo courtesy of Indiana University Archives of African American Music and Culture, Jack Gibson Collection

American vernacular language, humor, and vocal call-and-response sections between Jordan and the band. Jordan's music appealed to both African American and White audiences, and he had broad success with hit songs like "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby" (1944).

Southern musicians, especially performers from Texas who had moved to Los Angeles, were no less influential on the development of R&B. Pianist Charles Brown, first with Johnny Moore's Three Blazers, developed a smooth blues and R&B sound in post-war Southern California. Noted for his crooning vocals in the style of Nat King Cole, Brown had great success with mellow blues songs like "Drifting Blues" (1945) that would go on to influence fellow Texan Ivory Joe Hunter and Ray Charles. Texas-born blues guitarist T-Bone Walker, who worked with jazz bands in South Central L.A. clubs, pioneered the use of the electric guitar and developed a single-line soloing style based on jazz horn lines that continues to influence musicians today. His 1947 song "Call It Stormy Monday," based on a harmonically extended 12-bar blues form, with lyrics referencing the working-class life, has become an R&B and blues standard. Boogie-woogie pianist Amos Milburn from Houston—a popular performer in clubs around L.A.'s Central Avenue—whose recordings on the independent Aladdin Records were based firmly in the blues and boogie-woogie style as performed in Texas, appealed to audiences on the West Coast and beyond with hit songs such as "Chicken Shack Boogie" (1948).



Throughout its history, the sounds that have come to define R&B have derived from a range of musical characteristics, instrumentation, and ensembles, ranging in size from tight piano trios to large groups with full rhythm and horn sections. Performed with a core of acoustic instruments in the 1940s, R&B was “plugged in” and electric from the late 1950s forward. Rhythmically, R&B now encompasses a wide breadth from blues shuffles with a back beat to boogie-woogie, modified rumba rhythms, and syncopated variations of eight-beat rhythm patterns that are the hallmark of rock and roll, and more. Even slow R&B ballads feature a palpable rhythmic pulse, while up-tempo songs might include polyrhythmic arrangements to create rhythmic density. At its core R&B is dance music that compels the listener to respond. It is the creative melding and mixing of antecedent song forms—including blues, gospel, swing, and other harmonic structures—with new innovations that keep the evolving sounds of R&B contemporary.

The saxophone was one of the first instruments to take prominence as a lead instrumental voice in R&B ensembles through the influence of big band tenor saxophonist Illinois Jacquet’s hallmark “honking” solo on Lionel Hampton’s recording of “Flying Home” (1942). His sound and technique influenced tenor players from Big Jay McNeely (“Deacon’s Hop,” 1949) to Junior Walker (“Shotgun,” 1965). Vocalists, in turn, established distinctive musical identities through the use of a variety of singing techniques, including high-volume singing characterized as “shouting,” singing in a falsetto register, the use of mellow crooning styles, alternating between a raspy and pure voice, vibrato, sudden changes in pitch, sliding from pitch to pitch, and more. Rhythm and blues singers, often strongly influenced by gospel singing traditions, typically perform as soloists, in duets, and in groups where four to five members sing in harmony with a lead vocalist.



(Above) Motown recording artist and saxophone player Junior Walker relaxes in a dressing room in New York City’s Palladium concert hall, 1981. Photo © Fredrich Cantor

(Below) Teenagers hand dance in Houston, Texas, 1964. Photo by Benny A. Joseph, Sr.



THE BUSINESS

In the 1950s, stylistic changes in African American popular music and accompanying changes in cultural and racial politics after World War II prompted the music industry to change how it categorized African American music. The term R&B was first used as a music category label in 1949 in the entertainment magazine *Billboard*. Coined by then-music journalist and later Atlantic Records executive Jerry Wexler to replace the older categories of “race music” or “race records,” R&B initially included all popular commercial musical expressions by African American artists. While the motivation for this change could be seen as a response to shifting racial attitudes, the R&B category continued to segregate the music marketplace as in the past. However, as young White audiences increasingly engaged with R&B, new terms emerged to continue to delineate audiences and markets. Rock and roll, essentially derived from R&B, was used as a category that designated White artists. This “crossover” music—the music of Little Richard, Bo Diddley, Fats Domino, and Chuck Berry—attracted both African American and White audiences. Composer, producer, and performer Jerry “Swamp Dogg” Williams, whose career begins in this early period, later marveled at how these definitions were changed and applied: “Black people go to bed and wake up the next day and their address has been changed.” As a writer for R&B and country artists, Swamp Dogg’s career moved fluidly between such discrete “addresses,” and he is sharply conscious of the fact that the broad range of African American cultural products and musical expressions were far too varied to be neatly categorized as “R&B” or “soul” or “Black.”

Starting in the late 1940s, a number of independent record labels recognized the potential mass appeal of R&B music, despite the fact that the mainstream

Jerry Williams Jr. has been a performer, songwriter, producer, and engineer since the 1960s. He took the name Swamp Dogg in the 1970s in order to “put some ragged jeans on the song and some sneakers instead of Florsheim shoes,” and to sing about topics beyond love and interpersonal relationships.

Photo by J. W. Kaldenbach, courtesy of Jerry Williams Jr.

industry still approached market development in ways that reflected the racial segregation of the period. A significant number of the independent record companies were based in Southern California during the late 1940s, such as Specialty, Modern, Aladdin, and Imperial. Often these companies used the production services of skilled composers and arrangers. For example, New Orleans-based musician Dave Bartholomew was instrumental in producing and co-writing songs for Fats Domino such as “Ain’t That a Shame.”

Atlantic Records, established in 1947 in New York City, focused on R&B from its inception. Its co-founder Ahmet Ertegun, the son of a Turkish diplomat, was passionate about African American music of many styles. Jesse Stone, an African American songwriter and arranger who wrote the classic “Shake, Rattle and Roll” for Big Joe Turner, was instrumental in Atlantic’s early success. Atlantic quickly became one of the larger labels to focus on R&B, releasing recordings by Ruth Brown and, later, Ray Charles. Similarly, Chess Records in Chicago, founded in 1950 by two Polish immigrant brothers, released an impressive catalogue of R&B and urban blues by artists such as Etta James, Gene Ammons, Jackie Brenston, Muddy Waters, and a noted roster of other artists who later influenced rock and roll.

In addition, there were a number of early African American-owned independent record labels. Brothers Leon and Otis René established Exclusive, Excelsior,

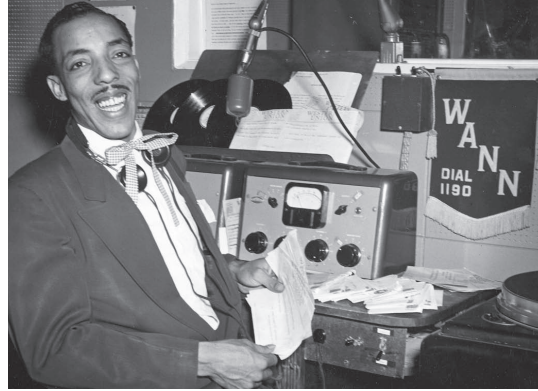


and, later, Class Records in Los Angeles. Leon René was the composer of classic songs such as “When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano” and “Rockin’ Robin.” In Oakland, California, Bob Geddins established record labels Down Town and Veltone, featuring artists such as Lowell Fulson and providing African American communities in the Bay Area with R&B and blues. In Houston, Texas, Don Robey with business partner

Evelyn Johnson—one of the first female African American record executives—founded Peacock Records in 1949, which featured R&B artists like Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown and Willie Mae “Big Mama” Thornton.

In 1949, Don Robey and Evelyn Johnson created Peacock Records that featured early R&B artists. Evelyn Johnson started the Buffalo Booking Agency in 1950 where she represented B.B. King, among other musicians. Photo by Benny A. Joseph, Sr.





Broadcast radio was the medium through which even the most racially segregated audiences were able to first listen to R&B music. Commercial radio broadcasts after World War II were targeted primarily towards mainstream White audiences, while radio stations with programs hosted by African American DJs or those featuring R&B music were often relegated to non-prime-time hours. To stay competitive after the advent of television, radio stations were forced to find new advertising sponsors, reach out to untapped local markets, and in many cases sell to new owners. In 1948 WDIA in Memphis became the first radio station with all African American programming, and featured gospel, blues, jazz, and R&B music shows. In 1949 businessman Jessie B. Blayton Sr. purchased WERD in Atlanta, making it the first African American-owned radio station in the country, where Jack “The Rapper” Gibson, who hosted an R&B show, became its top radio personality. Gibson’s engaging style of announcing with a colorful use of slang and rhyme influenced subsequent generations of DJs and

gave him a popularity that drew significant advertising revenues. These stations, and other African American DJs like Al Benson in Chicago, proved the economic viability of courting African American audiences. From 1948 through the 1950s, there was a marked increase in radio programs that featured R&B and advertisements directed towards the African American market.

As the market for R&B music grew to include more White audiences, so did the competition among the independent record labels. Some labels endeavored to exploit this market by releasing the songs of R&B artists “covered” by White performers, a hedge against the limited mainstream acceptance and marketability of African American performing artists. Thus versions of songs previously ranked in the R&B charts later were re-released by White artists like Pat Boone, Bill Haley, and Elvis Presley. This process, along with the parallel process of producing African American artists to appeal to mainstream sensibilities, established R&B as the foundation of rock and roll, which eventually became a category for predominantly White artists.

(Above left) Herb Kent, known on air as “The Cool Gent,” has been a DJ in Chicago since 1944. His remarkable career in radio paved the way for other African American DJs, and led to his induction into the National Radio Hall of Fame & Museum in 1995. Photo courtesy of Herb Kent

(Above center) Distinguished radio DJ Charles W. “Hoppy” Adams was with WANN radio in Annapolis for thirty years. Adams was host for R&B and jazz shows at Carr’s Beach during the 1950s and 1960s. Photo courtesy of WANN Radio Station Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

(Above right) Radio station KCOH became African American-owned and featured R&B music in Houston beginning in 1953. KCOH used a mobile studio for remote broadcasts and promotions. Photo by Benny A. Joseph, Sr.





A WIDER WORLD

The 1959 establishment of Motown Records in Detroit by African American businessman Berry Gordy was a watershed moment in R&B history. With a keen understanding of popular music, Gordy produced a polished sound and look for Motown artists that was rooted in R&B but with mainstream appeal. Motown became the first African American-owned record label to compete with the major national labels. With a roster of exceptional artists and songwriters, Motown produced music that achieved groundbreaking international success with artists that included Mary Wells, the Miracles, Four Tops, Supremes, and Stevie Wonder, to name just a few.

Another important chapter in the development of R&B came with the establishment of Stax Records (formerly Satellite) in 1960. Founded in Memphis by White country fiddler James Stewart and his sister Estelle Axton, this racially integrated studio produced music that drew upon gospel, blues, and country. Noted for its impeccable rhythm and horn section, Stax initially produced a live sound quality on its recordings. Stax artists included Otis Redding, Booker T. and the MGs, Carla and Rufus Thomas, the Staple Singers, and Isaac Hayes.

While R&B music was not explicitly political from the late 1940s through the 1950s, its appeal across racial divides served as an emotional and psychological bond that linked American youth of all races and ethnic backgrounds. By the late 1950s, social and cultural changes were occurring that set the stage for the coalescence of civil rights activism and ethnic consciousness in the decade to come. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, founded in 1957, employed a strategy of non-violent mass

James Brown takes the stage at the Savoy in New York City, 1981. His music, dance, and high energy performances influenced popular music worldwide. Photo © Fredrich Cantor

resistance and demonstrations under the leadership of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. to challenge the injustices of long-sanctioned racial segregation. In 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee joined in the struggle to secure voting rights and break down the social and economic barriers of segregation throughout the South. The Black Nationalist agenda of Malcolm X presented a counter-strategy to non-violence in response to racial injustice, and gave rise to the Black Panther Party. And with the growing opposition to the Vietnam War, it became clear that political sentiments within African American communities were in transition.

As these events in the civil rights movement focused America's attention on the moral contradictions and social inequity within society, R&B artists and songwriters increasingly began to address issues that went beyond interpersonal relations and group camaraderie. The release of Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come" (1964) was in the advent of politicized R&B music. It was followed by songs that overtly related to the civil rights, ethnic consciousness, and anti-war movements. Curtis Mayfield's "Keep on Pushing" (1964), James Brown's "Say It Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud" (1968), and Marvin Gaye's seminal album "What's Going On" (1971) all directly addressed civil rights and social issues and enjoyed great market success.

As R&B in this period was associated increasingly with the civil rights movement, record executives at both Motown and Stax would produce artists and undertake initiatives that explicitly reflected their commitment to African American community empowerment. In 1968, for example, Stax signed the Staple Singers, whose music grew out of performances in Chicago-area churches and enjoyed crossover gospel-to-R&B success with their “protest” and message-oriented repertoire. Patriarch Roebuck “Pops” Staples had reportedly steered his family in this direction after hearing Martin Luther King Jr. speak, telling them, “If he can preach it, we can sing it.” In 1970 Motown launched its spoken word Black Forum label featuring Martin Luther King Jr., Stokely Carmichael, and others. In 1972 Stax artists participated at an event in South Los Angeles, Wattstax, from which the proceeds were donated to local African American community causes.

In 1971 Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff founded Philadelphia International Records (PIR), a company whose music explicitly celebrated African American identity and consciousness. Through songs such as “Only the Strong Survive,” “Wake Up Everybody,” and “Ain’t No Stopping Us Now,” and their slogan “there’s a message in the music,” PIR reminded listeners to be aware of the struggles of the past and those yet to come. PIR produced music that covered a wide spectrum from R&B to club music, incorporating elements from jazz and lush string arrangements. Their studio orchestra, known as MFSB (short for Mothers, Fathers, Sisters, Brothers) exemplified their collaborative spirit. The MFSB release “TSOP (The Sound of Philadelphia)” was the theme song for the long-running *Soul Train* television show. Artists produced by PIR included the Intruders, Jerry Butler, Lou Rawls, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, the O’Jays, Patti LaBelle, Teddy Pendergrass, and the Jones Girls.

CONCLUSION

For the first five months of 1967, a romantic ballad—“Tell It Like It Is,” passionately sung by Aaron Neville—climbed to the number one spot on the U.S. R&B charts. Released in November 1966, just a month after Stokely Carmichael delivered his now-famous “Black Power” speech in Berkeley, the song stayed high in the charts through May 1967, while the Supreme Court was deliberating its landmark decision in *Loving v. Virginia* on the constitutionality of anti-miscegenation legislation. Essentially a love song, it did not comment upon any of the roiling civil rights issues of the time—neither the urban riots, nor the persistence of segregation, legal and de facto. But in 1970, the phrase “tell it like it is” was appropriated by Stax Records as the slogan for its spoken-word Respect label. The catalog consisted of readings and recitations reflecting Black consciousness, and their intended audiences were school systems and churches.

The popularity of the song and its subsequent adaptation and reinterpretation by artists from Otis Redding to Andy Williams to Freddy Fender, the Dirty Dozen Band, and Heart, tell us how the music that speaks about a history of marginalization and exclusion also tells a story about resilience and resistance. The song had such broad resonance that it ultimately played a central role in shaping mainstream American popular music.

This year’s R&B Festival program underlines these qualities. It celebrates pioneers and iconoclasts, soloists and studio musicians, and relationships and collaborations through which a younger generation is taking ownership of the music. This is perhaps most dynamically revealed in the participation of the Stax Music Academy, a group of high school musicians who are learning leadership and teamwork skills through music that (in their own words) “embodies the spirit of harmony, respect and cooperation that defined Memphis’ legendary



Stax Records.” These students not only learn the historic importance of the music, but also experience R&B through collaboration and practice as a living art form.

Mark Puryear is Lecturer in the African American Studies Department at the University of Maryland, College Park. Mark holds an M.A. in ethnomusicology from the University of Maryland, College Park, and has worked in public programming in a range of institutions including the National Endowment for the Arts (National Heritage Fellowships), the National Council for the Traditional Arts, and the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. Most recently he conducted the survey of the Smithsonian Folkways collections for the African American Legacy recordings series.



(Above) Singer and songwriter William Bell recorded with the Stax label from 1961 until 1975, when he switched to Mercury Records. In 1985 he founded Wilbe Records.

Photo courtesy of Andrea Zucker Photography

(Left) Tangela Mathis performs during the Stax Music Academy SNAP! After School 2009 Winter Concert “Hey Sista, Soul Sista: A Salute to the Divas of Soul, Jazz, Pop, & R&B.” Photo courtesy of Stax Museum of American Soul Music

FURTHER READING

Atkins, Cholly, and Jacqui Malone. *Class Act: The Jazz Life of Choreographer Cholly Atkins*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Bowman, Robert M.J. *Soulsville U.S.A.: The Story of Stax Records*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997.

Burnim, Mellonee, and Portia K. Maultsby, eds. *African American Music: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Cogdell DjeDje, Jacqueline, and Eddie S. Meadows, eds. *California Soul: Music of African Americans in the West*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Cohodas, Nadine. *Spinning Blues into Gold: The Chess Brothers and the Legendary Chess Records*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

George, Nelson. *Where Did Our Love Go?: The Rise and Fall of the Motown Sound*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.

Goosman, Stuart L. *Group Harmony: The Black Urban Roots of Rhythm & Blues*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.

Guralnick, Peter. *Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern Dream of Freedom*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1999.

Lipsitz, George. *Midnight at the Barrelhouse: The Johnny Otis Story*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Malone, Jacqui. *Steppin' on the Blues: The Visible Rhythms of African American Dance*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996.

Shaw, Arnold. *Honkers and Shouters: The Golden Years of Rhythm and Blues*. New York: Macmillan, 1978.

Taylor, Quintard. *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528–1990*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998.

Wesley, Fred. *Hit Me, Fred: Recollections of a Sideman*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

SUGGESTED LISTENING

1940s

"Flying Home," The Lionel Hampton Orchestra, featuring Illinois Jacquet. Decca Records, 1942.

"I'm Gonna Leave You on the Outskirts of Town," Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five. Decca Records, 1942.

"Ration Blues," Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five. Decca Records, 1942.

"Don't Get Around Much Anymore," The Ink Spots. Decca Records, 1942.

"Strange Things Happening Every Day," Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Decca Records, 1944.

"Evil Gal Blues," Dinah Washington. Keynote Records, 1944.

"When My Man Comes Home," Buddy Johnson Orchestra. Decca Records, 1944.

"Caldonia," Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five. Decca Records, 1945.

"Baby Please Don't Go," Big Joe Williams. RCA Victor–Bluebird Records, 1945.

"Driftin' Blues," Charles Brown. Philo (Aladdin Records), 1945.

"That's All Right," Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup. RCA Victor–Bluebird Records, 1946.

"Let the Good Times Roll," Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five. Decca Records, 1946.

"Good Rocking Tonight," Roy Brown. DeLuxe Records, 1947.

"Call It Stormy Monday (But Tuesday Is Just as Bad)," T-Bone Walker. Black & White Records, 1947.

"Chicken Shack Boogie," Amos Milburn. Aladdin Records, 1948.

"Rock Around the Clock," Hal Singer. Mercury Records, 1948.

"Boogie Chillen," John Lee Hooker. Modern Records, 1948.

"All She Wants to Do Is Rock," Wynonie Harris. King Records, 1948.

"Tell Me So," The Orioles. Jubilee–It's a Natural Records, 1949.

1950s

"Please Send Me Someone to Love," Percy Mayfield. Specialty Records, 1950.

"Rocket 88," Jackie Brenston and His Delta Cats. Chess Records, 1951.

"Sh-Boom," The Chords. Atlantic–Cat Records, 1951.

"Sixty Minute Man," The Dominoes. King–Federal Records, 1951.

"Too Late Baby," The Five Keys. Aladdin Records, 1951.

"Lawdy Miss Clawdy," Lloyd Price. Specialty Records, 1952.

"Reeling and Rocking," Fats Domino. Imperial Records, 1952.

"5-10-15 Hours," Ruth Brown. Atlantic Records, 1952.

"Tipitina," Professor Longhair. Atlantic Records, 1953.

"Shake, Rattle and Roll," Big Joe Turner. Atlantic Records, 1954.

"The Things That I Used to Do," Guitar Slim. Specialty Records, 1954.

"Bo Diddley"/"I'm A Man," Bo Diddley. Chess–Checker Records, 1955.

"Maybellene," Chuck Berry. Chess Records, 1955.

"Don't Be Angry," Nappy Brown. Savoy Records, 1955.

"The Girl Can't Help It," Little Richard. Specialty Records, 1956.

"Honky Tonk," Bill Doggett. King Records, 1956.

"I Put a Spell on You," Screamin' Jay Hawkins. Okeh Records, 1956.

"Sinner's Prayer," Ray Charles.
Atlantic Records, 1957.

"Further Up the Road," Bobby
"Blue" Bland. Duke, 1957.

"Willie and the Hand Jive," Johnny
Otis. Capitol Records, 1958.

"A Lover's Question," Clyde
McPhatter. Atlantic Records, 1958.

"Lonely Teardrops," Jackie Wilson.
Brunswick Records, 1958.

"Don't You Just Know It," Huey
"Piano" Smith. Ace Records, 1958.

"Love Potion No. 9," The Clovers.
United Artists Records, 1959.

"There Is Something on Your
Mind," Big Jay McNeely.
Swingin' Records, 1959.

"The Twist," Hank Ballard.
King Records, 1959.

1960s

"Please Mr. Postman,"
The Marvelettes. Motown–
Tamla Records, 1961.

"Gee Whiz (Look At His Eyes),"
Carla Thomas. Satellite/
Stax Records, 1961.

"Mother In Law," Ernie-K-
Doe. Minit Records, 1961.

"Bring It on Home to Me," Sam
Cooke. RCA Victor, 1962.

"Green Onions," Booker T. & the
MGs. Stax–Volt Records, 1962.

"Baby Workout," Jackie Wilson.
Brunswick Records, 1963.

"It's All Right," The Impressions.
ABC–Paramount Records, 1963.

"Walking The Dog," Rufus
Thomas. Stax Records, 1963.

"Pushover," Etta James.
Chess Records, 1963.

"Wish Someone Would Care," Irma
Thomas. Imperial Records, 1964.

"Black Nights," Lowell Fulson.
Kent Records, 1965.

"Respect," Otis Redding.
Stax–Volt Records, 1965.

"Ooo Baby Baby," The Miracles.
Motown–Tamla Records, 1965.

"I Take What I Want," Sam &
Dave. Stax Records, 1965.

"Wang Dang Doodle," Koko
Taylor. Chess Records, 1965.

"Knock on Wood," Eddie
Floyd. Stax Records, 1966.

"When a Man Loves a
Woman," Percy Sledge.
Atlantic Records, 1966.

"Reach Out I'll Be There," Four
Tops. Motown Records, 1966.

"Tell It Like It Is," Aaron Neville.
Par-Lo Records, 1966.

"Ain't Nobody Home," Howard
Tate. Verve Records, 1966.

"Cold Sweat Parts 1&2," James
Brown. King Records, 1967.

"Piece of My Heart," Erma
Franklin. Shout Records, 1967.

"Ain't No Way," Aretha Franklin.
Atlantic Records, 1968.

"Cloud Nine," The Temptations.
Motown–Gordy Records, 1968.

"Tighten Up," Archie Bell and the
Drells. Atlantic Records, 1968.

"Say It Loud—I'm Black and
I'm Proud," James Brown.
King Records, 1968.

"I Want to Take You Higher,"
Sly and the Family Stone.
Epic Records, 1969.

"Can I Change My Mind," Tyrone
Davis. Dakar Records, 1969.

1970s

"Rainy Night in Georgia,"
Brook Benton. Atlantic–
Cotillion Records, 1970.

"The Thrill Is Gone," B.B.
King. ABC–Paramount–
Bluesway Records, 1970.

"The Look of Love," Isaac Hayes.
Stax–Enterprise, 1970.

"Patches," Clarence Carter.
Atlantic, 1970.

"Betcha by Golly, Wow," The
Stylistics. Avco Records, 1971.

"Don't Knock My Love,
Part 1," Wilson Pickett.
Atlantic Records, 1971.

"Son of Shaft," The Bar-Kays.
Stax Records, 1972.

"Work to Do," The Isley Brothers.
T-Neck–Buddah Records, 1972.

"Little Child Runnin' Wild," Curtis
Mayfield. Curtom Records, 1972.

"I Wanna Be Where You
Are," Michael Jackson.
Motown Records, 1972.

"Trouble Man," Marvin Gaye.
Motown–Tamla Records, 1972.

"In the Rain," The Dramatics.
Stax–Volt Records, 1972.

"Let's Stay Together," Al
Green. Hi Records, 1972.

"Super Fly," Curtis Mayfield.
Curtom Records, 1972.

"I Love Every Little Thing About
You," Stevie Wonder. Motown–
Tamla Records, 1972.

"If You're Ready (Come Go
with Me)," The Staple Singers.
Stax Records, 1973.

"Could It Be I'm Falling in Love," The
Spinners. Atlantic Records, 1973.

"Midnight Train to Georgia,"
Gladys Knight & the Pips.
Buddah Records, 1973.

"I Can't Stand the Rain," Ann
Peebles. Hi Records, 1973.

"For the Love of Money,"
The O'Jays. Philadelphia
International Records, 1973.

"Let's Straighten It Out," Latimore.
Glades Records, 1974.

"Hope That We Can Be
Together Soon," Harold Melvin
& the Blue Notes. Philadelphia
International Records, 1975.

"Mothership Connection
(Star Child)," Parliament.
Casablanca Records, 1976.

"One Nation Under a
Groove," Funkadelic. Warner
Bros. Records, 1978.

Remembering Kate Rinzler

by Jeff Place

Archivist, Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collection, Smithsonian Institution

Each year the Smithsonian Folklife Festival holds a special evening concert to honor both its co-founder Ralph Rinzler (1934–1994) and a key person with whom he collaborated. The 2011 Ralph Rinzler Memorial Concert pays tribute to his wife, Kate. For many years during Ralph's tenure as director of the Festival, Kate was his confidante and worked closely by his side.

Kathryn Hughes Rinzler (and Ralph always referred to her as Kathryn when he was addressing her affectionately) was born in 1937 in London, England, to an old New England family. She followed her dream to be a modern dancer and choreographer, studying dance in college and performing until she became a mother and her interests turned to teaching. She remarked, "That became one of the main themes in my life, to become a teacher.... It's much harder to be a dancer or choreographer—I was for a while—but then that got transformed into writing plays from oral histories, creating choreographies for children, and in the meantime, I was really studying children's ways of transforming their energies." Kate used art to teach children about social issues. And children's folklore—their art and their games—became another major theme in her life. As she was tied closely to the Folklife Festival through Ralph, she created a section of the Festival dedicated to children's folklore. Kate invited storytellers, musicians, and other tradition bearers such as Bessie Jones from the Georgia Sea Islands, Alison McMorland from Scotland, Paul Ofori-Ansah with his African games, and Stu Jamieson with Appalachian traditions to work with children on the National Mall. A series of films was produced on children's games and distributed through the Smithsonian Office of Museum Programs. While Kate directed the children's section of the Festival from 1974 to 1979, she solidified the concept of children's activities as a core theme for the Festival. In the years since then, children's programming has always been

part of the Festival, and we have Kate to thank for that.

During the many years the Rinzlers lived in Washington, they owned a wonderful large row house on Ninth Street SE, full of folk art that they had collected. "Jam sessions" were held here, with musicians hanging out in the spacious gardens. And it was here that they hosted many a reception for luminaries they had known through the Festival, the folk music scene, and the civil rights movement. The Rinzlers spent their down-time on Naushon Island, off the coast of Cape Cod, a large private island owned by Kate's family. The family would gather in the handful of houses on the property, and they would travel around by horse and carriage as there were no automobiles on the island. It was a blissful spot, a place for relaxation and creativity.

Kate spent several summers working with the Bread and Puppet Theater in Vermont. In the 1980s, she taught school in Pembroke, North Carolina, a community made up mostly of Lumbee Indians, who had been involved with the Festival since its early days. During this same time period, she traveled to India to conduct fieldwork for an exhibition, *Aditi: A Celebration of Life*, mounted at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History as part of the Institution's contribution to the Festival of India in 1985. She subsequently took what she learned from this experience and incorporated it into her work with the American Indian schoolchildren in North Carolina.

After Ralph's passing, Kate coordinated the annual Ralph Rinzler Memorial Concert for a number of years until she sold their long-time Washington home and moved west to Prescott, Arizona. During her final years she worked as an artist, mainly in the medium of batik, and found a wonderful new community of friends. She lost her long battle with cancer on Christmas Day 2010. She will be missed.



Kate Rinzler in the Children's Area at the 1974 Festival of American Folklife.
Photo by Reed and Susan Erskine, Lightworks