



Marvin Gaye



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Marvin Gaye in 1973	
Background information	
Birth name	Marvin Pentz Gay, Jr. ^[1]
Born	April 2, 1939 Washington, D.C., U.S.
Died	April 1, 1984 (aged 44) Los Angeles, California, U.S.
Genres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">R&Bsoulfunkjazz
Occupations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Singer-songwritermusicianproducer
Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Vocalspianokeyboardsdrumspercussionsynthesizers
Years active	1961–1984
Labels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tamla/Tamla-MotownColumbia
Associated acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Harvey FuquaMary WellsKim WestonTammi TerrellDiana Ross

Marvin Gaye (April 2, 1939 – April 1, 1984), born **Marvin Pentz Gay, Jr.**,^[1] was an American singer-songwriter and musician.

Gaye helped to shape the sound of Motown Records in the 1960s with a string of hits including "How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved By You)" and "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" and duet recordings with Mary Wells and Tammi Terrell, later earning the titles "Prince of Motown" and "Prince of Soul". During the 1970s, he recorded the concept albums *What's Going On* and *Let's Get It On* and became among the first artists in Motown to break away from the reins of its production company. Gaye's later recordings influenced several R&B subgenres such as quiet storm and neo-soul.

Following a period in Europe as a tax exile in the early 1980s, Gaye released the 1982 Grammy Award-winning hit "Sexual Healing" and the *Midnight Love* album. Since his death in 1984, Gaye has been posthumously honored by many institutions, including the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Early life

Marvin was born in Washington, D.C., to minister Marvin Gay, Sr., and domestic worker Alberta Gay (née Cooper). He first grew up in a house located at 1617 First Street SW, only a few blocks from the Anacostia River. The First Street neighborhood was nicknamed "Simple City" owing to its being "half-city, half country".^{[2][3][4]} When Marvin was in his teens, the family relocated to the Deanwood section of northeastern D.C. Marvin was the second eldest of Marvin Gay, Sr.'s children and the third overall of six. He had two sisters: Jeanne and Zeola, and three brothers: Michael Cooper, Frankie Gaye and Antwaun Gay. Michael Cooper was from his mother's previous relationship while Antwaun was born as a result of his father's extramarital affairs.

Marvin began singing in church at age four and was accompanied by his father on piano.^{[5][6][7]} Marvin and his family were part of a Pentecostal church sect known as the House of God. The House of God took its teachings from Hebrew Pentecostalism, advocated strict conduct, and adhered to both the Old and New Testaments.^{[8][9]} Gaye developed a love of singing at an early age and was encouraged to pursue a professional music career after a performance at a school play.^[7] His home life consisted of "brutal whippings" at the hands of his father, who struck him for any shortcoming.^[10] The younger Marvin described living under his father's house as similar to "living with a king, a very peculiar, changeable, cruel and all powerful king."^[3] He further stated that had his mother not encouraged his singing, he would have been a child suicide case.^[11] His sister later explained that Marvin was beaten often, from age seven well into his teenage years.^[12]

Marvin attended Cardozo High School and joined several doo-wop vocal groups, including the Dippers and the D.C. Tones.^[13] The younger Marvin's relationship with his father worsened during his teenage years as his father would kick him out of the house for what he perceived was misbehavior. Following an argument in which he stood up against his father, the younger Marvin walked out of the house for good and dropped out of high school.^[14] With dreams of being a flyer, 17-year-old Marvin enlisted in the United States Air Force as a Basic Airman.^{[15][16]} Disappointed in having to perform menial tasks, he faked mental illness and was discharged shortly afterwards.^[17] Gaye's sergeant stated that Marvin refused to follow orders.^[17]

Career

Early career

Following his return, Marvin and good friend Reese Palmer formed the vocal quartet The Marquees.^[18] The group performed in the D.C. area and soon began working with Bo Diddley, who assigned the group to Columbia subsidiary OKeh Records after failure to get the group signed to his own label, Chess.^[18] The group's sole single, "Wyatt Earp", failed to chart and the group was soon dropped from the label.^[19] Marvin began composing music during this period.^[19] The Marquees were later hired by Moonglows co-founder Harvey Fuqua as his employees.^[20] Under Fuqua's direction, the group changed its name to Harvey and the "New Moonglows" relocating them to Chicago.^[21] The group recorded several sides for Chess in 1959, including the song "Mama Loochie", which was



Washington, D.C.'s Columbia Heights where Marvin Gaye attended Cardozo High School, not far from the Deanwood neighborhood where he grew up

Marvin's first lead vocal recording. The group found work as session singers for established acts such as Chuck Berry, singing on the hits "Back in the U.S.A." and "Almost Grown". In 1960, the group disbanded and Marvin relocated to Detroit with Fuqua where he signed with Tri-Phi Records as a session musician, playing drums on several Tri-Phi releases. Marvin performed at Motown president Berry Gordy's house during the holiday season in 1960. Impressed by the singer, Gordy sought Fuqua on his contract with Marvin. Fuqua agreed to sell part of his interest in his contract with Gaye.^[22] Shortly afterwards, Marvin signed with Motown subsidiary Tamla.

When Marvin signed with Tamla, he pursued a career as a performer of jazz music and standards, having no desire to become an R&B performer.^[14] Before the release of his first single, Marvin was teased about his surname, with some jokingly asking, "Is Marvin Gay?"^[23] Marvin changed his surname by adding an "e", following the style of Sam Cooke. Author David Ritz wrote that the move was to silence rumors of his sexuality while adding the move also was designed to bring more distance between Marvin and his father.^[23] Gaye released his first single, "Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide" in May 1961, with the album, *The Soulful Moods of Marvin Gaye*, following a month later. Gaye's initial recordings were flops. Gaye spent most of 1961 performing session work as a drummer for artists such as The Miracles and The Marvelettes and was being paid \$5 (US\$39 in 2013 dollars^[24]) a week playing drums for the Miracles and blues artist Jimmy Reed.^{[25][26]} While Gaye would take some advice on performing with his eyes open (having been accused of appearing as though he were sleeping), Gaye refused to attend grooming school courses at the John Roberts Powers School for Social Grace in Detroit because of his unwillingness to comply with its orders, something he later regretted.^{[27][28]} In 1962, Gaye found success as co-writer of the Marvelettes hit, "Beechwood 4-5789". His first solo hit, "Stubborn Kind of Fellow", was later released that September, reaching number 8 on the R&B chart and number 46 on the *Billboard* Hot 100.

Initial success

Gaye reached the top 40 with the dance song, "Hitch Hike", peaking at number 30 on the Hot 100. "Pride and Joy" became Gaye's first top ten single after its release in 1963. The three singles and songs from the 1962 sessions were included on Gaye's second album, *That Stubborn Kinda Fellow*. Starting in October of the year, Gaye performed as part of the Motortown Revue, a series of concert tours headlined at the north and southeastern coasts of the United States as part of the chitlin' circuit. A filmed performance of Gaye at the Apollo Theater took place in June of 1963. Later that October, Tamla issued the live album, *Marvin Gaye Recorded Live on Stage*. "Can I Get a Witness" became one of Gaye's early international hits.

In 1964, Gaye recorded a successful duet album with singer Mary Wells titled *Together*, which reached 42 on the pop album chart. The album's two-sided single, including "Once Upon a Time" and "What's the Matter With You Baby", each reach the top 20. Gaye's next solo hit, "How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved By You)", written for Gaye by Holland-Dozier-Holland, reached number 6 on the Hot 100 and reached the top 50 in the UK. Gaye started getting some TV exposure around this time on shows such as *American Bandstand*. Also in 1964, he appeared in the concert film, *The T.A.M.I. Show*. Gaye had two number one R&B singles in 1965 with the Miracles-composed "I'll Be Doggone" and "Ain't That Peculiar". Both songs became million-sellers.

After scoring a hit duet, "It Takes Two" with Kim Weston, Gaye began working with Tammi Terrell on a series of duets, mostly composed by Ashford & Simpson, including "Ain't No Mountain High Enough", "Your Precious Love", "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing" and "You're All I Need to Get By".



"I Heard It through the Grapevine"

"I Heard It through the Grapevine" was recorded by Gaye in April 1967, several months before Gladys Knight and the Pips recorded it. The song features a horror-based Wurlitzer piano solo, percussion, and horns. Gaye's recording of it paved the way for what later became "psychedelic soul".

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In October of the year 1967, Terrell collapsed in Gaye's arms during a performance in Farmville, Virginia.^[29] Terrell was subsequently rushed to Farmville's Southside Community Hospital, where doctors discovered she had a malignant tumor in her brain.^[29] The diagnosis ended Terrell's career as a live performer, though she continued to record music under careful supervision. Despite the presence of hit singles such as "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing" and "You're All I Need to Get By", Terrell's illness led to problems with recording with repeated operations to remove the tumor. Gaye was reportedly devastated by Terrell's sickness and became disillusioned with the record business. In late 1968, Gaye's recording of "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" was released and became Gaye's first to reach number one on the Billboard Hot 100; it also reached the top of the charts in other countries, selling well over four million copies.^[30] However, Gaye felt the success was something he "didn't deserve" and that he "felt like a puppet—Berry's puppet, Anna's puppet...."^{[31][32][33]} Gaye followed it up with "Too Busy Thinking About My Baby" and "That's the Way Love Is", which reached the top ten on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1969. That year, his album *M.P.G.* became his first number one R&B album. Gaye produced and co-wrote two hits for The Originals during this period, including "Baby I'm For Real" and "The Bells".

On March 16, 1970, Tammi Terrell succumbed to brain cancer, and Gaye wept at her funeral.^[34] Following this, he went into prolonged seclusion from the music business. After a period of depression, Gaye sought out a position on a professional football team, the Detroit Lions, where he later befriended Mel Farr and Lem Barney. It was eventually decided that Gaye wouldn't be allowed to try out owing to fears of possible injuries that could have affected his music career.^{[35][36]}

***What's Going On* and subsequent success**

On June 1, 1970, Gaye returned to Hitsville U.S.A., where he recorded his new composition "What's Going On", inspired by an idea from Renaldo "Obie" Benson of the Four Tops after he witnessed an act of police brutality at an anti-war rally in Berkeley.^[37] Upon hearing the song, Berry Gordy refused its release due to his feelings of the song being "too political" for radio. Gaye responded by going on strike from recording until the label released the song. Released in 1971, it reached number one on the R&B charts within a month, staying there for five weeks. It also reached the top spot on Cashbox's pop chart for a week and reached number two on the Hot 100 and the Record World chart, selling over two million copies.^{[38][39]}

After giving an ultimatum to record a full album to win creative control from Motown, Gaye spent ten days recording the *What's Going On* album that March.^[40] Motown issued the album that May after Gaye remixed portions of the album in Hollywood. The album became Gaye's first million-selling album launching two more top ten singles, "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)" and "Inner City Blues". One of Motown's first autonomous works, its theme and segue flow brought the concept album format to rhythm and blues and was later cited by an Allmusic writer as being "the most important and passionate record to come out of soul music, delivered by one of its finest voices".^[41] For the album, Gaye received two Grammy Award nominations and several NAACP Image Awards.^[42] The album also topped *Rolling Stone's* year-end list as its album of the year. Billboard magazine named Gaye *Trendsetter of the Year* following the album's success. In 1971, Gaye signed a new deal with Motown worth \$1 million (US\$5,764,174 in 2013 dollars^[24]), making it the most lucrative deal by a black recording artist at the time.^[43] Gaye first responded to the new contract with the soundtrack and subsequent score, *Trouble Man*, released in late 1972.



"Let's Get It On"

"Let's Get It On" was written by Gaye and producer Ed Townsend, originally as a gospel song, and later as a protest song before eventually turning into a funk-oriented love anthem. It became Gaye's second number-one hit in 1973.

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In 1973, Gaye released the *Let's Get It On* album. Its title track became Gaye's second number one single on the Hot 100. The album subsequently stayed on the charts for two years and sold over three million copies. The album was later hailed as "a record unparalleled in its sheer sensuality and carnal energy."^[44] Other singles from the album included "Come Get to This", which recalled Gaye's early Motown soul sound of the previous decade, while the suggestive "You Sure Love to Ball" reached modest success but received tepid promotion due to the song's sexually explicit content.^[45] Marvin's final duet project, *Diana & Marvin*, with Diana Ross, garnered international success. Responding to demand from fans and Motown, Gaye started his first tour in four years at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum on January 4, 1974.^[46] The performance received critical acclaim and resulted in the release of the live album, *Marvin Gaye Live!* and its single, a live version of "Distant Lover", an album track from *Let's Get It On*. The tour helped to increase Gaye's reputation as a live performer.^[46] For a time, he was earning \$10,000 a night (US\$47,335 in 2013 dollars^[24]) for performances. Gaye toured throughout 1974 and 1975. A renewed contract with Motown allowed Gaye to build his own custom-made recording studio. In October 1975, Gaye gave a performance at a UNESCO benefit concert at New York's Radio City Music Hall to support UNESCO's African literacy drive, resulting in him being commended at the United Nations by then-Ambassador to Ghana Shirley Temple Black and Kurt Waldheim.^{[47][48]} Gaye's next studio album, *I Want You*, followed in 1976 with the title track becoming a number-one R&B hit. That summer, Gaye embarked on his first European tour in a decade, starting off in England. In early 1977, Gaye issued the live album, *Live at the London Palladium*, which sold over two million copies thanks to the success of its studio song, "Got to Give It Up", which became a number one hit.


Last Motown recordings and European exile

In December 1978, Gaye issued *Here, My Dear*, inspired by the fallout of his first marriage to Anna Gordy. Recorded as an intent for Gaye to remit a portion of its royalties to her to receive alimony payments, it flopped on the charts. During that period, Gaye developed a serious dependence and addiction to cocaine and was dealing with several financial issues with the IRS. These issues led him to move to Maui, where he struggled to record a disco album.^[49] In 1980, Gaye went on a European tour.^[50] By the time the tour stopped, the singer relocated to London where he feared imprisonment for failure to pay back taxes, which had now reached upwards to \$4.5 million.(US\$12,749,394 in 2013 dollars^[24]),^{[50][51]}

Gaye then reworked *Love Man* from its original disco concept to another personal album invoking religion and the possible end time from a chapter in the Book of Revelation.^[52] Titling the album, *In Our Lifetime?*, Gaye provided work on the album for much of 1980 in London studios such as Air and Odyssey Studios.^[53] In the fall of that year, a master tape of a rough draft of the album was stolen from one of Gaye's traveling musicians, Frank Blair, who took the master tape to Motown's Hollywood headquarters.^[54] Motown remixed the album and issued it on January 15, 1981.^[55] When Gaye learned of its release, Gaye accused Motown of editing and remixing the album without his consent, allowing the issue of an unfinished production ("Far Cry"), altering the album art of his request and removing the album title's question mark, muting its irony.^[56] He also accused the label of rush-releasing the album, comparing his unfinished album to an unfinished Picasso painting.^[56] Gaye then promised not to record any more music for Motown.^[57]

On February 14, 1981, under the advice of music promoter Freddy Cousaert, Gaye relocated to Cousaert's apartment in Ostend, Belgium.^[58] While there, Gaye shied away from heavy drug use and began exercising and attending a local Ostend church, regaining personal confidence.^{[59][60]} Following several months of recovery, Gaye sought a comeback onstage, starting the short-lived *Heavy Love Affair* tour in England and Ostend between June and July 1981.^[61] Gaye's personal attorney Curtis Shaw would later describe Gaye's Ostend period as "the best thing that ever happened to Marvin". When word got around that Gaye was planning a musical comeback and an exit from Motown, CBS Urban president Larkin Arnold eventually was able to convince Gaye to sign with CBS. On March 23, 1982, Motown and CBS Records negotiated for Gaye to be released from Motown. The details of the contract were kept from being revealed due to a possible negative effect on the singer's settlement to creditors from the IRS.^[62]

Midnight Love

	<p>"Sexual Healing"</p> <p>"Sexual Healing" was written by Gaye alongside Odell Brown and David Ritz. Ritz said Gaye advised him to write a poem after telling the singer he needed "sexual healing" while living in Europe. The song became an international hit after its release in 1982.</p>
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Assigned to CBS' Columbia subsidiary, Gaye worked on his first post-Motown album titled *Midnight Love*. The first single, "Sexual Healing", was released on September 30, 1982, and became a huge hit, reaching number-one on the R&B chart, where it stayed for ten weeks. The success later translated to the top ten on the pop chart in January 1983, while the record reached international success, reaching the top spot in New Zealand and Canada and reaching the top-10 in the United Kingdom, later selling over two million copies, becoming Gaye's most successful single to date. The video for the song was shot at Ostend's Casino-Kursaal. "Sexual Healing" won Gaye his first two Grammy Awards including Best Male Vocal Performance, in February 1983, and also won Gaye an American Music Award in the soul/R&B category. It was called by *People* magazine "America's hottest musical turn-on since Olivia Newton John demanded we get 'Physical'". *Midnight Love* was released to stores a day after the single's release and was as successful as the single, peaking at the top ten of the Billboard 200 and becoming Gaye's eighth number-one album on the Top Soul LPs chart, eventually selling over six million copies worldwide, three million alone in the United States.

“I don't make records for pleasure. I did when I was a younger artist, but I don't today. I record so that I can feed people what they need, what they feel. Hopefully, I record so that I can help someone overcome a bad time.”

NME – December 1982

On February 13, 1983, Gaye performed "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the NBA All-Star Game, held at The Forum in Inglewood, California, accompanied by Gordon Banks, who played the studio tape from stands.^[63] The following month, Gaye performed at the *Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever* special. This and a May appearance on *Soul Train*, his third appearance overall on the show, became Gaye's final television performances. Gaye embarked on his final concert tour, titled the *Sexual Healing Tour*, on April 18, 1983 in San Diego, California.^[64] The tour ended on August 14, 1983 at the Pacific Amphitheatre in Costa Mesa, California but was plagued by cocaine-triggered paranoia and illness. Following the concert's end, he retreated to his parents' house in Los Angeles. In early 1984, *Midnight Love* was nominated for a Grammy in the Best Male R&B Vocal Performance, his fourteenth and final nomination.

Death

At around 11:38 am on April 1, 1984, as Marvin was seated on his bed talking to his mother, Gaye's father shot at Marvin twice. The first shot, which entered the right side of Gaye's chest, was fatal, having perforated his vital organs. Gaye was taken to the emergency room of the California Hospital Medical Center and was pronounced dead on arrival at 1:01 pm.^[65] Gaye died a day before turning 45. The gun with which Marvin Gaye, Sr. shot his son was given to him by Marvin as a Christmas present.^[66]

Following his funeral, Marvin was cremated with part of his ashes spread near the Pacific Ocean. Gaye did not leave behind a will or an insurance policy at the time of his death.^[67] Gaye's father pleaded no contest to a voluntary manslaughter charge and was sentenced to probation. He later died of pneumonia in 1998. Marvin's fans have held vigils for the singer at the final residence to celebrate the day of his birth.

Personal life

Marvin was the father of three children, Marvin III, Nona and Frankie, and the grandfather of three boys, Marvin IV, Nolan and Dylan. At the time of his death, he was survived by his three children, parents and five siblings.

Musicianship

Influences

Growing up, as a child, Gaye's main influence was that of his minister father, something he would later acknowledge to biographer David Ritz and also in interviews he gave, often mentioning that his father's sermons left a big impression on him. His first major musical influences came in the form of doo-wop groups such as The Moonglows and The Capris. Gaye's Rock & Roll Hall of Fame page lists the Capris' song, "God Only Knows" as "critical to his musical awakening". Of the Capris' song, Gaye said "It fell from the heavens and hit me between the eyes. So much soul, so much hurt. I related to the story, to the way that no one except the Lord really can read the heart of lonely kids in love."^[68] Gaye's main musical influences were Rudy West of The Five Keys, Clyde McPhatter, Ray Charles and Little Willie John.^[69] Gaye considered Frank Sinatra to be a real major influence in what he wanted to be.^[69] He also was influenced by the vocal styles of Billy Eckstine and Nat King Cole.^[70]

Later on as his Motown career developed, Gaye would seek inspiration in fellow label mates such as David Ruffin of The Temptations and Levi Stubbs of the Four Tops as their grittier voices led to Gaye and his producer seeking a similar sound in recordings such as "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" and "That's the Way Love Is". Later in his life, Gaye reflected on the influence of Ruffin and Stubbs stating, "I had heard something in their voices something my own voice lacked".^[71] He further explained, "the Tempts and Tops' music made me remember that when a lot of women listen to music, they want to feel the power of a real man."^[71]

Vocal range

Gaye encompassed a three-octave vocal range.^[72] From his earlier recordings as member of the Marquees and Harvey and the New Moonglows and in his first several recordings with Motown, Gaye recorded mainly in the baritone and tenor ranges. Gaye changed his range to a raspier tenor for his gospel-inspired early hits such as "Stubborn Kind of Fellow" and "Hitch Hike". As writer Eddie Holland explained: "He was the only singer I have ever heard known to take a song of that nature, that was so far removed from his natural voice where he liked singing, and do whatever it took to sell that song." In songs such as "Pride & Joy", Gaye used three different vocal ranges for the song, singing in his baritone range at the beginning, bringing a lighter tenor in the verses before reaching a gospel mode in the chorus. Holland further stated of Gaye's voice that it was "one of the sweetest and prettiest voices you ever wanted to hear." And while he noted that ballads and jazz was "his basic soul", he stated Gaye "had the ability to take a roughhouse, rock and roll, blues, R&B, any kind of song and make it his own", later citing that Gaye was the most versatile vocalist he ever worked with.

Gaye's vocal style changed in the late 1960s in which he was told to incorporate a sharper raspy voice especially in Norman Whitfield's recordings, which Gaye initially profoundly disliked, considered it out of his range, but said he was "into being produce-able". After listening to David Ruffin and Levi Stubbs, Gaye said he started to develop what he called his "tough man voice" stating "I developed a growl".^[71] According to the liner notes of his DVD set, *Marvin Gaye: The Real Thing in Performance 1964-1981*, Rob Bowman stated that by the early 1970s, Gaye had essentially developed "three distinct voices; his smooth, sweet tenor, a growling rasp and an unreal falsetto". Bowman further wrote that the recording of the "What's Going On" single was "the first single to utilize all three as Marvin developed a radical approach to constructing his recordings by layering a series of contraptional background vocal lines on different tracks, each one conceived and sung in isolation by Marvin himself." Bowman cites Gaye's multi-tracking of his tenor voice and other vocal styles "summon[ed] up what might be termed the ancient art of weaving".

Social commentary and concept albums

Prior to recording the *What's Going On* album, Gaye recorded a cover of the song, "Abraham, Martin & John", which became a UK hit in 1970. Only a handful of artists of various genres had recorded albums that focused on social commentary, including Curtis Mayfield. Despite some politically conscious material recorded by The Temptations in the late 1960s, Motown artists were often told to not delve into political and social commentary, fearing alienation from pop audiences. Early in his career, Gaye was affected by social events such as the Watts riots and once asked himself, "with the world exploding around me, how am I supposed to keep singing love songs?"^[73] When the singer called Gordy in the Bahamas about wanting to do protest music, Gordy cautioned him, "Marvin, don't be ridiculous. That's taking things too far."^[40]

Once Gaye presented Gordy with the *What's Going On* album, Gordy feared Gaye was risking the ruination of his image as a sex symbol. Following the album's success, Gaye tried a follow-up album that he would label *You're the Man*. The title track only produced modest success, however, and Gaye and Motown shelved the album. Later on, several of Gaye's unreleased songs of social commentary, including "The World Is Rated X", would be issued on posthumous compilation albums. *What's Going On* would later be described by an Allmusic writer as an album that "not only redefined soul music as a creative force but also expanded its impact as an agent for social change".

The album also provided another first in both Motown and R&B music: Gaye and his engineers had composed the album in a song cycle, segueing previous songs into other songs giving the album a more cohesive feel as opposed to R&B albums that traditionally included filler tracks to complete the album. This style of music would influence recordings by artists such as Stevie Wonder and Barry White making the concept album format a part of 1970s R&B music. Concept albums are usually based on either one theme or a series of themes in connection to the original thesis of the album's concept. *Let's Get It On* repeated the suite-form arrangement of *What's Going On*, as would Gaye's later albums such as *I Want You*, *Here, My Dear* and *In Our Lifetime*.

Legacy

Marvin Gaye has been called "the number-one purveyor of soul music".^[5] In his book, *Mercy Mercy Me: The Art, Loves and Demons of Marvin Gaye*, Michael Eric Dyson described Gaye as someone "who transcended the boundaries of rhythm and blues as no other performer had done before".^[74] His recordings for Motown in the 1960s and 1970s shaped that label's signature sound. His work with Motown gave him the titles "Prince of Soul" and "Prince of Motown".^{[75][76]} According to several music critics and historians, Marvin Gaye's career "spanned the entire history of rhythm and blues from fifties doo-wop to eighties contemporary soul." Critics stated that Gaye's music "signified the development of black music from raw rhythm and blues, through sophisticated soul to the political awareness of the 1970s and increased concentration on personal and sexual politics thereafter." As a Motown artist, Gaye was among the first to break from the reins of its production system, paving the way for Stevie Wonder.^{[5][77][78]} Gaye's late 1970s and early 1980s recordings influenced contemporary forms of R&B predating the subgenres quiet storm and neo-soul.

Artists from many genres have covered Gaye's music, including James Taylor, Brian McKnight, Chico DeBarge, Michael McDonald, Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross, Aaliyah, A Perfect Circle, The Strokes and Gil Scott-Heron. Other artists such as D'Angelo, Common, Nas and Maxwell interpolated parts of Gaye's clothing from the singer's mid-1970s period. Gaye's clothing style was later appropriated by Eddie Murphy in his role as James "Thunder" Early in *Dreamgirls*. Gaye's military-styled clothing attire in his final tour was picked up by Michael Jackson.^[79] According to David Ritz, "since 1983 Marvin's name has been mentioned - in reverential tones - on no less than seven top-ten hit records."^[76] Later performers such as Kanye West and Mary J. Blige sampled Gaye's work for their recordings.

Awards and honors

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducted him in 1987, declaring that Gaye "made a huge contribution to soul music in general and the Motown Sound in particular." The page stated that Gaye "possessed a classic R&B voice that was edged with grit yet tempered with sweetness". The page further states that Gaye "projected an air of soulful authority driven by fervid conviction and heartbroken vulnerability" throughout his career. A year after his death, then-mayor of D.C., Marion Barry declared April 2 as "Marvin Gaye Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund Day" in the city.^[80] Since then, a non-profit organization has helped to organize annual Marvin Gaye Day Celebrations in the city of Washington. A year later, Gaye's mother founded the Marvin P. Gaye Jr. Memorial Foundation in dedication to her son to help those suffering from drug abuse and alcoholism; however she died a day before the memorial was set to open in 1987.^[81] Gaye's sister Jeanne once served as the foundation's chairperson.^[82] In 1990, Gaye received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.^{[83][84]} In 1996, Gaye posthumously received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame listed three Gaye recordings, "I Heard It Through the Grapevine", "What's Going On" and "Sexual Healing", among its list of the "500 Songs That Shaped Rock and Roll". American music magazine *Rolling Stone* ranked Gaye number 18 on their list of the "100 Greatest Artists of All Time" and sixth on their list of "100 Greatest Singers of All Time". *Q* magazine ranked Gaye sixth on their list of the "100 Greatest Singers".

Three of Gaye's albums, *What's Going On*, *Let's Get It On* and *Here, My Dear*, were ranked by *Rolling Stone* on their list of the "500 Greatest Albums of All Time". *What's Going On* remains his largest-ranked album, reaching No. 6 on the Rolling Stone list and topped the NME list of the "Top 100 Albums of All Time" in 1985 and was later chosen in 2003 for inclusion by the Library of Congress to its National Recording Registry. In addition, four of his songs, "I Heard It Through the Grapevine", "What's Going On", "Let's Get It On" and "Sexual Healing" made it on the *Rolling Stone* list of the "500 Greatest Songs of All Time".

In 2006, an old park that Gaye frequented as a teenager called Watts Branch Park in Washington was renamed Marvin Gaye Park. Three years later, the 5200 block of Foote Street NE in Deanwood, Washington, DC, was renamed Marvin Gaye Way.

Use of his music and documentaries

His 1983 NBA All-Star performance of the national anthem was used in a Nike commercial featuring the 2008 US Olympic basketball team. Also, on CBS Sports' final NBA telecast to date (before the contract moved to NBC) at the conclusion of Game 5 of the 1990 Finals, they used Gaye's 1983 All-Star Game performance over the closing credits. When VH1 launched on January 1, 1985, Gaye's 1983 rendition of the national anthem was the very first video to be aired. Most recently, it was used in the intro to Ken Burns' *Tenth Inning* documentary on the game of baseball.

"I Heard It Through the Grapevine" was played in a Levi's ad in 1985. The result of the commercial's success led to the original song finding renewed success in Europe after Tamla-Motown re-released it in the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands. In 1986, the song was covered by Buddy Miles as part of a California Raisins ad campaign. The song was later used for chewing gum commercials in Finland and to promote a brand of Lucky Strike cigarettes in Germany.^{[85][86]}

Gaye's music has also been used in numerous film soundtracks including *Four Brothers*, which frequently played Gaye's music from his *Trouble Man* soundtrack. "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" was used in the opening credits of the film, *The Big Chill*. Gaye's music has also become a source for samples in hip-hop recordings.

In 2007, his song, "A Funky Space Reincarnation", was used in the Charlize Theron-starred ad for Dior J'Adore perfume. A documentary about Gaye – *What's Going On: The Marvin Gaye Story* – was a UK/PBS co-production, directed by Jeremy Marre and was first broadcast in 2006; two years later, the special re-aired with a different production and newer interviews after it was re-broadcast as an *American Masters* special. Another documentary, focusing on his 1981 documentary, *Transit Ostend*, titled *Remember Marvin*, was seen in 2006.

Earnings

In 2008, Gaye earned \$3.5 million (US\$3,794,822 in 2013 dollars^[24]), and took 13th place in 'Top-Earning Dead Celebrities' in *Forbes Magazine*.

Filmography

- 1965: *T.A.M.I. Show* (documentary)
- 1969: *The Ballad of Andy Crocker* (television movie)
- 1971: *Chrome & Hot Leather* (television movie)
- 1973: *Save the Children* (documentary)

Videography

- *Marvin Gaye: Live in Montreux 1980* (2003)
- *The Real Thing: In Performance (1964–1981)* (2006)

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- [3] Ritz 1991, p. 13.
- [4] Gaye 2003, p. 4.
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- [6] Ritz 1991, p. 14.
- [7] Gaye 2003, p. 8.
- [8] Ritz 1991, p. 5.
- [9] Ritz 1991, p. 11.
- [10] Ritz 1991, p. 12.
- [11] Ritz 1991, p. 13: "If it wasn't for Mother, who was always there to console me and praise me for my singing, I think I would have been one of those child suicide cases you read about in the papers".
- [12] Ritz 1991, p. 12: "From the time he was seven until he became a teenager, Marvin's life at home consisted of a series of brutal whippings".
- [13] Gulla 2008, p. 333.
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