



The Temptations



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The "Classic 5" lineup of The Temptations: David Ruffin (bottom left), Melvin Franklin (top left), Paul Williams (top right), Otis Williams (bottom right), and Eddie Kendricks (center) c. 1965.	
Background information	
Also known as	The Elgins, The Pirates
Origin	Detroit, Michigan, U.S.
Genres	R&B, soul, funk, doo-wop, rock and roll
Years active	1960–present
Labels	Warwick, Miracle, Gordy, Motown, Atlantic, New Door
Associated acts	The Supremes, Smokey Robinson, Norman Whitfield, The Four Tops, The Temptations Review featuring Dennis Edwards
Website	www.temptationssing.com ^[1]
Members	Otis Williams Ron Tyson Joe Herndon Terry Weeks Bruce Williamson
Past members	Elbridge "Al" Bryant Melvin Franklin Eddie Kendricks Paul Williams David Ruffin Dennis Edwards Ricky Owens Richard Street Damon Harris Glenn Leonard Louis Price Ali-Ollie Woodson Theo Peoples Ray Davis Harry McGilberry Barrington "Bo" Henderson G. C. Cameron

The Temptations are an American vocal group known for their success with Motown Records during the 1960s and 1970s. Known for their choreography, distinct harmonies, and flashy wardrobe, they were highly influential to R&B and soul.^[2]

Known to always feature at least five male vocalists and dancers, the group formed in 1960 in Detroit, Michigan under the name **The Elgins**. Having sold tens of millions of albums, the Temptations are one of the most successful groups in music history.^{[3][4][5]} As of 2013^[6], the Temptations continue to perform and record for Universal Music Group with one living original member, Otis Williams, still in the lineup.

The original founding members of the group were Otis Williams, Elbridge "Al" Bryant, Melvin Franklin, Eddie Kendricks, and Paul Williams. The members were from two former rival vocal groups, the Distant and the Primes. In 1964, Bryant was replaced by David Ruffin. Four years later, Ruffin was replaced by Dennis Edwards. In 1971,

the lineup changed again when Kendricks and Paul Williams were replaced by Ricky Owens and Richard Street. The former replacement was soon replaced by Damon Harris. Like its "sister" group, The Supremes, the Temptations' lineup has changed frequently over the years.

Over the course of their career, the Temptations have released four Billboard Hot 100 number-one singles and fourteen R&B number-one singles. Their material earned them three Grammy Awards. The Temptations was the first Motown recording act to win a Grammy Award and in 2013 the group received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. Six of the Temptations (Edwards, Franklin, Kendricks, Ruffin, Otis Williams and Paul Williams) were inducted to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1989. Three classic Temptations songs, "My Girl", "Just My Imagination (Running Away with Me)", and "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone", are among The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll. The Temptations were also ranked at #68 on the Rolling Stone magazine's list of the 100 Greatest Artists of all time.

History

Origins

Eddie Kendricks and Paul Williams began singing together in church as children. By their teenage years, they formed a doo-wop quartet in 1955 with two other friends, Kell Osborne and Wiley Waller, naming themselves the Cavaliers. After Waller left the group in 1957, the remaining trio left Birmingham to break into the music business. The group settled at Detroit where they changed their name to the Primes under the direction of Milton Jenkins. The Primes soon became well known around the Detroit area for their meticulous performances.^[7] Jenkins later created the "sister group", The Primettes, later known as The Supremes. Kendricks was already seen as a "matinee idol" in the Detroit area while Williams was well received for his baritone vocals. Texas teenager Otis Williams moved to Detroit as a youngster to be with his mother. By 1958, Williams was the leader of a vocal group named Otis Williams and the Siberians. The group included best friend Elbridge "Al" Bryant, James "Pee-Wee" Crawford, Vernard Plain and Arthur Walton. The group recorded a song, "Pecos Kid" for a label run by radio deejay Senator Bristol Bryant.^[8] Shortly after its release, the group changed its name to The El Domingoes. Following this, Montgomery native Melvin Franklin replaced Arthur Walton as bass vocalist and Franklin's cousin, Detroit-born Richard Street, replaced Vernard Plain as lead singer. Signing with Johnnie Mae Matthews' Northern Records, the group had their name changed again to The Distant.

The group recorded two Northern singles including "Come On" (1959) and "Alright" (1960).^[9] Between these releases, Albert "Mooch" Harrell replaced Pee-Wee Crawford. "Come On" became a local hit and the Warwick Records label picked the record up for national distribution. Following the release of "Alright", Matthews appointed Williams the group leader, and the group's name was changed to Otis Williams & The Distant.^[10] During this period, both the Primes and Distant were influenced by other vocal groups including The Miracles.^[11] Other inspirations included the Cadillacs, Frankie Lymon & the Teenagers, The Drifters, and The Isley Brothers.^[12] Though "Come On" was a local hit in the Detroit area, the Distant never saw much record sales and "Alright" wasn't as successful. After receiving an offer from Berry Gordy to sign with Motown Records, the Distant got out of their contract with Northern Records. However, Mooch Harrell and Richard Street shortly departed from the group and the remaining members lost use of the Distant name. Richard Street later formed another Distant group who recorded for the Thelma label in the early 1960s.

Early years

Members of the Distant were acquainted with the Primes as both groups participated in the same talent shows and performed at the same public venues. Friendly rivals, the Primes were considered to be the more polished and vocally stronger group of the two. The Primes disbanded in 1960 after Kell Osborne moved to California. Eddie Kendricks and Paul Williams returned to Alabama following the band's dissolution. While visiting relatives in Detroit, Kendricks called Otis Williams who, desperately needing two more members for an audition for Gordy's label, offered Kendricks a lead singer place in his new group. Kendricks agreed on the condition he bring Paul Williams with him. Otis Williams happily agreed and Kendricks and Paul Williams moved back to Detroit to join the new group.

The original name for the new lineup of Otis Williams, Melvin Franklin, Elbridge "Al" Bryant, Eddie Kendricks, and Paul Williams was the Elgins. Under that name, the group auditioned for Motown in March 1961. Already impressed with some of the members after hearing session work, Berry Gordy agreed to sign the group to the Motown imprint, Miracle. However, before signing, Gordy discovered another group was using the name of Elgins. The group began tossing about ideas for a new name on the steps of the Hitsville U.S.A. studio. On a suggestion from Miracle Records employee Billy Mitchell, songwriter Mickey Stevenson, and group members Otis Williams and Paul Williams, The Temptations became the group's new moniker. The "Elgins" name would re-surface at Motown in 1965, when Gordy renamed a quartet called The Downbeats as The Elgins.

The Temptations' first two singles, "Oh Mother of Mine" and "Check Yourself", with Paul Williams on lead, were released on Miracle before Gordy closed the label down and reassigned the band to his latest imprint, Gordy Records. On the Gordy imprint, Eddie Kendricks sang lead on the Temptations' first charted single, "Dream Come True", which peaked at #22 on the R&B chart in 1962. Later that year, the Temptations began touring as part of the Motortown Revue. The group would issue eight recordings between 1961 and 1963 without much success. Paul Williams and Eddie Kendricks split the leads during this early period, with Al Bryant, Otis Williams, and Melvin Franklin occasionally singing lead, as they would on a song titled "Isn't She Pretty". For a brief time, the group almost had their name changed to The Pirates, and recorded the songs "Mind Over Matter" and "I'll Love You Till I Die" under that name. Eventually the label and the group decided against it. One hit song, "Do You Love Me", was originally set to be recorded by the Temptations. When he couldn't get a hold of the group, Gordy produced a version for The Contours. In 1963, the Temptations began working with Smokey Robinson as producer and writer. Robinson's first work with the group was the Paul Williams-led "I Want a Love I Can See". While the song failed to chart, it did eventually become a popular live performance spot for the group and particularly for Paul Williams in general. Due to their lack of hits, the group was given the nickname, "The Hitless Temptations".

During this time, David Ruffin began following the group around as he aspired to join the group. During a local Detroit performance, Ruffin joined the group onstage and impressed the group with his vocal talent and dancing skills.^[13] Following that same time, Al Bryant had grown frustrated with the group's lack of success and became restless and uncooperative, preferring the mundane routine of his day job as a milkman over the rigors of rehearsal and performing. After a heated quarrel with Paul and hitting him in the head with a beer bottle following a disastrous performance at the 1963 Motown company Christmas/New Years Eve party, Bryant was summarily fired from the group. As a result, David Ruffin was brought in as his replacement in January 1964. Though Ruffin's brother Jimmy was also considered for the slot, David was selected following his performance with them in 1963. Bryant continued to perform in a number of other local groups, and died at the age of 36 in Flagler County, Florida of liver cirrhosis on October 26, 1975.

The "Classic Five" Era

In January 1964, Smokey Robinson and Miracles bandmate Bobby Rogers co-wrote and produced "The Way You Do the Things You Do" with Eddie Kendricks on lead and the single became the Temptations' first Top 20 hit that April.

Shortly afterward, "The Way You Do The Things You Do" and several pre-David Ruffin singles were compiled into the group's first album, *Meet The Temptations*, released in early 1964. The next two Temptations singles in 1964, "Girl (Why You Wanna Make Me Blue)" along with "I'll Be in Trouble" and its B-side "The Girl's Alright With Me", all featured Kendricks on lead. However, producer Smokey Robinson saw potential in the "mellow" yet "gruff" voice of David Ruffin, and thought that if he could write the perfect song for his lead, then the group could have a Top 10 hit.^[14]

While traveling as part of Motown's Motortown Revue later that year, Robinson and fellow Miracles member Ronnie White wrote "My Girl", which the Temptations recorded in the fall of 1964 with Ruffin singing his first lead vocal for the group. Released as a single on December 21, 1964, the song became the Temptations' first number-one pop hit in March 1965, and is their signature song to this day.

After the success of "My Girl", Ruffin sang lead on the next three singles: "It's Growing", "Since I Lost My Baby", and "My Baby", all of which made it to the Top 20 in 1965. The B-side to "My Baby", "Don't Look Back", featured a stirring lead from Paul Williams, and was a sleeper hit on the R&B charts and a standard for vocal group playlists.

Norman Whitfield had requested the opportunity to write for the group and in 1966, Berry Gordy promised him that if Robinson's "Get Ready", with Eddie Kendricks on lead, failed to chart in the Top 20, Whitfield would be allowed to produce the next song. "Get Ready" subsequently missed its mark, and Gordy issued the Whitfield-produced "Ain't Too Proud to Beg", with David Ruffin on lead, as the next single. "Ain't Too Proud to Beg" outperformed "Get Ready" on the *Billboard* charts, and Whitfield became the Temptations' new main producer. He began pulling the group away from the ballad-based productions espoused by Robinson, toward a harder-edged and brass-heavy soul sound reminiscent of James Brown.

Nearly all of the singles produced by Whitfield prior to 1968 featured David Ruffin on lead, including the R&B number-one/pop Top 10 hits "Beauty Is Only Skin Deep", "(I Know) I'm Losing You" and the early 1967 hit "(Loneliness Made Me Realize) It's You That I Need". Other important singles from this period include "All I Need", produced by Frank Wilson, a Whitfield protégé, and the "You're My Everything", on which Kendricks and Ruffin share lead. Studio albums during the "Classic Five" period apart from *Meet The Temptations* include *The Temptations Sing Smokey* (1965), *The Temptin' Temptations* (1965), *Gettin' Ready* (1966), *The Temptations with a Lot o' Soul* (1967), and *The Temptations Wish It Would Rain* (1968).

During this period, the various songwriting partners of Norman Whitfield included Roger Penzabene, Edward Holland, Jr., and Temptations road show manager and guitarist Cornelius Grant. Subsequently, Barrett Strong, who sang the very first hit at Motown in 1959, "Money (That's What I Want)", began working with Whitfield and Penzabene on Temptations material after Eddie Holland left Motown with the rest of the Holland-Dozier-Holland songwriting/production team in 1967. Two of the Whitfield-Strong-Penzabene collaborations, "I Wish It Would Rain" and "I Could Never Love Another (After Loving You)", became hits in early 1968 after the suicide of Roger Penzabene in December 1967. Subsequently, Barrett Strong became the sole collaborator of Norman Whitfield.

Exit David Ruffin, enter Dennis Edwards

From early 1964 to mid 1968, the Temptations went from unknown hopefuls to international stars and as a result, appeared frequently on television shows such as *American Bandstand*, *The Ed Sullivan Show*, and *The Hollywood Palace*. At the same time, the group began to achieve a crossover success, catering to middle America with a pop standards album (*The Temptations in a Mellow Mood*, 1967), the success of which resulted in performances at the famous Copacabana in New York City along with dates at other similar supper clubs. Outside of music, the

Temptations were made honorary members of Phi Beta Sigma fraternity.

By 1967, David Ruffin had begun demanding special treatment as lead singer, riding to and from gigs in a private mink-lined limousine with his then-girlfriend, Motown singer Tammi Terrell, instead of in the group limousine used by the other four Temptations. The other members slowly became irritated and annoyed with Ruffin's behavior. Following Motown's decision to rechristen The Supremes as *Diana Ross & the Supremes*, Ruffin felt entitled to the same treatment and demanded that his group be renamed as well, to *David Ruffin & the Temptations*. Ruffin was also causing friction with Berry Gordy by demanding an accounting of the group's earnings.

Some of this behavior was attributed to the fact that by this time Ruffin had begun using cocaine regularly, building further tension within the group and causing him to miss a number of group meetings, rehearsals, and concerts. There was a general consensus among the rest of the group that Ruffin needed to be replaced. When Ruffin missed a June 1968 engagement at a Cleveland supper club in order to attend a show by his new girlfriend Barbara Gail Martin (daughter of Dean Martin),^[15] it was decided that he had crossed the line. The other four Temptations drew up legal documentation, officially firing Ruffin from the group on June 27, 1968.^[16] The next day, Dennis Edwards, a singer formerly of the Contours that Eddie Kendricks and Otis Williams already had pegged as a potential Ruffin replacement, was hired to take Ruffin's place.

Edwards and Ruffin were good friends, and at first, Ruffin went along with the changing of the guard and encouraged Edwards. However, at Edwards' official debut with the Temptations in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania on July 7, Ruffin came to the show and jumped onstage, taking the microphone from Edwards, singing lead on "Ain't Too Proud to Beg", and disappearing as quickly as he'd appeared.^[17] Ruffin repeated this stunt several times throughout the group's July tour run. Despite the group hiring extra security to keep Ruffin out, he continued to find ways to sneak into the venue and jump onstage when the group performed one of the songs he once sung lead on.

In a story recounted several times by Dennis Edwards, though refuted by Otis Williams and Temptations road manager Don Foster, after several of these stunts, the positive audience reactions and a remorseful Ruffin's pleas to be let back into the act convinced the other Temptations to do so. Otis Williams informed the then still-new Edwards that the group would lay him off and rehire Ruffin while in Gaithersburg, Maryland. However, when Ruffin failed to show up on time for the next night for his "return" engagement, Edwards was kept on, and the prospect of rehiring Ruffin ceased to be entertained.^[1]

After Gaithersburg, Ruffin stopped attempting to bogart the Temptations' concerts and instead turned his attention to the Motown offices back in Detroit. He sued Motown in October 1968, seeking a release from the label, but Motown countersued to keep the singer from leaving and the case was eventually settled out of court.^[18] The settlement required Ruffin to remain with Motown as a solo artist to finish out his initial contract.

Edwards' first album with the Temptations was *Live at the Copa*, recorded at the group's return to the Copacabana nightclub. The year 1968 also saw the debut of the first of a number of collaborations for the Temptations with Diana Ross & the Supremes. The results included two studio albums: 1968's *Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations*, which featured Edwards's first studio recordings with the group and the number-two hit single "I'm Gonna Make You Love Me"; and *Together*. (But it did hit #1 on the Cashbox chart, which reflected its strong sales). There was also a joint tour and two NBC television specials, *TCB* (aired December 9, 1968) and *G.I.T. on Broadway* (aired November 12, 1969).

Psychedelic soul

The addition of Dennis Edwards to the Temptations coincided with the adoption of a new sound for the group by producer Norman Whitfield, and in the fall of 1968, Whitfield began producing psychedelic-based material for the Temptations, derived primarily from the sound of funk band Sly & the Family Stone. This new style, which debuted with the Top 10 hit single "Cloud Nine" in October 1968, was a marked departure from the David Ruffin-era ballads. The instrumentation was funkier, the beat was hard-driving, and all five Temptations traded lead vocals, similar to Sly & the Family Stone. "Cloud Nine", the centerpiece of the group's landmark *Cloud Nine* LP, was a Top 10 hit and won Motown its first Grammy Award, for Best R&B Vocal Group Performance of 1969.

The blending of the Motown sound and psychedelic rock sound resulted in a new subgenre of music called "psychedelic soul", also evident in the work of Diana Ross and the Supremes ("Reflections", "Love Child"), Marvin Gaye's version of "I Heard It Through the Grapevine", and the music of The 5th Dimension, The Undisputed Truth, and The Friends of Distinction. More Temptations psychedelic soul singles would follow in 1969 and 1970, among them "Runaway Child, Running Wild" (a number-one R&B hit), "I Can't Get Next to You" (a number-one pop hit), "Psychedelic Shack", and "Ball of Confusion (That's What the World Is Today)", but the formula began to wear thin when "Ungena Za Ulimwengu (Unite the World)", only went to #33 Pop in the fall of 1970. The group's other important albums from this period included *Puzzle People* (1969) and *Psychedelic Shack* (1970). *Psychedelic Shack* includes the original version of "War", later made famous by Edwin Starr.



The Temptations perform on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in September 1969. Left to right: Otis Williams, Melvin Franklin, Eddie Kendricks, Paul Williams, and Dennis Edwards.

Exit Eddie Kendricks and Paul Williams

Paul Williams, who suffered from sickle-cell disease, fell into depression because of the stress of touring and personal issues. By the late 1960s, he had developed a serious case of alcoholism.^[19] As his physical and mental health began to decline sharply, it made performing increasingly difficult. Williams began traveling with oxygen tanks, and the other four Temptations made valiant efforts to raid and drain his alcohol stashes.

By 1969, Richard Street, lead singer of Motown act The Monitors and a former Distant, was touring with the group as a backup replacement for Williams. For most shows, save for his solo numbers, Williams would dance and lip-sync onstage to parts sung live by Street into an offstage mic behind a curtain. At other shows, and during most of the second half of 1970, Street substituted for Williams onstage.^[20]

Eddie Kendricks became detached from the group after David Ruffin's firing and as the health of Paul Williams continued to fail. In addition, Kendricks preferred the ballad material from the earlier days and was uncomfortable with the psychedelic soul material the group was now performing. Kendricks rekindled his friendship with Ruffin, who persuaded him to go solo. Kendricks no longer felt he had a say in Otis Williams's handling of the group and was also convinced Motown's handling of the Temptations' finances was cheating the group out of money.^[21]

Kendricks lobbied strongly in 1970 to have the Temptations go on "strike" - no performances, no recordings - until Berry Gordy and the Motown staff would be willing to go over all group finances with independent accountants. Otis Williams and Melvin Franklin strongly opposed this idea, and regular group in-fighting between Kendricks, Otis Williams, and Franklin grew from this disagreement. After a November 1970 Copacabana engagement, one final confrontation between the three caused Kendricks to walk out in-between shows and not return. Both Kendricks and

Williams then agreed that Kendricks would be leaving the group. Kendricks later stated that he actually considered leaving as early as 1965, but remained with the Temptations and unsuccessfully attempted to get permission to record a solo album without leaving the group.^[22]

Before Kendricks officially left the Temptations, he and Paul Williams recorded the lead vocals for "Just My Imagination (Running Away with Me)", a ballad that became Kendricks' final single with the group. Included on the *Sky's the Limit* LP along with the original album version of "Smiling Faces Sometimes", "Just My Imagination" was released as a single in January 1971, and the song began steadily climbing the U.S. pop singles chart, peaking at #1 two months later. By the time "Just My Imagination" topped the charts, Kendricks had negotiated his release from the group and signed a solo deal with Motown's Tamla label.

The Temptations originally hired Ricky Owens, from the Los Angeles-based vocal group the Vibrations, to replace Kendricks. However, Owens only played two dates with the group before he was fired for forgetting the words to his solo numbers due to nervousness.^[23] For several weeks of the spring of 1971, the Temptations were without a fifth member. Owens meanwhile returned to the Vibrations and died in Los Angeles, California on December 6, 1996 at the age of 57.

Whitfield took the remaining Temptations quartet and re-recorded "It's Summer", the B-side to "Ball of Confusion (That's What the World Is Today)", as a replacement single. "Smiling Faces Sometimes" was released as a single for The Undisputed Truth instead, becoming a Top 5 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1971. Meanwhile, "It's Summer" peaked at #51 on the Billboard Hot 100, making it the first Temptations single to miss the Top 40 since "Farewell My Love" eight years earlier.

After his doctor declared a few weeks later that he was unable to continue performing due to medical reasons, Paul Williams quit the Temptations in May.^[24] Richard Street officially took Williams' place, although Williams continued to be paid his customary one-fifth of group revenue (Street was paid on salary for the first eighteen months of his tenure),^[25] and worked when he could with the group as an adviser and choreographer. After Williams had recovered enough to record again, he recorded two sides in 1973 for a debut solo single. However, on August 17, 1973, Williams died in Detroit at the age of 34 from a gunshot wound, his death ruled a suicide by the Wayne County coroner.

The Temptations in the early 1970s

In May 1971, The Temptations finally found a permanent replacement for the first tenor position in twenty-year-old Baltimore native Damon Harris. Otis Williams, Edwards, Franklin, Street, and Harris continued recording and performing, and Norman Whitfield continued producing hits for them. There were Top 40 hits such as "Superstar (Remember How You Got Where You Are)" (1971), a message from the Temptations to David Ruffin and Eddie Kendricks, and "Take a Look Around" (1972).

Late 1972 saw the release of "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone", a magnum opus written by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong and produced by Whitfield. Originally a three-minute record written and produced for the Undisputed Truth, Whitfield took the somber tune and created a sprawling, dramatic twelve-minute version for the Temptations—a forerunner of the extended single, soon to become popular in clubs and discothèques. An edited seven-minute version was released as a single and became one of the longest hit singles in music history: it hit #1 on the pop charts and #5 on the R&B charts. In 1973, "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone" won the Temptations their second Grammy for Best R&B Performance by a Group. Whitfield and arranger/conductor Paul Riser won the award for Best R&B Instrumental Performance for the instrumental version on the B-side, and Whitfield and Barrett Strong won the songwriting Grammy for Best R&B Song.

After "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone", Whitfield stopped working with Barrett Strong, and began writing the Temptations' material on his own. The success of "Papa" led Whitfield to create more elongated, operatic pieces, including the Top 10 hit "Masterpiece" (1973) and several of the tracks on the resulting *Masterpiece* album. Tensions developed between Whitfield and the group, who found Whitfield arrogant and difficult to work with, and

the group citing his habitual tardiness, his emphasis of the instrumental tracks over the vocals on many of his productions, and the declining singles and albums sales as other sources of conflict, sought to change producers.^[26] Otis Williams complained about Whitfield's actions and the Temptations' stagnant sales to Berry Gordy, and as a result, the group was reassigned to Jeffrey Bowen, co-producer of the 1967 *In a Mellow Mood* album.

The final Norman Whitfield-produced Temptations album, *1990*, was released in December 1973, and included the Top 30 single "Let Your Hair Down". Shortly afterwards, Whitfield left Motown, and in 1975 established Whitfield Records, taking the Undisputed Truth and Willie Hutch with him, along with Rose Royce—who performed an instrumental track for "Let Your Hair Down" before recording their 1976 smash *Car Wash*.

Dry spell

Bowen's first LP with the Temptations was January 1975's *A Song for You*, which included a cover of the titular Leon Russell tune (popularized with soul audiences by Donny Hathaway), along with the pop Top 40/R&B number-one hits "Happy People" (featuring the Commodores as the instrumentalists) and "Shakey Ground" (featuring instrumentation by Parliament-Funkadelic's Eddie Hazel along with Billy Bass Nelson). "Glasshouse", the group's final Top 40 Pop hit was also included. Damon Harris was fired from the group during the recording of *A Song for You*, as his behavior and work ethic were deemed unprofessional,^[27] and his replacement was Washington, D.C. native Glenn Leonard, formerly of the Unifics.^[28]

A number of producers, including Bowen, Brian Holland, James Carmichael, and even the Temptations themselves tried producing hits for the next three LPs, *House Party* (November 1975), *Wings of Love* (March 1976), and *The Temptations Do the Temptations* (August 1976). None of these recordings were as commercially successful as *A Song for You* however, and none of their associated singles entered the Billboard charts.^[29]

As time progressed, Bowen pushed Dennis Edwards further to the front of the group. This was evident on *Wings of Love*, where several tracks featured Edwards' vocal more prominently than the other Temptations' backing vocals.^[30] Otis Williams felt that this was hurting the group, accused Motown of inattention, and cited this as the reason for the group's declining sales and popularity. After *The Temptations Do the Temptations* was recorded in 1976, Edwards was fired from the group,^[31] and with new lead Louis Price on board, they left Motown for Atlantic Records.^[32]

Success continued to elude the group at Atlantic, however. Their two releases on Atlantic — *Hear to Tempt You* (1977), and *Bare Back* (1978), along with their associated singles, had failed to perform any better at Atlantic than their last handful of singles had at Motown. As a result, in 1979, Atlantic released the group from its contract, and shortly afterwards, the Temptations met once again with Smokey Robinson and Berry Gordy, who re-signed the group to Motown in 1980.^[33]

Return to Motown and Reunion

Upon the return to Motown several lineup changes occurred. Louis Price departed from the group and joined the Drifters. Dennis Edwards—who had made an unsuccessful attempt at developing a solo career during his three-year exit from the group—returned to the lineup. And Berry Gordy co-wrote and produced "Power", the Temptations' first single under the new contract. "Power", from the album of the same name, hit #11 on the R&B charts but failed to chart in the Top 40. Two years of under-performing singles and albums followed, including an eponymous album with Philadelphia-based producer Thom Bell, until Motown began planning a Temptations reunion tour in 1982.

Eddie Kendricks and David Ruffin agreed to rejoin the group for the new album, aptly titled *Reunion*, and its subsequent promotional tour. Rick James, Melvin Franklin's nephew and the Motown funk star who had previously used the Temptations as backup vocalists on his 1981 hit "Super Freak", wrote, produced, and guested on the *Reunion* album's lead single, "Standing on the Top". The single went to number-six on the R&B charts and featured Ruffin, Kendricks and Edwards trading back and forth on lead.

While the ensuing *Reunion* tour with all seven Temptations (Ruffin, Kendricks, Otis Williams, Franklin, Edwards, Richard Street, and Glenn Leonard) was financially successful, it ended up being a stressful venture. Kendricks'

voice had weakened after decades of chain smoking, Ruffin, still addicted to drugs, missed a number of the performances due to being incapacitated, and current group members Dennis Edwards and Glenn Leonard were causing problems. At the conclusion of the *Reunion* tour, Ruffin and Kendricks departed, and they began touring and performing together as a duo.

One more album, *Surface Thrills*, released in 1983, featured a sharp departure in the group's sound by incorporating elements of then-current rock. Following its release, Glenn Leonard was let go and replaced by Ron Tyson, who was with the Philadelphia groups the Ethics and Love Committee. Tyson had been a staff songwriter at Atlantic during the Temptations' tenure at that label, and co-wrote several songs on the album *Hear to Tempt You*.

From the 1980s to the 1990s

By this time, the Temptations' releases were no longer performing well on the pop charts, though some singles still made the R&B Top 20. "Love on My Mind Tonight," a single from *Surface Thrills*, charted at number 17.

The lineup of Franklin, Williams, Street, Tyson, and Edwards proved to be short-lived. The five performed on *Motown 25* and released the direct to video *The Temptations: Live in Concert* (filmed at Harrah's Atlantic City). The album *Back to Basics*, released later in 1983, was the first album featuring Ron Tyson on lead. "Sail Away," produced by a returning Norman Whitfield and featuring Ron Tyson's first lead vocal, peaked at number 13. In addition, a then-relatively unknown singer/musician, Ali-Ollie Woodson was featured on one track, "Stop the World Right Here (I Wanna Get Off)." Woodson was a Detroit native who had been a potential candidate to replace Dennis Edwards back in 1977. Meanwhile, Edwards (who also had his share of lead vocals on the *Back to Basics* album) was again fired in 1984, for missing rehearsals or showing up hungover. He then attempted a second solo career, scoring a hit with the 1984 single "Don't Look Any Further", a duet with Siedah Garrett. At this point, Woodson officially joined the group, taking Edwards' place. Woodson's first lead on a single was 1984's "Treat Her Like a Lady", co-written by himself and Otis Williams, and co-produced by former Earth, Wind & Fire members Al McKay and Ralph Johnson. The single became their biggest success on R&B radio since 1975, reaching number-two on the R&B charts, and just missing the Pop Top 40 at number 48. The group experienced similar success in 1986 with the single "Lady Soul", another Top 5 R&B smash.

Ollie Woodson remained with the Temptations until 1987, when he was fired for consistent lateness. He was replaced by the again-returning Dennis Edwards. The group recorded one album during Edwards's third tenure, *Together Again*, released in late 1987. The following year, Otis Williams published his autobiography, *Temptations*, co-written with Patricia Romanowski, chronicling the careers of the group from the Primes/Distants days and focusing on the lives of Williams and Melvin Franklin. (An updated version of the book was published in 2002.)

Edwards was fired from the group for the third and final time in late 1988, with Woodson re-joining the lineup. On January 18, 1989, the Temptations were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The event honored Edwards, Franklin, Otis Williams, David Ruffin, Eddie Kendricks (now performing as "Eddie Kendrick"), and, posthumously, Paul Williams. Most of the Temptations, present and former, showed no ill feelings towards one another, although Otis Williams reported that Kendricks would not speak to him during the ceremony. The Temptations ended their induction ceremony with a performance of Paul Williams' signature song, "Don't Look Back", dedicated to his memory.

After reuniting at the induction ceremony, and much to the chagrin of Otis Williams and Motown, Edwards, Ruffin, and Kendrick made plans to tour and record as "Ruffin, Kendricks and Edwards, Former Leads of The Temptations". The tour was in fact carried out, but production on the album was canceled when 50-year-old David Ruffin died in Philadelphia after a cocaine overdose on June 1, 1991. Kendricks was diagnosed with lung cancer soon after; he continued to perform until his death on October 5, 1992 in his native Birmingham.

The Temptations in the 1990s

Richard Street missed a performance in 1992 after undergoing emergency surgery to remove kidneystones. Otis Williams, unaware of Street's surgery, called him angrily about his absence. Street felt Williams was unsympathetic, and as a result, he left the group in 1993 after twenty-two years. His replacement was St. Louis native Theo Peoples.

By the early 1990s, bass Melvin Franklin began missing performances due to failing health and Ray Davis, former bass man of Parliament-Funkadelic, began touring as a fill-in during 1993. Franklin died after suffering a brain seizure at the age of 52 on February 23, 1995, and Davis was named his official replacement. The group subsequently finished production on *For Lovers Only*, an album of pop standards featuring two tracks recorded with Melvin Franklin prior to his death.

This lineup would not last, however, as Davis was diagnosed with lung cancer and left shortly after completing the album. Davis died in New Brunswick, New Jersey of respiratory problems and complications of lung cancer on the evening of Tuesday July 5, 2005.

The group continued as a quartet for a short time before recruiting bass Harry McGilberry, a former member of the Futures. *For Lovers Only* would also be the last contribution for lead Ali-Ollie Woodson; he was released from the group shortly after McGilberry's hiring due to health problems: he suffered two bouts of throat cancer in a short time. He was replaced by new member Terry Weeks, who had served as his sub.

The Temptations' new lineup, consisting of Otis Williams, Ron Tyson, Theo Peoples, and newcomers Harry McGilberry and Terry Weeks, toured throughout 1997, and was featured in the halftime show of Super Bowl XXXII in early 1998, which celebrated the fortieth anniversary of Motown. Later that year, The Temptations released *Phoenix Rising*, vocally arranged by 1980s producer Narada Michael Walden, Claytoven Richardson, Theo Peoples, Tony Lindsey and Skyler Jett, which became their first million-selling album in over twenty years. The album was anchored by "Stay", a single featuring Theo Peoples on lead and including a sample from "My Girl", which became a number-one hit on the adult contemporary charts.

Peoples was fired from the group before the release of *Phoenix Rising* because of issues with drug addiction, and was replaced by Barrington "Bo" Henderson. Henderson lip-synched to Peoples's vocals in the "Stay" music video, and the completed album features lead vocals on different tracks by both Henderson and Peoples. Peoples would go on to join the Four Tops the following year.

The Temptations TV miniseries

Also in 1998, de Passe Entertainment (run by former Motown vice-president Suzanne de Passe) and Hallmark Entertainment produced *The Temptations*, a four-hour television miniseries based on Otis Williams' *Temptations* autobiography. The miniseries was broadcast in two parts on NBC on November 1 and November 2, 1998, with the first part covering the group's history from 1958 to 1968, and the second part the years from 1968 to 1995.^[34] The miniseries was a ratings success and was nominated for five Emmy Awards, with Allan Arkush winning for Best Direction;^[35] it was subsequently rerun on the VH-1 cable television network and released to VHS and DVD.

Otis Williams' former wife Josephine Miles, Melvin Franklin's mother Rose Franklin, David Ruffin's family, and Johnnie Mae Matthews filed lawsuits against Williams, Motown, de Passe and de Passe Entertainment, Hallmark, and NBC for a number of charges, including defamation. The lawsuits were consolidated, and the judges ruled in favor of the defendants, and the ruling was upheld when the plaintiffs appealed in 2001. Williams later claimed that, although his book was used as the source material for the film, he did not have a great deal of control over how the material was presented.

From 2000 to the present day

The Temptations were inducted into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame in 1999. In 2001, their 2000 album *Ear-Resistible* won the group its third Grammy, this one for Best Traditional R&B Vocal Performance. Bo Henderson was fired from the group in 2003, prompting a wrongful termination lawsuit. His replacement was former Spinners lead G.C. Cameron. The lineup of Cameron, Otis Williams, Ron Tyson, Harry McGilberry, and Terry Weeks recorded for a short time before Harry McGilberry was dismissed; his replacement was former Spaniels bass Joe Herndon. McGilberry died on April 3, 2006, at age 56.

The group's final Motown album, *Legacy*, was released in 2004. Later that year, the Temptations asked to be released from their Motown contract, and moved to another Universal Motown Records Group label, New Door Records. Their sole album with this lineup, *Reflections*, was released on January 31, 2006, and contains covers of several popular Motown songs, including Diana Ross & the Supremes' "Reflections", the Miracles' "Ooo Baby Baby", Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell's "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing", and the Jackson 5's "I'll Be There".^[36]

G. C. Cameron left the group in June 2007 to focus on his solo career. He was replaced by new member Bruce Williamson. The new lineup recorded another album of soul covers, *Back to Front*, released in October 2007. Former member Ali-Ollie Woodson died on May 30, 2010 after a long battle with leukemia.

This lineup still exists today and on May 4, 2010, the group released their *Still Here* album. The first single from *Still Here*, "First Kiss", was criticized for having instances of using Auto-Tune technology.

The Temptations received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award on February 9, 2013. Otis Williams, Dennis Edwards, and the children of David Ruffin, Eddie Kendricks, Paul Williams, and Melvin Franklin attended the ceremony to accept the six Grammys given to the group for the occasion.

Former member Damon Harris died on February 18, 2013 from prostate cancer at a Baltimore hospital. Eight days later, former member Richard Street died of pulmonary embolism in Las Vegas, Nevada.

On May 13, 2013, Ron Tyson confirmed a new album rumored by the name of "Rulers of The Soul" was 2/3 of the way completed. He said this CD would have more contemporary/mainstream feel, with major names featured, such as Ne-Yo, Miguel, Drake, Mario Winans, and T.I.. An estimated winter 2014 release is the desired release date for the group's new project.^[citation needed]

Splinter groups

Several former Temptations performed outside of the group in spin-off or offshoot acts.

Ruffin, Kendrick & Edwards

The most well known splinter was "Ruffin, Kendrick(s) & Edwards: Former Leads of the Temptations", which featured the three former Temptations and three other members, David Sea, who'd been a consideration to replace Edwards in 1984, and Nate Evans, a former member of The Impressions. Unfortunately, David Ruffin died on June 1, 1991, and those plans were postponed. Following the death of David Ruffin, Dennis Edwards and Eddie Kendrick began touring as



Eddie Kendrick (right front) and Dennis Edwards (right back) perform with their spin-off "Temptations" act in July 1991 at the Summertime Jazz, Blues & World Music Festival in Belgrade, Yugoslavia (now Serbia).

"The Temptations", still with David Sea and Nate Evans, and bringing in another former Temptation, Damon Harris. The group had different sixth vocalists at different times, including Charles Blackmon (Blagman), from The Choice Four, and Curtis Taylor. but their use of the Temptations name prompted a legal battle with Otis Williams. The legal battle was resolved in favor of Otis Williams who is still touring as the last original Temptation. Before Eddie Kendricks (now named Eddie Kendrick) died, he, Dennis Edwards, Damon Harris, Charles Blackmon (Blackman), David Sea, and Nate Evans recorded an album of all of the old Temptations song that was released in 1992. Everybody loved the album, but their future recording sessions were put on hold when Eddie Kendrick (Kendricks) died.

Dennis Edwards and Damon Harris form offshoot groups

Following the death of Eddie Kendrick, the group splintered. Dennis formed "Dennis Edwards and the Temptations Revue", Damon formed "Damon Harris and the Temptations Revue" featuring future Temptation Joe Herndon, Evans and Taylor formed a Temptations tribute band^[37] and David Sea went on to a solo career.

Edwards' group, whose lineup in 1993 featured Edwards, Mike Patillo (bass), Bernard Gibson (tenor), a fourth male member, and a female member, has appeared on several PBS music specials. The female member was replaced by the returning David Sea in 1999, and the remaining male member by falsetto Chris Arnold in the early 2000s (decade). Between 1993 and 2000, troubles in Edwards' group began to come up. The female member was always late for the concerts because she was always hungry for fast food whenever the group toured. The fourth male member would usually do a lot of drugs before every show, and he would be late for rehearsals every once in a while. When the female member was too busy eating cheeseburgers for her fat belly to show up on tour nights, David Sea would have to fill in for her. When 1998 was about to end, the female member was fired, and David Sea returned to be with Dennis Edwards' group full-time. As for the remaining male member, he had a lot of problems with some members of the group, and would go play with "The Temptations Experience" every once in a while. Chris Arnold found out what was going on because he filled in for Eddie Kendricks (Kendrick) in 1992 before Dennis Edwards formed "Dennis Edwards and the Temptations Revue" in 1993, and he joined the group on January 1, 2000. A few years later, Bernard Gibson started doing drugs after every show, and that made the other group members really upset. As a result of that, whenever Bernard Gibson was late or sick, either Ali-Ollie Woodson or Paul Williams Jr. would fill in for him, and would do Bernard's notes. Gibson's last show with Edwards' group was on February 23, 2006.

Bernard Gibson was fired in 2006, and replaced by another former Temptation, Ali-Ollie Woodson. Woodson had previously fronted an act called *Ali-Ollie Woodson & the Emperors of Soul*, the name being drawn from the Temptations boxed set released in 1994. Woodson left the group briefly in 2008 to join a touring theatrical production, *The Greatest (Love) Story Ever Told*, and was replaced by Paul Williams, Jr., son of Paul Williams, Sr. Woodson briefly rejoined, but left again due to cancer, with Paul Williams Jr. again taking his place. Woodson died on May 30, 2010.

Currently, "Dennis Edwards and the Temptations Revue" are working on an album that should be out in the very near future. Of course, they haven't started to perform any of their original songs live yet. A lot of people believed that Edwards' group is closer to the original Temptations than the actual Temptations with founder Otis Williams. They have been booked more times than the actual Temptations, despite the fact that they haven't been signed by a record label yet.

Glenn Leonard's Temptations Revue

Harris later split from his "Temptations Revue", with the other four members joining another former Temptation falsetto, Glenn Leonard, to become "Glenn Leonard and the Temptations Experience." Joe Herndon left this group to join the Temptations^[38] and *his* spot was filled by former Temptations bass singer Ray Davis. Following Davis' death on July 5, 2005, the spot was filled by *another* former Temptations bass singer Harry McGilberry, who died of an apparent drug overdose at the age of 56 on April 3, 2006. Damon Harris would form a new group later, billed as "Damon Harris and the Temptations Tribute." Harris died on February 18, 2013.

Glenn Leonard has maintained his lineup throughout the 2000–2013 decade, and is billing his show "Glenn Leonard's Temptations Revue" <http://www.glennleonardpromo.com> His current lineup includes Joe Coleman (longtime member of The Platters), Joe Blunt (longtime member of The Drifters), John "Doc" Devone and Andre Jackson.

In 2013, they have performed throughout the United States on major concert tours, and have performed in countries such as Denmark, France, Brazil, Qatar, and many other countries throughout the world.

Richard Street's Temptations

Richard Street also led a group, billed as "Richard Street" or "Richard Street's Temptations". At the time of his death, Street was in the process of writing a book regarding his time with The Temptations entitled *Ball of Confusion*. If it is published, it will be the second autobiography regarding the group.

In 1992, the "Ruffin & Kendricks" roadie, Tony Turner also wrote a book, assisted by Barbara Aria, contrasting Otis Williams's account of the group's glory days, entitled *Deliver Us From Temptation*. Street died on February 26, 2013. The lineup for "Richard Street's Temptations" before Richard Street's death were Larry Johnson, Eddie Watkins Jr., Bob Henley III, Lawrence Jones, and Richard Street. When Richard Street died on February 26, 2013, Larry Johnson took over as the leader of the group, and Terry Forsythe joined the group to do Street's lines in "My Girl" and "Ain't Too Proud To Beg" on stage.

"Legendary Lead Singers of The Temptations"

Leonard, Woodson, and Henderson previously toured as "Legendary Lead Singers of the Temptations" and "The Temptations Reunion Show" since 2004. This prompted a lawsuit by Otis Williams filed in October 2007, citing not just the three performers but their managers and every venue that hosted them. Williams' complaint deals with their use of the name, "The Temptations", as well as claims that the act accepted considerably lower fees than The Temptations, hurting the group's reputation as well as the ability to work. Also cited is advertising by the venues claimed to be misleading by billing Leonard, Woodson and Henderson's group as "The Temptations".

Musical style

Unlike many other R&B groups, each member of the Temptations was a lead singer of some capacity, and The Temptations' songs depended upon the individual members' interaction as a group. Although the group always had an appointed main lead singer who dominated most of the lead vocals (from Paul Williams to David Ruffin, Dennis Edwards, and later singers such as Louis Price, Ali-Ollie Woodson, and Terry Weeks), that singer was never given more of a promotional push than the other members. Co-lead songs, with two or more of the singers sharing the lead vocals, are common in the Temptations catalog, particularly among the psychedelic-era recordings of the late 1960s/early 1970s.

The "Motown Sound" (1961-1968)

Following their first Motown hit, the group would alter their style several times over the ensuing years, adapting to the popular styles of the day while retaining their signature visual and vocal styles. The earliest Temptations recordings backed by Motown's stalwart studio band, the Funk Brothers, reflect the influence of producers Berry Gordy and Smokey Robinson, and featured a cohesive blend of black rhythm and blues along with elements of white pop music that later came to be known as the "Motown Sound". Recordings made prior to 1966 such as "My Girl", were built around songs with simple, direct lyrics supported by an R&B rhythm section with orchestral strings and horns added for pop appeal. During this period, each recording usually featured only one lead singer, usually David Ruffin or Eddie Kendricks, although Paul Williams, Melvin Franklin, and Otis Williams each had solo numbers of their own at various times during this period.

Melisma and other complicated vocalization techniques featured in the arrangements of most other Motown groups of the period were essentially eschewed by the Temptations for a more direct, yet obviously gospel-rooted vocal approach, in order to make the songs more palatable for white audiences. Creative control remained primarily in the hands of Smokey Robinson, although individual members of the Temptations periodically co-wrote some of their own songs, most frequently by Eddie Kendricks, who also handled the vocal arrangements for all of the Temptations' material.

In 1966, Norman Whitfield changed the group's dynamic, moving them away from the previous one lead singer model and adding elements derived from the rougher soul of artists such as James Brown, Wilson Pickett, and the performers at Stax Records. Whitfield and his lyricists crafted Temptations songs with shifts of dynamics, syncopated horn stabs, and more intricate harmony arrangements which spotlighted each singer's unique vocal range. Onstage, this change was reflected in the group's use of a custom-made four-headed microphone stand, invented by David Ruffin, which allowed each member freedom to perform without having to all crowd around one or two microphones. Under Whitfield's control, the Temptations retained their white pop appeal, but also gained popularity amongst black audiences as well.

Psychedelic and cinematic soul (1968-1973)

When David Ruffin was replaced by Dennis Edwards, and Sly and the Family Stone became popular, Whitfield again restructured the Temptations' sound, this time driving the group almost completely into a "psychedelic soul" type sound. However, ballads in the traditional style of the group were still being recorded as B-sides and album fillers, with the lone exception being "Just My Imagination".

Most other recordings from this period in 1968–1970 such as "Cloud Nine" and "Psychedelic Shack" featured echoed vocal tracks, distorted guitar lines with prominent use of the wah-wah pedal, hard-hitting drums, and various stereo and other sound effects. The majority of these songs feature at least two lead singers and often, all five Temptations sang lead, trading bars à la the Family Stone. Dennis Edwards, whose vocal style had a rougher, more Southern-soul based sound than that of David Ruffin, was often featured prominently on most of these recordings.

Inspired heavily by the concurrent works of Sly Stone, the lyrics for these songs centered primarily around then-current social issues such as integration, the Vietnam War, and self-consciousness. In addition, in an attempt to get the social message contained therein across to their audiences more clearly, many of the psychedelic soul recordings of this period were presented in mixes of extended length, often up to twice, triple or quadruple the length of the typical three-minute Motown song.

Tracks such as the album version of "Run Away Child, Running Wild" from *Cloud Nine*, "Take a Stroll Thru Your Mind" from *Psychedelic Shack*, and "Smiling Faces Sometimes" from *Sky's the Limit*, all run at least eight minutes. At the insistence of Norman Whitfield, a large portion of the additional running time for each song consisted of instrumental passages without vocals. For example, the hit version of their smash 1972 single "Papa Was a Rolling Stone" was nearly seven minutes, featuring an instrumental intro that was almost two minutes, a rarity for songs of that era.

"Psychedelic soul" soon gave way to "cinematic soul", highlighting a further series of lengthy recordings featuring detailed orchestration, extended instrumental introductions and bridging passages. Often focusing on lyrics about the ghettos and inner cities of black America, these songs were heavily influenced by the work of singer-songwriters Isaac Hayes and Curtis Mayfield. Unlike Hayes and Mayfield however, the Temptations had no creative control over their recordings, and were in no way fond of the twelve- and thirteen-minute long songs being forced upon them by Norman Whitfield, whose contributions were the focal point of Temptations albums such as *Solid Rock*, *All Directions*, and particularly *Masterpiece*.

From funk to disco to adult contemporary (1974 to present)

In 1974, after Whitfield was dismissed as the producer for the Temptations, the group altered its sound to accommodate a balance of both up-tempo dance material as well as ballads. The vocal arrangements began to again focus primarily on one lead singer per track, although some leads were still being shared periodically. In addition, the Temptations themselves, after fighting Motown and Berry Gordy for creative control, began to write and produce some of their own material. From this point on, the Temptations focused almost exclusively on songs about romance. However, songs about social issues similar to the recordings made during the tenure of Norman Whitfield were periodically produced as well.

Temptations recordings of the mid '70's focused significantly on the influences of funk music from artists such as Parliament-Funkadelic and Sly and the Family Stone, and members of both acts contributed significantly to material recorded by the group during this period. In addition, their signature ballad sound, reduced to filler material during much of the Whitfield period, was restored to the lush, full productions of the earlier hits produced by Smokey Robinson. After a brief diversion into disco in the late-1970s, the Temptations settled into a form of an adult contemporary-rooted type of R&B, a style in which they continue to record.

Although the group continues to feature dancing as an important aspect of its act, as the ages of its members have increased, live shows have focused on less intricate choreography.

Legacy and influence

With their tailored suits and detailed choreography, The Temptations set the bar high for male soul and R&B groups of the period. Before the Temptations became popular, most black vocal groups were rough, high-energy acts featuring vocals which were more raw and dance movements which were more improvisational. Only a few performers, including contemporaries Marvin Gaye, Sam Cooke, and the Four Tops, showed the refined style that would be popularized by the Temptations.

Producer Berry Gordy insisted that all his acts be equally appealing to both white as well as black audiences, and employed an extensive creative team to help tailor Motown talent for the crossover success he desired. Motown choreographer Cholly Atkins along with Paul Williams created the trademark precise and energetic, yet refined, dance steps used by the Temptations onstage. The most famous of these, the "Temptation Walk", or "Temptation Strut", was adapted from similar moves by the Flamingos and the Vibrations and from those two sources, Cholly Atkins and Paul Williams crafted the resulting signature dance routine.

Like other similar independent companies of the period, Motown was neither a member of ASCAP nor BMI, preferring to stay independent and handling their own widely varied distribution through thousands of "Mom & Pop" record stores and small radio stations. Many singles that might have been charted higher did not have the data for the Billboard charts to evaluate, so it is quite possible that the Temptations sold more than a "Gold Record" number of most of their early records. Their stage work and depth of their lead singers made them legends throughout the northern cities as well as the southern "chitlin' circuit", before being acknowledged by most radio disc jockeys as the strongest group around.

During the 1960s and 1970s, a number of soul groups showed significant influence from the Temptations, among them the Delfonics, the Chi-Lites, Parliaments, featuring George Clinton, the Dramatics, Daryl Hall & John Oates

(from 1965 to 1967 one of Daryl Hall's earliest bands was named The Temptones), and Motown labelmates the Jackson 5 and The Undisputed Truth. These acts, and others, showed the influence of the Temptations in both their vocal performances and their onstage choreography. Several more recent soul and R&B vocal groups, including New Edition led by Johnny Gill, Jodeci, BLACKstreet, Dru Hill, and, most notably, Boyz II Men in the 1980s also showed significant influence from the Temptations.

It is interesting to note that during the early part of their career, their main competition came from Impressions featuring Curtis Mayfield; then during the phase of the group featuring alternating leads, competition came from Sam & Dave, the Chi-Lites. In their next phase, competition came from the O'Jays. In each case, each group alternated between love songs and songs with messages in their lyrics.

Temptations songs have been covered by scores of musicians, from R&B singers such as Luther Vandross ("Since I Lost My Baby"), to pop vocalists such as Bette Midler ("Just My Imagination"), to rock bands such as Rare Earth ("Get Ready"), Anthrax, Love and Rockets, Duran Duran ("Ball of Confusion (That's What the World Is Today)") and the Rolling Stones ("My Girl", "Ain't Too Proud to Beg", "Just My Imagination") and Mick Jagger's collaboration with reggae artist Peter Tosh on ("Don't Look Back"). British rock singer Rod Stewart released a cover of "I'm Losing You" in 1971; in 1991, he collaborated with the Temptations on the single "The Motown Song".

The lives and careers of The Temptations were one of several inspirations for *The Five Heartbeats*, a 1991 film about a 1960s Motown-esque male group starring Robert Townsend, Michael Wright, Leon, and Harry J. Lennix.

In 2004, *Rolling Stone* magazine ranked The Temptations #67 on their list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time. They received the Lifetime Achievement Grammy Award in 2013. On Saturday August 17, 2013 The Temptations were officially inducted into the R&B Music Hall of Fame at the inaugural ceremony held at the Waetejen Auditorium on the campus of Cleveland State University.

Personnel

For a detailed listing of the various versions of The Temptations (and a timeline), see: List of The Temptations members.

The Primes

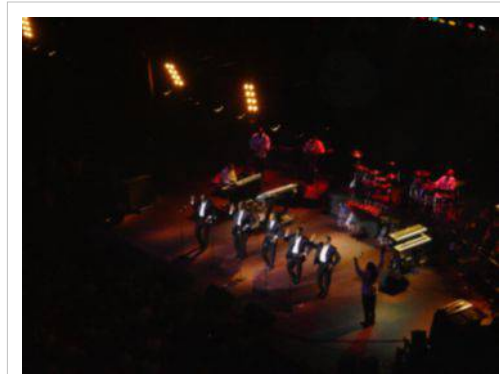
aka The Cavaliers

- Paul Williams (1955–1960)
- Eddie Kendricks (1955–1960)
- Kell Osborne (1955–1960)
- Wiley Waller (1955–1957)

The Distant

aka Otis Williams & the Distant, Otis Williams & the Siberians

- Otis Williams (1958–1960)
- Elbridge "Al" Bryant (1958–1960)
- James "Pee-Wee" Crawford (1958–1959)
- Vernard Plain (1958–1959)
- Arthur Walton (1958–1959)
- Melvin Franklin (1959–1960)
- Richard Street (1959–1960)
- Albert "Mooch" Harrell (1959–1960)



The Temptations on stage at London's Royal Albert Hall, November 2005. Pictured L-R: Joe Herndon, Otis Williams, G.C. Cameron, Terry Weeks, and Ron Tyson.

The Temptations

aka *The Elgins*

- Otis Williams (1960–present)
- Elbridge "Al" Bryant (1960–1963)
- Melvin Franklin (1960–1995)
- Eddie Kendricks (1960–1971, 1982 reunion)
- Paul Williams (1960–1971)
- David Ruffin (1964–1968, 1982 reunion)
- Dennis Edwards (1968–1977, 1980–1984, 1987–1989)
- Ricky Owens (1971)
- Richard Street (1971–1992)
- Damon Harris (1971–1975)
- Glenn Leonard (1975–1983)
- Louis Price (1977–1980)
- Ron Tyson (1983–present)
- Ali-Ollie Woodson (1984–1987, 1989–1997)
- Theo Peoples (1992–1998)
- Ray Davis (1994–1995)
- Harry McGilberry (1995–2003)
- Terry Weeks (1997–present)
- Barrington "Bo" Henderson (1998–2003)
- G. C. Cameron (2003–2007)
- Joe Herndon (2003–present)
- Bruce Williamson (2007–present)

Discography

U.S. and UK Top Ten singles

The following singles reached the Top Ten of the United States pop singles chart or the United Kingdom pop singles chart, or No. 1 on the US R&B chart.

Year	Song title	US Top 10	UK Top 10	R&B No. 1
1965:	"My Girl"	1	2	1
1966:	"Get Ready"	29	10	1
1966:	"Ain't Too Proud to Beg"	13	21	1
1966:	"Beauty Is Only Skin Deep"	3	18	1
1966:	"(I Know) I'm Losing You"	8	19	1
1967:	"All I Need"	8	–	2
1967:	"You're My Everything"	6	26	3
1967:	"I Wish It Would Rain"	4	45	1
1968:	"I Could Never Love Another (After Loving You)"	13	47	1
1968:	"Cloud Nine"	6	15	2
1968:	"I'm Gonna Make You Love Me" <i>(Diana Ross & the Supremes and the Temptations)</i>	2	2	1

1969:	"Run Away Child, Running Wild"	6	–	1
1969:	"I Can't Get Next to You"	1	13	1
1970:	"Psychedelic Shack"	7	33	2
1970:	"Ball of Confusion (That's What the World Is Today)"	3	7	2
1971:	"Just My Imagination (Running Away with Me)"	1	8	1
1972:	"Papa Was a Rollin' Stone"	1	14	5
1973:	"Masterpiece"	7	–	1
1973:	"Let Your Hair Down"	–	–	1
1974:	"Happy People"	–	–	1
1975:	"Shakey Ground"	–	–	1
1991:	"The Motown Song" (Rod Stewart featuring The Temptations)	10	–	–
1992:	"My Girl" (reissue)	–	2	–

Top Ten albums

The following albums reached the Top Ten on either the United States pop or R&B albums chart.

- 1965: *The Temptations Sing Smokey* (R&B #1)
- 1965: *The Temptin' Temptations* (R&B #1)
- 1966: *Gettin' Ready* (R&B #1)
- 1966: *Greatest Hits* (R&B #1) (US #5)
- 1967: *Temptations Live!* (R&B #1) (US #10)
- 1967: *The Temptations with a Lot o' Soul* (R&B #1) (US #7)
- 1967: *The Temptations in a Mellow Mood* (R&B #1)
- 1968: *The Temptations Wish It Would Rain* (R&B #1)
- 1968: *The Temptations Show* (R&B #2)
- 1968: *Diana Ross & the Supremes Join The Temptations* (with Diana Ross & The Supremes) (R&B #1) (US #2)
- 1968: *TCB* (with Diana Ross & The Supremes) (R&B #1) (US #1)
- 1968: *Live at the Copa* (R&B #2)
- 1969: *Cloud Nine* (R&B #1) (US #4)
- 1969: *Puzzle People* (R&B #1) (US #5)
- 1969: *Together* (R&B #6)
- 1969: *On Broadway* (R&B #4)
- 1970: *Psychedelic Shack* (R&B #1) (US #9)
- 1970: *Live at London's Talk of the Town* (R&B #5)
- 1970: *Greatest Hits, Vol. 2* (R&B #2)
- 1971: *Sky's the Limit* (R&B #2)
- 1972: *Solid Rock* (R&B #1)
- 1972: *All Directions* (R&B #1) (US #2)
- 1973: *Masterpiece* (R&B #1) (US #7)
- 1973: *Anthology* (R&B #5)
- 1973: *1990* (R&B #2)
- 1975: *A Song for You* (R&B #1)
- 1975: *Wings of Love* (R&B #3)
- 1976: *The Temptations Do The Temptations* (R&B #10)

- 1982: *Reunion* (R&B #2)
- 1984: *Truly for You* (R&B #3)
- 1986: *To Be Continued* (R&B #4)

Filmography

- 1973: *Save the Children*
- 1987: *Happy New Year*
- 2007: *Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story*

Television work

- 1985: *The Fall Guy* (TV episode "Rockabye Baby", February 13, 1985)
- 1985: *The Love Boat* (TV episode "Your Money or Your Wife/Joint Custody/The Temptations", October 5, 1985)
- 1986: *Moonlighting* (TV episode "Symphony in Knocked Flat", October 21, 1986)
- 1986: *227* (TV episode "Temptations", November 15, 1986)
- 1990: *Murphy Brown* (TV episode "Goin' to the Chapel, Part 2", May 21, 1990)
- 1990: performed CBS network's 1990–91 version of their *Get Ready* campaign with an updated version of "Get Ready".
- 1993: *Getting By* (TV episode "Reach for the Stars", November 23, 1993)
- 1996: *New York Undercover* (TV episode "Deep Cover", May 2, 1996)
- 2008: *Friday Night with Jonathan Ross* (TV appearance), March 7, 2008
- 2012: *Dancing with the Stars* (TV appearance), April 23, 2012 – Motown Week

Video and DVD releases

- 1991: *The Temptations Live in Concert*
- 2004: *20th Century Masters The Best of the Temptations*
- 2006: *Get Ready: The Definitive Performances - 1965/1972*
- 2007: *The Temptations Live In London (1987)*

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External links

- The Temptations (<http://www.allmusic.com/artist/p5616>) at AllMusic
- The Temptations official website (<http://www.temptationssing.com>)
- Otis Williams' official website (includes current tour schedule) (<http://www.otiswilliams.net/main.aspx>)
- Ron Tyson's official website (<http://www.rontyson.com/>)
- Official homepage for Glenn Leonard (<http://www.GlennLeonardPromo.com>)
- Classic Temptations page at Classic Motown website (<http://classic.motown.com/artist.aspx?ob=ros&src=lb&aid=52>)
- 'The Temptations' Vocal Group Hall of Fame page (http://www.vocalgroup.org/inductees/the_temptations.html)

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