

Motown Profiles

FROM PAGE 18

James once defined his R&B as "Rhythm and Business".

Like the P-Funk man himself, George Clinton, James is writing and producing for Sattelite acts — Stone City Band and the Mary Jane Girls.

The best Rick James albums are *Street Songs* (1981) (contains 'Superfreak'), *Throwin' Down* (1982), both very impressive and *Cold Blooded* (1983). MC

JUNIOR WALKER

When Junior Walker was interviewed by *NME* recently, the hootin', hollerin' sax player was clear on who sets the pace.

"I wouldn't say because they're young their energy rubs off on me. I got them because they can keep up with me," he said of his current band.

Always more down-home funky than his label mates, Walker recorded hot albums and several hit singles for the Soul label from 1963 through to the mid-70s.

Never subtle in lyric or groove, he's back on Motown with the 1983 *Blow the House Down* album. MC

STEVIE WONDER

The youngest of the label's 60s stars, but never over-awed by his Motown success, Stevie left the label briefly in 1971 to ensure that he gained control of his music from the dictates of the company machine.

Wonder signed with Motown in 1962, at the tender age of 12. He hit Number One with 'Fingertips' a year later.

From *Where I'm Coming From* (1971) to new material on *Original Musiquarium*

(1982), largely a collection of his post 1971 material, Wonder explores the commercial, the obtuse and the personal and political.

Although Wonder writes prolifically for himself and others, he releases albums infrequently, following the dictates of his own vision. A hard taskmaster, judging by the standards he achieves.

GLADYS KNIGHT & THE PIPS

Gladys Knight and the Pips didn't join the Soul label until 1967 and, unlike most Motown acts, their career was more one of accomplished albums than popular hit singles.

Although they had initial success at Motown with 'I Heard It Through the Grapevine' sales really picked up with their move to the Buddah label in 1973. Their first album for the label featured 'I've Got to Use My Imagination' and 'Midnight Train to Georgia'.

Their best LP since *Imagination* is last year's CBS LP, last year's CBS LP *Visions* featuring 'Save the Overture for Me'. MC

SMOKEY ROBINSON

The single most important figure in the Motown story has to be Smokey Robinson. His songs launched the careers of the Temptations and the Miracles.

He also wrote and produced key songs for other acts while fronting the Miracles from 1960-72.

Recent revivals of his songs include the Rolling Stones' 'Going to A Go-Go', the Beat's 'Tears of a Clown' and Blondie's 'Hunter Gets Captured By the Game'.

His solo recordings include 'Cruisin'' and 'Being With You'. MC



Gladys Knight and the Pips (L-R): William Guest, Edward Patten, Merald Knight and Gladys. 1967.



The Commodores are now five and up to album '13' for Motown. They graced the cover of the first 'Rip It Up' in June 1977, when they last toured NZ. They are (L-R): Thomas McClary, Ronald LaPread, William King, Milan Williams, Walter Orange.



Yep, that's Michael the singin', dancin' man on the right there, during the Jackson Five's years with Motown 1969-1975. His videos are hot now but he was big news on the Andy Williams show that night in '69. Believe me. Da brudders are (L-R): Marlon, Jackie, Tito, Jermaine, Michael.

MOTOWN COLLECTIONS

Marvin Gaye Every Great Motown Hit

Nice packaging, good selection but the title is a misnomer. Every great Motown hit? I don't think so. This collection ignores the early hits ('Can I Get A Witness', 'Ain't That Peculiar', and so on) in favour of Marvin's middle period (1968-73) with the odd late hit ('Got to Give It Up') thrown in. Still, nobody's going to get all Marvin's goodies on a single album and as this includes plenty from my favourite era from Mr Gaye, I'm not complaining.

Stevie Wonder Original Musiquarium II

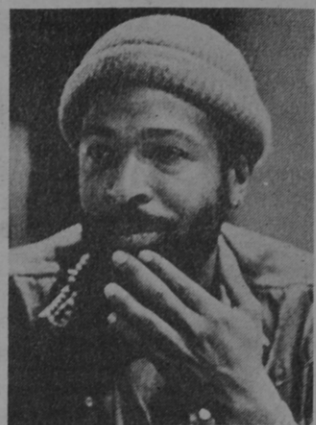
The pick of the Motown compilations available. It's hard not to run out of superlatives describing this record. Perhaps it's simpler to just say that it includes 'Superstition', 'Living for the City', 'Sir Duke', 'Isn't She Lovely', 'I Wish' and many other gems from the last 10 years or so, that these tracks have been digitally remastered and sound better than ever and that the four new tracks do not sound even slightly out of place in this company. Intelligently compiled, nicely packaged and entirely indispensable.

Diana Ross and the Supremes Greatest Hits

Ignore the ugly cover, check the track listing and you'll find that the record you're holding was previously released as *20 Golden Greats of Diana Ross and the Supremes* and is a sanely organised (that is, chronological) history of nearly everything you've ever wanted to hear from the Supremes. Side One in particular is a formidable collection of 10 of the greatest singles of the 60s.

Michael Jackson and the Jackson Five Greatest Hits

The Jackson Five were the last great gasp of the Motown production line. The Corporation, a group of producer/composers, whipped up a stunning funk maelstrom for the Five's first single 'I Want You Back' and managed to nearly equal this



Marvin Gaye, 1972.

standard with subsequent releases. But, as this collection shows, this creative burst was short lived. Motown was soon struggling to provide material equal to Michael Jackson's talent. So, in the end, it's Michael who rescues this record. Whether singing to a pet rat ('Ben') or delivering an overwrought tear-jerker ('One Day in Your Life') Michael nearly always performs with that winning mixture of innocence and authority and even the occasionally shoddy material and eccentric organisation of the tracks don't destroy that achievement.

Smokey Robinson Blame It On Love and All the Greatest Hits

Now this one crept up on me. I had it tagged as a poorly compiled rip-off. You know, take some of Smokey's recent big hits ('Cruising', 'Being With You'), some lesser known hits (of no lesser quality though) and, to lure in the collectors, three previously unreleased tracks of dubious quality. Well, the solid craftsmanship of the new songs slowly impressed itself on me, the quality of the singles is indisputable (though I could do without the mediocre 'Blame It On Love') and it all adds up to the kind of high quality romantic music Smokey's made for over 20 years. AD

THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE MOVIE. THE MUSIC.

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE/MARVIN GAYE · JOY TO THE WORLD/THREE DOG NIGHT · A WHITER SHADE OF PALE/PROCOL HARUM · MY GIRL/THE TEMPTATIONS · GOOD LOVIN'/THE RASCALS · THE TRACKS OF MY TEARS/SMOKEY ROBINSON & THE MIRACLES · AIN'T TOO PROUD TO BEG/THE TEMPTATIONS · (YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A) NATURAL WOMAN/ARETHA FRANKLIN · I SECOND THAT EMOTION/SMOKEY ROBINSON & THE MIRACLES · TELL HIM/THE EXCITERS

THE BIG CHILL



"For a lot of people of my generation, rock'n'roll hasn't since equalled that period in terms of richness or emotional impact. The songs really spoke to us, spoke to a lot of our concerns."

'BIG CHILL'
DIRECTOR
LAWRENCE
KASDAN



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