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The Temptations Have Endured Despite The Obstacles

By Loretta Manago
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Music, like many businesses, experiences its own kind of storms. In the 60's when the forecast was sunny and clear, a harmonious sound dominated in the music industry. From the Temptations we heard classic songs like "My Girl," "The Way You Do The Things You Do" and "Since I Lost My Baby."

But the sunshine of the 60's became the cloudiness of the 70's. A new era of music was ushered in - disco. And all of those entertainers who could not adapt to the new sound were lost at sea. By no means were the Temptations included in that number. If it was disco their audience wanted, it was disco they got, with songs like "Psychedelic Shack," "Ball of Confusion," and "Runaway Child."

And now the 80's are here and so are the Temptations, doing what they know how to do best, scoring hit after hit with each song that they make. Songs like "Standing On The Top," "Truly For You" and "Treat Her Like A Lady," are testimonies to that fact. They have endured despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles placed in their path.

Not only have they faced the challenges put before them that occurred in the music industry, but have effectively minimized the damage that personnel changes can have on a group.

When the Temptations formed back in the 50's, the group consisted of the founder, Otis Williams, Melvin Franklin, Eddie Kendricks, Elridge Bryant and Paul Williams. By 1963 Bryant had left the group and David Ruffin replaced him. The five of them were responsible for the unparalleled success experienced during that period. Platinum and gold records along with Grammy



THE TEMPTATIONS

Just as "tempting" as ever

awards were standard for the quintet.

After Paul Williams' death and David Ruffin's departure in '67, the Temptations added Dennis Edwards to the group. Damon Harris and Richard Street filled two of the vacant spots that were created when Eddie Kendrick also made his exit in '71. Four years later, Glenn Leonard replaced Damon Harris and today, Ron Tyson claims the honor of being the newest Temptation. As a result of a number of personnel changes, Otis Williams and Melvin Franklin remain the only original Temptations.

While the members of this soulful team took on new faces, nothing altered about the quality and the style that has become a trademark for the Temptations. With their highstepping choreography was also silk voices that

blended in complete harmony. As trendsetters in music, the Temptations reach for early youthful melodies and chords, the ones that favored earlier hits, yet innovative enough to bring a new type of musical excitement to any song.

Today the Temptations are: Otis Williams, Melvin Franklin, Richard Street, Ron Tyson and Ollie Woodson.

As founder of the Temptations, Otis Williams grew up listening to Hank Ballard and the Midnighters and Bill Ward and the Domingos.

The other original Temptation, Melvin Franklin, is best known to his fans as the man with the deep bass voice. His much celebrated bass is perhaps the most recognizable one of the Temptations.

Melvin Street was a quality control evaluator before he

joined the Temptations. Before that, he was a member of the Monitors who recorded "Say You" and "Greetings (This Is Uncle Sam)."

From North Carolina, Temptation member Ron Tyson's first outing with the group was the "Motown 25th Anniversary Special." Before becoming a Temptation, Tyson worked with the group as a writer-producer. He's also worked with the Four Tops, Curtis Mayfield, The Dells, the O'Jays and Harold Melvin and the Bluenotes.

The latest addition to the Temptations, Ollie Woodson, once auditioned for the group back in '77. Last year, he ran into Franklin and Williams in Atlanta and was extended an invitation to join. He brings to the group a wealth of experience, having had stints with James Brown, Issac Hayes, Patti Austin and Ray Parker, Jr.

Martin Luther King Series To Air

"Memories of Martin," 45, 25-second programs, which can be linked to a billboard as a 30-Second spot will be aired from January 15, Dr. King's birthday, through February 26, the conclusion of Black History Month.

"Memories of Martin" is being produced with the assistance of Mrs. Coretta King and the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change in Atlanta.

Harry Belafonte, Sen. Edward Kennedy, and Rep. Walter Fauntroy are just a few of the participants to be signed for the series.

"Memories of Martin" is a co-production of Black Entertainment Television, NEP Programs, Inc.-TVI and WNEV-TV, Boston.