

ROCK'N'ROLL'S 1ST DECADE

Week Eight: Rock Approaches the Mid-1960s: The Birth of Soul and the First Hints of a British Invasion

Recommended Listening:

Bobby "Blue" Bland, *Greatest Hits, Vol. 1: The Duke Recordings* (Duke/Peacock, 1998). Though Bland never crossed over much to the pop market, he's perhaps the most esteemed of the major R&B performers crossing blues with early soul. The most famous of the songs on this best-of covering his 1957-1969 work is "Turn on Your Love Light," covered by Van Morrison's first group (Them) and the Grateful Dead.

James Brown, *Roots of a Revolution* (Polygram, 1989). He's most often identified with his funk-pioneering output from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, but James Brown had been recording R&B hits for a decade before that. This two-CD set has the most essential tracks he recorded prior to 1964's "Out of Sight," which took R&B into tougher early soul music. It doesn't, however, have anything from his famous 1963 album *Live at the Apollo*, the first LP to take earthy soul near the top of the pop charts.

Ray Charles, *His Greatest Hits Vol. 1 & 2* (DCC, 1987). Though Charles passed his artistic and commercial prime after the mid-1960s, the first half of the decade found his stardom at its peak. These two CDs are devoted to his 1960s output for the ABC label, which included the hits "Hit the Road Jack," "Busted," "Unchain My Heart," "Georgia on My Mind," "I Don't Need No Doctor," "One Mint Julep," and "I Can't Stop Loving You." Also of note are volumes one and two of *Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music*, issued in 1962, in which he made huge hit albums by mixing soul with country and pop.

Chubby Checker, *The Best of Chubby Checker: Cameo Parkway 1959-1963* (ABKCO, 2005). Included more for its historic importance than its artistic merits, as Checker's numerous early-'60s hits were pretty samey-sounding. No one was a more popular "twist" artist or dance song-oriented rock'n'roller, however,

and his "The Twist" was one of the biggest hit singles ever, reaching #1 on two separate occasions in 1960 and 1962.

Sam Cooke, *Portrait of a Legend 1951-1964* (ABKCO, 2003). Perhaps the most important soul singer of the late 1950s and early 1960s except Ray Charles, Cooke was also a soul-pop pioneer, if a generally smoother one. This goes all the way back to some of his pre-rock gospel recordings, but has all his big soul-pop hits, like "You Send Me," "Twistin' the Night Away," "Chain Gang," "Bring It on Home to Me," "Another Saturday Night," and "A Change Is Gonna Come."

The Drifters, *The Very Best of the Drifters* (Rhino, 1993). All of the major hits from the late '50s-to-mid-'60s version of the band, like "There Goes My Baby," "Save the Last Dance for Me," "Under the Boardwalk," "Up on the Roof," and "On Broadway." All of these married soul to slicker production and orchestration, sometimes with Latin beats, often with Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller as songwriters and producers. The two-disc *All-Time Greatest Hits & More: 1959-1965* is more comprehensive, and the early-to-mid-'60s work by one-time Drifters lead singer Ben E. King is also recommended.

Johnny Kidd & the Pirates, *25 Greatest Hits* (EMI, 2007). Inarguably the best pre-Beatles British rock group, most noted for the original version of "Shakin' All Over" (a big UK hit in 1960), subsequently covered by the Who. Kidd was only an average singer and the band were unknown in the US, but their lean, tough guitar sound in particular was groundbreaking and influential on young British rockers.

Ben E. King, *The Very Best of Ben E. King* (Rhino, 1998). After singing lead on some Drifters hits in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Ben E. King left for a solo career in which he sang New York soul of similar quality. This has the Drifters hits on which he appeared, as well as solo singles like "Stand By Me" and "Spanish Harlem." Rhino's double-CD *Anthology* has some worthwhile material not on this single-disc collection.

Curtis Mayfield/Jerry Butler/The Impressions, *Curtis Mayfield/Jerry Butler/The Impressions* (Raven, 2001). The Impressions, led by Curtis Mayfield, and Jerry Butler were the leading figures of 1960s Chicago soul, working together (though they soon went their separate ways) at the beginning of their careers. There are good anthologies focusing solely on the Impressions or solely on Butler. But this unusual collection combines much of their most popular and essential work, from the early '60s to the early '70s, onto one 28-song CD. "It's All Right" (the Impressions), "People Get Ready" (the Impressions), "He Will Break Your Heart" (Butler), and "Never Give You Up" (Butler) are among the classics here, though each of them would move into more socially conscious and elaborately produced soul in the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially Mayfield when he split from the Impressions.

Joe Meek, *It's Hard to Believe: The Amazing World of Joe Meek* (Razor & Tie, 1995). Still unfamiliar to most of the American public, Joe Meek was the most creative producer in British rock'n'roll prior to the British Invasion. His eccentric techniques were simultaneously futuristic and cheesy, with loads of echo, compression, and references to the occult and horror. The Tornados' instrumental hit "Telstar," and the Honeycombs' early British Invasion hit "Have I the Right?," were his only US smashes, and are both on this 20-track CD of his productions. But many of the others, including British hits by John Leyton, Heinz, and Mike Berry, and flops by the likes of Screaming Lord Sutch, are equally intriguing.

Jackie Wilson, *The Very Best of Jackie Wilson* (Rhino, 1994). Erratic and sometimes overproduced, Jackie Wilson was nonetheless one of early soul music's most electrifying performers. This compilation spans the late 1950s to the late 1960s, with "Lonely Teardrops," "Baby Workout," and "Higher and Higher" the key milestones.

Various Artists, *Hitsville USA: The Motown Singles Collection 1959-1971* (Motown, 1992). Motown is more properly discussed in the session for week five, which is devoted to soul music. It's worth pointing out, however, that the Motown empire

was well underway by the time the Beatles broke the USA in early 1964. There's no stellar compilation of pre-1964 Motown music, but most of disc one of this four-CD box set covers their early breakthrough hits by the Miracles, Marvelettes, Mary Wells, and others.

Recommended Books:

Motown: The Golden Years, by Bill Dahl (Krause, 2001).

Although this isn't as tightly constructed an overview as the best Motown history (Nelson George's *Where Did Our Love Go? The Rise and Fall of the Motown Sound*), this 350-page oversize paperback has a great deal of detail on Motown in the 1960s and 1970s. Aside from separate chapters on all the Motown stars, there are literally dozens of short profiles of the many other acts on the label's roster, and many pictures.

Tune In: The Beatles: All These Years Vol. 1, by Mark Lewisohn (Crown Archetype, 2013). By far the most thorough biography of the Beatles, which is really saying something considering the voluminous competition. But note: this 900-page book is but the first of three volumes, covering only until the end of 1962. Though staggeringly detailed, it's also extremely readable, with vast first-hand research and much context from their Liverpool life and the rise of rock'n'roll. An "extended special edition," available in the UK only, runs 1700 (!) pages, with several hundred thousand more words. This too adds a lot of detail and many stories, though most readers will be satisfied with the standard 900-page edition, which covers the essentials well. Volume 2 was not expected until about 2020 (now it's already late), and the third and final volume not until about seven years after that.

Where Did Our Love Go?: The Rise and Fall of the Motown Sound, by Nelson George (University of Illinois Press, 1997). Of the numerous books that have been written about Motown (including biographies and memoirs for its artists and chief Berry Gordy, Jr.), this remains the best and most readable, balancing history with insightful and fair critical description.

You Send Me: The Life and Times of Sam Cooke, by Daniel Wolff (Quill, 1996). Bio of one of the first soul stars also covers his gospel roots in the Soul Stirrers, and his still-controversial death by shooting in 1964.

Recommended DVDs:

James Brown, *Mr. Dynamite* (Universal, 2014). Mostly devoted to Brown's prime from the early 1960s to mid-1970s, this blends lots of interviews done specifically for this documentary (including many with musicians in his bands) with generally splendid vintage performance footage. It's a little strange in that there's not nearly as much on his earlier career and nothing on his later career, but by 1975 he'd done all of his important records anyway. Co-produced by Mick Jagger, who talks about the Rolling Stones following James Brown on *The T.A.M.I. Show* concert film in 1964 during his interview segment.

Ray Charles, *O Genio: Live in Brazil 1963* (Rhino, 2004). Two live concert sets, including several of his classics: "What'd I Say," "You Don't Know Me," "Hit the Road Jack," "Hallelujah I Love Her So," "Take These Chains from My Heart," "I Can't Stop Loving You."

Sam Cooke, *Legend* (ABKCO, 2003). Though a little on the brief side (70 minutes), this is a decent documentary of the soul star, including vintage footage and interviews with those he worked with and influenced.

The T.A.M.I. Show (Shout, 1964). Filmed in late 1964 in the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, the first great rock concert film features top soul acts James Brown, the Rolling Stones, the Beach Boys, Chuck Berry, and Jan & Dean. Motown is well represented by the Miracles, the Supremes, and Marvin Gaye.

On VHS only:

Jackie Wilson, *Shindig! Presents Jackie Wilson* (Rhino, 1991). A half-hour of mid-'60s Wilson performances on the network television show *Shindig!*

Notable Figures (Excluding Star Musicians):

Frank Guida: Norfolk, Virginia-based producer of Gary U.S. Bonds, a notable transitional figure between rock'n'roll and soul with his murkily produced party rock'n'roll records, especially "Quarter to Three." Some of the records by Bonds and a smaller Guida-produced artist, Jimmy Soul, also mixed in calypso (like Soul's big hit "If You Wanna Be Happy").

Berry Gordy, Jr.: Founder of Motown whose drive, and songwriting/production contributions, were vital to its enormous success, although his autocratic style caused friction with some of Motown's artists and producers.

Notable Places:

The Hacienda Hotel: Los Angeles hotel where Sam Cooke was shot to death by the hotel manager under mysterious circumstances after meeting a woman there on December 11, 1964.

Motown Historical Museum: Open for the past 25 years, and located at the original building, 2648 West Grand Boulevard in Detroit, where Motown was headquartered when it rose to glory in the early-to-mid-1960s. Studio A, the most renowned of the studios Motown used, is here and part of the museum.

Important Record Labels:

Minit: New Orleans-based home of early soul records by Irma Thomas, Aaron Neville, Ernie K-Doe ("Mother-in-Law"), and others.

Motown: Not just the most successful soul label, but the most successful independent label in history; one of the biggest African-American-owned businesses ever founded; and the only label whose name become synonymous with a major style of soul and popular music.

Audiovisual Clips:

Booker T. & the MGs: Green Onions (video)

Ray Charles: Hit the Road Jack (video)
Chubby Checker: The Twist (video)
Joey Dee: Peppermint Twist (video)
Jackie Wilson: Baby Workout (video)
Sam Cooke: Twistin' the Night Away (video)
Gary US Bonds: Quarter to Three (video)
Gene Chandler: Duke of Earl (video)
Barbara Lynn: You'll Lose a Good Thing (video)
Ben E. King: Stand By Me (video)
The Drifters: On Broadway (audio)
The Drifters: Up on the Roof (video)
The Impressions: It's All Right (video)
The Miracles: You Really Got a Hold on Me (video)
Mary Wells: Two Lovers (audio)
James Brown: I Got Money (audio)
Martha & the Vandellas: Heat Wave (video)
The Shadows: FBI (video)
Johnny Kidd & the Pirates: Shakin' All Over (audio)
The Undertakers: Mashed Potatoes (video)
Rory Storm & the Hurricanes: I Can Tell (video)
The Beatles: Some Other Guy (video)
The Beatles: I Saw Her Standing There (video)
The Beatles: From Me to You (video)
Gerry & the Pacemakers: I'm the One (video)
The Beatles: I Wanna Be Your Man (video)
The Rolling Stones: I Wanna Be Your Man (video)
The Beatles: She Loves You/Twist and Shout, November 20, 1963
(video)