



Soul

History and  
Development

## Key Facts

- 'Soul' was used to denote Black popular music from the 50s-70s
- Interpreted and developed the sounds from RnB
- Return to the roots of Black music
- Secularisation of Gospel music
- Divide between Motown and Stax/Atlantic



- Pictured: The Temptations

Unlike RnB from the 30s-50s a lot of Soul music found success with the mainstream, white record buying public

Style of the music was very similar to that of Blues

Motown records (Detroit) tended to have a lighter, more pop approach in order to appeal to a wider audience while southern record labels had more 'gospel grit' (Supremes vs Marvin Gaye)

## Main Artists

- Aretha Franklin
- Etta James
- The Supremes/Diana Ross (*Baby Love* – 1964)
- The Temptations (*My Girl* – 1965)
- Marvin Gaye
- Stevie Wonder (*As* - 1976)
- James Brown
- Jackson 5/Michael Jackson



- Pictured: The Supremes

# Record Labels

- **Motown (Detroit)**
  - Set up by Berry Gordy in the 50s
  - Developed some of the most successful artists of the 60s, 70s and 80s
- **Stax (Memphis)**
  - Considered to be 'rawer' and more 'authentic' than Motown
- **Atlantic (New York City)**
  - Partnered with Stax and had links to bigger US labels



- Pictured:
- Motown was responsible for Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder and Diana Ross
- Tried to maintain commercial popularity by avoiding lyrics of a sexual nature to remain non-controversial
- Stax had less commercial success
- Atlantic also worked with soul artists from the UK such as Dusty Springfield

## Technology & Production

- Recorded to multi-track tape
- Live capture with all musicians in the same room
- Use of DI to capture guitars and basses
- Close miking of drums
- Vocal overdubbing
- Echo chambers and plates (EMT 140) to create reverb
- Light compression
- Very wide stereo field



- Pictured: Marvin Gaye

Early adoption of firstly 4-track and then 8-track tape recording

Musicians would have been separated with acoustic screens to limit bleed

Overdubbing = re-recording over a track to either correct mistakes, thicken the sound (double tracking) or add additional musical layers (such as harmonies)

Stereo mixes would feature very extreme panning (e.g. drums and bass panned hard left and everything else panned to the right)