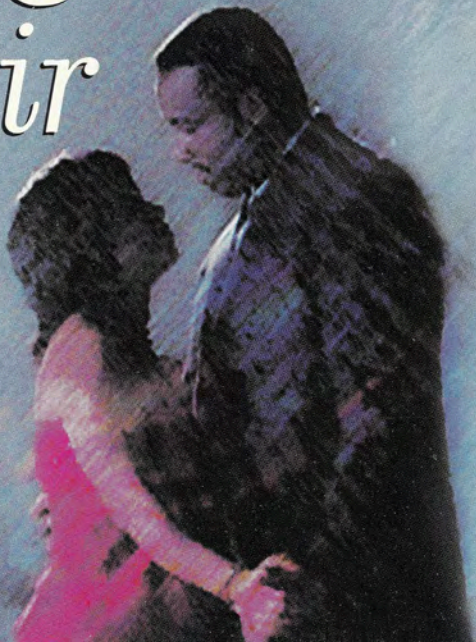


*Old School*  
**Love**  
*Affair*



# SOLID GOLD SOUL

## *Old School Love Affair*

1. THE O'JAYS • Let Me Make Love to You
2. SMOKEY ROBINSON • Baby Come Close
3. EARTH, WIND AND FIRE • Love's Holiday
4. ENCHANTMENT • Gloria
5. THE MOMENTS • Look at Me (I'm in Love)
6. TEDDY PENDERGRASS • Love T.K.O.
7. NORMAN CONNORS • You Are My Starship
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# Old School Love Affair

**SOLID GOLD SOUL**

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# Politically;

the '70s saw the rise of Black

Power and the Panther party. Musically, the decade found a bump-and-grind soundtrack in funk and disco. But the soul ballads of the era—emphasizing smooth vocal harmonies instead of pounding dance-floor rhythms and sweetly romantic themes instead of strident political messages—offered a subtler expression of black culture. In the polished production and highly emotive vocals of contemporary R&B, the influence of these classic love songs can still be heard today.

The Sound of Philadelphia, characterized by the sweeping orchestral arrangements of Kenny Gamble, Leon Huff and Thom Bell, defined early-'70s soul. The Intruders, who had

been working with Gamble and Huff since the mid-'60s, were at the foundation of the Philly success story. Written by the two producers, **I Wanna Know Your Name** showcased the distinctive tenor of Samuel "Little Sonny" Brown against a backdrop of mellow French horns, delicate keyboards and gently rolling percussion. The song appeared on *Save the Children*, a concept album advocating family unity.

It was on the advice of the *Intruders* that the O'Jays came to work with Gamble and Huff. Although the O'Jays had been singing doo-wop since 1958, it wasn't until they signed with the producers' Philadelphia International label in 1972 that their career really took off. The group developed a reputation for driving message songs, but their talent was wide-ranging. The expressive delivery of lead singer Eddie Levert and



Teddy Pendergrass

tenor *Walter Williams* clicked on suave, sensuous ballads such as **Let Me Make Love to You**, which made the R&B Top 10 in 1975.

The Stylistics' label, Avco Embassy, hired Philly producer-arranger-song-writer Thom Bell to perfect the group's sound. It was Bell's idea to have Russell Thompkins Jr. lower his pure, soaring falsetto just a notch in order to improve his enunciation. Bell also co-wrote **Betcha by Golly, Wow**, the biggest hit of the Stylistics' career.

In 1973, Delfonics member Randy Cain brought in Ted "Wizard" Mills to do some writing for a session with Al Rubens, Steve Bernstein and Bruce Gable, producers for Philly's W.M.O.T. (We Men of Talent) label. Rubens noticed Mills's distinctive high tenor and got the idea to team him with a local group of singers, the Shades of Love. Soon the quintet was rehearsing songs by the Blue Notes and the O'Jays. Renamed Blue Magic, the

act released their first three singles in 1973 and toured Europe opening for the Ike and Tina Turner Revue. By the spring of 1974, Blue Magic's third single, **Stop to Start**, had become their most successful release to date.

Norman Connors was another product of the Philly scene. According to legend, in his junior-high days the jazz drummer snuck into a nightclub to play with John Coltrane. After studying at



Juilliard, Connors did session work with Archie Shepp and toured with Pharoah Sanders. **You Are My Starship**, which features a lovely vocal by Michael Henderson, reached No. 4 on the R&B chart.

The Moments were heavily influenced by the Philadelphia sound brewing just south of their home in Hackensack, New Jersey. The group became known for romantic songs, starting with their 1970 hit, *Love on a Two-Way Street*. In 1975, they returned to the same vein for **Look at Me (I'm in Love)**, which topped the R&B chart. The Moments' Al Goodman wrote the number when he learned that bandmate Harry Ray was getting married. They wound up performing it at both of their weddings, as well as that of bandmate Billy Brown.

Hailing from Cincinnati, Ohio, the Isley Brothers, like so many of their contemporaries, started out singing gospel music. Following a series of monster hits like *Twist and Shout* and *It's Your Thing*, the vocal trio revamped their lineup in 1969, adding two younger brothers and a brother-in-law. Since then, the group has placed 60 singles on the R&B chart. **Don't Say Goodnight (It's Time for Love) (Parts**

**1 and 2)** tied *It's Your Thing* as their biggest hit, holding the No. 1 spot for four weeks.

Detroit's Temptations, arguably the country's favorite soul group during the '60s, struggled through lineup changes and personal problems in the early '70s. Eddie Kendricks and Paul Williams left the group in 1971, to be replaced by Damon Harris and Richard Street. The revamped Tempts favored uptempo songs such as *Papa Was a Rollin' Stone* and *Masterpiece* but returned to the ballad form with **Hey Girl (I Like Your Style)**. In a sad coincidence of timing, that single debuted the day after Williams was found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot.

As much as the Philly sound dominated soul in the first half of the '70s, the latter part of the decade belonged to Earth, Wind and Fire. EWF added funk, jazz and Afrocentric themes to the cauldron of soul and R&B to create their own flavorful stew. On simmering ballads like **Love's Holiday**, the group's high-pitched vocal harmonies owe much to the Temptations.

**That's the Way of the World**, a richly textured midtempo jam punctuated by EWF leader Maurice White's beloved

*kalimba*, was written as the theme song to a movie of the same title. Directed by Sig Shore of Superfly fame, the film was an inside look at the music business, featuring acting stints by members of EWF. Although the movie flopped, the title tune took the group, in the words of the song, "higher and higher." The soundtrack album proved to be the EWF's commercial breakthrough, producing double-platinum sales and *Shining Star*, the band's only hit to top both pop and R&B charts.

Smokey Robinson's prowess as a songwriter, producer and performer with the Miracles had already made him soul's leading man when, in 1972, he left the group for a solo career (around the same time partner and mentor Berry Gordy moved Motown Records from Detroit to Los Angeles). **Baby Come Close**, from Robinson's debut solo album, *Smokey*, became his first hit in 1974. Its cool, laid-back groove hinted at developments to come the following year on his influential album *A Quiet Storm*. The title itself became a catchphrase describing urban contemporary music in the '80s.

The quiet-storm sound was epitomized by 1980's **Love T.K.O.**, a spare,

jazzy lament of love gone wrong crooned by R&B's main sex symbol, Teddy Pendergrass. Pendergrass's gruff baritone and dark good looks earned him a legion of adoring female fans. Two years after *Love T.K.O.* hit, Pendergrass was to serve as a different kind of inspiration, staging a dramatic comeback from an auto accident that left him partially paralyzed.

—Sue Cummings

Smokey Robinson



# Discography

- 1. Let Me Make Love to You *The O'Jays*** • Music and lyrics by Bunny Sigler and Allan Felder. Philadelphia International 3573 (1975) No. 10\* Warner-Tamerlane Publ. Corp./Golden Fleece Music. BMI. © 1975 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.
- 2. Baby Come Close *Smokey Robinson*** • Music and lyrics by Marvin Tarplin, William "Smokey" Robinson and Pamela Moffett. Tamla 54239 (1974) No. 7\* Jobete Music Co. Inc. ASCAP. © 1973 Motown Record Company, L.P. Courtesy of Motown Record Company under license from Universal Music Enterprises.
- 3. Love's Holiday *Earth, Wind and Fire*** • Music and lyrics by Maurice White and Skip Scarborough. Columbia LP 34905 (1977) Did not chart. EMI April Music, Inc. ASCAP. Alexscar Music. BMI. © 1977 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.
- 4. Gloria *Enchantment*** • Music and lyrics by Mike Stokes and Emanuel Johnson. Roadshow 912 (1977) No. 5\* Desert Moon Songs, Limited/Willow Girl Music Company Careers-BMG Music Publishing, Inc./Frankly Music. BMI. U.S. Music & Media/Skytower Music Limited. ASCAP. © 1976 EMI Records. Courtesy of EMI Records, under license from EMI-Capitol Music Special Markets.
- 5. Look at Me (I'm in Love) *The Moments*** • Music and lyrics by Al Goodman, Harry Ray and Walter Lee Morris. Stang 5060 (1975) No. 1\* Gambi Music Inc./Twenty-Nine Black Music. BMI. © 1975 Rhino Entertainment Co. Produced under license from Rhino Entertainment Co., by arrangement with Warner Special Products.
- 6. Love T.K.O. *Teddy Pendergrass*** • Music and lyrics by Cecil Womack, Linda Womack and Gil Noble. Philadelphia International 3116 (1980) No. 2\* Warner-Tamerlane Publ. Corp. BMI. © 1980 Philadelphia International Corp. Courtesy of Philadelphia International Corp.
- 7. You Are My Starship *Norman Connors*** • Music and lyrics by Michael Henderson. Buddah 542 (1976) No. 4\* Electrocard Music Publishing Company. ASCAP. © 1976 BMG Special Products. Under license from BMG Special Products.
- 8. I Wanna Know Your Name *The Intruders*** • Music and lyrics by Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff. Gamble 2508 (1973) No. 9\* Warner-Tamerlane Publ. Corp. BMI. © 1973 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.
- 9. Don't Say Goodnight (It's Time for Love) (Parts 1 and 2) *The Isley Brothers*** • Music and lyrics by Rudolph Isley, Ronald Isley, Ernest Isley, Christopher Jasper, Marvin Isley and O'Kelly Isley. T-Neck 2290 (1980) No. 1\* EMI April Music, Inc. (ASCAP) on behalf of Bovina Music Inc. ASCAP. © 1980 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.
- 10. Just to Be Close to You *The Commodores*** • Music and lyrics by Lionel Richie. Motown 1402 (1976) No. 1\* Brenda Richie Publishing Co./Jobete Music Co. Inc./Libren Music. ASCAP. © 1976 Motown Record Company, L.P. Courtesy of Motown Record Company under license from Universal Music Enterprises.
- 11. Betcha by Golly, Wow *The Stylistics*** • Music and lyrics by Thomas Randolph Bell and Linda Creed. Avco 4591 (1972) No. 2\* Warner-Tamerlane Publ. Corp. BMI. © 1972 Amherst Records, Inc. Courtesy of Amherst Records, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- 12. That's the Way of the World *Earth, Wind and Fire*** • Music and lyrics by Maurice White, Charles Stepney and Verdine Adams White. Columbia 10172 (1975) No. 5\* EMI April Music, Inc. (ASCAP) on behalf of Eibur Music. BMI. © 1975 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.
- 13. Stop to Start *Blue Magic*** • Music and lyrics by Jimmy Grant and Al Felder. Atco 6949 (1974) No. 14\* Wintot Music Pub./Six Strings Music/Zella Music. BMI. © 1974 Atco Records. Produced under license from Elektra Entertainment Group.



14. **Love Don't Love Nobody** *The Spinners* • Music and lyrics by Charles Simmons and Joseph Jefferson. Atlantic 3206 (1974) No. 4\* Warner-Tamerlane Publ. Corp. BMI. © 1975 Atlantic Recording Corp. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp.
15. **Hey Girl (I Like Your Style)** *The Temptations* • Music and lyrics by Norman Whitfield. Gordy 7131 (1973) No. 2\* Stone Diamond Music Corporation. BMI. © 1973 Motown Record Company, L.P. Courtesy of Motown Record Company under license from Universal Music Enterprises.
16. **Lady** *The Whispers* • Music and lyrics by Nicholas Caldwell. Solar 11928 (1980) No. 3\* Sony/ATV Songs LLC/Whisperdex Music. BMI. © 1979 Solar Records, Inc. Courtesy Solar Records, under license from EMI-Capitol Music Special Markets.
17. **It's Forever** *The Ebonys* • Music and lyrics by Leon Huff. Philadelphia International 3529 (1973) No. 14\* Warner-Tamerlane Publ. Corp. BMI. © 1973 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.
18. **'Cause I Love You** *Lenny Williams* • Music and lyrics by Lenny Williams and Michael Bennett. ABC LP 1073 (1978) Did not chart. Len-Lon Music Publishing/Stone Diamond Music Corporation. BMI. © 1978 MCA Records. Courtesy of MCA Records under license from Universal Music Enterprises.

\*Indicates highest Billboard R&B chart position



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