

# SHINDIG!

DEEP CUTS

A lovely Supreme:  
Mary Wilson in 1966

## Mary Go Round

MARY WILSON was a co-founder of THE SUPREMES - the most successful American vocal group of all time. Their influence on popular music is enormous and remains undimmed, over 55 years since their formation.

Shindig! tested Mary's formidable powers of recall by asking for her recollections on 10 cherry-picked deep cuts from The Supremes' back catalogue. She hardly skipped a beat

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**YOUR HEART BELONGS TO ME**

(Single, 1962)

The Supremes signed our recording contract with Motown in 1961. During that time we recorded many songs that were written and produced by Smokey Robinson. There were four of us and Barbara Martin was with us on many of those early tracks. But by the time we recorded this track she had left the group to get married. That's when we made the big decision to just keep the group a trio and not a quartet. At the time The Miracles were our heroes and Smokey had been having big hits on Mary Wells, so we were thrilled to record anything he gave us. We were 17 years old – still mere teenagers – madly in love with life. It was the three of us in our youth.

I love the tenderness of Diane's voice on this one and remember how we sang with so much happiness in our voices, this is the real Supremes before the hits started coming and more voices added in with me and Florence. I just love this song.

**NOTHING BUT HEARTACHES**

(Single, 1965)

Unfortunately 'Nothing But Heartaches' was the single that broke the string of #1 songs Holland-Dozier-Holland were throwing out. Five #1 singles in the early '60s was like miracles happening one after another. No wonder we have been voted the #1 female group of all time! No one seems to understand why this track failed to get higher than #11 on the US charts, it certainly is a driving track – the lyrics are strong, the singing is very catchy. Even today when I hear it, it makes me want to sing along with it and get up and dance.

**HE'S ALL I GOT**

(*I Hear A Symphony* LP, 1966)

This was a Holland-Dozier-Holland song from our *I Hear A Symphony* album, which was

mostly standards and a few new songs. We felt so grown up with this album. The new songs fit in with the standards, and two were hits: 'I Hear A Symphony' and 'My World Is Empty Without You'. 'He's All I Got', was a fun little song, but unlike the others, wasn't issued as an A-side. Motown issued it as the B-side to 'Love Is Like An Itching In My Heart', the first single from our next album, *Supremes A Go-Go*, and that album went to #1.

**IT'S TIME TO BREAK DOWN**

(*New Ways But Love Stays* LP, 1970)

This song was VERY psychedelic. It was also from our *New Ways But Love Stays* album. We performed it on *The Flip Wilson Show*. Years later it was sampled in several hip-hop songs. We had so much fun recording this one. This was during Jean Terrell's early days with me and Cindy. I enjoyed her style as she certainly brought a bit of soul into our sound.



Mary, Florence Ballard and Diana Ross on top of the world in '65; painted poster of Mary included in original copies of '67's multi-million selling *Greatest Hits* (above left)





into the '70s. Mary, Jean Terrell and Cindy Birdsong.

#### COME TOGETHER

(*New Ways But Love Stays* LP, 1970)

We covered The Beatles a lot! We recorded an album called *A Bit Of Liverpool* in 1964 and, through the years, we performed a lot of their songs on television shows and in our nightclub act. And it made sense, because what The Beatles were to Americans, we were to the British.

#### WITHOUT THE ONE YOU LOVE

(*The Magnificent 7* LP, 1970)

*The Magnificent 7* was not only a cowboy movie, but an album of duets with The Four Tops and The Supremes. Whoever came up with the idea of putting the Tops and Supremes together I cannot tell you, but it was brilliant. 'Without The One You Love' had been a hit for the Tops in 1964 so recording it was a gas. We had a hit on 'River Deep, Mountain High', which went to #17 in *Billboard* and reached #7 on the R&B chart.

The album design with us all in cowboy outfits was precious. We covered many songs and worked with many different producers. The first album was in 1970 just after Jean Terrell joined The Supremes. She and Levi Stubbs were a great match, and Cindy and I had a ball with Duke (Fakir), Obie (Benson) and Lawrence (Payton) in the background. Talk about fun in the studio while recording – it was full of laughs and lots of fried chicken.

#### STONED LOVE

(Single, 1970)

This was a very controversial song, because radio thought we were talking about drugs. We weren't – it was about real love, stone love. In fact, we actually sing "stone love". The "d" was added when the single was released. It was the lead single on our second album produced by Frank Wilson, *New Ways But Love Stays*, one of Motown's first concept albums. Frank did a similar album at the same time with The Four Tops called *Still Waters*. We were very excited about ours.

They were going to call the album *Stoned Love*, but at the last minute, changed the name,



which we did not like. Also we felt the look of the album cover was out of touch with the times; it was too psychedelic. To me the album was more about what was really going on in America. Big change was happening, especially in the black communities. It was an album about the times we were living in. We had taken a great head shot with all of us wearing Afro hair-dos. Personally, this was what made me know that I had to take more control over the decision-making of the group.

#### AUTOMATICALLY SUNSHINE

(Single, 1972)

The wonderful Smokey Robinson, who is a genius and who was one of our first producers, came to my rescue after Frank Wilson left. Smokey tried to get a hit with us back in the days when we were called "the no hit Supremes". Our first album is full of his recordings.



"To me, 'Stoned Love' was more about what was really going on in America. Big change was happening, especially in the black communities"

'Automatically Sunshine' was the second single from the *Floy Joy* album, produced by Smokey. This was the beginning of my starting to do leads in The Supremes. Jean and I shared leads on this song, and on the single, 'Floy Joy'. The photo on the album cover is great, however very deceiving. Cindy Birdsong, who had replaced Florence, and I recorded the album. However, Cindy decided to leave the group at this time, so we shot the album cover with the incoming new person, Lynda Lawrence. I loved the album cover – I think it is one of our best. I love the rose.

#### ALL I WANT

(Produced And Arranged By Jimmy Webb LP, 1972)

This was from our Jimmy Webb album. Jimmy chose beautiful songs for us, including one for me to sing lead on called 'I Keep It Hid'. I really enjoyed working with Jimmy Webb, but I did not like that he felt he had to add more voices. We performed this song on *The Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour*, our primetime debut with our new line-up of Sherry and Cindy, who'd rejoined us again. We took turns with the leads, and on that version, you can hear each of us.

#### BAD WEATHER

(Single, 1973)

Speaking of Lynda Lawrence brings up the fact that it was her connection with Stevie Wonder, who wrote and produced this great song for us, was a good choice to replace Cindy. Lynda's brother co-wrote 'Bad Weather' with Stevie. Here we were working with a genius again. I was certain that this song would be huge. It was released between his singles 'Superstition' and 'You Are The Sunshine Of My Life'. He was as upset as we were that the song didn't do as well as it should have. It was more popular in the UK than in the US. However, through the years, the song has become a classic, and still remains a very big favourite of the fans. ☺

*The Living Legends Tour, starring Dionne Warwick, Roberta Flack, Mary Wilson of The Supremes and The Drifters, hits the UK on October 3rd*