

Rhythm N' Blues highlights

[Independant Record Labels](#) of the 1960's

Windy City, Chess/Checker and Motown Record Labels



The Five Stairsteps

Videos:

[Ooh Child](#)

[You Waited Too Long](#)

[World Of Fantasy](#)



The Five Stairsteps

The Chicago group was dubbed "First Family of Soul" because of their successful five-year chart run; the moniker was later passed on to The Jackson 5. Initially a teenage five-member brothers and sister vocal group made up of the offspring of Betty and Clarence Burke, The Five Stairsteps (named by Mrs. Burke who thought her kids looked like stair steps when lined up according to their age) featured lead singer Clarence Jr., Alohe, James, Dennis, and 13-year-old Kenneth ("Keni"). Most of the members attended Harlan High School. Clarence Sr. was a detective for the Chicago Police Department. He backed the group on bass guitar, managed them, and co-wrote songs with Clarence Jr. and Gregory Fowler. ([Read more](#))



The Jackson Five

Videos:

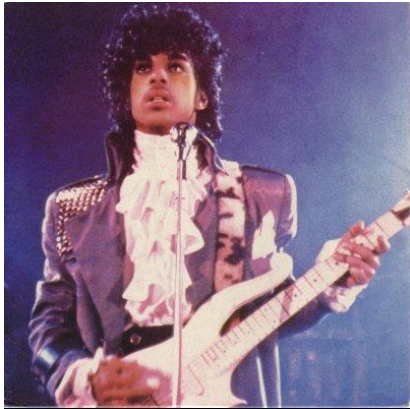
- [Never Can Say Goodbye](#)
- [Got to be There & Brand New Thing](#)
- [Dancing Machine](#)



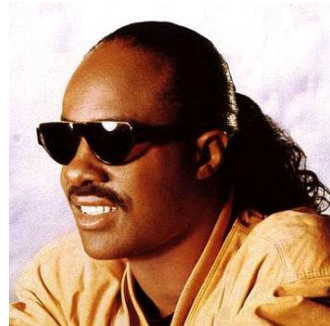
The Jackson Five

Born and raised in Gary, Indiana, the Jackson brothers were guided early in their careers by their father [Joseph Jackson](#), a steel mill crane operator and former musician, and their mother [Katherine Jackson](#), who watched over the boys during the early years. Tito recalled playing around with his father's guitar while he was away working on Gary's steel mills. One night, Joe discovered Tito had been playing his guitar after Tito broke a string. Initially upset with his sons playing behind his back, he saw their potential and in 1963, Jackie, Tito and Jermaine formed *The Jackson Brothers*, including hometown friends Reynaud Jones and Milford Hite on guitar and drums respectively. By the end of the following year, the group's younger brothers Marlon and Michael joined the instrumental band playing tambourine and congas. ([Read more](#))

Super Stars



[Prince](#)



[Stevie Wonder](#)



[Marvin Gaye](#)



[Michael Jackson](#)



[Curtis Mayfield](#)



[Isaac Hayes](#)



[James Brown](#)



[Lou Rawls](#)



[Jennifer Hudson](#)



[Beyoncé Knowles](#)



[Keyshia Cole](#)



[Janet Jackson](#)



[Usher](#)



[Chris Brown](#)



[Luther Vandross](#)



[Brian McKnight](#)



[Mary J. Blige](#)



[Anita Baker](#)



[Sade' Adu](#)



[Mariah Carey](#)

Rhythm and blues, commonly abbreviated as R&B, is a genre of popular music that originated in African American communities in the 1940s. The term was originally used by record companies to describe recordings marketed predominantly to urban African Americans, at a time when "urbane, rocking, jazz based music with a heavy, insistent beat" was becoming more popular. In the commercial rhythm and blues music typical of the 1950s through the 1970s, the bands usually consisted of piano, one or two guitars, bass, drums, one or more saxophones, and sometimes background vocalists. R&B lyrical themes often encapsulate the African-American experience of pain and the quest for freedom and joy, as well as triumphs and failures in terms of relationships, economics, and aspirations.

The term "rhythm and blues" has undergone a number of shifts in meaning. In the early 1950s, it was frequently applied to blues records. Starting in the mid-1950s, after this style of music contributed to the development of rock and roll, the term "R&B" became used to refer to music styles that developed from and incorporated electric blues, as well as gospel and soul music. In the 1960s, several British rock bands such as the Rolling Stones, the Who and the Animals were referred to and promoted as being R&B bands; posters for the Who's residency at the Marquee Club in 1964 contained the slogan, "Maximum R&B".

[\(read more\)](#)

Super Soul

The Miracles (known from 1965 to 1972 as **Smokey Robinson & the Miracles**) are an American rhythm and blues group from Detroit, Michigan, notable as the first successful group act for [Berry Gordy's Motown Records](#) company.



Smokey Robinson & the Miracles

Their single "[Shop Around](#)" was Motown's first million-selling hit record, and the group went on to become one of Motown's signature acts of the 1960s. During the same period, the Miracles' original lead singer and founding member [Smokey Robinson](#) became one of the most successful songwriters and record producers of all time. ([Read more](#))

Videos: [40 Song Playlist](#)

[The Tears Of A Clown](#)
[The Tracks Of My Tears](#)
[You really got a hold on me](#)



The Supremes

Videos: [40 Song Mix Playlist](#)

[Baby Love](#)

[where did our love go](#)

[Come See About Me](#)

The Supremes, an American female singing group, were the premier act of Motown Records during the 1960s. The Supremes have sold over 100 million records to date. Their catalog remains active 50 years later.

Originally founded as **The Primettes** in Detroit, Michigan, in 1959, The Supremes' repertoire included doo-wop, pop, soul, Broadway show tunes, psychedelic soul, and disco. They were the most commercially successful of Motown's acts and are, to date, America's most successful vocal group with 12 number one singles on the *Billboard* Hot 100. Most of these hits were written and produced by Motown's main songwriting and production team, Holland–Dozier–Holland. At their peak in the mid-1960s, The Supremes rivaled The Beatles in worldwide popularity, and their success made it possible for future African-American R&B and soul musicians to find mainstream success.

([Read more](#))



Gene Chandler

[What Now](#)

Gene Chandler (born **Eugene Drake Dixon** and nicknamed "**The Duke of Earl**" or simply "**The Duke**"; July 6, 1937) is an American singer, songwriter, music producer and record label executive. He is known best for his most successful songs "[Duke of Earl](#)" and "[Groovy Situation](#)" and his association with The Dukays, [the Impressions](#) and [Curtis Mayfield](#).

Chandler is a [Grammy Hall Of Fame](#) inductee and a winner of both the National Association of Television and Radio Announcers' (NATRA) "Producer of the Year" Award and the [Rhythm and Blues Foundation](#)'s Pioneer Award. He is also one of a just a few singers to achieve chart successes spanning the [doo-wop](#), [rhythm and blues](#), [soul](#), and [disco](#) musical eras, with some Top 40 pop and R&B [chart](#) hits between 1961 and 1986. ([read more](#))

Aretha Louise Franklin (March 25, 1942 – August 16, 2018) was an American singer, songwriter, pianist, and civil rights activist. Franklin began her career as a child singing gospel at [New Bethel Baptist Church](#) in [Detroit, Michigan](#), where her father [C. L. Franklin](#) was minister. At the age of 18, she embarked on a secular musical career as a recording artist for [Columbia Records](#).

Videos:

[Respect](#)

[I Dreamed A Dream](#)

[Chain Of Fools](#)



[Aretha Franklin](#)

While Franklin's career did not immediately flourish, she found acclaim and commercial success after signing with [Atlantic Records](#) in 1966. Hit songs such as "[Respect](#)", "[Chain of Fools](#)", "[Think](#)", "[\(You Make Me Feel Like\) A Natural Woman](#)", "[I Never Loved a Man \(The Way I Love You\)](#)", and "[I Say a Little Prayer](#)", propelled her past her musical peers. By the end of the 1960s, Aretha Franklin had come to be known as "**The Queen of Soul**".

[\(read more\)](#)



Jerry Butler

Jerry Butler, Jr. (born December 8, 1939) is an American soul singer-songwriter, producer, musician, and retired politician. He is also noted as being the original lead singer of the [R&B vocal group the Impressions](#), as well as a 1991 [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](#) inductee. Since leaving The Impressions, Jerry has had over 55 *Billboard* Pop & R&B Chart Hits as a solo artist, including some 15 Top 40 Pop Hits in the Hot 100, and 15 R&B Top 10's. He served as a Commissioner for [Cook County, Illinois](#), from 1985 to 2018. As a member of this 17-member county board, he chaired the Health and Hospitals Committee, and served as Vice Chair of the Construction Committee.

[\(read more\)](#)

Mary Esther Wells (May 13, 1943 – July 26, 1992) was an American singer who helped to define the emerging sound of Motown in the early 1960s. Along with the Supremes, the Miracles, the Temptations, and the Four Tops, Wells was said to have been part of the charge in black music onto radio stations and record shelves of mainstream America, "bridging the color lines in music at the time."



Mary Wells

With a string of hit singles composed mainly by Smokey Robinson, including "[The One Who Really Loves You](#)", "[Two Lovers](#)" (1962), the [Grammy-nominated "You Beat Me to the Punch"](#) (1962) and her signature hit, "[My Guy](#)" (1964), she became recognized as "**The Queen of Motown**" until her departure from the company in 1964, at the height of her popularity. She was one of Motown's first singing superstars. ([read more](#))

Videos:

[Two Lovers](#)

[Beat Me To The Punch](#)



Wilson Pickett

Wilson Pickett (March 18, 1941 – January 19, 2006) was an American singer and songwriter. A major figure in the development of American soul music, Pickett recorded over 50 songs which made the US R&B charts, many of which crossed over to the [Billboard Hot 100](#). Among his best-known hits are "[In the Midnight Hour](#)" (which he co-wrote), "[Land of 1,000 Dances](#)", "[Mustang Sally](#)", and "[Funky Broadway](#)".

Pickett was inducted into the [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](#) in 1991, in recognition of his impact on songwriting and recording. ([read more](#))

Videos:

[Funky Broadway](#)

[Stagger Lee](#)

[Land of a Thousand Dances](#)



[Patti LaBelle](#)



Videos: [40 Song Playlist](#)

[Save The Last Dance For Me](#)

[Hello Happiness](#)

[Saturday Night at the Movies](#)

[This Magic Moment](#)

The Drifters

The first classic Drifters formed by Clyde McPhatter was inducted into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame as "The Drifters" or "The Original Drifters". The second Drifters formed by Treadwell featuring [Ben E. King](#) was separately inducted into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame as Ben E. King and the Drifters. In their induction, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame eclectically selected four members from the classic Drifters, two from the second Drifters, and one from the post-King Treadwell Drifters. According to the Vocal Group Hall of Fame, "Through turmoil and changes the (original) Drifters managed to set musical trends and give the public 13 chart hits, most of which are legendary recordings today." ([Read more](#))

Martha and the Vandellas (known from 1967 to 1972 as **Martha Reeves and the Vandellas**) were among the most successful groups of the Motown roster during the period 1963–1967. In contrast to other Motown groups such as [The Supremes](#) and [The Marvelettes](#), Martha and the Vandellas were known for a harder, R&B sound, typified by "[\(Love Is Like a\) Heat Wave](#)", "[Nowhere to Run](#)", "[Jimmy Mack](#)" and, their signature song, "[Dancing in the Street](#)".



Martha and the Vandellas

Videos: [41 Song Mix Playlist](#)

["Dancing in the Streets"](#)

[Heatwave](#)

[Nowhere To Run](#)

-

During their nine-year run on the charts from 1963 to 1972, Martha and the Vandellas charted over twenty-six hits and recorded in the styles of doo-wop, R&B, pop, blues, rock and soul. Ten Vandellas songs reached the top ten of the *Billboard* R&B singles chart, including two R&B number ones. Twelve of the Vandellas' songs charted within the Top 40 of the *Billboard* Hot 100, with six songs charting within the Top Ten including "Dancing in the Street," "Heat Wave," "Nowhere to Run" and "Jimmy Mack."

In 2004, ranked Martha and the Vandellas #96 on their list of the 100 greatest artists of all time.

[\(Read more\)](#)

the Vandellas #96 on their list of the 100 greatest artists of all time.

[\(Read more\)](#)



[Sam Cooke](#)

Samuel Cook (January 22, 1931 – December 11, 1964), known professionally as **Sam Cooke**, was an American singer, songwriter, civil-rights activist and entrepreneur.

Influential as both a singer and composer, he is commonly known as the [King of Soul](#) for his distinctive vocals and importance within popular music. He began singing as a child and joined [the Soul Stirrers](#) before moving to a solo career where he scored a string of hit songs like "[You Send Me](#)", "[A Change Is Gonna Come](#)", "[Wonderful World](#)", "[Chain Gang](#)", "[Twistin' the Night Away](#)", and "[Bring it on Home to Me](#)".

[\(Read more\)](#)

Videos:

[You Send Me](#)
[Blowing in the Wind](#)
["Chain Gang"](#)

Brenda Holloway (born June 21, 1946) is an American singer and songwriter, who was a recording artist for Motown Records during the 1960s. Her best-known recordings are the soul hits, "Every Little Bit Hurts", "When I'm Gone", and "You've Made Me So Very Happy."

Videos:

[Every Little Bit Hurts](#)
[Just Look what You've Done](#)
[I'll Always Love You](#)
[You Can Cry On My Shoulder](#)



Brenda Holloway

The latter, which she co-wrote, was later widely popularized when it became a Top Ten hit for [Blood, Sweat & Tears](#). She left Motown after four years, at the age of 22, and largely retired from the music industry until the 1990s, after her recordings had become popular on the British "[Northern soul](#)" scene.

[\(read more\)](#)



Al Green

Albert Leornes Greene (born April 13, 1946), often known as The Reverend Al Green, is an American singer, songwriter and record producer, best known for recording a series of soul hit singles in the early 1970s, including "Take Me to the River", "Tired of Being Alone", "I'm Still in Love with You", "Love and Happiness", and his signature song, "Let's Stay Together". Inducted to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995, Green was referred to on the museum's site as being "one of the most gifted purveyors of soul music".[2] He has also been referred to as "The Last of the Great Soul Singers". Green was included in the Rolling Stone list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time, ranking at No. 65, as well as its list of the 100 Greatest Singers, at No. 14.

[\(read more\)](#)

Videos:

[Love And Happiness](#)

[For The Good Times](#)

[Let's Stay Together](#)

Tina Turner (born **Anna Mae Bullock**, November 26, 1939) is an American-born Swiss singer, songwriter, and actress. Turner rose to prominence with [Ike Turner](#)'s Kings of Rhythm before recording hit singles both with Ike and as a solo performer. One of the best-selling recording artists of all time, she has been referred to as The Queen of Rock 'n' Roll and has sold more than 200 million records worldwide. Turner is noted for her energetic stage presence, powerful vocals, career longevity, and trademark legs.



Tina Turner

Anna Mae Bullock was born in [Nutbush, Tennessee](#). She began her career in 1958 as a featured singer with Ike Turner's Kings of Rhythm, first recording under the name "Little Ann". Her introduction to the public as Tina Turner began in 1960 as a member of the [Ike & Tina Turner Revue](#)

Videos:

[Private Dancer](#)

[Proud Mary](#)

[We Don't Need Another Hero](#)



Johnny Mathis

John Royce "Johnny" Mathis (born September 30, 1935) is an American singer of [popular music](#). Starting his career with singles of [standard music](#), he became highly popular as an album artist, with several dozen of his albums achieving [gold or platinum](#) status and 73 making the [Billboard charts](#) to date. According to Guinness Music Chart historian Paul Gambacini, Johnny Mathis has sold well over 360 million records worldwide making Mathis the third biggest selling artist of the 20th century. Mathis has received the [Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award](#) and has been inducted into the [Grammy Hall of Fame](#) for three separate recordings. ([read more](#))

Videos:

[It's Not For Me To Say](#)
[Chances Are](#)
[Misty](#)

Marie Dionne Warwick ([/'di:ɒn 'wɒrɪk/](#) [DEE-on WORR-ik](#); [née Warrick](#); born December 12, 1940) is an American singer, actress, and television show host who became a [United Nations](#) Global Ambassador for the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) and a United States Ambassador of Health.

Videos:

[Anyone Who Had A Heart](#)
[Walk On By](#)
[Don't Make Me Over](#)



Dionne Warwick

Warwick ranks among the 41 biggest hit makers of the entire rock era, based on the [Billboard](#) Hot 100 Pop Singles Charts. She is second only to [Aretha Franklin](#) as the most-charted female vocalist of all time, with 56 of her singles making the *Billboard* Hot 100 between 1962 and 1998, and 80 singles making all *Billboard* charts combined

([read more](#))

The Temptations are an American vocal group that achieved fame as one of the most successful acts to record for [Motown Records](#). The group's repertoire has included, at various times during its five-decade career, R&B, doo-wop, funk, disco, soul, and adult contemporary music. Formed in Detroit, Michigan, in 1960 as **The Elgins** (not to be confused with another Motown group with the same name), the Temptations have always featured at least five male vocalists/dancers

Videos: [40 Song Playlist](#)

[My Girl](#)

[Cloud Nine](#)

[Aint Too Proud To Beg](#)



The Temptations

. Known for its recognizable choreography, distinct harmonies, and flashy onstage suits, the Temptations have been said to be as influential to soul as The Beatles are to pop and rock. Having sold tens of millions of albums, the Temptations are one of the most successful groups in music history. As of 2010, the Temptations continue to perform and record for [Universal Records](#) with its one living original member, [Otis Williams](#), still in its lineup.

[\(Read more\)](#)

The Shirelles were originally formed in 1958 in Passaic, New Jersey, by four friends: Shirley Owens Alston Reeves, Doris Coley Kenner Jackson, Addie "Micki" Harris McPherson, and Beverly Lee. Students at [Passaic High School](#), they christened themselves 'the Poquellos', wrote a song called "[I Met Him on a Sunday](#)", and entered their school talent show with it, singing it a cappella.

Videos: [40 Song Mix Playlist](#)

[Will You Love Me Tomorrow](#)

[Everybody Loves A Lover](#)

[Baby it's you](#)



The Shirelles

A school friend had them audition for her mother, Florence Greenberg, who ran a small record label; she was impressed enough to become the group's manager, and changed their name to The Shirelles by combining frequent lead singer Shirley's first name with doo-woppers the Chantels. The Shirelles' recording of "I Met Him on a Sunday" was licensed by [Decca](#) and climbed into the national Top 50 in 1958. Two more singles flopped, however, and Decca passed on further releases. Greenberg instead signed them to her new label, [Scepter Records](#), and brought in producer [Luther Dixon](#), whose imaginative, sometimes string-heavy arrangements helped shape the group's signature sound.

[\(Read more\)](#)



Otis Redding

Otis Ray Redding Jr. (September 9, 1941 – December 10, 1967) was an American singer, songwriter, [record producer](#), [arranger](#), and [talent scout](#). He is considered one of the greatest singers in the history of American [popular music](#) and a seminal artist in [soul music](#) and [rhythm and blues](#). Redding's style of singing gained inspiration from the gospel music that preceded the genre. His singing style influenced many other soul artists of the [1960s](#). During his lifetime, his recordings were produced by [Stax Records](#), based in [Memphis, Tennessee](#).

Redding was born in [Dawson, Georgia](#), and at the age of 2, moved to [Macon, Georgia](#). Redding quit school at age 15 to support his family, working with [Little Richard](#)'s backing band, the Upsetters, and by performing in talent shows at the historic Douglass Theatre in Macon. In 1958, he joined [Johnny Jenkins](#)'s band, the Pinetoppers, with whom he toured the Southern states as a singer and driver. An unscheduled appearance on a Stax recording session led to a contract and his first single, "[These Arms of Mine](#)", in 1962. ([read more](#))

Videos:

[Try A Little Tenderness](#)

[Sittin' On The Dock of the Bay](#)

[I've been loving you too long](#)

Franklin Joseph Lymon (September 30, 1942 – February 27, 1968), known professionally as Frankie Lymon, was an American rock and roll/rhythm and blues singer and songwriter, best known as the boy soprano lead singer of the New York City-based early rock and roll group The Teenagers. The group was composed of five boys, all in their early to mid-teens. The original lineup of the Teenagers, an integrated group, included three African-American members, Frankie Lymon, Jimmy Merchant, and Sherman Garnes; and two Puerto Rican members, Joe Negroni and Herman Santiago. The Teenagers' first single, 1956's "Why Do Fools Fall in Love," was also its biggest hit. After Lymon went solo in mid-1957, both his career and that of the Teenagers fell into decline. He was found dead at the age of 25 on the floor of his grandmother's bathroom from a heroin overdose. His life was dramatized in the 1998 film *Why Do Fools Fall In Love*. ([read more](#))

Videos:

[Little Bitty Pretty One](#)

[Mama Don't Allow It](#)

[I Promise To Remember](#)



Frankie Lymon



Little Richard

Videos:

[Long Tall Sally](#)

[Lucille](#)

[Good Golly Miss Molly](#)

Richard Wayne Penniman (born December 5, 1932),^[4] known as **Little Richard**, is an [American](#) recording artist, musician, singer, songwriter and actor.

An influential figure in popular music and culture for seven decades, Penniman's most celebrated work dates from the mid-1950s, when his dynamic music and charismatic showmanship laid the foundation for [rock and roll](#). His music also played a key role in the formation of other popular music genres, including [soul](#) and [funk](#). Penniman influenced numerous singers and musicians across musical genres from [rock](#) to [hip hop](#); his music helped shape [rhythm and blues](#) for generations to come, and his performances and headline-making thrust his career right into the mix of American popular music.

[\(read more\)](#)

Whitney Elizabeth Houston (August 9, 1963 – February 11, 2012) was an American singer and actress. She was cited as the most awarded female artist of all time by [Guinness World Records](#) and remains one of the [best-selling music artists of all time](#) with 200 million records sold worldwide. She released seven studio albums and two soundtrack albums, all of which have been certified diamond, multi-platinum, platinum, or gold by the [Recording Industry Association of America](#) (RIAA). Houston's crossover appeal on the popular music charts—as well as her prominence on [MTV](#), starting with her video for "[How Will I Know](#)"—influenced several [African-American](#) women artists who followed in her footsteps. [\(read more\)](#)

Videos:

[All At Once](#)

[Greatest Love Of All](#)

[How Will I Know](#)



Whitney Houston



Jackie Wilson

Videos:

[Baby Workout](#)

[Lonely teardrops](#)

["Shake, Shake, Shake"](#)

Jack Leroy Wilson Jr. (June 9, 1934 – January 21, 1984) was an African American [soul](#) singer and performer. A [tenor](#) with a four-octave range, Wilson was a prominent figure in the transition of [rhythm and blues](#) into soul. Wilson was considered a master showman and one of the most dynamic singers and performers in pop, R&B, and rock & roll history, earning the nickname "**Mr. Excitement**".

Wilson gained initial fame as a member of the R&B vocal group [Billy Ward and His Dominoes](#). He went solo in 1957 and scored over 50 chart singles spanning the genres of [R&B](#), [pop](#), soul, [doo-wop](#) and [easy listening](#), including 16 R&B Top 10 hits, in which six R&B of the repertoire ranked as number ones. On the [Billboard](#) Hot 100, Wilson scored 14 top 20 pop hits, six of which reached the top 10. Jackie Wilson was one of the most important and influential musical artists of his generation.

[\(read more\)](#)

Super Groups



[The Dells](#)



[The Four Tops](#)



[The Imperials](#)



[The Delphonics](#)



[The Whispers](#)



[The Spaniels](#)



[Gladys Knight & The Pips](#)



[The Marvellettes](#)



[Chka Khan & Rufus](#)



[Heatwave](#)



[Earth Wind & Fire](#)



[Otis Day & The Knights](#)



[The Chi-Lites](#)



[The Spinners](#)



[Sly & The Family Stone](#)



[The O'Jays](#)



[The Emotions](#)



[The Impressions](#)



[The Time](#)



[The Intruders](#)



[Archie Bell & The Drells](#)



[The Flamingos](#)



[The Isley Brothers](#)



[The Platters](#)



[The Stylistics](#)



[Kool and the Gang](#)



[Rose Royce](#)



[Cameo](#)



[Ohio Players](#)



[New Edition](#)



[The Commodores](#)



[War](#)



[Toni Braxton](#)



[Paula Abdul](#)



[Fantasia Barrino](#)



[Mavis Staples](#)



[Joe](#)



[John Legend](#)



[Myron Avant](#)



[Babyface](#)



[Ne-Yo](#)



[Robin Thicke](#)



[R Kelly](#)



[Omarion](#)



[Motown](#) would probably be the most famous independent label during this time (and well beyond). But there were countless, numerous others



[Chess Records](#), based in Chicago, was run and owned by two Polish immigrant brothers, Leonard and Phil Chess. It became one of the most important labels in rock-and-roll history, renowned for its blues, rock, and R + B music.



[Checker Records](#) was started in 1952 as a subsidiary of [Chess Records](#). Like [Cadet Records](#) it stopped releasing records around 1971.



[Curtom Records](#) was a record label started in 1968 by Curtis Mayfield and Impressions manager Eddie Thomas. Mayfield had previously made attempts at a record label with the "Mayfield" and "Windy C"

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