

# **“Soul Deep: The Story Of Black Popular Music” Airs Exclusively On VH1 Monday June 4**



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NEW YORK, NY, June 1, 2007 “ Soul music has been the soundtrack to some of the most extraordinary social, political and cultural shifts of the second half of the 20th Century. Together with the Civil Rights movement, it challenged white hegemony, helped break down segregation and encouraged the fight for racial equality. Soul music is now a billion dollar industry with R&B and hip-hop dominating the music charts. As part of their month-long celebration of Black Music Month in June, VH1 SOUL will premiere the BBC original documentary, “SOUL DEEP: The Story of Black Popular Music.” “SOUL DEEP” is the story of a musical genre that resonates all over the world because it has managed to strike that one chord that all of humanity shares . . . soul.

The six-part foot-stomping series, “SOUL DEEP” will make its U.S. premiere on Monday, June 4 through Friday, June 8 exclusively on VH1 SOUL at 9PM ET/PT, with episodes 5 and 6 premiering back-to-back on Friday, June 8. Through a combination of rare archival footage, over 100 contemporary and never-seen-before interviews, each episode of “SOUL DEEP” explores a different era of the evolution of “soul music” from the creation of R&B, via gospel, southern soul,

Motown, funk and hip-hop soul through the words and performances of its greatest artists, producers, musicians and commentators.

The episode lineup for "SOUL DEEP" on VH1 SOUL is as follows (as you will see episodes five and six air back-to-back on Friday, June 8):

EPISODE 1: "The Birth of Soul" – In a never-seen-before BBC interview with Ray Charles, he reveals how his innovations first brought soul to a wider audience. The term "R&B," which means "rhythm" and "blues," was coined by Billboard Magazine journalist Jerry Wexler after he was asked by his editor to find an alternative for the label "race music." After many years touring on the "chitlin circuit" (a network of black clubs and bars) with artists like Ruth Brown, Ray Charles finally created his own style by unifying the sexually-charged music of the dance floor with the spiritually-charged sounds of the church hall. Life was hard and sometimes dangerous for black musicians in a segregated society. This episode premieres on Monday, June 4 at 9PM\*.

EPISODE 2: "The Gospel Highway" – Gospel singer Sam Cooke changed pop music forever and set the standard for every artist that followed him. This episode looks at the world of black music before and after that revolutionary moment in 1957 when Cooke went pop. Tragically, Cooke was killed in 1964 at the prime of his career. Gone, but not forgotten, Cooke bequeathed an extraordinary legacy, inspiring a myriad of black artists from Motown's Berry Gordy to Otis Redding and Aretha Franklin. This episode premieres on Tuesday, June 5 at 9PM\*.

EPISODE 3: "The Sound Of Young America" – Motown changed the landscape of music, rewrote the rule book and created the sound of young America, which appealed to whites as much as to blacks. Crossover soul was the vision of Motown's founder –

Svengali figure Berry Gordy. Reflecting the optimism of the early 60s and the promise of integration, Gordy's artists were coached, groomed and targeted at the lucrative white audience. This episode premieres on Wednesday, June 6 at 9PM\*.

EPISODE 4: "Southern Soul" – In the summer of 1967, Otis Redding performed in front of a 200,000-strong, mainly white, crowd at the Monterey Pop Festival. Five years after walking into Stax Records studio in Memphis as an unknown singer, he was now breaking into the mass white market and seducing its counter culture without diluting his sound. This episode follows both Redding's rise, as he became the embodiment of 60s soul music, and that of Stax Records as it crossed the racial divide at a time of segregation. This episode premieres on Thursday, June 7 at 9PM\*.

EPISODE 5: "Ain't It Funky" – The tough, urban syncopated rhythms of funk were the soundtrack to the riots and revolutions of the late 60s and early 70s. This episode traces the roots of funk from James Brown's seminal "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag" to the crazy psychedelia of George Clinton. This episode premieres on Friday, June 8 at 8PM\*.

EPISODE 6: "From Ghetto To Fabulous" – In a never-seen before interview, Mary J. Blige, the queen of hip-hop soul, speaks candidly about her journey from ghetto to fabulous. Her music represents the fusion of R&B and hip-hop and completes the journey that started 50 years ago with the emergence of the early soul sounds of Ray Charles and ends with black R&B artists' domination of the charts today. The extraordinary story of the unstoppable rise of urban R&B – with its diamond-dripping darlings of the media and high profile celebrity artists is traced back to the housing projects in Yonkers in the 80s where Mary J. Blige began. R&B, with its roots in soul music which has been evolving over the last 50 years, has moved from ghetto to ghetto-fabulous to simply fabulous. This episode premieres on Friday, June 8 at 9PM\*.

“SOUL DEEP: The Story of Black Popular Music” is only part of the Black Music Month celebration on VH1 Soul. In addition to the “SOUL DEEP” documentary, VH1 Soul and Essence will join forces for the first time to commemorate Black Music Month to promote the upcoming Essence Music Festival. Beginning on June 1st, VH1 Soul will be creating a special month of programming and promotions celebrating Black Music Month with more than 50 hours long-form programming.