

Throwback: Booker T. & The MGs-Melting Pot



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Booker T. Jones, Steve Cropper, Lewis Steinberg and Al Jackson, Jr. became the house band for legendary Memphis soul label Stax in 1962. They were an unusual lineup because they were one of the first interracial soul bands. Their 1962 hit ["Green Onions"](#) established them as more than just a great backing band but crucial artists of the time period. Their influential sound was like the Memphis version of Motown's Funk Brothers. Steinberg left the band in 1964 and was replaced by former Mar-Keys bassist Donald "Duck" Dunn. They played on seminal recording sessions for Carla Thomas, Rufus Thomas, Sam and Dave, Otis Redding, Johnny Taylor and Wilson Pickett. In the '60's they would have success with ["Hip Hug-Her,"](#) ["Groovin',"](#) ["Soul Limbo,"](#) ["Time Is Tight,"](#) and ["Hang'em High."](#) "Melting Pot" is from their 1971 album of the same name and it was the last album for Stax and with their core members. Booker T. Jones and Steve Cropper left the group and remaining members Al Jackson Jr. and Donald Dunn recorded *The MG's* in 1973 with Bobby Manuel and Carson Whitsett. The project did not sell remarkably but was critically acclaimed and had two singles with ["Neck Bone"](#) and ["Sugarcane."](#) The band was planning a reunion album in 1975 when Al Jackson, Jr. was killed in his home by a burglar. Steve Cropper and Donald Dunn made an appearance in [The Blues Brothers](#) in 1980 as members of their backing band. *Universal Language* came out in 1977 with the surviving members and Willie Hall replaced Jackson on drums. The album was not received well and they would not release another project until 1994's *That's The Way It Should Be*. In all they recorded 15 albums including the 1968 soundtrack to the movie *Uptight* and *McLemore Avenue* which was

a 1970 tribute to The Beatles' *Abbey Road*. They were inducted into the Rock Hall of Fame in 1992 and worked as the house band for the organization when they had the opening ceremony for the museum in 1995. Booker T. Jones released the solo album *Potato Hole* in 2009 and *The Road From Memphis* in 2011 which has appearances from Sharon Jones, Lou Reed, Dennis Coffey and The Roots. Donald Dunn passed May 13, 2012 in his sleep in Tokyo after a gig at the Blue Note club.