

# Throwback: Syl Johnson-Is It Because I'm Black



[youtube]AYur2tSf3HU[/youtube]

Syl Johnson is a singer, songwriter, harmonica and guitar player from Mississippi who started his recording career in Chicago during the late '50's. He developed his artistry by playing with blues legends like Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters. In 1967 he had his first two hit songs with ["Come On Sock It To Me"](#) and ["Different Strokes."](#) "Is It Because I'm Black" is the title song from his 1970 album. Of all his recorded output in the '70's it was his stint at Hi Records that produced ["Take Me To The River"](#) which was his most popular song. Johnson took a break from the music industry in the '80's and returned in the early '90's and introduced his daughter Syleena to the public on his '95 album *This Time Together By Father and Daughter*. The 2002 album *Two Johnsons Are Better Than One* is his most current output. Last year Johnson's media profile was raised when he sued Jay-Z and Kanye West for sampling his music and he made an appearance on the TV show "R&B Divas" to show support for his daughter Syleena. The hip-hop generation has reintroduced his music to the masses through their heavy sampling of his songs and 2010 saw the release of *Syl Johnson: Complete Mythology* box set.