

Throwback: Otis Redding-Try A Little Tenderness

Otis Redding was the tenth artist to record "Try A Little Tenderness" when he included it on his 1966 fifth album. The publishers of the song did not want Redding to record a "negro version" but Aretha Franklin and Sam Cooke had already covered it in 1962 and 1964. Percy Sledge also covered "Try A Little Tenderness" in 1966. Redding and Isaac Hayes rearranged it and the slow beginning changed into a frenetic climax of Redding's pleas. Redding incorporated Duke Ellington and Lee Gaines's "Just Squeeze Me (But Please Don't Tease Me)" into his cover and the popular phrase "sock it to me." "Try A Little Tenderness" was one of the hits to propel *Complete & Unbelievable: The Otis Redding Dictionary Of Soul* up the charts. His intense performance gave him ownership of the song in the pop realm despite it having been written and recorded by others. The album was adored by critics and widely accepted by the public and "Try A Little Tenderness" became Redding's signature song. *Dictionary Of Soul* was the last album of Redding's to come out before his death in a 1967 plane crash. There are no less than 30 versions of "Try A Little Tenderness" including a Frank Sinatra cover but Otis Redding's recording is still the most recognized one. The song has also been sampled most famously by Jay-Z and Kanye West for their Watch The Throne single "Otis." The [Otis Redding Foundation](#) is currently in the process of creating the Otis Redding Center for the Arts in Redding's native Macon, Georgia.

