

Throwback: New Edition - Mr. Telephone Man



In 1978 Michael Bivins, Ricky Bell and Bobby Brown all from the Roxbury section of Boston, Massachusetts started singing together. By 1980 Ralph Tresvant and Ronnie DeVoe joined the group and local choreographer Brooke Payne name them New Edition. Former Jonzun Crew member and boy band impresario Maurice "The General" Starr discovered them at a talent show he ran and invited them to his recording studio. The results would be the their 1983 debut album *Candy Girl* on Starr's Streetwise record label. Their sound immediately reminded the public of The Jackson 5 and they had hit songs ["Popcorn Love,"](#) ["Jealous Girl,"](#) ["Is This The End"](#) and ["Candy Girl."](#) But after going on their first tour they only received \$1.87 a piece for

their work which lead to a lawsuit against Starr who agreed to let them out of their contract. They signed a deal with MCA Records in 1984 and their second self-titled album was released in August of that year. Michael Sembello and Ray Parker, Jr. co-produced the album which reached the top ten position on the Billboard 200 and R&B/Hip-Hop charts. [“Cool It Now”](#) was the first hot single and the Parker penned “Mr. Telephone Man” was the second one that also secured their place as *the* male R&B group of the time. *All For Love* would come out the following year adding [“A Little Bit Of Love \(Is All It Takes\),”](#) [“Count Me Out,”](#) and [“With You All The Way”](#) to their hits catalog. Management pressured them to vote Bobby Brown out of the group because of conduct issues in 1985. Brown started a solo career in 1986 and the group continued to have success including an appearance on the TV show *Knight Rider* and a cover of [“Earth Angel”](#) for the “Karate Kid II” soundtrack prompting an album of doo-wop songs *Under The Blue Moon*. Johnny Gill would join the group in time for the recording of their 1988 fifth album *Hearbreak* produced by Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. Gill would co-lead vocals on their most commercially successful album that spawned five hits in [“You’re Not My Kind Of Girl,”](#) [“Can You Stand The Rain,”](#) [“Crucial,”](#) [“If It Isn’t Love,”](#) and [“N.E.Hearbreak.”](#) That same year Bobby Brown began his solo New Jack Swing reign with his second album *Don’t Be Cruel*. The project would become the biggest selling album of 1989 and earned him the title King Of R&B.

New Edition would splinter in 1990 with the formation of Bell, Biv and Devoe and solo albums from Ralph Tresvant and Johnny Gill. All of their efforts would achieve platinum status and later that year they would perform with Bobby Brown at the MTV Video Music Awards. It would be 1996 before they would release an album as group including Brown the multi-produced *Home Again*. [“Hit Me Off,”](#) [“I’m Still In Love With You,”](#) [“You Don’t Have To Worry,”](#) and [“One More Day”](#) were welcomed by fans and the album debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 and

R&B/Hip-Hop charts. In 2002 they joined the Bad Boy roster and and one album 2004's *One Love*. "[Hot2nite](#)" would be the only single and it fell low on the charts. The group was not happy with Sean Combs's handling of their career and they left the label in 2005. Within the next couple of years they filmed a couple of concerts for future DVD release and in 2006 they announced the coming of a future album in 2009 to be produced by Jam and Lewis. This new project from the group has not materialized yet but Tresvant, Brown and Gill have been performing in their new group Heads Of State that they formed in 2008. The Heads tour has received positive reviews and an album is supposed to be released before the end of 2010.