

Third Man Books Reissues Ben Edmonds' Marvin Gaye: What's Going On And The Last Days Of The Motown Sound

Ben Edmonds
Marvin
Gaye:



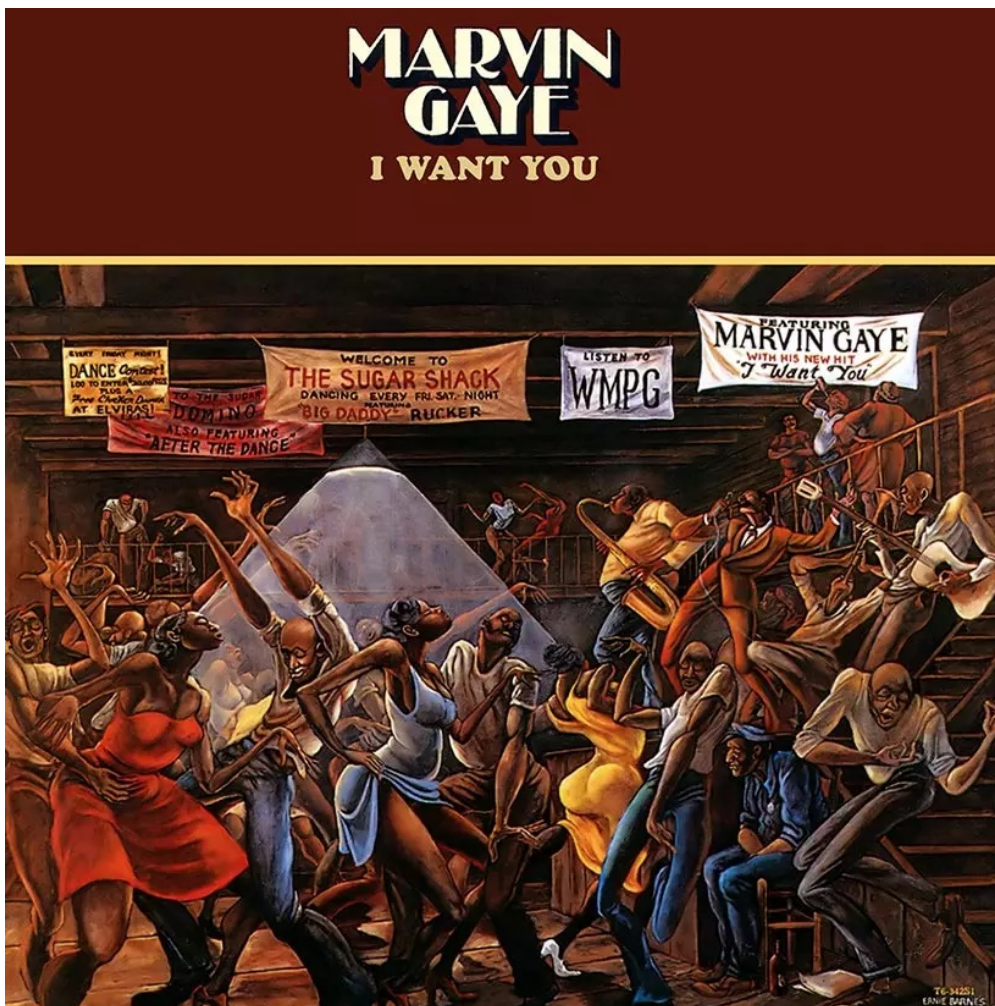
What's
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Third Man Books has reissued Ben Edmonds' *Marvin Gaye: What's Going On and the Last Days Of The Motown Sound*. Edmonds' book is a study of Marvin Gaye's landmark album, *What's Going On*, that came out in 1971. Gaye famously fought with Motown founder Berry Gordy Jr. to release the politically conscious album that was a response to the Vietnam War, drug addiction, and poverty. Renaldo "Obie" Benson of the The Four Tops told Edmonds how he witnessed anti-war protesters being attacked at Berkeley's People's Park and how his conversation about it with songwriter Al Cleveland led to the creation of the single, "What's Going On." Benson offered the song to his bandmates, who rejected it on the grounds that it was a protest song. Gaye accepted Benson's suggestion that he sing it and he added his own elements to the song and recorded it with famed Motown musicians The Funk Brothers. Edmonds' book was originally published in 2001 and he explained in his introduction the purpose of revisiting *What's Going On*.

"This is not simply about a singer and a record album. It is the story of an idea, formed out of the mixed ethers of social anger and spiritual longing, that Marvin Gaye articulated with a cast of brilliant accomplices and fought to get recorded and released. From that idea, and with that help, and out of that struggle, something was fashioned that continues to touch souls more profoundly than even its creator could have imagined."

Marvin Gaye: What's Going On and the Last Days Of The Motown Sound is available from [Third Man Books](#) and physical and online booksellers.

Throwback: Marvin Gaye: I Want You



Leon Ware and Diana Ross's brother, Arthur Ross, co-wrote "I Want You" for Marvin Gaye's 13th solo album, also titled *I Want You*. Gaye's sensual showpiece was a serious yearning inspired by his relationship with Janis Hunter that was taking place while he was still married to Anna Gordy. Leon Ware's arrangement of mood-inducing congas, sizzling guitar, horns, strings, and Marvin alternating between desirous wails and soft crooning captured the turbulence and tenderness of his relationships.

Gaye was coming off the success of *Let's Get It On* and a collaboration album with Diana Ross, both released in 1973. *I Want You* was the next step of the sexy image Gaye had established with *Let's Get It On*. His ability to share the urgency of new love with Ware's dreamy disco suite kept Gaye relevant in the '70s and the single became a mainstay of quiet storm radio. "I Want You" did well on the Soul Singles, Disco Singles, and Billboard Hot 100 charts. Ernie Barnes's Sugar Shack painting on the cover was just as iconic as the music and it asserted its place in pop culture by also appearing on the TV show *Good Times*. Ice Cube, Mary J. Blige, Madonna, and most recently, Kendrick Lamar are among those who have sampled and covered "I Want You." A remastered deluxe version of the album was released in 2003 with a booklet, unreleased material, original liner notes, and an essay from David Ritz, who later collaborated with Gaye on his biography, *Divided Soul*.

Media Questions Of The Week

https://www.instagram.com/p/CreZ38Qv20c/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=0e8714b0-89a5-4922-b250-fbf6ac4264f2

Is Larenz Tate right about Hollywood placing a higher value on Black British actors?

https://youtu.be/_iYU9h7FEw0

Are AI-generated songs of artists like Ghostwriter's Drake and Weeknd "Heart On My Sleeve" duet really a threat to the artists whose work gets used?

Did Ed Sheeran plagiarize Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get It On" for his single "Thinking Out Loud?"

https://www.instagram.com/p/Crb8M2hS3p5/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=2aab2a79-eae8-4a89-b4d9-2de718139373

Who painted over the Frankie Knuckles and Juice WRLD murals in Chicago?

Throwback: James Jamerson

James Jamerson's bass anchored numerous hits for Motown records and has been an endless inspiration for so many players after him. As a member of studio musician band The Funk Brothers, his sound became part of the company's identity. The Temptation's "My Girl," Stevie Wonder's "I Was Made To Love Her" and Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On" are a handful of songs made whole by Jamerson's touch. He played on every Motown project from 1963 to 1968 and was the most recognized member of the Hitsville USA studio musicians. His jazz-influenced style was improvisational and he was one of the first to use the electric bass which became his trademark instrument. Jamerson showed future bass players how to create on the spot,Â build bass lines from the melody and make the bass a leading instead of a background instrument. Jamerson thrived with Motown until the early '70s when the company relocated to Los Angeles, California. In his post-Motown days, he recorded with Smokey Robinson, The Sylvers, Bonnie Pointer and Robert Palmer.Â His reign as the most popular bass player in pop music had long ended by the time music changed in the '80s. Jamerson never found his professional footing again and

was no longer working as a session musician.Â Â His role as an innovator did not mesh with the commercial sounds of the new decade.

In 1983, he passed after being sick with heart failure, pneumonia and cirrhosis of the liver at age 47. The work he left behind caused him to be recognized by so many as the father ofÂ the modern bass. He is one of few supporting musicians to haveÂ been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, receive a Hollywood Walk of Fame star and a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2021, 38 years after his death, his grave at Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit, MI was outfitted with a proper headstone.Â

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