

**PAUL RISER &
GENE PAGE
EXTRAORDINARY
ARRANGERS**



SIGNATURE
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PAUL RISER

PAUL RISER IS ONE OF THE MOST PROLIFIC CLASSICALLY-TRAINED STRING AND HORN ARRANGERS TO EMERGE IN AMERICA. ORIGINALLY FROM THE CITY OF DETROIT, HE BECAME A SIGNIFICANT MASTERMIND OF AND CONTRIBUTOR TO, MOTOWN RECORDS' DEFINITIVE SIGNATURE SOUND, KNOWN AS "THE SOUND OF YOUNG AMERICA".

Among Riser's biggest hits as an arranger are "My Girl" (The Temptations), "Papa Was A Rollin' Stone" (The Temptations), for which he won a Grammy Award, both versions of "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" (Marvin Gaye and Gladys Knight & The Pips), "My Cherie Amour," (Stevie Wonder), both versions of "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" (Diana Ross and Marvin Gaye & Tammy Terrell), "If I Were Your Woman" (Gladys Knight & The Pips) and "Tears of A Clown" (Smokey Robinson & The Miracles). He is also the composer of "What Becomes of The Brokenhearted" (Jimmy Ruffin). "Come and Get These Memories" was the group's second single, issued on Motown's Gordy Records subsidiary. It became the group's first hit single, reaching number 29 on the Billboard Pop Singles Chart and number six on the Billboard R&B Sides Singles Chart. From then on the group began to develop a signature sound completely different from the Supremes and the Marvelettes.

Away from Motown, from the 1970s Riser's string and horn arrangements have graced recordings for The Carpenters, Carly Simon, Quincy Jones, The Doobie Brothers, Tom Jones, Natalie Cole, Pharoah Sanders, Kiki Dee, Johnny Mathis, Patti

LaBelle, Stephanie Mills, Anita Baker, Roberta Flack, Michael McDonald, Aretha Franklin and a host of others. During the 1980s he conducted and arranged strings on hits which include "Never Too Much" (Luther Vandross), "Two Hearts" (Phil Collins) and "I Believe I Can Fly" (R. Kelly). Paul Riser's work in film and television includes "Mad About You", "Car Wash", "Bamboozled", "Space Jam", "Standing In The Shadows Of Motown", "Four Brothers", "Which Way Is Up" and "Mother, Jugs and Speed."

In the 21st Century he went on to arrange an R&B and Soul classic for Hip/Hop artist R.Kelly, his signature song "Step in the Name of Love". The song was a dance "anthem" at social and corporate events in the UK and America. Taken from the 2003 album "Chocolate Factory", the track was a multi-platinum single in America and gold-certified in the UK. "Step in the Name of Love" peaked at number one on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs Singles Chart week-ending 6th December 2003 (1 week). The album "Chocolate Factory" was number one on the Billboard 200 Albums Chart week-ending 2nd March 2003 (1 week).

Paul Riser is one of the few former Motown arrangers who is still active as a musician, continuing his outstanding contribution to major hit recordings globally.

For his great work over the decades he was inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame and Museum in 2009.

GENE PAGE

"AFRICAN AMERICAN 'GENE' PAGE JR. IS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CLASSICALLY TRAINED CONDUCTORS, ARRANGERS AND RECORD PRODUCERS IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC".

(Extract from The Independent newspaper dated 20th September 1998)

The contribution of arrangers to popular music recordings is often ignored, George Martin and Quincy Jones being the exceptions to the rule. Gene Page, the American orchestrator and producer who died last month in Los Angeles, was "session call number one" for any artist needing lush strings to heighten the appeal of a ballad.

As the guitarist Ray Parker Jr. (of Ghostbusters fame) said in tribute to his long-time friend and colleague:

"Take any romantic record of the last 25-30 years, be it by the Righteous Brothers, Michael Jackson, Barry White, Marvin Gaye, Johnny Mathis, Barbra Streisand, Lionel Richie, Kenny Rogers or Whitney Houston, and you've heard Gene Page's work. He was a spectacular arranger; no one could put together cellos, French horns and violins like him".

"When I was a kid, still in diapers, Gene was already happening. I was a big fan of his. He had the same effect on me as Stevie Wonder. When you have this level

of talent around in the studio, you get a little more humble".

Born in Los Angeles in 1940, Eugene Page Jr was taught piano by his father. Something of a child prodigy, he won a scholarship to the Brooklyn Conservatory and seemed destined for a career as a concert pianist. However, to earn extra cash, he started to help various acts polish their demo tapes. In the early Sixties, his work caught the ear of Reprise Records who hired him as their in-house arranger.

PHIL SPECTOR RECORDING SESSIONS

Meanwhile, after the success of the Ronettes' seminal "Be My Baby", their producer Phil Spector was looking for another act and spotted Bill Medley and Bobby Hatfield. Renamed the Righteous Brothers, the original blue-eyed soul duo had already scored a minor hit with "Little Latin Lupe Lu". Spector commissioned the husband-and-wife team Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, who wrote "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'".

In the summer of 1964, Phil Spector's first-choice arranger, Jack Nitzsche, was busy and so the producer decided to give Page a try on the studio date. His swelling, swirling string arrangements greatly enhanced the recording of this epic track, which topped the charts on both sides of the Atlantic. "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'" is still named by many as the greatest single of all time and probably the definitive illustration of the Spector "Wall of Sound".

Page was on a roll; he worked with the Drifters and, in 1965, helped Dobie Gray to fashion

"The In Crowd", the dancefloor filler and northern soul favourite. By the following year, the arranger had become part of the elite of Los Angeles session men, which included the guitarist Glen Campbell, the drummer Hal Blaine and the engineer Bones Howe. Under the aegis of the producer Lou Adler, this team backed the Mamas and the Papas on "California Dreamin'" and "Monday, Monday", both million-sellers.

MOTOWN AND BARRY WHITE RECORDING SESSIONS

In the late Sixties, Page met the young singer Barry White, who was doing odd jobs to make ends meet between recording dates. To this day, the soul superstar remembers the arranger's generosity. According to Barry White, during several Motown recording sessions on the West Coast at Motown Recording Studios, Page sneaked him into the studio where he was collaborating with the Tamla Motown songwriters and producers Holland-Dozier-Holland (Eddie Holland, Lamont Dozier, and Brian Holland). They were cutting "Forever Came Today" for Diana Ross and the Supremes and White was transfixed. White would eventually get a chance to try and emulate his heroes. Page also arranged strings on Diana Ross' solo albums "Touch Me In The Morning," "Baby It's Me," "Ross" and on Michael Jackson's solo album "Got To Be There". He also conducted strings on Marvin Gaye's live album "Marvin Gaye Live!".

White owes Page more than the music. "In addition he used to feed my family, pay my rent, give me gas money, food money

for my children. I never had to pay him back. I tried many times . . . he'd never take it. When my ship came in, why would I use anyone else? When you say Barry White, Love Unlimited Orchestra, whatever else you say, always mention his name".

In 1972, White called Page in to work on Love Unlimited's slinky, sensuous "Walking in the Rain with the One I Love". White couldn't read or write music and, at first, wouldn't even sing himself: he let his proteges the sisters Glodean and Linda James and Diane Taylor front the record, while his deep voice came in on the telephone line halfway through the track, which became a Top 15 single in Britain and the United States. Soon, Page became an indispensable right-hand man, listening intently to White's ideas and directions, writing out charts for the different instruments and helping him fashion his unique, symphonic soul sound.

Page recalled in interviews: "Barry would play with so much energy that the legs of the piano would buckle; his sweat would pour out into the keyboard. Barry White was the first to have five guitarists on one song, all playing different parts. The guitarists couldn't hear it. And sometimes I couldn't either. I'd question him. "Trust me" was his favourite line. And suddenly, magically, the parts and counterparts blended to perfection. Barry's ears went to harpsichords, French horns, flutes, mandolins".

His ideas were never on paper but inside his head. Licks for tenor solos, accents for horns, complex patterns between drummers and bassists; Barry dictated, demonstrated, hummed out the parts. It was highly unorthodox, and it was also brilliant. Between

1973 and 1978, the brilliance of those pillow-talk recordings helped Barry White, as a solo artist and with his Love Unlimited and Love Unlimited Orchestra offshoots, sell over 100 million units and create what some sexologists still define as a "Barry boom". No night out was complete until you'd heard the rhapsodic strings and shuffling rhythms of such songs as "Never Never Gonna Give You Up", "Can't Get Enough of Your Love Babe", "You're the First the Last My Everything", "What Am I Gonna Do With You" and "Let The Music Play". Gene Page did all the string and horn arrangements for White's million-selling albums and singles, creating a formidable lush polished sexy sound that was loved mainly by the female population. This enabled Barry White to generate 16 million dollars in revenue for the entertainment industry in a few short years.

During that period in the 1970s Page still found time to conduct string arrangements for Aretha Franklin, the Four Tops, Deniece Williams, Natalie Cole, Dionne Warwick, Crystal Gayle, Julio Iglesias, Leo Sayer and even Elton John, an early Barry White convert, who used Page to great effect on the Philly-Sound-influenced single "Philadelphia Freedom" and the album Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy (1975).

1980S RECORDING SESSIONS

Prior to his death Gene Page had conducted strings on many 1980s recordings that were just as successful as those of the previous decade, including such recordings as "Endless Love" by

Diana Ross and Lionel Richie, that peaked at number one on the Billboard Hot 100 Singles Chart week-ending 15th August 1981 (9 weeks), followed by the duet "Tonight I Celebrate My Love" by Peabo Bryson and Roberta Flack, taken from the "Born To Love" album, gold-certified in America.

"The Greatest Love of All" performed by Whitney Houston was another gold-certified hit single in America, with multi-platinum certification for Houston's self-titled solo album. He went on to arrange strings for Atlantic Starr on their gold-certified album "All In The Name Of Love", which featured the single "Always" that reached the number one position week-ending 13th June 1987 (1 week). Anita Baker benefited from Page's brilliant arrangements on her second solo multi-platinum album "You're the Best That I Got" that reached number one on the Billboard 200 Albums Chart week-ending 24th December 1988 (4 weeks). Many of these artists had number one albums on the Billboard 200 Albums Chart that featured a credit for Gene Page during a prolific decade that represents a crowning achievement for a great icon. In all, his name appeared on more than 200 gold and platinum records. He also conducted string arrangements on Teddy Pendergrass' first post-accident studio album "Love Language", that was certified platinum in 1984 for over one million copies sold in North America.

At Page's funeral the Rev. William Minson Jnr. who officiated at the service remembers Page as "a man who always cared and shared with other people. More than his 35 year-career in popular music, I believe that this is Gene Page's biggest legacy."

TO KNOW MORE ABOUT DIANA ROSS AND THE SUPREMES, THEIR CREATIVE MASTERPIECE RECORDINGS AND THEIR PROLIFIC CAREER, CHECK THE E-BOOK WRITTEN BY MUSIC HISTORIAN KEVIN TOMLIN ABOUT HOLLAND-DOZIER-HOLLAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF DIANA ROSS AND THE SUPREMES AND THE DIANA ROSS E-BOOK, AVAILABLE FROM THE WEBSITE:

WWW.SIGNATURESOUNDSONLINE.COM



There are currently six e books in the collection, with more to come, all written by music historian Kevin Tomlin:

MOTOWN E-BOOK 1: HOLLAND-DOZIER-HOLLAND
MOTOWN E-BOOK 2: NORMAN WHITFIELD
MOTOWN E-BOOK 3: SMOKEY ROBINSON
MOTOWN E-BOOK 4: MARVIN GAYE
MOTOWN E-BOOK 5: STEVIE WONDER
MOTOWN E-BOOK 6: DIANA ROSS

Also available is Kevin Tomlin's new book about Motown Records:

"THE SIGNATURE SOUND OF MOTOWN"

Published by Filament Press.

You will also enjoy exploring this YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheSignaturesounds/about>

ABOUT MUSIC HISTORIAN KEVIN TOMLIN



Kevin Tomlin has been studying music with a signature sound for the last thirty plus years based around Soul and R&B music originated from America, especially music from America's inter-cities and urban areas such as New Orleans, Chicago, Memphis, Muscle Shoals, Detroit and Philadelphia.

Kevin started his journey from personal experiences living in Jamaica from the early 1970s until 1979 when Disco ruled the charts. He was listening to music coming out of America via radio and seeing performances on television and at live concerts at the music theatre at college and

at other live venues by many great legends, during a time when black music made inroads into popular culture globally.

While he was living in America, he began teaching music history. During this period Kevin was involved in the creation of special training programmes and workshops for music teachers in South Florida schools, using music history as the foundation, to build exciting programmes of study and support for education professional.

Kevin provides consultancy services for multi-media organisations, schools, recording artists, cultural and faith-based groups, and entertainment professionals all within the framework of "arts and cultural history". His breadth and depth of knowledge is part of the reason his writings are sought after and particularly favoured by music students of all types, and those *who really want to know real music gold nuggets*.

In recognition of his work as a music historian Kevin was appointed in 2015 onto the Executive Board of the UK based GMIA (Gospel Music Industry Alliance), serving and representing British Gospel Music in its relationship to Gospel Music sectors in other territories across the world.