



Newsletters  
Subscribe Now &  
Save



News ▾	Hot 100	Billboard 200	Charts ▾	Lists	Photos	Business	
--------	---------	---------------	----------	-------	--------	----------	--

ARTICLES / NEWS

# Exclusive: The Supremes' Mary Wilson Talks No. 1 Single 'Where Did Our Love Go' 50 Years Later

By [Fred Bronson](#) | August 20, 2014 10:52 AM EDT



The Supremes' "Where Did Our Love Go" single cover with Florence Ballard, Diana Ross and Mary Wilson released in 1964.

One Question Site Survey  
IT TAKES ONLY SECONDS TO ANSWER BELOW

How likely are you to purchase food from McDonald's within the next 30 days?

SELECT ONE ANSWER

Definitely will

Probably will

May or may not

Probably will not

Definitely will not

**VOTE TO SEE RESULTS**

POWERED BY VIZU      SAFE & ANONYMOUS

Sign up for our daily newsletter.

405

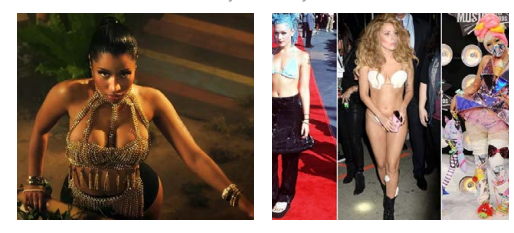
40

The singer reveals why the trio didn't care for the song, how they felt about Motown's other girl groups and how a Billboard chart-topper changed their lives.

Before Diana Ross, Mary Wilson and Florence Ballard became the most

## You Might Also Like

by Gravity





successful girl group of the rock era, Motown released eight singles by [The Supremes](#), none of which charted in the top 20 of the [Billboard Hot 100](#). Only one, "When the Lovelight Starts Shining Through His Eyes," cracked the top 30. None of their other singles peaked higher than No. 75.

Then, Motown staff writers Eddie Holland, Lamont Dozier and Brian Holland brought the trio a song that had been turned down by another of the label's girl groups, The Marvelettes. The Supremes didn't care for the tune either, but didn't have the power to reject it. "Where Did Our Love Go" debuted on the Hot 100 the week of July 11, 1964. Six weeks later, the single was No. 1.

Over the next 10 months, The Supremes earned four more No. 1s, becoming the first American group to score five consecutive No. 1s on the Hot 100. Before the decade was over, the Supremes had collected one dozen chart-toppers.

Before the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "Where Did Our Love Go" achieving pole position on Aug. 22, [Billboard](#) talked to Mary Wilson about that classic Motown hit and how it changed the fortunes of the group as well as Berry Gordy's record label.

**Billboard: In 1961, Motown released the first Supremes single, "I Want a Guy." At that point, did you feel like you had finally made it?**

**Mary Wilson:** We had been at Motown since 1960 and signed our contract in 1961. We were thrilled because we were 16 1/2 years old and we were recording at Motown. That's all we wanted to do -- record. We had been doing record hops but now we had our own record we could sing. It was pretty big for us. We had already recorded for the Lupine label but now we were with the biggest record company in Detroit and Berry Gordy liked us.

**When "I Want a Guy" didn't become a hit, were you disappointed, or did you simply move on to the next single?**

We weren't disappointed at all. All the [local] radio stations, including CKLW in Detroit, were playing it. We were very happy and we felt like we were on our way.

**After "I Want a Guy," Motown released several singles that also weren't big hits. Were you ever discouraged or was there ever any discussion of calling it a day?**

We never thought of giving up. We thought we were fabulous. But people were laughing behind our backs. That's why I made up the phrase "No-Hit Supremes." We really could not figure out why we weren't getting a hit record. On stage we were always great, but we couldn't transcend those live performances. The one thing that really helped is when Berry decided to have just one lead singer. That changed our course and gave us our sound. People have said that Flo and I were jealous but that wasn't true. We were happy.

**There were other girl groups at Motown, like The Marvelettes and Martha & the Vandellas, and they were having hits before the Supremes. How did that feel?**

We were thrilled. Florence was like an Etta James and she went into the studio and helped Gladys Horton sing "Please Mr. Postman." We did think, they've got their hits, when are we going to get ours? But we weren't envious.

Sir Mix-A-Lot Has One Word for Nicki...

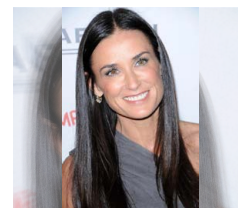


Victoria Justice's Music Career: Why...

MTV VMAs' 57 Most Outrageous...



Rita Ora Shuts Down Interview After Calvin...



7 Stars Whose Parents Committed...

[FAME10](#)



Shape Your Eyebrows - Trick to Look Young

[DERMSTORE](#)



5 Celebs Who Are Sick And Tired Of...

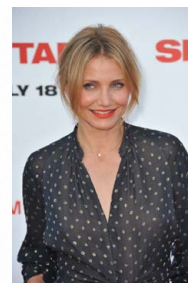
[ANSWERS](#)



9 Celebs Who Are Not Aging Very Nicely

[LEMURNET](#)

## Related Articles



7 Stars Who Are Notoriously Rude To Their Fans

[Fame10](#)



Mary Wilson

**After working with Smokey Robinson, Clarence Paul and other Motown writers and producers, Berry Gordy teamed you up with Eddie Holland, Lamont Dozier and Brian Holland. They gave you “When the Lovelight Starts Shining Through His Eyes” and it became your first top 30 hit on the Hot 100. But the follow-up, “Run, Run, Run,” stalled at No. 93. Then they brought you a song called “Where Did Our Love Go.” What did you think of it?**

We were a little pissed. It wasn't like a Martha & the Vandellas song. We told Holland-Dozier-Holland to bring on the hits. If we didn't get a hit, our parents were going to make us go to college. I went to Eddie and I cried. I told him, “You don't understand, we've got to get a hit record right now.” He said, “Don't worry, trust us, this is going to be a smash.” One of the things we didn't like about it was that Flo and I just had to sing, “Baby, baby.” We were used to doing intricate harmonic patterns but on this song we didn't do anything.

**You were in no position at Motown at that time to turn the song down, so you recorded it. Do you remember the first time you heard it on the radio?**

We were still living in the projects. “Where Did Our Love Go” was released in summer, when you could hear music outside in the neighborhood. We tuned in to every radio station, including CKLW. Hearing it on the radio for the first time



The Simple Makeup Trick That Can Make You Look Younger In Minutes

[Dermstore](#)



9 Celebs Who Are Not Aging Very Nicely

[Lemurnet](#)



The Most Wanted Man in the World: Behind the Scenes with Edward Snowden

[Wired](#)



was big for us even though we didn't like the song. It was infectious.

**Dick Clark loved to tell the story about what happened that summer on his touring Caravan of Stars.**

Dick called the Motown office because he wanted Brenda Holloway to be on the tour. She had a hit at the time called "Every Little Bit Hurts." He already had Gene Pitney, The Drifters, The Dixie Cups and Lou Christie. Motown told Dick he could have Brenda if he also took the Supremes. He said, "I never heard of the Supremes." Motown told him about our new single and that it was going to be a smash. Dick said, "We don't want The Supremes, all the acts are headliners." But he couldn't have Brenda without us. We were billed as "and others."

Dick fell in love with us the first time he saw us. At first we got a very small amount of applause. A couple weeks into the tour, the applause got bigger and bigger and bigger, until one day the crowd went crazy. We thought Gene Pitney must have stuck his head out from behind the curtain. But "Where Did Our Love Go" became a hit while we were on the tour. We were traveling on a bus and not listening to the radio, so we had no idea. When the tour was over, they flew us home on an airplane. We went to Motown and asked for our money and they said, "What money? We gave you away for nothing."

**How did your world change once you had a No. 1 hit?**

It changed because at a time when it was an impossible dream for black people, we accomplished something. It was a personal accomplishment but also an accomplishment for others. We started touring the world and every country we went to, we were introduced as "Motown's Supremes." We helped put Motown on the map.

**A few weeks later, "Baby Love" topped the Hot 100. How did it feel to have a second No. 1?**

"Baby Love" also went to No. 1 in the U.K. It was fabulous because we were now No. 1 on two continents. Then Europe took us in because of our success in Great Britain. We were on every major TV show. Being No. 1 in the U.K. was really huge. We were taking pictures with royalty and hanging out with the Rolling Stones.

**In 2014, "Where Did Our Love Go" is still played on the radio and in restaurants, malls and grocery stores. How do you feel when you're out shopping and you hear the song?**

It happens quite a bit and not just here in America. I can't comprehend how great it is. We did touch the entire world. When I hear our songs in the mall or the elevator, I want to say, "It's me! It's me!" I never had that feeling before.

**What do you think of "Where Did Our Love Go" 50 years later? And do you sing it in your live act?**

It's one of those songs that is not played as much as some of our other songs. It's a cute song and it did what it did but it's not one of those songs that make you jump up and dance. I only just started doing it live. It took me 50 years to fall in love with it. It's new for me and fresh. "Baby Love" I do all the time. I've been letting everyone know it's the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "Where Did Our Love Go" hitting No. 1 and that's why I fell in love with it.

**How would you sum up the last five decades and what is your life like**

## Fan Army Face-Off



**today?**

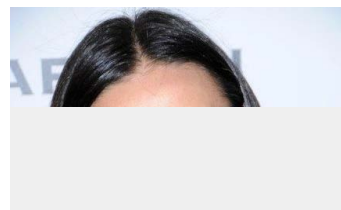
Thank God for 50 years and for having hit records that have carried me all this way. As Mary Wilson, I've found my own voice. I always sang the ballads in the group. Now I do lots of chanteuse-type songs. I put together my own show, Mary Wilson Live and Up Close. All the jazz clubs are asking me to perform. I'm recording a new song with Eddie and Brian Holland, "Life's Been Good to Me." I'm doing what I want to do. I turned 70 this year and I want to keep on.

Questions? Comments? Let us know: @billboard

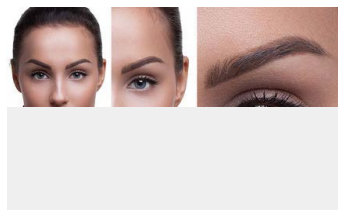


Tagged

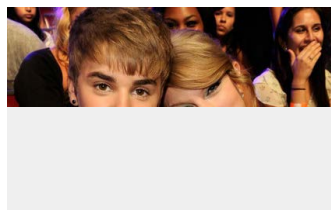
**You Might Also Like**



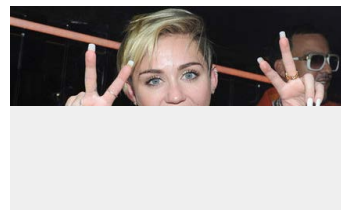
7 Stars Whose Parents Committed Horrible Crimes  
[FAME10](#)



The Simple Makeup Trick That Can Make You Look Younger In...  
[DERMSTORE](#)



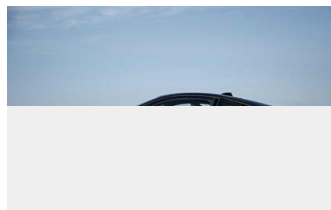
5 Celebs Who Are Sick And Tired Of Justin Bieber  
[ANSWERS](#)



9 Celebs Who Are Not Aging Very Nicely  
[LEMURNET](#)



The Most Wanted Man in the World: Behind the Scenes with...  
[WIRED](#)



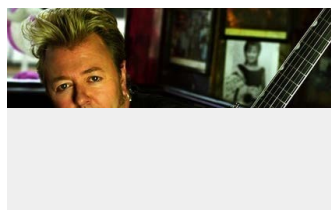
BMW i8 has lasers for headlights and a key fob that's smarter...  
[DIGITAL TRENDS](#)



The Cutest Child Stars that Grew Up UGLY!!  
[JUICY CELEB](#)



10 Best Cars for Young Drivers  
[KIPLINGER](#)



20 Famous Songs You Didn't Know Were Cover Songs  
[RANTLIFESTYLE](#)

