

THE TEMPTATIONS

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In 1964, after more than a few years of trying, a group of youngsters calling themselves the Temptations finally got a nation hit record. It was a quirky little ditty called "The Way You Do The Things You Do", produced by another youngster named Bill Robinson, or "Smokey", as he was popularly known.

With "The Way You Do", the Tempts--Melvin Franklin, Paul Williams, David Ruffin, Otis Williams and Eddie Kendricks--unknowingly inaugurated an era of good music that provides fond memories today to anyone who ever cha-cha'd to "My Girl" did the jerk to the tune of "Get Ready". Along the way, the Temptations also provided hundreds of young would-be singers with examples to emulate. And why not? Everyone knew the Tempts were the best.

One of those singers who was out there emulating the Tempts was a young Washington, D.C. native named Glenn Leonard. "My father was the one who first took me to see the "Temptation," he recalls. "We sat there together and he said, "Now there's the group. He used to put me out in the middle of the aisles while they'd be performing, tell me 'Learn the routines.'

I'd dance and people would give me money."

As the years went on, members of the fabled first-string of Tempts separated. Ruffin and Kendricks wound up with lucrative solo careers. Paul Williams, tragically, committed suicide in 1972. When the calls went out for replacements, the Tempts found those calls being answered by people who had idolized the group and were willing to do anything to help keep it on top. Dennis Edwards who came in 1968, always cited Ruffin--the man he was replacing--as one of his biggest influences. Damon Harris (Tempts Class of '71) is said to have admired Eddie Kendricks so much he did everything short of trying to smell like the man. Glenn Leonard got his chance to fulfill his boyhood dream in 1975.

Now, he's getting even more. Ruffin and Kendricks are back with the Temptations, making the group a seven man unit. They are slated to perform on a major tour and a live album with the Tempts, all centered around a studio LP aptly titled Reunion. After that, who knows?

Richard Street, who officially joined the Temptations in 1971, probably sums the group's feelings up best on the eve of this historic get-together.

"It feels good, man," he says. " I just wish we all could have done it. All the cats that have been here, that have been a part of what's happening now. That would have really made it a Temptations reunion.

Being a fan and being a member of the group, I always wanted it to happen. I thought it would happen a long time ago, but everybody has different ideas and different careers they were trying to pursue at the time, but now it seems like we can all get together and try to make this happen. I think this will go down in history. If it comes off right, it will really be a real nice thing to be a part of."

And, though he's been with the Temptations for some seven years, Glenn Leonard admits that he's just the slightest bit starstruck at the idea of working with the man who first inspired him to sing in the first place. "I really am flabbergasted," says Glenn, "cause now I'm getting a chance to work with the unit that made such an influence on me. I'm just overwhelmed with the idea. I'm thrilled with it. I'm sittin' here with David Ruffin and Eddie Kendricks..."

For bass singer Melvin Franklin, who has been with the Tempts since the group's inception, it's perhaps as if everything has finally come full circle. "Glenn had always admired Eddie so much," he muses. "That inspired him to sing. These are the little human things that make this reunion such a great one."

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