

Black Music Month 2014: June 7 musical salute to En Vogue



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It's Black Music Month. Enjoy the 2014 series. Support the artists. Buy their licensed music. And turn up as you dance along.

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Photo by Stephen Lovekin

Brief history: *In 2010, I wrote a music series honoring Black Music Month on Associated Content's site (republished on Examiner). The focus was to honor new R&B singers, veteran R&B singers, solo rappers, and evenly split the musical salute between female and male rappers. The only artists I was not willing to split up were Salt n' Pepa because they worked as a unit. In 2014, it's about time to salute*

more artists, but in the spirit of Salt n' Pepa's legacy, R&B groups and rap groups will be included. The pattern in 2014 will be newer R&B singers (from 2000 to present), R&B and/or hip-hop groups, veteran R&B singers, and then solo rappers, still evenly split between women and men.

Black Music Month Turn Up Factor "Turn down for what?": There's nothing quite like old school soul, but En Vogue was one of those harmonic groups that brought it back to the days of matching outfits and sultry style. Girl groups don't have a reputation for lasting long, but even for the short time they were together in the early '90s, they were memorable.

All of them (Terry Ellis, Cindy Herron, Maxine Jones and Dawn Robinson) were equally beautiful and could easily switch places as the lead singer or play the background. It takes a special kind of humility and teamwork to be able to do that.

My Connection/First Memory to Artist: I was too young to truly relate to all of the songs they sang during my early teen years, but I couldn't help but respect their astounding voices. But what really made me enjoy them was that they didn't take themselves too seriously. I cracked up watching them remove all their sex appeal and play the church-going, rhythmically challenged group for Ron Johnson on "A Different World" during the sixth season.

Numbers Don't Lie: Success was the name of the game with En Vogue, and they weren't playing around when it came to making hit songs. Some of their top work includes "Hold On" (25 weeks on the Top 100 charts, peaked at number two), "Lies" (11 weeks, peaked at number 38), "My Lovin (You're Never Gonna Get It)" (30 weeks, peaked at number two), "Giving Him Something He Can Feel" (24 weeks, peaked at number six), "Free Your Mind" (20 weeks, peaked at number eight), "Give It Up, Turn It Loose" (20 weeks, peaked at number 15), "Love Don't Love You" (16 weeks, peaked at number 36), "Don't Let Go (Love) (From 'Set It Off')" (35 weeks, peaked at number two), "Don't Let Go (Love) (From 'Set It Off')" (35 weeks, peaked at number two) and "Whatever" (15 weeks, peaked at number 16).

For the first series of Black Music Month artists republished on Examiner (originally on Associated Content), [click here](#) to see all 30.

*Shamontiel is also **The Wire Examiner**, and for the gladiators, she's the **Scandal Examiner**, too.*

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