

Reconstructing the History of Motown Session Musicians: The Carol Kaye/James Jamerson Controversy

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Abstract

Motown Records churned out hit singles with remarkable efficiency, thanks largely to a stable of skilled professional session musicians. However, exactly who played on their most iconic recordings remains a mystery because, as was standard within the music industry, no Motown release in the 1960s credited these musicians for their work. These practices have led to conflicting accounts, the most famous of which concerns bassists James Jamerson and Carol Kaye. To this day, Kaye alleges that she played on numerous classic Motown recordings but has been purposefully omitted from Motown history. Conversely, Jamerson—who died more than thirty years ago—continues to be vehemently defended by acolytes such as biographer Allan Slutsky, who see Kaye’s claims as blasphemous. Drawing on previously unexamined sources, this article reconstructs Kaye’s involvement with Motown and, in so doing, reevaluates the merits of the Kaye/Jamerson controversy. Building on the work of Andrew Flory, I explore the role of session musicians in Motown’s creative process and argue that critics and fans have propagated a problematic discourse in which Jamerson has been valorized and Kaye has been dismissed. Ultimately, Kaye’s story not only provides a useful corrective to the historical record, it also demonstrates the need for further research into session musicians’ contributions to popular music.

Berry Gordy Jr.’s Motown Records was one of the most successful empires in popular music history, churning out hundreds of catchy, chart-topping singles with remarkable efficiency. This success was due in large part to the company’s stable of highly skilled professional session musicians. With limited direction, these musicians were able to improvise intricate arrangements that gave Motown’s music a distinctive sonic identity—what is commonly referred to as “the Motown Sound.”¹ However, exactly who played on their most iconic recordings remains a mystery because, as was standard practice within the music industry, no Motown release in the 1960s ever explicitly credited its session musicians.²

These practices have led to conflicting accounts, the most famous of which concerns James Jamerson (1936–1983) and Carol Kaye (1935–), both of whom worked for the company—Jamerson as the in-house bassist for Motown’s Detroit studio

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¹ In his recent monograph, musicologist Andrew Flory explores the concept of “The Motown Sound” in depth, describing it both as a musical and marketing category. See, Andrew Flory, “The Rise of the Motown Sound,” in *I Hear A Symphony: Motown and Crossover R&B* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 41–68.

² The first Motown releases to credit session musicians were Valerie Simpson’s solo album *Exposed* and Marvin Gaye’s *What’s Going On?*, both released in May 1971.

and Kaye as the go-to bassist for Motown's lesser-known West Coast recording operations. To this day, Kaye alleges that she has been purposefully omitted from Motown history, despite, as she claims, having played on hit singles by acts such as the Supremes, the Temptations, the Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell, and Brenda Holloway. Conversely, Jamerson—who died more than thirty years ago—continues to be vehemently defended by acolytes, such as biographer Allan Slutsky, who see Kaye's claims as blasphemous.

This particular controversy highlights the historiographical dilemma posed by uncredited session musicians: in the absence of direct evidence, their histories have been constructed largely out of memories, hearsay, and speculation—the veracity of which are difficult to determine. Although critics, fans, and scholars continue to take ardent positions on both sides of the Kaye/Jamerson debate, evidence has recently surfaced that sheds new light both on the controversy itself and on the discourse surrounding it. Drawing on two previously unexamined sources—Motown's Los Angeles Musician's Union contracts and Kaye's personal session log—this article reconstructs Kaye's involvement with Motown and, in so doing, reevaluates the merits of the Kaye/Jamerson controversy. From these sources, I document that Kaye played on more than 175 songs for Motown, including as many as five Top 40 hits. These sources confirm that Kaye's place in Motown history is larger than her critics would have us believe, yet at the same time, they also complicate many of her own claims. Building on the work of Motown historian Andrew Flory, I explore the role of session musicians in Motown's creative process and how critics and fans have subsequently received both bassists. As I argue, the vacuum created by the company's decision not to credit its session musicians has propagated a problematic discourse of geographic and stylistic authenticity, in which Jamerson has been valorized and Kaye has been dismissed. Ultimately, Kaye's story not only provides a useful corrective to the historical record but also points to the difficulties inherent in reconstructing an accurate account of session musicians' contributions to popular music.

The Legacy of Session Musicians

Session musicians have been a staple of the American music industry nearly since the beginning of recording. As James P. Kraft has demonstrated, advances in phonograph and radio technology during the 1930s resulted in a loss of jobs for local musicians around the country; these same forces, however, created a demand for a new professional class of highly skilled musicians in major media centers, such as New York and Los Angeles.³ There, these musicians would perform on radio broadcasts, commercial recordings, and film soundtracks—all of which would then be exported across the country. By the 1940s, session musicians had become pervasive within the industry; according to Rob Bowman:

In the postwar era, all major genres of North American popular music, including jazz, country, pop, rock, rhythm and blues, and blues, increasingly utilized session musicians. In

³ James P. Kraft, *Stage to Studio: Musicians and the Sound Revolution, 1890–1950* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Nashville, New York, Los Angeles and eventually Toronto, the session musician scene became highly competitive, with certain players clearly considered the first, second, or third choice on their instrument for sessions in a given style.⁴

The use of session musicians expanded throughout the 1950s and 1960s to not only include major labels in big cities but also smaller labels whose music was produced at regional recording studios, such as Chess Records in Chicago, J&M Studio in New Orleans, Motown's Hitsville U.S.A. in Detroit, Stax Records in Memphis, and FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

Although numerous academic studies have effectively analyzed the studio as a creative space, reclaiming the role of the producer and engineer in the artistic process, less attention has been paid to the people who physically create the sounds within that space.⁵ This critical gap is largely due to the fact that most session musicians did not receive explicit recognition for their work.⁶ Regardless of their individual talent or sonic identity, the recording industry treats session musicians not as artists in their own right but rather as day-to-day employees—as small cogs in the larger record-making machine. This conception has, in turn, allowed critics and historians to repeatedly attribute the success of session musicians' efforts to others (producers, songwriters, etc.), who can be more easily depicted as master-mind auteurs. Although some scholars have attempted to reclaim their contributions, the inherent anonymity of these musicians has led them to be chronically underrepresented in popular music histories.⁷

This is not to say that session musicians were necessarily exploited by the music industry. For many, session work provided a steady income, and within the confines of the studio itself, these musicians were well respected for their abilities. Still, as popular music has been re-valued over the last century, many of these musicians have come forward seeking wider recognition.⁸

⁴ Rob Bowman, "Session Musician," in *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*, eds. John Shepherd, David Horn, Dave Laing, Paul Oliver, and Peter Wicke, vol. 2 (New York: Continuum, 2003), 104–5.

⁵ See Albin Zak, *I Don't Sound Like Nobody: Remaking Music in 1950s America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012); Albin Zak, *The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Simon Zargoski-Thomas, *The Musicology of Record Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁶ This problem appears to be genre specific. For instance, as evident in resources such as Tom Lord's *The Jazz Discography*, much dedicated effort has been spent trying to ascertain precisely who played on seemingly every jazz recording, regardless of obscurity (Lord's discography bills itself as "Everything you need to know about virtually any jazz record ever released."). See, Tom Lord, *The Jazz Discography Online*, <https://www.lordisco.com>.

⁷ Recent work on session musicians in popular music includes Christopher Reali, "Helping Pave the Road to FAME: Behind the Music of Muscle Shoals," *Southern Cultures* 21, no. 3 (2015) 53–74; Morris Levy, "Nashville Sound-Era Studio Musicians," in *Country Music Annual 2000*, eds. Charles K. Wolfe and James E. Akenson (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2000), 22–29; Roy Brewer, "String musicians in the recording studios of Memphis, Tennessee," *Popular Music* 19 no. 2 (2000) 201–15; and Isabel Campelo, "'That Extra Thing'—The Role of Session Musicians in the Recording Industry," *Journal on the Art of Record Production*, Issue 10 (July 2015), <http://arpjournal.com/that-extra-thing-the-role-of-session-musicians-in-the-recording-industry>.

⁸ This trend is perhaps best witnessed through a number of documentary films that have attempted to reclaim session musicians, including both *Standing in the Shadows of Motown* (2002) and *The Wrecking Crew* (2015)—which I discuss later—as well as *20 Feet from Stardom* (2013) and *Muscle*

When Motown was established in 1959, the expectation that their session musicians would be anonymous was part of a long-established music industry norm. Reflecting the automotive industry practices of the company's Detroit birthplace, Gordy established Motown's entire creative process as an "assembly line" in which all of their employees (songwriters, artists, producers, musicians, arrangers, etc.) performed a clearly delineated function.⁹ Gordy's goal was for Motown to function as a smoothly oiled machine, consistently producing well-crafted singles with widespread commercial appeal. Session musicians played an indispensable role in this vision.

By the time Motown reached massive success in 1964—most notably with a string of five consecutive #1 hits for the Supremes ("Where Did Our Love Go," "Baby Love," "Come See About Me," "Stop! In the Name of Love," and "Back in My Arms Again")—the company was relying upon a stable coterie of Detroit session musicians, who called themselves the Funk Brothers. As biographer Allan Slutsky has described them:

The Funk Brothers were one of the most disciplined and creative hit machines of all time. . . . With Motown constantly expecting them to crank out three to four songs during every three-hour session, they must have been doing something right or they wouldn't have stuck around as long as they did. (An average work day consisted of 2 of these three-hour sessions, and on occasion, as many as three or four.) Motown's producers and songwriters threw material at them at such a staggering rate that the musicians often had no idea what the songs were called, or who they were intended for.¹⁰

Beyond their ability to work quickly and diligently, these musicians were specifically able to generate material that sounded good on record (i.e., that was simultaneously catchy and blended well in a mono mix)—a learned skill that should not be taken for granted. They knew their instruments and they knew how best to use them within a studio environment.

The most important of the Funk Brothers was likely electric bassist James Jamerson (Figure 1), whose inventive musicality and idiosyncratic technical abilities led him to craft unique, propulsive bass lines that were central to the Motown Sound. In fact, Jamerson was considered so indispensable to the company that he was one of the first musicians they put on exclusive retainer, reportedly earning him \$250 per week in 1964 and \$1,000 per week by 1968 (or approximately \$7,000 per week today).¹¹

Shoals (2014). As other scholars have noted, these films often reproduce inaccurate or overly simplistic narratives; see Andrew Flory, "20 Feet from Stardom: Entertainment or History?," *Musicology Now*, February 21, 2014, <http://musicologynow.ams-net.org/2014/02/20-feet-from-stardom-entertainment-or.html>, and Christopher Reali, "Review of *Muscle Shoals*," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 11, no. 3 (August 2017) 384–87.

⁹ For more on Motown's multifaceted ties to Detroit, see, Suzanne E. Smith, *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

¹⁰ Allan Slutsky, *Standing in the Shadows of Motown: The Life and Music of Legendary Bassist James Jamerson* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1989), 30. Although Slutsky accurately conveys the amount of work that went into being a Motown session musician, the creative process he describes was also common practice for nearly all session musicians (including those in New York, Los Angeles, and Nashville). See, for instance, Levy, "Nashville Sound-Era Studio Musicians" and Reali, "Helping Pave the Road to FAME: Behind the Music of Muscle Shoals."

¹¹ Jamerson, like the other Funk Brothers, often broke his "exclusive" contract with Motown when he could get away with it—appearing, for example, on John Lee Hooker's "Boom Boom"



Figure 1. James Jamerson, ca. 1977. Courtesy of Jon Sievert/humble archives

What made Jamerson so important to Motown was his ability to improvise memorable, melodic bass lines with little direction. As he later described,

[Producing/songwriting team] Holland-Dozier-Holland would give me the chord sheet, but they couldn't write for me. When they did, it didn't sound right. They'd let me go on and ad lib. I created, man. When they gave me that chord sheet, I'd look at it, but then start doing what I felt and what I thought would fit. All the musicians did. All of them made hits. . . . I'd hear the melody line from the lyrics and I'd build the bass line around that. I always tried to support the melody. I had to. I'd make it repetitious, but also add things to it. Sometimes that was a problem because the bassist who worked with the acts on the road couldn't play it. It was repetitious, but had to be funky and have emotion.¹²

This proved to be a winning formula. Jamerson, in conjunction with the rest of the Funk Brothers—most especially drummer Benny “Papa Zita” Benjamin—improvised bass lines that became the backbone of over a hundred Motown hits.¹³

Yet although they are the most celebrated today, the Funk Brothers were not the only session musicians that Motown employed. In fact, although it is omitted from most Motown histories, the company had begun recording in Los Angeles in the early 1960s. As Flory explains,

Headed by Marc Gordon and Hal Davis, Motown's California-based recording and publishing office opened in 1963 and collaborated with the company's Detroit headquarters to

(1962) and Jackie Wilson's “Higher and Higher” (1967). The weekly retainer figures come from Slutsky, 23–24; 56.

¹² James Jamerson, Interview with Nelson George, “Standing in the Shadows of Motown,” Reprinted in *Buppies, B-Boys, Baps, & Bohos: Notes on Post-Soul Black Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), 171–72.

¹³ Jamerson was not Motown's only bassist in those early years. Other early Motown bassists include Clarence Isabell, Tweed Beard, Willie Green, and Joe Williams (see, Slutsky, *Standing*, 12); in later years, bassists Tony Newton and Bob Babbitt recorded for Motown in Detroit as well.

produce hundreds of recordings. Motown's first activity on the West Coast included sessions for records like Little Stevie Wonder's "Castles in the Sand" and Brenda Holloway's "Every Little Bit Hurts." . . . Virtually all of Motown's most important artists recorded at least a few tracks in Los Angeles during the mid-1960s.¹⁴

On these West Coast sessions, Motown utilized a Los Angeles-based collective of session musicians, known today as the Wrecking Crew. In a departure from Motown's standard practices in Detroit, these session musicians were free to record for any label. Also, unlike the Funk Brothers, their work fell under the purview of the highly regulated Local 47 Chapter of the American Federation of Musicians, meaning that their work was far more regularly documented.¹⁵

Motown's preferred electric bassist on the West Coast was Carol Kaye (Figure 2). Kaye began working as a session musician in 1957 and has since played on thousands of sessions, making her one of the most-recorded bassists of all time. Today, she is most remembered for her work with the Beach Boys, playing bass, for example, on "Help Me Rhonda" (1965), "Good Vibrations" (1966), and the entire *Pet Sounds* album (1966). She also supplied the bass lines to hits such as The Monkees' "I'm a Believer" (1966), "Theme from *Mission: Impossible*" (1967), Joe Cocker's "Feelin' Alright" (1969), Barbara Streisand's "The Way We Were" (1973), and many more. Working in the world of Los Angeles session musicians, Kaye's career depended on her ability to play in diverse musical styles. Her credits thus vary widely, from jazz and rhythm and blues, to country, rock, and pop (not to mention her work in film and television). Regardless, her process was not all that different from Jamerson's. Here, for example, is how she describes recording Glen Campbell's "Wichita Lineman" (1968):

"Wichita Lineman" is one of my favorite records. I got to improvise most of my bass line on that. . . . We just had a chord chart to work from and they were trying to come up with a lead-in line. . . so they asked me to "start it with a pickup on bass" . . . and what you hear is what I invented. . . . I mostly aimed for the roots/chordal notes, making up lines. . . . It sounds arranged, but it wasn't arranged. . . . You keep the bass line simple when the tune is especially good and add a few nuances here and there.¹⁶

As a female musician in the male-dominated environment of the Los Angeles recording scene, Kaye faced distinct challenges, including verbal and sexual harassment.¹⁷ Yet in many other ways, Jamerson and Kaye had very similar careers: They both got their start as gigging jazz musicians and fell into session work as a way

¹⁴ Flory, 138.

¹⁵ According to Flory, "Led by Hank Cosby, Motown musicians began to file their recording sessions with the Detroit Federation of Musicians (Local 5) in late 1963, and by 1965 Motown work was documented regularly." See, Flory, 256.

¹⁶ Quote composited from two sections in Carol Kaye's memoir; see, Carol Kaye, *Studio Musician: Carol Kaye, 60s No. 1 Hit Bassist, Guitarist*, (Burbank, CA: Burbank Printing, 2016), 379, and 384–85.

¹⁷ In her discussion of Kaye's career, Lisa Rhodes explains that "Very few other women instrumentalists existed in the industry at that point in time. Kaye related that only one thousand of the sixteen thousand members of the Local 47 Musician's Union in Hollywood/Los Angeles were women, and they were largely string (violin, etc.) and harp players." Addressing the issue of harassment indirectly, Rhodes quotes Kaye as saying, "You could always defend yourself with some good humor and feeding back to them what they said and get everyone to laugh at the perpetrator, but this [sexual harassment] was very rare, if you could really PLAY GREAT. The men appreciated the women totally,

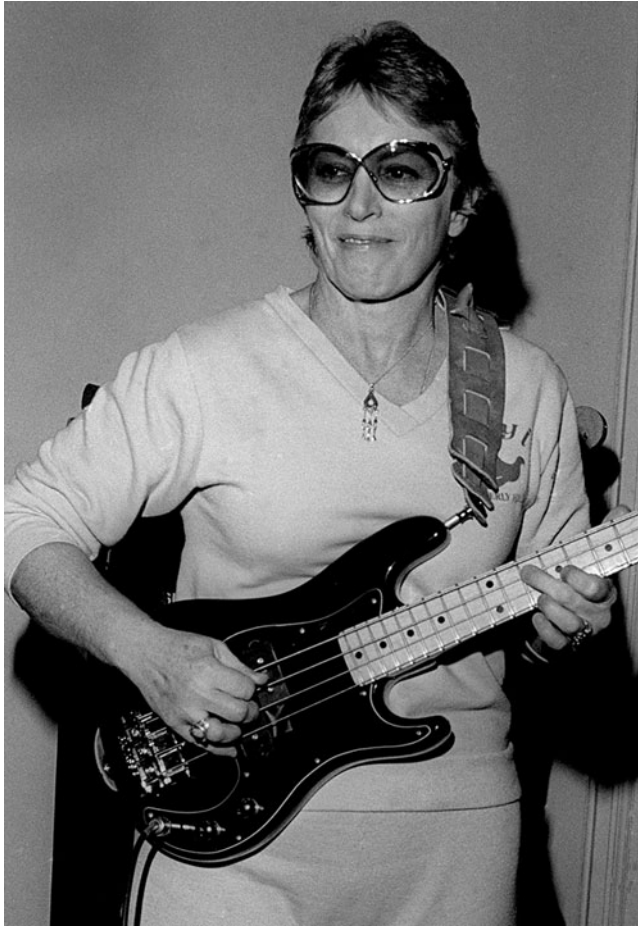


Figure 2. Carol Kaye, ca. 1982. Courtesy of Jon Sievert/humble archives

to supplement freelance incomes; they both started out on different instruments—Jamerson originally played upright bass and Kaye originally played electric guitar—before switching to electric bass in the early 1960s;¹⁸ they both considered themselves first and foremost jazz musicians and found recording pop songs to be a bit uninteresting but a good way to support their families;¹⁹ and even though

professionalism and skill always spoke the loudest.” Emphasis in original, see, Lisa L. Rhodes, *Electric Ladyland: Women and Rock Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 36–37.

¹⁸ Jamerson acquired a Fender Precision Bass in 1961 to perform with while on tour supporting Jackie Wilson and subsequently adopted it as his primary instrument. Kaye originally became a regular fixture on the Los Angeles studio scene as a guitarist, but picked up the electric bass in 1963 as a secondary instrument. She soon found that she was called more often to play bass than guitar.

¹⁹ According to Detroit keyboardist Earl Van Dyke, “A lot of the time, we thought the stuff we were playing was crap. . . . None of us ever thought that Motown would get that big. It was just a gig to us. All we wanted to do was play jazz, but we all had families and at the time, playing rhythm and blues was the best way to pay the rent.” See, Slutsky, *Standing*, 29. Also, Jamerson’s son recalls that his father didn’t like Motown records being played at home: “He’d come home from the studio and say, ‘Turn that off. I have to play that stuff all day long and I don’t want to have to listen to it when I come home.’ Usually, he

they both seemed unconcerned about their lack of credit while the Motown checks were arriving regularly, by the time their careers were waning each wanted the recognition they felt they deserved.²⁰

Today, Jamerson is rightly centered at the heart of Motown history, but Kaye's role at the company has been almost entirely expunged. It is easy to assume that this omission stems from her position as a white woman, but Motown's racial and gender dynamics were complex. For example, Motown was one of the first labels to have women work as company executives, with Berry Gordy hiring his sisters to manage internal operations—Loucye Gordy Wakefield was an early vice president at the company, and throughout the 1960s, Esther Gordy Edwards variously served as Motown's senior vice president, corporate secretary, and chief financial officer. Through Valerie Simpson, Motown was also one of the first labels to have women work as producers.²¹ Furthermore, although Motown (and rhythm & blues in general) is often understood as a specifically black enterprise, the company did have a number of white employees, both in sales positions and as part of their in-house studio band. For example, white guitarist Eugene Grew played on Barrett Strong's "Money (That's What I Want)" (1959), one of the first songs recorded at Hitsville, and the Funk Brothers regularly featured white musicians, such as guitarists Joe Messina and Dennis Coffey and later bassist Bob Babbitt.²² When it comes to Motown's West Coast sessions, many of those players—not just Kaye—were white.

Although Kaye's race and gender may be contributing factors, her exclusion is more directly the result of shoddy record keeping, disputes over credits, the mythologizing of Jamerson's bass style, and an after-the-fact critical discourse that has overly simplified Motown history.

Contested Credits

In 1971, Kaye published her method book *Electric Bass Lines No. 4*.²³ Released during Jamerson's lifetime, Kaye's book featured multiple transcriptions of Motown bass lines, including the Supremes' "Back in My Arms Again" (1965), Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell's "If I Could Build My Whole World Around You"

would just listen to jazz around the house . . . he used to play Oscar Peterson so much that it would make me sick." Quoted in Slutsky, *Standing*, 51.

²⁰ Speaking to Nelson George in the 1980s, Jamerson looked back at his time with the label bitterly: We were doing more of the job than I thought we were doing and we didn't get any songwriting credit. They didn't start giving any musicians credits on the records until the '70s. . . . It did make me sort of mad, but what could I do? . . . [T]hey felt that as long as you got paid your name didn't have to be on the record. See, George, "Standing in the Shadows of Motown," 173.

²¹ Simpson began her career at Motown as a songwriter, working in conjunction with her husband Nick Ashford. Together they wrote multiple hits for Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell, including the "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," "Your Precious Love," "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing," and "You're All I Need to Get By." For more on Simpson and her relationship to the women's movement, see, Christa Bentley, "Los Angeles Troubadours: The Politics of the Singer-Songwriter Movement, 1968–1975" (PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2016), 186–93.

²² See, Brian F. Wright, "Interview with Long-Lost Motown Session Guitarist Eugene Grew," *Vintage Guitar Magazine* (November 2016), 84–87.

²³ Carol Kaye, *Electric Bass Lines No. 4* (Sherman Oaks, CA: Gwyn Publishing, 1971).

(1967), Brenda Holloway's "You've Made Me So Very Happy" (1967), and Stevie Wonder's "I Was Made to Love Her" (1967), all of which she claimed as her own.²⁴ Many of these claims were later disputed—albeit tacitly—when Allan Slutsky (writing under his pseudonym, "Dr. Licks") published his own electric bass method book, *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, in 1989.²⁵ Based primarily on interviews with surviving members of the Funk Brothers, *Standing* was a post-humous celebration of Jamerson's life and musical style, and it explicitly situated Jamerson both as a key architect of the Motown Sound and as the person responsible for Motown's most iconic bass lines.

Kaye, who is not mentioned in *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, brought a defamation suit against Slutsky in October 1999, claiming that his book damaged her reputation by falsely crediting some of her bass lines to Jamerson; it was Kaye, her complaint alleged, who played bass on the Supremes' "Baby Love" (1964), "You Can't Hurry Love" (1966), and "Reflections" (1967); the Four Tops' "(I Can't Help Myself) Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch" (1965) and "Bernadette" (1967); and "numerous other classic Motown recordings."²⁶ After Kaye dismissed the lawsuit, Slutsky addressed her allegations in a lengthy online rebuttal, claiming that, at most, she only played on album cuts and re-recorded versions: "THEY WERE NOT THE ORIGINAL SINGLES AND THEY WERE ALL PLAYED DIFFERENTLY AND ARRANGED DIFFERENTLY FROM THE ORIGINAL SINGLES."²⁷ To this day, he contends that Kaye never played on any important hits and that her claims are simply lies.²⁸ Kaye similarly maintains her account of the facts, and since 2001, her personal website has listed twenty specific Motown hits on which she claims to play bass.²⁹

No one disputes that Kaye was part of Motown's West Coast recording operations. In fact, Lester Sill, the former head of Motown's publishing company Jobete Music, wrote a letter to this effect, stating categorically: "To whom it may concern, Carol Kaye has played bass on several Motown hits that were cut between the years 1963 and 1969."³⁰ The difficulty lies in determining the actual extent of Kaye's work for the company, which is further confounded by Motown's idiosyncratic, assembly-line process itself.³¹ As Flory explains, "Some records were created completely in California (including backing tracks and overdubs), and others began

²⁴ I address each of these particular claims later in the article, but it is worth noting that in the book Kaye claims that "Back in My Arms Again" was recorded "at Steiner's Studio (approximately 1967)," but the single had been released in April 1965; see, Kaye, *Electric Bass Lines No. 4*, 4.

²⁵ Slutsky, *Standing*.

²⁶ Carol Kaye vs. Bob Lee, et al., Los Angeles Supreme Court, Case Number PC024278.

²⁷ Emphasis in original, see, Allan Slutsky, "The Carol Kaye James Jamerson Debate: The Final Chapter (Hopefully)," originally published in March 2000, reprinted at: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/magic/kaye/>.

²⁸ Slutsky, interview with the author, May 25, 2017.

²⁹ Carol Kaye, "Electric Bass Hits," CarolKaye.com, <http://www.carolkaye.com/www/library/basshits.htm>.

³⁰ The letter, dated July 12, 1989, is reprinted on Kaye's website, see, <https://www.carolkaye.com/www/library/photogallery/index2.html>.

³¹ Kaye was also not the only bassist that Motown used on the West Coast. In fact, for Kaye's earliest Motown sessions, she played electric guitar and Arthur Wright played bass. As she recalls, "There were 9 of us bass players who did dates for Motown from 1963 through 1968–69. Arthur Wright was

there as band tracks and were later taken to Detroit (or other locations) for vocal dubbing or mixing.”³² Reconstructing an accurate account of whether it was Kaye’s or Jamerson’s performance that actually made it onto the released version of a song is thus a painstaking endeavor.

The New Evidence

For decades, it seemed as though nothing could conclusively settle this debate. However, forty-five years after Kaye’s claims first appeared in print, two new pieces of evidence have come to light: Kaye’s personal session log and Motown’s long-buried Los Angeles Musician’s Union contracts from the 1960s.³³ Cross referencing these sources against each other, as well as against Motown’s master tape catalog, provides a much clearer, if no less complicated, picture of Kaye’s work for the company.³⁴

Figure 3 is a typical American Federation of Musicians’ B-4 “Phonograph Recording Contract” from the period. The employer’s name—in this case, Motown Records—is listed at the top right, followed by the local Musician’s Union chapter number, the date, the session leader, the studio, the pay rate, “titles of tunes,” etc.; beneath that (not pictured) would be a list of all the musicians who played on the session. As with all of these contracts, however, we cannot take this information at face value. For instance, the date here is listed as August 12, 1966, but—judging by Kaye’s session log—this particular session appears to have taken place the day before, on August 11. There are also far more extreme examples of date altering, where the company falsified contracts either to avoid late fines from the union or to legitimize an off-the-books session that had been conducted months prior.³⁵ This is occasionally true for Motown’s Detroit B-4 contracts as well; for instance, Detroit contracts for the Supremes’ songs “Baby Love” and “Come See About Me” are dated March 10, 1965, but both of these songs had been commercially released months earlier.³⁶

The session leaders are listed here as H. B. Barnum, Gene Page, and (parenthetically) the Lewis Sisters. Barnum and Page, along with Frank Wilson and Ernest

the first one, I was 2nd, others include Rene Hall, Bob West, Ray Pohlman, Ron Brown, James Bond, Red Calendar, etc.” See, Kaye, *Studio Musician*, 51.


³² Flory, 138.

³³ The contracts were copied from the archive of the Local 47 Chapter of the American Federation of Musicians with the assistance of archivist Andrew Morris, and a detailed transcription of Kaye’s personal session log was recently printed in her aforementioned memoir, *Studio Musician*.

³⁴ The Motown master tape catalog contains detailed filing cards that clearly indicate if a track features material recorded outside of Motown’s Detroit studio. I was able to cross-reference these contracts thanks to the assistance of Andrew Flory, who provided me with the information from the tape catalog. For an example of a filing card that specifically documents studio work in Los Angeles, see Flory, 139. Incidentally, that tape card is for Paul Petersen’s “Chained” (1967), a single on which Kaye appears.

³⁵ See Appendix B.

³⁶ The music for “Baby Love” was recorded on August 13, 1964, and the song was released on September 17, 1964; similarly, the music for “Come See About Me” was completed by July 13, 1964, and the song was released on October 27, 1964.



Local Union No. 47

(Employer's name) Motown Records

Phonograph Recording Contract Blank

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS No. 346224

OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

THIS CONTRACT for the personal services of musicians, made this 12th day of August, 19 66, between the undersigned employer (hereinafter called the "employer") and 39 musicians (including the leader) (hereinafter called "employees").

WITNESSETH, That the employer hires the employees as musicians severally on the terms and conditions below, and as further specified on reverse side. The leader represents that the employees already designated have agreed to be bound by said terms and conditions. Each employee yet to be chosen shall be so bound by said terms and conditions upon agreeing to accept his employment. Each employee may enforce this agreement. The employees severally agree to render collectively to the employer services as musicians in the orchestra under the leadership of H. B. Barnum & Gene Page, Jr. (Lewis Sisters) as follows:

Name and Address of Place of Engagement: Columbia, 6121 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, Calif.

Date(s) and Hours of Employment: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 8/12/66

Type of Engagement: Recording for phonograph records only. Plus pension contributions as specified on reverse side hereof.

WAGE AGREED UPON \$: Minimum Unit n Scale (Terms and amount)

This wage includes expenses agreed to be reimbursed by the employer in accordance with the attached schedule, or a schedule to be furnished the employer on or before the date of engagement. To be paid within 2 weeks

Upon request by the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (herein called the "Federation") or the local in whose jurisdiction the employees shall perform hereunder, the employer either shall make advance payment hereunder or shall post an appropriate bond.

Employer's name and <u>Motown Records</u> authorized signature _____ Street address <u>6290 Sunset Blvd.</u> <u>Hollywood, Calif.</u> City State Phone	Leader's name <u>Hide Barnum</u> Local No. <u>47</u> & <u>Gene Page</u> Leader's signature <u>see below</u> Street address _____ City State
--	---

(1) Label Name	No. of Minutes	TITLES OF TUNES	Session No.
<u>"Our Love"</u>		<u>"Number One (Newkey)"</u>	
<u>"Come Along"</u>			
<u>"I'm Ready For Love"</u>			

Figure 3. Top Half of Motown B-4 Contract, dated August 12, 1966. American Federation of Musicians Local 47

Freeman Jr., were the most common leaders on Motown's West Coast sessions from this era. The mention of the Lewis Sisters is notable, but misleading: Although Helen and Kay Lewis did have their own small career as a Motown act, the indication here actually denotes that they provided the session's scratch vocals, acting as stand-ins for the eventual singers in Detroit.³⁷

As is often the case, the "Title of Tunes" section contains the most misleading information. Some contracts provide accurate titles, and others provide incorrect titles or none whatsoever. The titles in Figure 3 contain several of these inconsistencies: "Our Love" was actually a version of "Old Love (Let's Try Again)" that was intended for the Supremes but was never released; there is no song called "Come Along" or anything like it in the Motown master tape catalog; "I'm Ready for Love" is properly listed, and was a #9 hit for Martha and the Vandellas; and "Number One (New Key)" was the working title of the song "Love is Here and Now You're Gone," a #1 hit for the Supremes. Furthermore, there is much information not included in these contracts—most notably here that this session was actu-

³⁷ For more on the Lewis Sisters' career with Motown, see, Graham Betts, "The Lewis Sisters," *The Motown Encyclopedia* (AC Publishing, 2014), 255–56..

ally produced by famed Motown songwriting team Holland–Dozier–Holland, who were in Los Angeles at the time working on a film project.³⁸

Although these contracts may be unreliable on their own, when checked against existing sources, they provide a wealth of new information that can go a long way toward filling in gaps in the historical record.³⁹ Here is what the evidence now shows: from contracts dated between June 1964 and June 1971, Kaye played on more than 175 songs for the label (detailed in Appendix A), approximately 40 percent of which have never been released. Kaye’s personal log (detailed in Appendix B), however, lists Motown sessions dating as early as February 1964 and also includes 82 off-the-books sessions for which there are no contracts.⁴⁰ Although Kaye primarily recorded material for the Supremes, she played on sessions for nearly every major Motown act—including Barbara McNair, Brenda Holloway, the Four Tops, Martha and the Vandellas, Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell, the Temptations, Stevie Wonder, and Smokey Robinson and the Miracles.

Kaye definitively appears on the A-Side of six Motown singles (Table 1), including four Top 40 hits: the aforementioned “I’m Ready for Love” (1966) and “Love is Here and Now You’re Gone” (1967), the Supremes’ “In and Out of Love” (1967), and Brenda Holloway’s “You’ve Made Me So Very Happy” (1967); she additionally appears on at least four B-Sides.⁴¹ From aural and anecdotal evidence, we can also reasonably infer that she played on the Supremes’ last #1 hit “Someday We’ll Be Together” (1969).⁴² Additionally, she appears—at least partially—on seventeen

³⁸ As Graham Betts explains, “In August 1966, The Supremes and their regular writing and production team of Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier, and Eddie Holland had supplanted themselves to Los Angeles, ostensibly to record a couple of tracks for a forthcoming film, *The Happening*. Motown had hired Columbia Studios on Sunset Boulevard . . . chiefly because the studio had often been used for the production of film scores. Since the cost of hiring the studio, along with some sixty assorted musicians, was somewhat extortionate, [Holland-Dozier-Holland] decided to make as much use of the studio time as was possible, eventually recording some four completed songs.” See, Betts, “Love is Here and Now You’re Gone,” *The Motown Encyclopedia*, 264.

³⁹ According to Kaye herself, these are the only documents that should be trusted; in a section of her autobiography in which she explains how misinformation about session musicians is spread, she states that, although they aren’t infallible, “Only the Local 47 recording contracts are considered reliable.” See, Kaye, *Studio Musician*, 50–51.

⁴⁰ All of the surviving contracts are accounted for in Kaye’s session log. As detailed in Appendix B, most of these off-the-books sessions took place during Motown’s early years in Los Angeles, which is likely the reason why no contracts were filed (the company did not fully adhere to standard industry practices until 1965). As the company did not fully adhere to standard industry practices until 1965. Treated as “demo” sessions, most of these were conducted at Armin Steiner’s home studio on Formosa Avenue. It was here that albums like Stevie Wonder’s *Stevie at the Beach* (1964) were recorded (featuring Kaye on some tracks, notably the instrumental version of “Castles in the Sand”). It is difficult to know which of the material recorded at Steiner’s was eventually issued; I address Kaye’s claims regarding specific songs in the next section.

⁴¹ Kaye appears on “A Warmer World,” the B-Side to Billy Eckstine’s “And There You Were” (1966); “Where Were You?,” the B-Side to Brenda Holloway’s “Hurt A Little Everyday” (1966); “What A Day,” the B-Side to Barbara McNair’s “Everything is Good About You” (1966); and “Don’t Let It Happen to Us,” the B-Side to Paul Petersen’s “Chained” (1967).

⁴² Although some sources attribute this song to Jamerson, this is unlikely given that it was recorded in Los Angeles. Kaye claims to play bass on the song and, listening to the isolated rhythm tracks, it sounds to me to fit her typical bass timbre—most notably, it lacks Jamerson’s usual overdriven direct-input bass sound (for a better sense of these timbral nuances, compare the bass line on “Someday We’ll Be Together” to Jamerson’s performance on the Temptation’s “My Girl”).

Table 1. Motown A-Sides on which Kaye appears.

Group/Artist(s)	Single	Month Released	Highest Chart Position
Martha and the Vandellas	“I’m Ready For Love”	Oct 1966	#9
The Supremes	“Love is Here and Now You’re Gone”	Jan 1967	#1
Paul Petersen	“Chained”	May 1967	—
The Supremes	“In and Out of Love”	Oct 1967	#9
Brenda Holloway	“You’ve Made Me So Very Happy”	Oct 1967	#39
Debbie Dean	“Why Am I Loving You?”	Feb 1968	—
Diana Ross & The Supremes	“Someday We’ll Be Together”	Oct 1969	#1

hit albums, including *I Hear a Symphony* (1966), *The Supremes A’ Go-Go* (1966), *The Supremes Sing Holland-Dozier-Holland* (1967), and *Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations* (1968). She is most heavily and consistently featured on Motown’s numerous LPs of Broadway standards such as the Four Tops’ *On Broadway* (1967), *The Supremes Sing Rodgers & Hart* (1967), the Temptations’ *In a Mellow Mood* (1967), and the Supremes/Temptations’ *On Broadway* album (1969).

Revisiting the Controversy

These contracts clearly contradict many of Kaye’s critics. Contrary to what Slutsky argued, she did play on original hit singles; yet they also do not corroborate many of Kaye’s own claims. As detailed in Tables 2–4, Kaye’s personal website maintains that she played on one album and twenty singles for Motown—including seven #1 hits by the Supremes (the group had just twelve in total).⁴³

The contracts reveal that six of the songs Kaye claims are actually re-recordings (Table 2). For instance, she claims to have played on the Four Tops’ hit version of “I Can’t Help Myself” (1965), when she actually played on a later version that appeared on *The Supremes A’ Go-Go*.⁴⁴ Re-recording was a common practice at Motown—one act would have a hit and then the label would have a different act quickly record a new version of it for release on LP. This was usually done for practical reasons: first, it gave the company more material to fill out an entire album—a whole new release (and a more expensive one at that) could easily be constructed by pairing a few established hits with re-recorded filler; second, because Jobete Music owned these songs, the company made money off of each subsequent re-recording. One of the common assumptions among Kaye’s critics, including Slutsky, was that she

However, because there is no Musician’s Union contract that lists the song, it is impossible to know for certain.

⁴³ Carol Kaye, “Electric Bass Hits.” In various interviews over the years she has also claimed other Motown songs not listed here, such as the Four Tops’ “Reach Out (I’ll Be There);” for the sake of simplicity I have limited my discussion to the songs she currently claims on her personal website. For her discussion of “Reach Out,” see, Kingsley Abbott, Interview with Carol Kaye, in *Callin’ Out Around the World: A Motown Reader* (London: Helter Skelter, 2001), 93–100.

⁴⁴ Carol Kaye, “Electric Bass Hits.”

Table 2. Motown singles that Kaye claims which are re-recordings.

Song	Artist	Release Date	Notes
“Stop! In the Name of Love”	The Supremes	8 Feb 1965	Outtake from <i>Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations</i> (1968)
“I Can’t Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)”	The Four Tops	23 Apr 1965	Recorded on <i>The Supremes A’ Go Go</i> (1966)
“My World is Empty Without You”	The Supremes	29 Dec 1965	Played on the Barbara McNair version from <i>Here I Am</i> (1966)
“Get Ready”	The Temptations	7 Feb 1966	Recorded on <i>The Supremes A’ Go Go</i> (1966)
“You Can’t Hurry Love”	The Supremes	25 Jul 1966	Outtake from <i>Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations</i> (1968)
“I Was Made to Love Her”	Stevie Wonder	18 May 1967	Kaye played on the Beach Boys’ cover released on <i>Wild Honey</i> (1967)

played on the Supremes/Temptations’ 1968 *TCB* NBC TV special, and it was there that she re-recorded many of the classic Motown bass lines she claims as her own. This, it turns out, is not entirely accurate: the contracts show that Kaye was not a part of the actual *TCB* special, but instead played bass on *Diana Ross & The Supremes Join the Temptations* (1968)—an album pre-recorded and released to coincide with the special. Five of the twenty songs that Kaye claims come specifically from this album.⁴⁵

For another seven of the songs that Kaye claims (Table 3), evidence suggests that Kaye’s participation is unlikely. In support of Slutsky’s legal defense, Motown songwriter Brian Holland signed an affidavit attesting that it was James Jamerson who performed on “Bernadette,” “Reach Out,” “I Can’t Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch),” “You Keep Me Hangin’ On,” “Standing in the Shadows of Love,” “Reflections,” “Baby Love,” “Back in My Arms Again,” “Come See About Me,” and “You Can’t Hurry Love.” Songwriter Hank Cosby similarly provided an affidavit definitively stating that Jamerson appeared on “I Was Made To Love Her.”⁴⁶ For the rest of the songs in Table 4, there is either a Detroit B-4 for the song or the actual recording date does not match up to Kaye’s personal log.⁴⁷ This does not rule out the possibility that Kaye could have re-recorded these songs at some point (e.g., as part of a backing track for television performances),

⁴⁵ NBC’s *TCB* contracts list Ray Brown as the bassist on the special and list the tape dates as August 22–24, 1968. Kaye’s session log states that she was on vacation at that time.

⁴⁶ An extended version of “I Was Made To Love Her,” released on the deluxe edition soundtrack to the 2002 documentary based on Slutsky’s book, includes a few seconds of studio banter. In it, you can clearly hear Stevie Wonder call out “Papa Zita,” Benny Benjamin’s nickname. This further confirms that the track was recorded in Detroit. Various Artists, *Standing in the Shadows of Motown: Deluxe Edition*, Hip-O Records, 2004, CD.

⁴⁷ Most of the surviving Detroit B-4s list Jamerson as the bass player; however, as discussed earlier, these contacts are not always accurate and are difficult to trust without any other way to corroborate them.

Table 3. Motown singles Kaye claims on which she likely does not appear.

Song	Artist	Release Date	Notes
"Baby Love"	The Supremes	17 Sep 1964	Brian Holland signed affidavit declares Jamerson played on the song
"Back in My Arms Again"	The Supremes	15 Apr 1965	Jamerson B4 exists, dated April 9, 1965
"Bernadette"	The Four Tops	16 Feb 1967	Brian Holland signed affidavit declares Jamerson played on the song
"Reflections"	The Supremes	24 Jul 1967	Brian Holland signed affidavit declares Jamerson played on the song
"If I Could Build My Whole World Around You"	Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell	14 Nov 1967	Instrumental track recorded 19 Mar 1967, not in Kaye's log
"Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing"	Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell	28 Mar 1968	Instrumental track recorded 29 Sep 1967, not in Kaye's log
"Love Child"	Diana Ross & the Supremes	30 Sep 1968	Jamerson B4 exists, dated 17 Sep 1968

it simply means that I have found no direct evidence of it. All of these seven songs were Top 10 hits on the Billboard Hot 100, and four of them went to #1.

That leaves seven songs and one album (Table 4) that Kaye claims which can solidly be attributed to her. It is noteworthy that she tacitly admits that three of these are actually re-recordings—claiming to have played on the Supremes' and the Temptations' versions of "I Second That Emotion," "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," and "You're All I Need to Get By"—and not the original hit versions (by, respectively, Smokey Robinson & the Miracles and Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell). Of the five hit singles I attribute to her, Kaye claims only three: "Love is

Table 4. Motown singles Kaye claims on which she definitively appears.

Song	Artist	Release Date	Notes
"Do I Love You (Indeed I Do)"	Frank Wilson	—	Recorded in 1965, not released until 1979
"Love is Here and Now You're Gone"	The Supremes	11 Jan 1967	#1 Hit, Billboard Hot 100
"You've Made Me So Very Happy"	Brenda Holloway	17 Aug 1967	#39 Hit, Billboard Hot 100
"Ain't No Mountain High Enough"	The Supremes	8 Nov 1968	Recorded on Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations (1968)
"I Second That Emotion"	The Temptations	8 Nov 1968	Recorded on Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations (1968)
"You're All I Need to Get By"	The Supremes	—	Outtake from Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations (1968)
"Someday We'll Be Together"	Diana Ross & the Supremes	14 Oct 1969	#1 Hit, Billboard Hot 100
<i>GIT on Broadway</i>	Diana Ross/ Temptations	7 Nov 1969	NBC TV Special and Album

Here and Now You're Gone," "Someday We'll Be Together," and "You've Made Me So Very Happy" (there is no mention of "I'm Ready for Love" or "In & Out of Love").

Given that Kaye only appears on approximately one-third of the songs she claims, how should we interpret her account? Giving her the benefit of the doubt, it is possible to argue that she might not have known that she was "re-recording" a given track or that hers was not the hit version of a particular song. As previously mentioned, some of these recordings were cut using scratch vocalists and even Motown's Detroit musicians often did not know for whom songs were actually intended. Furthermore, Motown's assembly line process meant that every person was assigned a single role, and as a session musician, Kaye was not involved in or privy to any other part of Motown's operations.⁴⁸ This is also why she might come away from the experience thinking that she was Motown's most important bass player; in fact, the man in charge of Motown's West Coast operations, Hal Davis, was known in Los Angeles as "Mr. Motown," much to Berry Gordy's amusement.⁴⁹ Also, because she has literally played on thousands of sessions, it is more than likely that she is simply misremembering.

It is easy to see why Jamerson supporters continue to doubt Kaye: many of her claims are, at best, misleading; at worst, they are outright fabrications (for example, there is no evidence that she played on any of the seven songs specifically cited by her lawyers in her defamation suit against Slutsky). Nevertheless, Kaye cannot simply be dismissed outright.

The Style Debate

This new evidence would likely do little to sway Kaye's critics, because, although "hits" are the standard by which they measure success, the key component of this controversy is actually style. In the years since his death, Jamerson has been mythically recast as the great pioneer of the electric bass; Ed Friedland, former senior editor of *Bass Guitar* magazine, has gone so far as to describe him as: "[T]he man who started it all. Before him, the electric bass was an untapped reservoir of potential. Often poorly recorded and played without flair, it had not yet become a force in music. All that changed when Jamerson picked up the instrument."⁵⁰ For those invested in this narrative, Jamerson is seen as the primogenitor of modern electric bass playing—his style is virtuosic, unique, and unquestionably his own invention.⁵¹

⁴⁸ For an in-depth discussion of Motown's assembly line process, see, Andrew Flory, "I Hear a Symphony: Making Music at Motown, 1959–1979" (PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2006), 270–82.

⁴⁹ Bill Dahl, *Motown: The Golden Years* (Iola, WI: Krause Publications, 2001), 230.

⁵⁰ Ed Friedland, *Re&B Bass Masters: The Way They Play* (San Francisco: Backbeat, 2005), 7.

⁵¹ Detailed analyses of Jamerson's style can be found in Anthony Jackson, "An Appreciation of the Style," Slutsky, *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, 92–96; Ed Friedland, *Re&B Bass Masters*; Chris Jisi, "The Dance Floor Never Stood a Chance: Inside the James Jamerson Style," *Bass Player*, December 2002; "James Jamerson and Motown," in *The Funky Bass Book*, ed. Bill Leigh (Milwaukee, WI: Backbeat Books, 2010), 2–8; and, Per Elias Drabløs, *The Quest for the Melodic Electric Bass: From Jamerson to Spenner* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2016), 145–54. Drabløs's book also includes both an analysis of Carol Kaye's style and a brief discussion of the Jamerson/Kaye controversy.

Jamerson supporters thus see Kaye's claims as an affront to his legacy, and this perceived disrespect has led many (including Slutsky) to reject even the possibility that she appears on any of Motown's biggest hits.

Their arguments primarily rely on the differences between Kaye's and Jamerson's techniques and equipment. Jamerson played a stock Fender Precision Bass, including the original foam mute in his bridge that deadened the sound of his strings, and he played La Bella flat-wound strings, which he almost never changed. His action (the space between the strings and the fretboard) was unusually high, and he played solely with his index finger, a holdover from his time as an upright bassist. Sonically, the unique timbre of his bass was the result of Motown's recording process, in which Jamerson's bass was recorded directly into the mixing console; when he pushed his bass's electric signal, this direct-input (DI) process caused his bass to often sound overdriven and slightly distorted. Kaye, by contrast, played a muted Fender Precision Bass, but she played with a pick and recorded through a miked amplifier; her bass sound is thus produced using a method that is fundamentally distinct from Jamerson's. In practice, however, these differences are not always easy to hear.

Kaye's recorded output with Motown illustrates the diverse material the company recorded on the West Coast, including both pop singles and collections of Broadway standards. Each song's overall arrangement dictated Kaye's particular style of bass playing. As such, her bass lines can broadly be grouped into three categories: new creations, general allusions to Jamerson's style, and verbatim re-recordings of Jamerson material. All three reveal notable stylistic differences and are therefore useful for investigating this debate.

As mentioned earlier, Kaye played on a number of re-recorded versions of classic Motown songs. In these contexts, Kaye was often given a transcription of (or a loose approximation of) Jamerson's original bass line to work from. In her autobiography, she explicitly described one such situation: discussing her re-recording of "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" for *Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations* (1969), Kaye writes that,

I remember reading the written bass part, actually a copy of Jamerson's part he originally cut with Marvin Gaye and Tami [*sic*] Terrell on "Ain't No Mountain High Enough." It was many pages of music. . . . While turning the music page over on 'the' take, my music fell about at the key change and I had to improvise after glancing quickly to [conductor] Gil [Askey], who didn't stop—he kept waving to keep going so I did.⁵²

Sonically, on each bassist's interpretation of "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," the timbres of their instruments are noticeably distinct; yet they are not as radically different as Kaye's critics tend to describe. Instead, Kaye's felt mute and picking style conceal many of the aforementioned technical differences between her and Jamerson.⁵³ Listening today, the most obvious differences between the two musicians concern their approaches to attack, improvisation, and rhythm, with

⁵² Kaye, *Studio Musician*, 271.

⁵³ As Kaye explains, "What I did with the early 1960s [Fender Precision Bases], was take the bridge cover off, tape my felt mute on top of the string where they exited the bridge cover but also shimmed it with 2–3 picks to keep it up some, so there were no 'plunk' sounds." See, Kaye, 146.

Kaye playing more aggressively on top of the beat and more often playing extended passages of eighth notes.⁵⁴

Kaye's work for Motown also included a more general pop/rhythm and blues style. This occasionally took the form of direct imitation of Jamerson, such as in "I'm Ready for Love" by Martha and the Vandellas; Kaye's bass line to this song—although not a verbatim transcription—is an obvious allusion to Jamerson's playing on the Supremes' "You Can't Hurry Love" (1966).⁵⁵ Other times, Kaye was given more latitude to invent her own bass lines. For instance, to accompany Brenda Holloway's "You've Made Me So Very Happy," Kaye improvises a nuanced, propulsive line that is distinctly her own and yet still fits perfectly within the Motown oeuvre. An even more extreme example can be heard in her performance on "My Girl" from the album *Time Out for Smokey Robinson & The Miracles* (1969); eschewing Jamerson's famous three-note motive from the Temptations' original 1964 hit recording, Kaye improvises a funkier, more dynamic bass line that supplies a substantially different groove for the song. Kaye's contributions to Motown's albums of Broadway standards are similarly notable because, although they place her within a different stylistic context, her bass lines are still just as prominent in the overall mix (see, for example, "Mountain Greenery" from *The Supremes Sing Rodgers & Hart*).

Kaye contributed to and innovated within the Motown bass style, even if she did not invent it. When her critics argue that she couldn't possibly have played on these songs or that her timbre or technique make her immediately stand out as an outsider, they do her a disservice. They forget that Kaye worked in the cutthroat scene of Los Angeles session musicians. Her livelihood was predicated on her ability to act as a chameleon, playing whatever sound or style was needed on a given session. That is not to say that there were not important differences between Kaye's and Jamerson's approaches to the bass, it merely means that the recording itself is not always enough to conclusively identify either musician. This latter point can clearly be seen in the example of "Love is Here and Now You're Gone"—even though the contracts show that it is definitively a Kaye recording, Slutsky included a transcription of its bass line in *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, incorrectly attributing it to Jamerson.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Because these recordings are readily available, I have foregone direct transcriptions of these bass lines. Traditional music notation would not adequately convey the elements I am most concerned with (notably attack and groove), and standardizing them into notation would also obscure the micro-rhythmic differences between each bassist's approach. I would instead suggest simply listening to each recording back-to-back.

⁵⁵ Using such a highly similar bass line was part of the wider logic of Motown, which tried to craft new hits by replicating elements of recent ones. Flory describes this process as Motown producers' "self-dialogue," using repeated lyrical and musical tropes to create a sense of stylistic conformity. See, Flory, "The Rise of the Motown Sound," in *I Hear a Symphony*, 41–68.

⁵⁶ Slutsky, 176. I spoke with Slutsky about this error. He admitted the mistake but dismissed the song as largely unimportant: "Well, that was the only one, but who cares about that tune. . . . It's a big hit but it wasn't one of the signature tunes of the Supremes. . . . It's just a written part with a big orchestra. . . . The electric was doubling an upright bass. So that's probably the only one I'd owe her an apology on." Slutsky, personal interview with the author, May 25, 2017.

Conclusion

When James Jamerson died in 1983, he was a completely unknown figure.⁵⁷ Thanks largely to Slutsky's book and the subsequent 2002 *Standing in the Shadows of Motown* documentary, he has been rescued from obscurity, and today he is correctly recognized as an innovative bassist and a key figure in Motown history.⁵⁸ However, in the years since his death, the mythology surrounding Jamerson has also grown exponentially, to the point that any conflicting narrative is now immediately suspect. Kaye has likewise been the subject of both a book and a documentary (Kent Hartman's 2012 *Wrecking Crew* book and Denny Tedesco's 2015 *Wrecking Crew* film), yet her role at Motown—even if it is smaller than she might claim—has been erased completely.⁵⁹

The Kaye/Jamerson controversy is a particularly complicated case study, one that could have been easily avoided had Motown credited their session musicians (or at the very least, kept better internal records). But that was not the reality of their working environment. Like nearly all other labels at the time, the company simply saw their musicians as in-house employees who were already being compensated for their work. As this music has since become enshrined as an important cultural artifact, the uncertainty surrounding who actually played on these recordings has created a vacuum that has bred wild speculation. One of the most important lessons from Kaye's story is that such speculation can lead to problematic narratives that often reproduce preexisting bias. In the absence of tangible evidence, fans, critics, and historians have simplified and mythologized Motown history to the point that Motown can only mean Detroit and can only mean Jamerson. This mythology in turn has become all consuming, even, as the evidence now shows, when it is wrong.

⁵⁷ Jamerson gave only two interviews in his entire life, the first to *Guitar Player's* Dan Forte and the second to Nelson George for *Musician* magazine; see, George, "Standing in the Shadows," and Dan Forte, interview with James Jamerson, "James Jamerson: Preeminent Motown Bassist," *Guitar Player*, June 1979.

⁵⁸ *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, directed by Paul Justman (2002; Santa Monica, CA: Artisan Entertainment), DVD.

⁵⁹ Kent Hartman, *The Wrecking Crew: The Inside Story of Rock and Roll's Best-Kept Secret*, New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2012; *The Wrecking Crew*, Directed by Denny Tedesco (New York: Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2015), DVD. It is difficult to overlook the sexist underpinnings of Kaye's unstable position within Motown discourse. For example, despite Bob Babbitt's similar disputes over Jamerson's legacy, he has never been subject to the same fervent criticisms as Kaye. Babbitt claims to have played bass on songs occasionally attributed to Jamerson, such as The Capitols' "Cool Jerk" (1966), Smokey Robinson's "Tears of a Clown" (1970), and Marvin Gaye's "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)" (1971). In an editorial for *Bass Player* magazine, Babbitt discussed the problems inherent in session musicians not being properly credited for their work: "Often a session would be re-cut, or someone would be called in to overdub and play the exact same part but perhaps with better feel or execution. . . . If the new player's sound was close to yours, it may be hard to tell whether or not it's you on the track. . . . Now, I want to say that every record I have claimed to play on I really feel in my heart and soul that I played on. . . . It is hard when you hear that other bass players are getting credit for some of your work. But, if those few songs in question were re-cuts or overdubs, I guess I'll have to live with that. The fact that there were no credits on those records hurt everyone." See, Bob Babbitt, "Who Played Bass?," *Bass Player*, December 2002, 88.

Slutsky concluded his rebuttal of Kaye’s claims as follows:

History is a funny thing. Once something is published, whether in magazines, books, or on the internet, it becomes a part of history. As the witnesses to the original events die out, false, revisionist versions of history tend to confuse and even, in some instances, destroy the real facts for future generations. . . . To those of you who keep pushing Carol’s Motown agenda, I say this: You are taking that legacy away from James, you are taking it away from history, and you are taking it away from the bass lore that should be handed down to generations of future bassists. Carol has enough credits. Let James keep his.⁶⁰

Although his discussion of “revisionist history” may seem a bit ironic, his goal is clear: he wants to preserve the unimpeachable mythology of James Jamerson. But acknowledging Kaye’s contributions does not diminish Jamerson’s significance—rather, it simply validates the work of a fellow anonymous session musician. Kaye played on original hits by the Supremes, Martha and the Vandellas, and Brenda Holloway, and she deserves recognition for her work.

Even with these new sources, there is still much that is left unresolved, and for many recordings, we may never know exactly which musicians are performing. Nonetheless, it remains vitally important that historians carve out a space for Carol Kaye and the thousands of other session musicians like her, who both literally and symbolically were never given their proper credit. For many in this unlucky club, there are no buried contracts waiting to be found, no evidence outside of fading memories—too much time has passed, and too few records have been kept. Yet these people were an integral part of the music we listen to and study, and if for no other reason, their stories deserve to be told.

Appendix A: Detailed Record of Every Motown Los Angeles Musician’s Union Contract That Lists Kaye as a Performer

(Source: Los Angeles Local 47 Musician’s Union)⁶¹

Contract Date	Song	Artist	Released	Album/Single
16 Jun 1964	“The Rose”	Dorsey Burnette		
16 Jun 1964	“Gotta Travel On”	Dorsey Burnette	Dec 2015	<i>The Complete Motown Recordings 1964–1965</i>
16 Jun 1964	“Don’t Believe”	Dorsey Burnette	Dec 2015	<i>The Complete Motown Recordings 1964–1965</i>
16 Jun 1964	“Alligator Davey”	Dorsey Burnette	Dec 2015	<i>The Complete Motown Recordings 1964–1965</i>
24 Mar 1965	“Mine for a Moment”	Unknown		
24 Mar 1965	“Maybe Today”	Billy Eckstine	Nov 1965	<i>The Prime of My Life</i>
24 Mar 1965	“A Warmer World”	Billy Eckstine	Sep 1966	B-Side to “And There You Were” Single
24 Mar 1965	“Night Song”	Unknown		

(Continued)

⁶⁰ Slutsky, “The Carol Kaye James Jamerson Debate: The Final Chapter (Hopefully).”

⁶¹ For each entry, I have listed the date of the contract—not necessarily the date of the session—and any song titles; bolded entries did not originally include song titles. I then cross-referenced this

Appendix A: Continued.

Contract Date	Song	Artist	Released	Album/Single
24 Mar 1965	"Climb Every Mountain"	Billy Eckstine	Nov 1965	<i>The Prime of My Life</i>
3 Jun 1965	"Is There A Chance"	unknown		
27 Aug 1965	"Santa Baby"	The Supremes		
27 Aug 1965	"My Favorite Things"	The Supremes	Nov 1965	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
27 Aug 1965	"My First Christmas Without You"	The Supremes		
27 Aug 1965	"Noel"	The Supremes		
27 Aug 1965	"Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer"	The Supremes	Nov 1965	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
27 Aug 1965	"Winter Wonderland"	The Supremes		
28 Aug 1965	"Oh Holy Night"	The Supremes	Nov 2015	<i>A Motown Christmas Volume 2</i>
28 Aug 1965	"O Little Town of Bethlehem"	The Supremes	Oct 1995	<i>A Motown Christmas Carol</i>
28 Aug 1965	"Joy to the World"	The Supremes	Nov 1965	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
28 Aug 1965	"Born of Mary"	The Supremes	Nov 1965	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
28 Aug 1965	"Just a Lonely Lonely Christmas"	The Supremes	Oct 1993	<i>Christmas in the City</i>
28 Aug 1965	"Silver Bells"	The Supremes	Nov 1965	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
28 Aug 1965	"Santa Claus is Coming to Town"	The Supremes	Nov 1965	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
28 Aug 1965	"My Christmas Tree"	The Supremes	Nov 1965	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
28 Aug 1965	"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"	The Supremes		
28 Aug 1965	"Twinkle Twinkle Little Me"	The Supremes	Nov 1965	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
28 Aug 1965	"Little Bright Star"	The Supremes	Nov 1965	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
28 Aug 1965	"Children's Christmas Song"	The Supremes	Nov 1965	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
17 Sep 1965	"For Once in My Life"	Barbara McNair	Nov 1966	<i>Here I Am</i>
17 Sep 1965	"Fancy Passes"	Barbara McNair	Nov 1966	<i>Here I Am</i>
17 Sep 1965	"I Did it All For You"	Billy Eckstine	Nov 1966	<i>My Way</i>
17 Sep 1965	"Crying Time"	Brenda Holloway	Jun 2015	<i>A Cellarful Of Motown! Volume 2 [UK]</i>
17 Sep 1965	"Il Silenzia" (Silent Men)	Connie Haines		
17 Sep 1965	"Duo"	Jack Soo		
17 Sep 1965	"Show Girl"	The Vows		
17 Sep 1965	"While You're Waitin' for Tomorrow"	Unknown		
11 Nov 1965	"Hava Nagila"	The Supremes		
11 Nov 1965	"Oh Danny Boy"	The Supremes		
11 Nov 1965	"Jamaica Farwell"	The Supremes		
11 Nov 1965	"Never on Sunday"	The Supremes		
11 Nov 1965	"Tie Me Kangaroo Down"	The Supremes		
11 Nov 1965	"Hawaiian Wedding Song"	The Supremes		
11 Nov 1965	"La Bamba"	The Supremes		
16 Nov 1965	"Let the Music Play"	The Supremes	May 1969	<i>Let the Sun Shine In</i>
16 Nov 1965	"With a Song in my Heart"	The Supremes	Feb 1966	<i>I Hear A Symphony</i>
16 Nov 1965	"This is the Night"	The Supremes		

(Continued)

Appendix A: Continued.

Contract Date	Song	Artist	Released	Album/Single
16 Nov 1965	"Unchained Melody"	The Supremes	Feb 1966	<i>I Hear A Symphony</i>
16 Nov 1965	"Stranger in Paradise"	The Supremes	Feb 1966	<i>I Hear A Symphony</i>
24 Nov 1965	"You've Lost that Lovin' Feeling"	Barbara McNair	Nov 1969	<i>The Real Barbara McNair</i>
24 Nov 1965	"What Now My Love"	Barbara McNair	Nov 1969	<i>The Real Barbara McNair</i>
24 Nov 1965	"Almost Like Dying"	Barbara McNair		
24 Nov 1965	"Come Back Half-Way"	Barbara McNair	Oct 2015	<i>Love And Affection - More Motown Girls</i> [UK]
30 Nov 1965	"Who Can I Turn To?"	Barbara McNair		
30 Nov 1965	"Yesterday"	Barbara McNair		
30 Nov 1965	"My Way"	Barbara McNair		
30 Nov 1965	"Just in Time"	Barbara McNair		
30 Nov 1965	"It Rained Again Today"	Barbara McNair		
30 Nov 1965	"Something For My Heart"	Barbara McNair		
9 Feb 1966	"Whenever You Need Me"	Brenda Holloway		
9 Feb 1966	"Where Were You?"	Brenda Holloway	Aug 1966	B-Side to "Hurt A Little Everyday" Single
9 Feb 1966	"Can't You Hear Me Knocking"	Brenda Holloway		
7 Mar 1966	"It's Not Unusual"	The Supremes	Mar 2008	<i>Let The Music Play: Supreme Rarities</i>
7 Mar 1966	"Money (That's What I Want)"	The Supremes	Aug 1966	<i>The Supremes A' Go-Go</i>
7 Mar 1966	"(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction"	The Supremes	Mar 2008	<i>Let The Music Play: Supreme Rarities</i>
9 Mar 1966	"Get Ready"	The Supremes	Aug 1966	<i>The Supremes A' Go-Go</i>
9 Mar 1966	"This Old Heart of Mine (Is Weak for You)"	The Supremes	Aug 1966	<i>The Supremes A' Go-Go</i>
9 Mar 1966	"Uptight (Everything's Alright)"	The Supremes	Jan 2005	<i>Motown Sings Motown Treasures Volumes 1 +2</i>
9 Mar 1966	"Going to a Go-Go"	The Supremes		
9 Mar 1966	"Can I Get a Witness"	The Supremes	Jul 1987	<i>The Never-Before-Released Masters</i>
9 Mar 1966	"Shake Me, Wake Me (When It's Over)"	The Supremes	Aug 1966	<i>The Supremes A Go-Go</i>
12 Mar 1966	"On a Clear Day (You Can See Forever)"	Barbara McNair		
12 Mar 1966	"The Wheels of the City"	Barbara McNair	Jan 2004	<i>The Ultimate Motown Collection</i> [UK]
12 Mar 1966	"What Now My Love"	Kim Weston		
12 Mar 1966	"Once Upon A Time"	Kim Weston		
12 Mar 1966	"What the World Needs Now"	Kim Weston	Mar 1968	<i>Reflections</i>
12 Mar 1966	" <i>More (Than the Greatest Love)</i> "	The Four Tops		
12 Mar 1966	"Blowin' in the Wind"	The Supremes	Nov 1969	<i>Cream of the Crop</i>
27 Apr 1966	"Smile"	Barbara McNair		

(Continued)

Appendix A: Continued.

Contract Date	Song	Artist	Released	Album/Single
27 Apr 1966	"Second Time Around"	Barbara McNair		
27 Apr 1966	"The Shadow of Your Smile"	Barbara McNair	Nov 1966	<i>Here I Am</i>
27 Apr 1966	"On the Street Where You Live"	The Four Tops	Nov 1967	<i>Four Tops On Broadway</i>
28 Apr 1966	"I Will Wait For You"	Barbara McNair	Nov 1966	<i>Here I Am</i>
28 Apr 1966	"The Sound of Music"	The Four Tops	Nov 1967	<i>Four Tops On Broadway</i>
28 Apr 1966	"Climb Ev'ry Mountain"	The Four Tops	Nov 1967	<i>Four Tops On Broadway</i>
28 Apr 1966	"What Did I Have That I Don't Have"	The Four Tops	Nov 1967	<i>Four Tops On Broadway</i>
20 May 1966	"What A Day"	Barbara McNair	Sep 1966	B-Side to "Everything is Good About You" Single
20 May 1966	"My World is Empty Without You"	Barbara McNair	Nov 1966	<i>Here I Am</i>
20 May 1966	"You've Got Possibilities"	Barbara McNair		
20 May 1966	"On a Clear Day (You Can See Forever)"	Barbara McNair	Feb 2003	<i>Motown From Broadway To Hollywood [UK]</i>
20 May 1966	"I Want to Be With You"	The Four Tops	Nov 1967	<i>Four Tops On Broadway</i>
12 Aug 1966	"I'm Ready for Love"	Martha and the Vandellas	Oct 1966	Released as a Single
12 Aug 1966	"Old Love (Let's Try it Again)"	The Supremes		
12 Aug 1966	"Love is Here and Now You're Gone"	The Supremes	Jan 1967	Released as a Single
12 Aug 1966	"Come Along"	Unknown		
13 Aug 1966	"The Sound of Music"	The Supremes	Jul 2004	<i>There's A Place For Us</i>
13 Aug 1966	"The Sweetheart Tree"	The Supremes		
13 Aug 1966	"The Shadow of Your Smile"	The Supremes	Jul 2004	<i>There's A Place For Us</i>
13 Aug 1966	"Tender is the Night"	The Supremes	Jul 2004	<i>There's A Place For Us</i>
13 Aug 1966	"Strangers in the Night"	The Supremes	Oct 1998	<i>Motown Celebrates Sinatra</i>
21 Oct 1966	"With A Song in my Heart"	The Supremes	Jun 1987	<i>The Rodgers And Hart Collection</i>
21 Oct 1966	"Falling in Love With Love"	The Supremes	May 1967	<i>The Supremes Sing Rodgers & Hart</i>
21 Oct 1966	"Lover"	The Supremes	May 1967	<i>The Supremes Sing Rodgers & Hart</i>
21 Oct 1966	"My Romance"	The Supremes	May 1967	<i>The Supremes Sing Rodgers & Hart</i>
21 Oct 1966	"Where or When"	The Supremes	May 1967	<i>The Supremes Sing Rodgers & Hart</i>
24 Oct 1966	"The Lady is a Tramp"	The Supremes	May 1967	<i>The Supremes Sing Rodgers & Hart</i>
24 Oct 1966	"Little Girl Blue"	The Supremes	Jun 1987	<i>The Rodgers And Hart Collection</i>
24 Oct 1966	"My Funny Valentine"	The Supremes	May 1967	<i>The Supremes Sing Rodgers & Hart</i>
24 Oct 1966	"Mountain Greenery"	The Supremes	May 1967	<i>The Supremes Sing Rodgers & Hart</i>

(Continued)

Appendix A: Continued.

Contract Date	Song	Artist	Released	Album/Single
31 Oct 1966	“Don’t Let it Happen to Us”	Paul Petersen	May 1967	B-side to “Chained”
31 Oct 1966	“Chained”	Paul Petersen	May 1967	Released as a Single
31 Oct 1966	“Kickin’ Stones”	Unknown		
31 Oct 1966	“Sylvia”	Unknown		
23 Jan 1967	“Why Am I Loving You”	Debbie Dean	Feb 1968	Released as a Single on V.I.P.
23 Jan 1967	“I Believe in Him”	Debbie Dean		
23 Jan 1967	“Oh How I’d Miss You”	Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell	Aug 1967	<i>United</i>
23 Jan 1967	“We’ll Be Satisfied”	Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell	Nov 2015	<i>The Complete Duets</i>
1 Mar 1967	“A Spoonful of Sugar”	The Supremes		
1 Mar 1967	“It Won’t Be Long ’Til Christmas”	The Supremes		
1 Mar 1967	“A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes”	The Supremes		
1 Mar 1967	“In the Land of Make Believe”	The Supremes		
23 Mar 1967	“Hurtin’ All Over”	Barbara Randolph		
23 Mar 1967	“Why Did You Run Away”	Barbara Randolph	Sep 2003	<i>The Collection</i> [UK]
23 Mar 1967	“I’m So Thankful”	Barbara Randolph	Sep 2003	<i>The Collection</i> [UK]
6 Apr 1967	“Since I Don’t Have You”	Temptations		
6 Apr 1967	“A Woman To Love”	Temptations		
6 Apr 1967	“Why Did You Leave Me Darling”	Temptations	Apr 1968	<i>Wish It Would Rain</i>
6 Apr 1967	“Me By Loving”	Unknown		
7 Apr 1967 ⁶²	[No Specific Songs Listed]	The Temptations	Nov 1967	<i>In a Mellow Mood</i>
11 Apr 1967	[No Specific Songs Listed]	The Temptations	Nov 1967	<i>In a Mellow Mood</i>
12 Apr 1967	[No Specific Songs Listed]	The Temptations	Nov 1967	<i>In a Mellow Mood</i>
20 Apr 1967	“Linda K”	Eddie Holland		
20 Apr 1967	“In and Out of Love”	The Supremes	Oct 1967	Released as a Single
27 Apr 1967	“Land of Make Believe”	The Supremes		
15 May 1967	“Looking in the Mirror”	Martha and the Vandellas	Nov 2015	<i>Spellbound: Motown Lost & Found</i>
15 May 1967	“For Once in My Life”	Martha and the Vandellas	Nov 2015	<i>Spellbound: Motown Lost & Found</i>
26 Jun 1967 ⁶³	[No Specific Songs Listed]	Paul Petersen		

(Continued)

data against the Motown master tape catalog in order to determine for whom the track was intended and if that recording had ever been commercially released. This list does not differentiate between sessions on which Kaye played electric bass and sessions on which she played guitar.

⁶² Although there are no specific “Titles of Tunes” listed for this or the following two contracts, they do specifically mention the Temptations and the recording dates align with the material for the *In a Mellow Mood* LP.

⁶³ Although there are no specific “Titles of Tunes” listed for this contract, it does specifically mention Paul Petersen.

Appendix A: Continued.

Contract Date	Song	Artist	Released	Album/Single
21 Jul 1967	"You've Made Me So Very Happy"	Brenda Holloway	Oct 1967	Released as a Single
21 Jul 1967	"Every Time I Think About You"	Brenda Holloway		
21 Jul 1967	"I'm Not Your Clown"	Suzee Ikeda		
21 Jul 1967	"How Am I Gonna Make It"	Unknown		
30 Sep 1967	"It's Not Necessary"	Barbara Randolph	Sep 2003	<i>The Collection</i> [UK]
30 Sep 1967	"When it Rains it Pours"	Barbara Randolph	Sep 2003	<i>The Collection</i> [UK]
30 Sep 1967	"Chained"	Barbara Randolph	Sep 2003	<i>The Collection</i> [UK]
31 Oct 1967	"I Just Don't Understand It"	Debbie Dean		
31 Oct 1967	"You Gave Me Love To Live For"	Debbie Dean	Aug 2010	<i>A Cellarful Of Motown! Volume 4</i> [UK]
31 Oct 1967	"Send Him to Me"	Debbie Dean		
31 Oct 1967	"Something About You"	Debbie Dean	Oct 2007	<i>A Cellarful Of Motown! Volume 3</i> [UK]
16 Apr 1968	"As Long As There is L-O-V-E Love"	Barbara McNair	Jan 2004	<i>The Ultimate Motown Collection</i> [UK]
16 Apr 1968	"I'll Try Something New"	Barbara McNair	Jan 2004	<i>The Ultimate Motown Collection</i> [UK]
16 Apr 1968	"If You Can Want"	Barbara McNair	Apr 1969	<i>The Real Barbara McNair</i>
16 Apr 1968	"More Love"	Barbara McNair	Jan 2004	<i>The Ultimate Motown Collection</i> [UK]
16 Apr 1968	"You Beat Me to the Punch"	Barbara McNair	Jan 2004	<i>The Ultimate Motown Collection</i> [UK]
17 Apr 1968	"All That's Good"	Barbara McNair	Jan 2004	<i>The Ultimate Motown Collection</i> [UK]
17 Apr 1968	"What Love Has Joined Together"	Barbara McNair	Jan 2004	<i>The Ultimate Motown Collection</i> [UK]
17 Apr 1968	"The One Who Really Loves You"	Barbara McNair	Jan 2004	<i>The Ultimate Motown Collection</i> [UK]
17 Apr 1968	"Be My Love"	Barbara McNair		
17 Apr 1968	"I Second That Emotion"	Barbara McNair	Jan 2004	<i>The Ultimate Motown Collection</i> [UK]
17 Apr 1968	"The Hunter Gets Captured by the Game"	Barbara McNair	Apr 1969	<i>The Real Barbara McNair</i>
17 Aug 1968	"This Guy's in Love With You"	The Supremes & the Temptations	Nov 1968	<i>Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations</i>
17 Aug 1968	"Funky Broadway"	The Supremes & the Temptations	Nov 1968	<i>Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations</i>
17 Aug 1968	"You Can't Hurry Love"	The Supremes & the Temptations		
17 Aug 1968	"I'll Try Something New"	The Supremes & The Temptations	Nov 1968	<i>Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations</i>
18 Aug 1968	"The Impossible Dream"	The Supremes & the Temptations	Nov 1968	<i>Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations</i>

(Continued)

Appendix A: Continued.

Contract Date	Song	Artist	Released	Album/Single
18 Aug 1968	Opening Medley: “When The Lovelight Starts Shining Through His Eyes” / “Come See About Me” / “Stop! In the Name of Love” / “Love is Like an Itching in My Heart” / “You Keep Me Hangin’ On”	The Supremes & the Temptations		
18 Aug 1968	“Try it Baby”	The Supremes & the Temptations	Nov 1968	<i>Diana Ross & the Supremes Join the Temptations</i>
18 Aug 1968	“You’re All I Need to Get By”	The Supremes & the Temptations		
15 Oct 1968	“Got to Get You Into My Life”	The Four Tops	Nov 1969	<i>Soul Spin</i>
15 Oct 1968	“The Look of Love”	The Four Tops	Nov 1969	<i>Soul Spin</i>
15 Oct 1968	“Little Green Apples”	The Four Tops	May 1969	<i>Four Tops Now!</i>
15 Oct 1968	“This Guy’s in Love With You”	The Four Tops	Nov 1969	<i>Soul Spin</i>
13 Mar 1969	“California Soul”	Smokey Robinson & the Miracles		
13 Mar 1969	“My Girl”	Smokey Robinson & the Miracles	Jul 1969	<i>Time Out for Smokey Robinson & the Miracles</i>
13 Mar 1969	“Won’t Nobody Care”	Smokey Robinson & the Miracles		
13 Mar 1969	“Smokey’s Tune”	Smokey Robinson & the Miracles		
13 Mar 1969	“A Legend in His Own Time”	Smokey Robinson & the Miracles		
13 Mar 1969	“Hey Jude”	Smokey Robinson & the Miracles	Nov 1969	<i>Four in Blue</i>
28 Jun 71	“Baby, I Need Your Loving”	Tom Clay	Jul 1971	<i>What the World Needs Now is Love</i>
28 Jun 71	“Both Sides Now”	Tom Clay	Jul 1971	<i>What the World Needs Now is Love</i>

Appendix B: Annotated Record of Every Motown Entry from Kaye's Personal Session Log

(Source: Carol Kaye, *Studio Musician, 60s No. 1 Hit Bassist, Guitarist, Burbank Printing, 2016*)⁶⁴

Date	Studio	Contractor	Notes
11 Feb 1964	Steiner's	Marc Gordon	Bass
11 Mar 1964	Steiner's	Marc Gordon	Electric and Acoustic Guitar
13 Mar 1964	Steiner's	Marc Gordon	Bass
14 Mar 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	5 Tunes, Bass and Electric Guitar
17 Mar 1964	Steiner's	Marc Gordon	
25 Mar 1964	International Sound	Frank Wilson	2 Tunes, 12 String and Acoustic Guitars
4 Apr 1964	Steiner's		4 Hours, 6 Sides
7 Apr 1964	Steiner's		3 Hours, Bass
12 Apr 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	2 Tunes, Bass
27 Apr 1964 ⁶⁵	Steiner's	Hal Davis	Stevie Wonder, Bass, 6 Hours
28 Apr 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	Stevie Wonder, 4 Hours
5 May 1964	Steiner's		1 Side, Electric Guitar
7 May 1964	International Sound	Hal Davis	
9 May 1964	Steiner's		Stevie Wonder, Bass
10 May 1964	Steiner's		Stevie Wonder, Bass
14 May 1964	Western	H. B. Gallants	
28 May 1964		Gene Page	Electric Guitar, Ski Lark
8 Jun 1964	International Sound	Marc Gordon	Bass
9 Jun 1964	International Sound	Marc Gordon	Bass
11 Jun 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	5 Tunes
12 Jun 1964	Steiner's	Marc Gordon	2 Tunes, Bass
14 Jun 1964	Steiner's	Marc Gordon	1 Tune, Bass
16 Jun 1964	International Sound	Marc Gordon	2 Hours / Bass
16 Jun 1964	RCA C		Dorsey Burnett
22 Jun 1964	International Sound	Marc Gordon	2 Tunes
24 Jun 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	
15 Jul 1964	International Sound	Hal Davis	1 Tune
20 Jul 1964	Steiner's	Marc Gordon	
5 Aug 1964	Steiner's	Gene Page	
11 Aug 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	Bass
13 Aug 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	Bass
18 Aug 1964	Steiner's		Acoustic and Electric Guitar
21 Aug 1964	International Sound	Marc Gordon	Bass
25 Aug 1964	Steiner's	Gene Page	
26 Aug 1964	Steiner's	Gene Page	1.5 Hours
1 Sep 1964	International Sound	Marc Gordon	12 String and Electric Guitars
2 Sep 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	Bass

(Continued)

⁶⁴ Bolded entries have corresponding contracts in Appendix A. All notes are from Kaye's original log. I did not include any sessions that were not explicitly listed as being for Motown.

⁶⁵ This entry and those from April 28, May 9, and May 10, 1964, were likely sessions recording material for Stevie Wonder's *Stevie At the Beach* album (1964).

Appendix B: Continued.

Date	Studio	Contractor	Notes
18 Sep 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	2 Tunes, Bass and Electric Guitar
28 Sep 1964	Radio Recorders	Gene Page, Hal Davis	Bass
29 Sep 1964	Steiner's	Gene Page, Hal Davis	
1 Oct 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	1 Tune
13 Oct 1964	Steiner's		Lincoln
15 Oct 1964	International Sound	Marc Gordon	
23 Oct 1964	Steiner's	Gene Page	Bass
24 Oct 1964	Steiner's		Bass
25 Oct 1964	Steiner's	Hal Davis	Two Sessions
30 Oct 1964	Steiner's	Gene Page	
3 Nov 1964	Radio Recorders	Marc Gordon, Jerry Long	Supremes, Bass, Acoustic, and Electric Guitars
9 Dec 1964	Sunset Sound	Marc Gordon	
12 Dec 1964	Steiner's	Marc Gordon	Bass
11 Jan 1965	Steiner's	Hal Davis	
16 Jan 1965	Audio Arts	Frank Wilson, Marc Gordon	
20 Jan 1965	Radio Recorders	Armin Steiner, Ed Cobb	Motown Overdubs
21 Jan 1965	Sunset Sound	Frank Wilson	
27 Jan 1965	Radio Recorders	Marc Gordon, Hal Davis	Bass, Two Sessions
29 Jan 1965	Sunset Sound	Hal Davis	
30 Jan 1965		Frank Wilson	
2 Feb 1965	Sunset Sound	Frank Wilson, Hal Davis	
3 Feb 1965	Sunset Sound	Hal Davis	
17 Feb 1965	Sunset Sound	Frank Wilson	
26 Feb 1965	Sunset Sound	Frank Wilson, Hal Davis	
9 Mar 1965	Sunset Sound	Hal Davis	
11 Mar 1965	Sunset Sound	Hal Davis	
11 Mar 1965	Radio Recorders	Hal Davis	
12 Mar 1965	Radio Recorders	Hal Davis	
23 Mar 1965	Radio Recorders	Hal Davis	
24 Mar 1965	Radio Recorders	Marc Gordon, Ben Barrett	Bass
4 Apr 1965	Nashville West	Hal Davis	Bass
16 Apr 1965	Wally Heider Studios	Marc Gordon	
2 Jun 1965⁶⁶	Sunset Sound	Marc Gordon	
27 Aug 1965	Sunset Sound	Frank Wilson	Supremes
28 Aug 1965	Sunset Sound	Frank Wilson	Supremes (Two Sessions)
16 Sep 1965	Audio Arts	Hal Davis	Bass
17 Sep 1965	Sunset Sound	H.B. Barnum	Billy Eckstine, Billy Page, Bass
17 Sep 1965	Sunset Sound	H.B. Barnum	Brenda Holloway, Bass
8 Oct 1965			7:30pm
11 Nov 1965	Radio Recorders	Frank Wilson, H.B. Barnum	Two Sessions
13 Nov 1965 ⁶⁷	Sunset Sound	Frank Wilson	Bass, Electric, and 12 String Guitars

(Continued)

⁶⁶ This session most likely corresponds to the contract dated June 3, 1965.⁶⁷ This session most likely corresponds to the contract dated November 16, 1965.

Appendix B: Continued.

Date	Studio	Contractor	Notes
24 Nov 1965	Radio Recorders	Frank Wilson, Jean King	
26 Nov 1965 ⁶⁸	Radio Recorders	Frank Wilson	Bass
2 Dec 1965	Harmony Recorders	H.B. Barnum	1 Tune, Bass
6 Dec 1965	Harmony Recorders	Frank Wilson	
9 Feb 1966	Harmony Recorders	Frank Wilson	Brenda Holloway
7 Mar 1966	Harmony Recorders	Frank Wilson	Brenda Holloway
9 Mar 1966 ⁶⁹	Harmony Recorders	Frank Wilson	Brenda Holloway, 5 hours
12 Mar 1966	Radio Recorders	Frank Wilson	Supremes (Two Sessions)
27 Apr 1966	Columbia Studio A	Frank Wilson	Four Tops
28 Apr 1966	Columbia Studio A	Frank Wilson	Four Tops, Bring all guitars with bass
20 May 1966	Columbia Studio A	Frank Wilson	Barbara McNair
18 Jun 1966	Nashville West	Hal Davis	1 Tune
11 Aug 1966 ⁷⁰	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Supremes
12 Aug 1966 ⁷¹	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Supremes
21 Oct 1966	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Supremes (Two Sessions)
24 Oct 1966	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Supremes
27 Oct 1966	Sunset Sound	Gene Page	Brenda Holloway
31 Oct 1966	Harmony Recorders	Gene Page, Frank Wilson	Brenda Holloway
1 Nov 1966		Hal Davis	
9 Nov 1966	Harmony Recorders	Marc Gordon, Will Hutchison	Soul
20 Nov 1966		Hal Davis	
21 Nov 1966	Sound Recorders	Gene Page	
28 Nov 1966			
18 Jan 1967	Sound Recorders	Gene Page, Lee Young	
23 Jan 1967	Sound Recorders	Gene Page	
13 Feb 1967	Sound Recorders	Hal Davis	
28 Feb 1967	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Supremes
1 Mar 1967	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Supremes
23 Mar 1967	Sound Recorders	Gene Page	
6 Apr 1967	Columbia Studio D	Gene Page	
7 Apr 1967	Western	Ben Barrett	Temptations
11 Apr 1967	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Temptations
12 Apr 1967	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Temptations
20 Apr 1967	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Miracles
20 Apr 1967	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Miracles
21 Apr 1967	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Miracles
27 Apr 1967	Sound Recorders	Ben Barrett	Brenda Holloway
11 May 1967	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Brenda Holloway
15 May 1967	Sound Recorders	Ben Barrett	Martha and the Vandellas
26 Jun 1967	Sound Recorders	Ben Barrett	
21 Jul 1967	Sound Recorders	Ben Barrett	Brenda Holloway
4 Aug 1967	Nashville West	James Carmichael	
30 Sep 1967	Sound Recorders		
31 Oct 1967	Audio Arts	Sherell	
16 Apr 1968	RCA	Ben Barrett	Barbara McNair

(Continued)

⁶⁸ This session most likely corresponds to the contract dated November 30, 1965.

⁶⁹ This session was actually for material for the Supremes. Holloway provided the scratch vocals. See Appendix A.

⁷⁰ This session most likely corresponds to the contract dated August 12, 1966.

⁷¹ This session most likely corresponds to the contract dated August 13, 1966.

Appendix B: Continued.

Date	Studio	Contractor	Notes
17 Apr 1968	RCA	Ben Barrett	Barbara McNair
17 Aug 1968 ⁷²	RCA	Ben Barrett	Supremes-Temptations
15 Oct 1968	RCA	Ben Barrett	Four Tops
12 Mar 1969 ⁷³	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Smokey Robinson
13 Mar 1969	Columbia Studio A	Ben Barrett	Smokey Robinson
19 Sep 1969 ⁷⁴	NBC	H.B. Barnum, Al Lapin	Supremes-Temptations
20 Sep 1969	NBC	H.B. Barnum, Al Lapin	Supremes-Temptations
21 Sep 1969	NBC	H.B. Barnum, Al Lapin	Supremes-Temptations
22 Sep 1969	NBC	H.B. Barnum, Al Lapin	Supremes-Temptations
23 Sep 1969	NBC	H.B. Barnum, Al Lapin	Supremes-Temptations
25 Jun 1971 ⁷⁵	T.T.G. Recording Studio	Ben Barrett	Tom Clay

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⁷² Although there are contracts dated August 17 and 18, 1968, Kaye's log does not list any sessions for August 18.

⁷³ This entry and the next most likely correspond to the contracts dated March 13, 1969.

⁷⁴ These sessions were for the Diana Ross and the Supremes and the Temptations' *G.I.T. On Broadway*, NBC Television Special (1969).

⁷⁵ This session most likely corresponds to the contract dated June 28, 1971.

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