

THE DRAMATICS BIO

In the late 1960s, success was undoubtedly on the horizon for the Detroit-based sextet known as the Dynamics. The only problem seemed to be figuring out the actual members of the group, as they would go through several lineup combinations before finally storming onto the scene as the quintet by the name of The Dramatics.

The original sextet was comprised of Ron Banks, Rob Davis, Larry Reed, Robert Ellington, Larry Demps and Elbert Wilkins. After Ellington's departure, the group released their first single in 1967, *All Because of You*, under the name The Dramatics. The song reached No. 42 on the Billboard R&B Charts, but still some members were disheartened with the direction of the group, which brought about major lineup changes. William Howard replaced Reed as the lead singer and Willie Ford replaced Rob Davis as Bass. The Dramatics also signed with producer Don Davis and with all the pieces finally in place, they were poised to make a run at stardom.

Their rise would be a slow, patient process, but it paid off when they collaborated with songwriter Tony Hester to create their first bona fide hit, the soulful *Whatcha See is Whatcha Get*. The song peaked at No. 3 on the Billboard R&B charts and it stayed on the charts for 15 weeks. The Dramatics followed up their first hit with another Top Ten single, *Get Up and Get Down*.

The following year, The Dramatics made the successful R&B/pop crossover with the single, *In The Rain*, another Hester creation. The song bolted to No. 1 and No. 4 on the Billboard R&B and pop charts, respectively.

Even with their rising momentum, The Dramatics managed to continue their signature roster shuffling. Larry L.J. Reynolds, an up-and-coming artist, who was pursuing a solo career and was signed with Don Davis production company, impressed The Dramatics with an audition following a performance at the Apollo one night. Reynolds made an impression on the group and their common production company made him a logical fit to replace Howard as lead singer during absences.

In 1973, Howard decided to leave the group, opening the door for Reynolds to replace him permanently./ The group underwent yet another change when Lenny Mayes replaced Wilkins around the same time as Howard's departure. The result was a flawless transition as they continued to prevail with such hits as, *Hey You Get Off My Mountain*, which cracked Top Ten status on the R&B charts.

As they moved into the latter half of the 70s during the prime of disco music, The Dramatics survived with such Top 20 R&B hits as *Shake It Well*, *Ocean of Thoughts and Dreams*, off their 1977 album, *Shake It Well*.

In 1980, the group recorded one of its strongest efforts with the album, *10* _ which turned out to be somewhat of a farewell album as Reynolds left in 1981, and Banks followed suit in 1983.

They remained intact throughout the 1980s, reuniting every few years to tour and release a new album. Even Howard, their original lead vocalist, returned in 1986, as a featured singer on their *Somewhere in Time* album. The presence of the Dramatics in the music world has spanned through five decades as they continue to be a vital part of the 70s Soul Jam Tour.