



# DETROIT

## MUSIC OF THE MOTOR CITY

When I lived in Montreal, I had a loud neighbour. He drove me crazy. He'd have parties and clomp around upstairs, and I'd just seethe. Until one Sunday afternoon he was blasting The Stooges and instead of banging on the ceiling, I went up and knocked on his door.

We ended up talking about the record for a while. I got to know him a little, it turned out we were both drummers, and he was having a hard go. After that he got a bit quieter... for a while. But at least when the parties started up again, I could place a face to the sound. I didn't want to join in, but it wasn't just noise anymore - there was a person there. A struggle. A story.

Now I should confess that I'm a dual citizen, and I've been worrying a lot these days about our neighbour. Worrying about my family. I'm open to getting my elbows up, but I do find it hard to simply plug my ears. And scrolling, obviously, does not help.

But listening - listening to the music you'll hear tonight - really has. We've found that the sounds coming out of Detroit radio through the twentieth century offer a surprising amount of insight into this moment.

We turned our ears to Detroit for several reasons. Many of us, as musicians, had formative experiences there. And in all of Detroit's remarkably diverse music - Motown, blues, rock and pop, techno, hip-hop - you can hear a kind of radical joy born out of struggle. Factories. Migration. Ford's dream of removing the human from the machine. Humanity persisting elsewhere. Upheaval. Reinvention.

Detroit's past shines a light on today - not just because Michigan so often decides the American presidency. But because Detroit is a city that has already lived through a version of the future America now seems to be approaching. Its story - of dehumanizing systems pushed to a breaking point - can offer a useful lens.

And the sound that comes out of that story - the joy rising from bleakness, the determination to dance anyway - can offer a little hope. A little humanity. And maybe a way into this "ball of confusion," as the Temptations once called it.

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Director and Creator