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Detroit: The musical legacy of the Motor City

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Detroit has spawned more than five generations of musical heritage from the legendary sounds of Motown to the godfather of punk, Iggy Pop.

The sounds of the city, which has now filed for bankruptcy with debts of £12bn, are synonymous with its industry.

Filmmaker Julien Temple, who visited Detroit in 2009 to film a documentary about the Motor City, said: "I think the music is still a lifeline for people."

"The music wouldn't have arrived without the cars and the industry couldn't have existed without the cheap labour from the south," he told the BBC News website.

"There is a real sense of survival there and it's incredible people have survived so long. I'm not without hope."

The director, renowned for his documentaries including *The Filth and the Fury* about punk band The Sex Pistols, has looked back at some of the influential artists the city has produced.

Motown

Berry Gordy founded the Motown label in 1959, signing Smokey Robinson's The Miracles as his first act, scoring 26 top 40 hits.

It started a succession of influential acts created by the hit-maker including Diana Ross and The Supremes, The Four Tops, Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder.

Motown quickly became another Detroit factory where the soul and pop classics that changed the US were built.

"Motown made their music in response to working on the assembly line. The car industry and the repetitive nature of the work on an assembly line fed into the sound of Detroit," said Temple.

When Gordy moved Motown to Los Angeles in 1972, people saw it as the day Detroit died. Marvin Gaye stayed in the city for two years and refused to leave. "He knew it was taking the soul of the city away," said Temple.

"Unfortunately a lot of Detroit musicians have done that. As soon as they get successful, they leave - which doesn't help the city."

Motown darling Martha Reeves, who still lives in the city in her old family house where she grew up, told the BBC News website she is the "eternal optimistic" and she "sees Detroit coming back".

Iggy Pop

In 1967, in nearby Ann Arbor, James Newell Osterberg, the colourful and often outrageous and unpredictable singer known by his stage name Iggy Pop, formed the protopunk band The Stooges.

Inspired by the raw, thrashing sound of another Michigan band MC5 (short for Motor City 5) and the dramatic stage antics of The Doors' chaotic frontman Jim Morrison, the band helped Detroit become the centre of a new brand of high-octane rock music.

"There was a sense of music reaching across this big racial divide that existed in Detroit," said Temple.

In an interview, Pop once claimed he was inspired by "the industrialism in Detroit...what I heard walking around...boom boom bah - 10 cars...boom boom bah - 20 cars.."

"Iggy wasn't working on the assembly lines. He was a disaffected white punk - but the crossover in the city made the music scene very fertile."

The sound was the polar complete opposite of the more mellow soul of Motown and paved the way for the likes of other Detroit artists such as Alice Cooper.

Techno

Techno, a form of electronic dance music, emerged in Detroit during the mid-to-late 1980s when Juan Atkins, Kevin Saunderson and Derrick May, who had attended Belleville high school formed the Belleville Three.

They were influenced by the likes of Kraftwerk, Yellow Magic Orchestra, Prince and The B-52's and their music, like Kraftwerk, reflected an interest in technology and machines.

"Conditions in Detroit where the only place the techno scene could happen," said Temple.

Techno offered a new, integrated club scene in the post industrialist city. The Belleville Three featured regularly as DJs on Detroit's party circuit and collaborated with other musicians, sharing equipment and recording space.

"You had all these abandoned warehouses and car factories where the raves could take place. There were vast, incredible halls and abandoned car plants covered in moss that made the most surreal and wonderful background for this music."

"It was, again, inspired by the rhythms of the car assembly line, the mechanical rhythmic motion of putting bits on cars and sending them along a line."

Eminem

Detroit has enjoyed a strong link to hip-hop - though perhaps less high profile than the likes of New York and Los Angeles. Kid Rock and Insane Clown Posse were the first major artists to gain international recognition.

But it was the young Marshall Mathers - aka Eminem - who took the world by storm with his second album The Slim Shady LP released in 1999.

The LP earned Eminem his first Grammy award for best rap album. His next two records The Marshall Mathers LP, and The Eminem Show, also won in the same category and propelled him to become one of the biggest names in hip hop.

Although he grew up in Warren, 18 miles outside of Detroit, as a teenager he would travel to the city's tough east side to take part in rap battles.

"Music and sport has always been the way out from the ghettos in America," said Temple.

"I'm sure Eminem would feel the same as any black kid in that nightmare scenario where you don't have any chance of doing anything, so if you have this gift of music, it's an escape route you would want to take."

In 2011, he penned an open love letter dedicated to Detroit, it opens with the words: "There is a resilience that rises from somewhere deep within your streets."

"You can't define it, but you can feel it"

"You can feel it overflowing from the people who call you home

"From people who are always proud to declare, 'I'm from Detroit'

"You took our country from it's infancy, into industry

"And your name still carries with it the idea of a nation built on steel, muscle and sweat."

New Hope

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder has said that although Detroit may have hit rock bottom, filing for bankruptcy could reverse decades of decay.

"There is a real sense of survival," agrees Temple. "In the midst of this bankruptcy, there is an influx of artists, young people and musicians from other parts of America coming to the city."

"Detroit's city emblem is a phoenix coming out of the fire," he adds. "I'm not without hope for Detroit."

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