

# The Shades of Blue

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In the Spring of 1966, a suburban Detroit vocal quartet called The Shades Of Blue, skyrocketed to the top of charts with their "Blue-Eyed Soul" smash, "Oh How Happy".

Originating from Livonia, Michigan, The Shades of Blue were: Nick Marinelli (lead vocals), Ernie Dernaï (first tenor), Linda Allen (second tenor), and Bob Kerr (baritone).

On March 30, 1966, "Oh How Happy" made its public debut on Detroit radio stations WKNR and WXYZ, as well as Windsor, Ontario's 50,000 watt giant, CKLW. The platter took off like a "shot out of the blue", and blasted to the #1 spot on all three stations in less than three weeks. The record spread like wildfire into other major markets abroad, hitting #12 on the national pop charts, #7 on the R&B listings, and reaching the top ten in Canada.

The overnight success of "Oh How Happy" caught everyone by surprise, as Nick Marinelli remembers: "We literally hit the road running. All of us were still in college at the time, and suddenly, Harry Balk is calling us up saying, "I've got all kinds of bookings lined up for you guys". It was crazy". In addition to a grueling cross-country tour schedule, the Shades TV appearances included several spots on Dick Clark's "Where The Action Is", and Jerry Blavat's Philly-based "Discophonnic Scene" teen show. In the Detroit area, they were regulars on Robin Seymour's "Swingin Time".

The Shades of Blue concentrated on live performances through the end of the late sixties, but the end of the road was clearly in sight. Around 1967, the whole music scene started to change, Acid Rock was becoming popular and The Shades of Blue didn't want to go in that direction. So in 1970, four years after their Blockbuster hit "Oh How Happy" was recorded The Shades of Blue disbanded.

In 2003 after a 33 year hiatus recording with The Shades of Blue, Nick Marinelli received a phone call from the legendary Motown Group, The Valadiers. The Valadiers recorded with Motown Records in the early 60's and where the first White Recording Group Motown ever signed. Their most successful hit was "Greetings (This is Uncle Sam)". The Valadiers lost one of their members and needed a replacement. Vocal group veteran Stuart Avig (original lead singer of The Valadiers) called upon Nick to join the group.

In October of 2003 The Shades of Blue would form their partnership between Stuart Avig and Nick Marinelli. The Shades of Blue have performed for numerous sold out audiences all over the world ever since. Combining their Motown roots with their Blue-Eyed Soul sound they quickly became one of the finest entertainment groups in the world. In 2009 Nick Marinelli retired from the music business.

The Shades of Blue would go on to perform over 40 dates a year all over the world in cities such as: Detroit, Columbus, Seattle, New York City, Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Grand Rapids, Cleveland, Omaha, Minneapolis, Boston, St. Louis, Washington D.C., Charlotte, Miami, Buffalo and Toledo just to name a few. In addition, The Shades of Blue performed on three Caribbean cruises, The Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame and The Motown 50th Anniversary Party.

The Shades of Blue would perform on the same shows with the legendary artists from the 50's and 60's such as: The Spinners, Dennis Edwards Temptations, The Dramatics, The Four Tops, The Platters, The Teenagers, The Contours, The Spaniels, The Coasters, Martha Reeves, Ben E King, The Drifters, The Skyliners, The Flamingos, The Stylistics, Gary Lewis & Playboys, Dion, Bowzer and Jay Black to name a few.

In 2015 The Shades of Blue were inducted into the Rhythm & Blues Hall of Fame along with music legends, The Four Tops, Dennis Edwards Temptations, The Spinners, Martha Reeves, The Contours and Aretha Franklin.

Today The Shades of Blue consist of A MOTOWN All Star Group featuring:

**Stuart Avig – Original Lead Singer of MOTOWN'S Very First White Vocal Group in 1959, The Valadiers.**

**Scotty Avig – Stuart's son**

**Charles Davis – Former Member of MOTOWN'S Legendary Group, The Contours for over 40 years. Was on The Iconic Dirty Dancing Tour from 1988-1994.**

**Delbert Nelson – Former Lead Singer of MOTOWN'S Backing Band, The Funk Brothers. Starred in the movie, Standing In The Shadows of MOTOWN.**

**Ray Ward – Former lead Singer of the 60's Detroit Soul Group, The Fantastic Four.**