



## Right on time

Exhibition salutes vibrant but nearly overlooked era of local music

By David Lindquist

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Rodney Stepp, known today as a smooth-jazz musician and owner of Brooks Street Music recording studio, was a student at Crispus Attucks High School when the Diplomats recorded their "Hum-Bug" single in 1968.

Because a different group on the East Coast claimed the Diplomats name, Stepp's band was known as the "Diplomatics" when the local Lamp label released the song." We were the Jacksons before the Jacksons. They should have discovered us," Stepp says with a laugh. "We were really that good as musicians and vocalists."

The Diplomats turned out to be a farm team for the Spinners band, as keyboard player Stepp, guitarist Jerry Miller and bass player Rodney Vorhis all toured with the Philadelphia vocal group known for the hits "Could It Be I'm Falling in Love" and "The Rubberband Man."

Stepp says the Historical Society's tribute doesn't signal the end to his musical story.



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