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The Lost Supreme: The Life Of Dreamgirl Florence Ballard



Synopsis

In the months before she died, Florence Ballard, the spunky teenager who founded the most successful female vocal group in history—the Supremes—told her own side of the story. Recorded on tape, Flo shed light on all areas of her life, including the surprising identity of the man by whom she was raped prior to her entering the music business, the details of her love-hate relationship with Motown Records czar Berry Gordy, her drinking problem and pleas for help, a never-ending desire to be the Supremes™ lead singer, and her attempts to get her life back on track after being brutally expelled from the group. This is a tumultuous and heartbreaking story of a world-famous performer whose life ended at the age of 32 as a lonely mother of three who had only recently recovered from years of poverty and despair.

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Customer Reviews

For years I have absolutely loved and adored Flo, but this book has now given me an admiration for the fallen star. Contrary to popular belief this book did NOT rag on Diana Ross a la Mary Wilson's Dreamgirl: My Life as a Supreme. Florence pretty much said what most co-workers would say about

one another. Keep in mind that from Jan 15, 1961 to July 1, 1967 these girls spent 90% of their lives together so their personalities were bound to clash. I still love Diana as I always have and neither Florence nor Mr. Benjaminsen did anything to diminish that. As a matter of fact Flo gave Diana props on her success by stating, "I give Diane all the credit in the world". Doesn't sound like Flo was putting her down to me. If you read this book expecting juicy gossip then this book isn't for you. Peter delves into Florence's life before, during, and especially after her life with The Supremes. He really digs into her legal battles and is the only author that has done such. Most of Flo's demise came at the hands of crooked attorneys that sucked her dry financially, and her husband who knew nothing about the music industry and managed her solo career into the ground. Also Florence found fault in herself. She didn't play the blame game (as some think) and even spoke of her drinking problem extensively. She realized she had a problem and sought help. This is the most in depth account of Flo's life written to date and has my mouth watering for the release of those tapes. On top of Flo's word of mouth Peter did much research; digging up documents of her legal issues and interviewing people that dealt with her on a daily basis. These people spoke very highly of Flo.

I enjoyed reading Peter Benjaminsen's book **THE LOST SUPREME: THE LIFE OF DREAMGIRL FLORENCE BALLARD**. It's an intriguing book that gives the reader a glimpse at the behind the scenes of one the world's most famous singing group and arguably the one that put Motown on the map. The book covers, briefly, the formation of the Supremes and the rise up the chart. It also covers the break up and downward spiral of ex-Supreme Flo Ballard. And although I found the book an interesting read, most of the information seems to be put together in piecemeal format. It jumps around a lot, and I understand that Benjaminsen was using a tape recorded interview that he had conducted with Ballard back in 1975-76, when he worked for the "Detroit Free Press," as well as public records to put this book together. I was expecting more details, especially of Ballard's life after the Supremes, along the lines of Mary Wilson's book *Dreamgirl & Supreme Faith, Updated Edition: My Life as a Supreme* but this book falls short. It does give some account of the sad life and struggle that Ballard had after Motown and The Supremes, so at least it sheds some light. There were a couple of errors in the book that makes me say read everything with a grain of salt. One problem, that Supreme fans would catch, is the author implying that when the Supremes became "Diana Ross and the Supremes" they no longer cared about their appearance and performed "Love Child" on the Ed Sullivan show in their street clothes. Well, that's not true. The group was changing their image to a more urban look to fit in with the turbulent 60s and the changing times, hence the song.

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