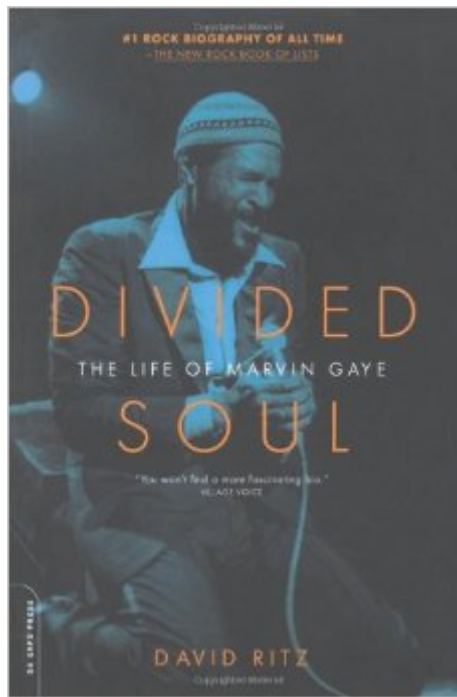


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Divided Soul: The Life Of Marvin Gaye



Synopsis

Drawing from interviews conducted before Marvin Gaye's death, acclaimed music writer David Ritz has created a full-scale portrait of the brilliant but tormented artist. With a cast of characters that includes Diana Ross, Berry Gordy, Smokey Robinson, and Stevie Wonder, this intimate biography is a definitive and enduring look at the man who embodied the very essence of the word soul.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

David Ritz did a wonderful job with separating the man from the myth. Growing up, I listened to Marvin's music with my father, and there was always a spirit in the music, that to this day, I still can't explain. Just his voice had a presence, which could either frighten or enlighten you. He was truly one of the best. I got a hold of this book about four years ago, and have read it a few times. There are some parts of the story that are hilarious (like him wanting to beat up Lou Rawls for "stealing" the grammy from him), and some parts are just tragic (his candid talk about his cocaine use, suicide attempts, and death), but overall, it makes you wonder how someone with such an incredible artistic mind could be so self doubting, and self destructive. It makes you wonder: had he not been killed, would he have done something to himself to end his own life? His honesty in regards to his envy and admiration of other artists was something you won't find in too many biographies, considering the author will try to glamorize it's subject; not the case here. No matter how many charm classes the Motown artists were required to take or how poised Berry Gordy wanted them to be, in this book Marvin bares all, and voids pride. Although I was only 7 when he was killed, I remember not knowing all too well what a loss the world had suffered- that was until I got older. All I knew then was that

man who had the voice that could scare me, or make me feel safe was dead, and I cried. Being a young adult, it is easy to identify with the man's music, considering the world we live in now, is the world he was telling us was to come. Like his music, Marvin is timeless, and his story is one of the greatest tragedies ever recorded. Beautifully written, and painfully honest, this is a must have for music lovers in general.

This was indeed a FASCINATING and TRAGIC drama. It produces emotions of love and hate for Mr. Gaye in the reader. I had no intention of reading the ENTIRE book...but I just couldn't help myself! I wish MORE had been said about HOW IN THE WORLD did his crazy father "get off," because it became obvious to me that it was a cold-blooded and premeditated murder. I wish the photos had been better and that there had been MORE of them....esp. did I want to see a photo of Jewel Price and Eugenie. It's a shame Marvin's mother was too weak to protect herself and her precious son throughout his life from such a vicious, mean, sick father...I couldn't believe how the whole family put up with him. I also feel regret that the family didn't intervene and didn't band together more to bring SOMEBODY to help Marvin in those last several months he spent at home and to keep those bad, destructive elements and people from "hanging out" at their own property. It's such a shame and a loss for the world that Marvin never sought professional therapy to resolve his many and varied issues. I believe that these sensitive entertainers should have "Conflict Resolution" as a part of their contracts. It's terrible to lose such a talent and for him not to have ever been truly happy with the wonderful life he COULD have enjoyed. All in all though, this book was DEFINITELY "da bomb." I'll never forget it or the man behind the story--esp. since I was a big fan, front-row center admiring his handsome face and body during his performance at his Black Expo Concert in Chicago in the 70's and have felt a real "closeness" to him ever since.

It usually takes me about four days to get through a book. "The Divided Soul" took me almost two months! I had no idea how tortured Marvin Gaye was...I'm surprised he lived as long as he did. He was obviously sexually addicted and had conflicts about his own sexuality, especially with his father being androgynous and leaning more to the effeminate side. To think that a singer as great as Marvin Gaye, would have any jealousy for other male singers was surprising. His admiration/jealousy for singers like Levi Stubbs and David Ruffin astounded me. The fantasies about his wife having sex with other men and his obsession with prostitution, debauchery and pornography made it clear that something had happened to Marvin early in his early life. Never explained. His move to Belgium and his bazaar behavior had me reeling (thus, I put down the book

for a couple of days). The book DOES have its funny moments. Gaye crawling out the men's room window, leaving Dionne Warwick deserted in the recording studio "playing temperamental diva" (Marvin had no time for that!) Mr. Ritz did a fabulous job. Too bad he was so dazzled by Aretha Franklin's legend with "From These Roots", not to grab her by the shoulders and scream, "let's tell the WHOLE truth, Diva!" He certainly laid bare Marvin's life. Reading this was almost too much to bear.

In reading this David Ritz account of the life and times of Marvin Gaye, you get the feeling he was the ultimate contradiction. He had the public persona of being a sex machine, but privately he thought of himself as sexually inadequate. He praised God and His message, yet was constantly consuming cocaine and other drugs. He thought of himself as the prince of soul, yet was always doubting his ability. In fact it seems that just about everything that Marvin Gaye did in his life was marked with both pain and pleasure. Ritz provides the reader with entry to the innerworking of Gaye's mind and soul. The chapters that contain the reviews of Gaye's musical work (especially the one regarding his musical masterpiece What's Going On) are extremely insightful. The one drawback to the book is that Ritz is a little too melodramatic in his account of the last years of Gaye's life. He details them in a bit of a soap opera fashion. That is only a minor complaint though and I would highly recommend this book. Marvin Gaye was a tortured genius and his life makes for compelling reading.

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