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Peter Benjaminson
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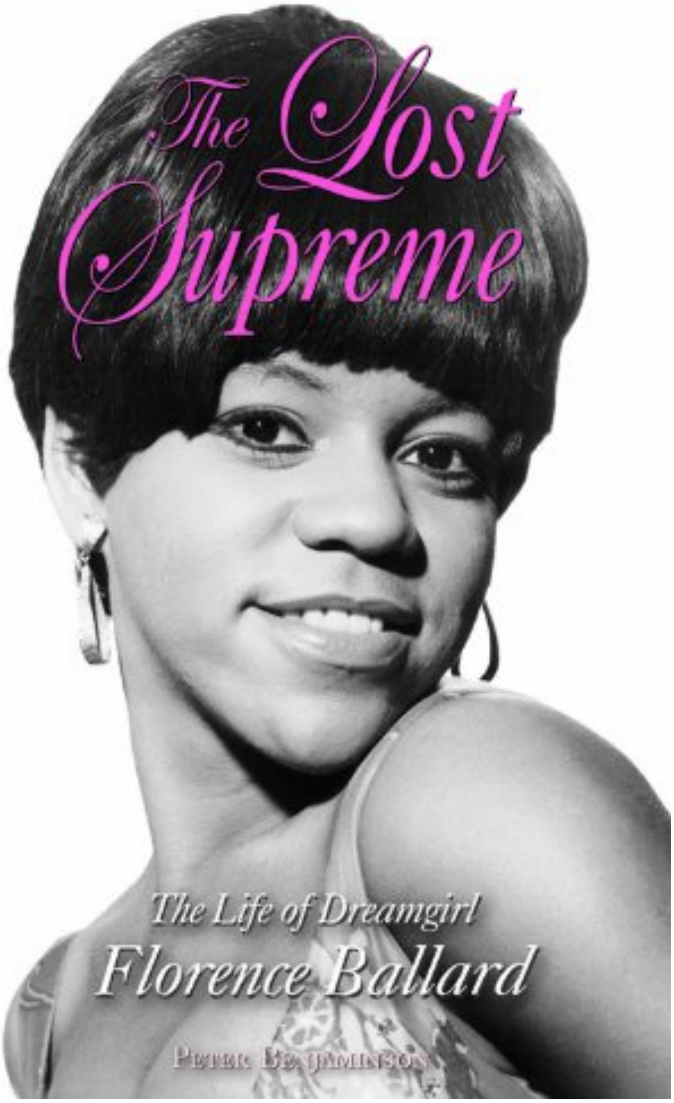

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Peter Benjaminson : The Lost Supreme: The Life of Dreamgirl Florence Ballard before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lost Supreme: The Life of Dreamgirl Florence Ballard:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Not "Nothin' But Heartaches," but too many of them.By Peter GrantWhen you look at the book's cover photo, you know why Supremes fans loved Flo. A talented composer could turn her short, tumultuous life into a tragic opera, since it was a life of music and she made a fast trip from the bottom to the top and back down. It is truly sad that Florence Ballard never got even a sentence of good advice in her life. Mary Wilson was in the same back row with Flo and survived because she made better choices. Flo's story is tragic in

the classical sense of the word.My only reservation is that Peter Benjaminson doesn't give Diana Ross any credit for the Supremes' phenomenal success. Whatever her personal failings might be, she was the one who sang lead and her "thin, nasal voice" has been popular with millions for over fifty years. All of the Supremes were talented, and we'll never know how they would have played if they'd shared lead vocals.Let's hope that Mary Wells and Florence Ballard are up in heaven singing with the many other late Motown singers and getting a better deal than they got on earth. The book is an enjoyable read and all Supremes fans will enjoy learning about beautiful, talented Florence Ballard.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Lesson learned the hard way.By SylviaExcellent and well written. Sad too. I understand Barry Gordy would have a piece of the pie from his successful talent that he employed under Motown, but he was a greedy, sonfabitch that took advantage of them too. He knew exactly what he was doing in their contracts and knowing that almost most of the individuals underneath him would do and sign any contract to take them out of poverty. Either through ignorance and the inability to hire their own lawyers to help them understand what they were getting themselves into. What happened to Flo and her family should never have happened but it did. Her story reflects what can happen to anyone that is taken advantage of. It would be great if there was some kind of organization in Hollywood and New York that could assist celebrities to prevent the same demise as Flo.11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Interesting Book, But....By Alex HI enjoyed reading Perter Benjaminson'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 Benjaminson 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.Another small problem, the author makes the comparison between the Supremes and "Dreamgirls." He lists the show stopping number sung by the character "Effie," which is patterned after Ballard, as "I Tell You I'm Not Going." Anyone who knows anything about musical theater or has listened to this song, either from the Broadway musical or recent movie, knows the title is "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going." Yes, this is nitpicking but you don't paraphrase a proper title. My guess is: Benjaminson ran to the theater and saw the movie once and mistakenly thought the title was as he wrote it.Other than that, I found it a fun read. There are pictures in the book but nothing that I haven't seen before.

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 Supremesrsquo; 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.

From Publishers WeeklyJournalist and author Benjaminson (The Story of Motown) attempts valiantly, painstakingly to resurrect the reputation of founding Supreme member Florence Ballard, who left the group early on and descended into litigiousness and alcoholism. Then a reporter with the Detroit Free Press, Benjaminson interviewed Ballard a year before her death in 1976 and elicited a sad story of a starry-eyed, single-minded high school dropout whose dream, and fortune, was co-opted by Berry Gordy's Motown empire. Growing up together in Detroit's black working-class Brewster Projects, gospel-singing Ballard and Mary Wilson first formed the Primettes, joined by Diane (as she was then known) Ross and Betty McGlown, who eventually dropped out. In 1961, the teenagers auditioned for Berry Gordy, who kept them doing backup as they matured, touring with the Motortown across country by bus until the newly configured Supremes (Ballard chose the name) had their first hit in 1964 with Where Did Our Love Go? The boom-boom beat coupled with the nasaly sound of Ross's voice prompted Gordy to promote Ross rather than Ballard as lead. Over the Supremes' several heady years in the spotlight, Benjaminson explains in this engaging biography, gobs of money vanished through flimsy contracts and the fingers of unscrupulous managers, costly clothes and glamorous acquaintances, and Ballard's resentment of Ross's ambition and Gordy's manipulation got her fired. (Apr.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Readers who are

familiar with the group and even those who are not will definitely enjoy this well-written biography."nbsp;
mdash;Library Journal