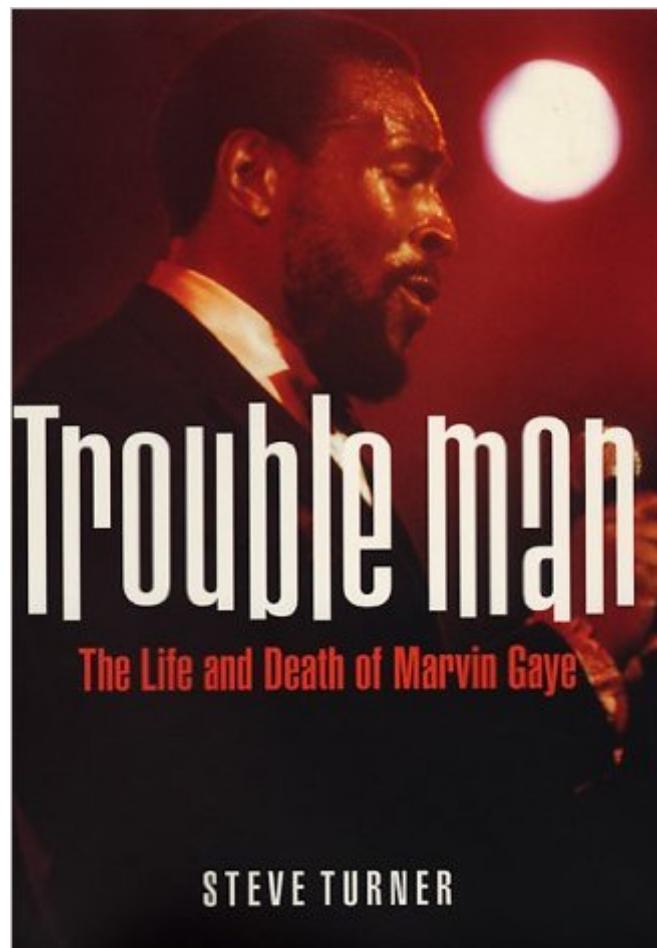


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Trouble Man: The Life And Death Of Marvin Gaye



Synopsis

Marvin Gaye was a twentieth-century icon, one of our greatest pop singers. He made his name with the Motown sound of the sixties, but went on to become a musical revolutionary with the release of *What's Going On* -- an album that touched on war, ecology, racism, violence, and poverty. It perfectly captured the spirit of the times and changed people's perceptions of what soul music could achieve. Behind the songs, however, Gaye's was a troubled life: drug dependency, tortured personal relationships, and ongoing financial and legal difficulties led inexorably to the final fatal meeting with his father. Since his tragic death, his stature has increased rather than diminished. His musical legacy has endured that his popularity and influence will endure and continue to win new generations of fans. *Trouble Man*, based on exhaustive and exclusive new research, is the definitive story of the turbulent life and violent death of an American icon. Steve Turner probes beyond the undying magic of songs like "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," "What's Going On," and "Sexual Healing" to trace the jagged contours of Gaye's life and examine the man behind the legend. Turner's detailed exploration of Gaye's childhood and his relationship with his family, his religious upbringing, and his meteoric professional success and ultimate descent into drug abuse and financial instability offers a new look at a beloved American musician.

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Customer Reviews

To the outside observer, Marvin Gaye had it all. Millions of adoring fans around the world, a seemingly endless money supply, a loving family, and the presence of mind to deprive himself of no

desire no matter how sexually deviant or socially inappropriate. Many people would jump at the chance to trade places with Marvin Gaye during the height of his career. As fans we tend to fixate on the accomplishments of those we admire while overlooking any shortcomings they may possess until we've created the image of a perfect icon who probably never existed. These perceptions change of course, as his fans watched his glamorous world come crashing down. In retrospect, what we are left with are countless questions and an incredible string of shocking circumstances that the music world has never recovered from. "Trouble Man" gives readers the joy of actually knowing not only the history of Marvin Gaye but an astounding vision into the type of person he was, the lives he touched, and the inner demons that haunted him until the day he died. The author brings us back to the upbringing of Marvin's father and his father's role in the church as a minister. The issue of religion was key in young Marvin's struggle between gospel and secular music. That battle with his family and his conscience would be the first of many struggles that ultimately defined the man we knew as Marvin Gaye. "Trouble Man" is easily the best biography I have read to date. Readers will be taken along on a life full of so much change and up's and down's that I was left awestruck.

Despite the involving history of its freakishly dualistic and tragic subject, author Turner misses the mark here. After catching a couple of filmed performances from late in Gaye's career on cable - a thrilling rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" at a Lakers Game and an incandescent in-concert performance of "Sexual Healing", I realized how completely the author fails to convey the Gaye's mastery of his art. Both of these performances came after an extended period of slumping sales and inactivity and marked a final, ultimately failed attempt at a rally. Yet these brilliant appearances get scant mention in the book. As does Marvin's breakthrough appearance in the T.A.M.I. Show lineup. Often quotes by family and associates are riddled with Britishisms (the author is English) that are incongruously sprinkled into the speech of these urban African Americans. I believe that when biography writers take broad liberties in paraphrasing the words of those he interviews, it calls into question the overall accuracy of their work. (Couldn't the guy have used a tape recorder?) The book is riddled with minor errors of fact. For example, Turner refers to a town as being in "Upper California" and he often gets the names of venues wrong. I plan to read David Ritz's biography in the hope that he has done a better job in recounting this tragic soul man's life and work.

I have studied extensively the life and music of one of history's most fascinating and interesting artists. I have already read *Divided Soul* five times over, and *Trouble Man* uncovers some of the

mysteries of Marvin's Life. Trouble Man picks up where Divided Soul leaves off. One of the most interesting facts about Marvin, is that he is the Biological Father of his and Anna Gordy Gaye's adopted son Marvin Jr. Until this book was published, that was a bit of information that few in the musical circles that I run in, knew about. Also the relationships that Marvin kept open with his former wives is informative. In my opinion, the man was a very talented, shy, introverted person, who just happened to also be a star. Women loved him in part because of his sensitivity, and the fact that Marvin acknowledged that he possessed a soft side. Marvin was prophetic, loving, and was years way ahead of his time. It is also reiterated in this book that there was no type of romantic relationship between Marvin, and Tammi Terrell. For anyone who believes that, listen to the end of the song "Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing" whereby Tammi sings, "Oh Marvin!" If you are a true Marvin fan, you will not be able to put this book down until you are finished reading it!

The significance of perhaps one phrase of the book sums up Marvin Gaye's inner life - and that was that his father didn't want him. And thank God he went on to try and heal those wounds through his music. He was a such a wonderful musician, with such a troubled soul - which seems to be commonplace for many of our very gifted artists. It sometimes takes the complexities of inner conflict to product an alternative inner universe to escape to; a universe of unconditional love and affection - which is what Marvin sought his entire life. The connections between Marvin and his father, were unmistakable. From the Hindu point of view, it would have seemed that they were karmically entwined in a life/death struggle for recognition and acceptance, and that only one would win out in the end. Unfortunately, Marvin SR.'s own feelings about himself were projected onto his son, and given Marvin was so empathic, he accepted the load. My feelings about the end of his life were more than perhaps Marvin, Jr. wanting to egg on his dad to kill him. He was also releasing a lifetime of rage and frustration at his father; eventually that kind of toxic emotional backup will surface. I'm surprised it didn't surface years before. His own demons were engrained from birth; in spite of them, he went on to make a solid contribution to the world of music. This book is extremely well researched; I would have liked to have had more information on Marvin himself; the book focused a lot on the musical connections he had. At any rate, it's a book worth reading; and is a testimonial to the benefits, perhaps, good therapy might have had for Marvin, had he chosen that route. Marvin might have conquered his demons if he realized that his father's opinion really didn't make one difference to his creative soul's expression.

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