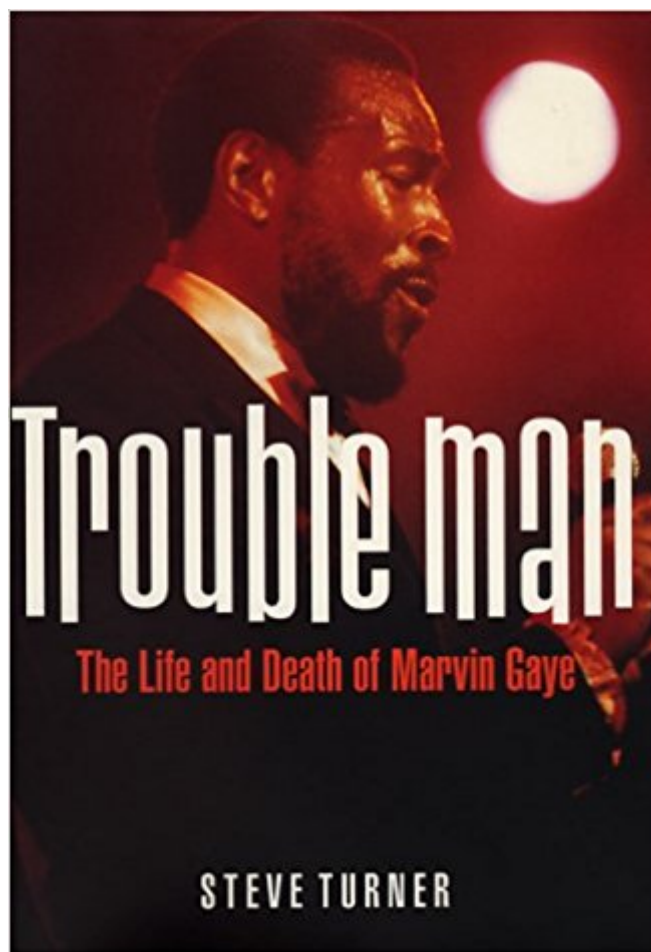


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# Trouble Man: The Life And Death Of Marvin Gaye



## 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 fateful 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Originally published in the U.K. in 1998, this biography surveys the ups and downs of Marvin Gaye's life, taking an admiring but not enamored stance concerning the Motown singer's contribution to

American music. London-based music writer Turner presents an exciting profile, regardless of the reader's prior knowledge of the soul legend. Gaye was born in 1939 in Washington, D.C., and raised with his father Marvin Sr.'s strong religious beliefs he sang in church at age two but he was also plagued by his father's mistreatment of his mother and general ultra-strict demeanor. The dysfunctional upbringing would have devastating effects later in Gaye's life. He believed he was chosen by God to sing, and kept this view throughout his life, despite what Turner depicts as his subsequent straying from morality and purity. Gaye's first album, in 1961, flopped (it was deemed too jazzy), and he turned to profitable and popular R & B at the urging of agents and producers, coupled with introductions to Smokey Robinson and others. An illustrious musical career ensued, highlighted with hits like "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" and "Sexual Healing." But for this "trouble man," even bright moments of fame and success were merely shades away from distress. He began spontaneous romances despite lingering bitterness from previous relationships, gave lavish concerts while struggling to pay alimony to his ex-wives and projected a thriving, happy image to the world while he battled with serious drug dependency. The author comprehensively presents Gaye's decline and fall (including his 1984 murder by his father), offering equal amounts of musical data and personal anecdotes. Two 8-page b&w photo inserts. (Oct.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Music journalist Turner (*Van Morrison: Too Late To Stop Now*) conducted thorough research and scores of interviews to write this tragic story of one of Motown's greatest stars. Gaye was a multifaceted, angel-voiced artist who lived his entire life tormented by a dysfunctional relationship with his father, culminating in his being shot to death by Marvin Sr. in 1984. Unfortunately for Turner, *Trouble Man* has to compete with David Ritz's highly regarded *Divided Soul* (LJ 5/15/85), which benefits from extensive interviews with Gaye himself and with both of his parents, access that time and circumstance deny Turner. Yet the intervening 15 years have also helped Turner, who is able to divulge the true identity of the mother of Gaye's first son (a secret Gaye kept from Ritz). Turner also supplies an up-to-date discography and listings of television and concert appearances. *Trouble Man* is solid but ultimately lacks the depth that Gaye's involvement provides *Divided Soul*, making it a complement to, but not a replacement for, Ritz's book. ALloyd Jansen, Stockton-San Joaquin Cty. P.L., CA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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.

it is good to read about people life's stories as it make up for the full person and gives you a well-rounded aspect to them besides being a singer.

Fascinating book. Very interesting to read this detailed account of the troubled life of a great artist.

This is a MUST read for any Marvin Gaye fan who wants to figure out this man's legacy. I'd admire him for how well he acheived. Even tho he's gone now he still lives on. There's nobody like him but just 1 Marvin Gaye. Marvin Gaye is such a Genius I inspired growing. 2 me I'm learning what he had left off from his career. To me if u love the sound of him or never even heard of him, u must pick this up. 'Cuz it'll take u on 4 journies.This is incl. along w/ Divided Soul: The Life of Marvin Gaye, Miles: An Autobiography, and Revelations: There's a Light After the Lime.

!!!!!! ALL GOOD !!!!

loved it

Very pleased

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 downs that I was left awestruck

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