

## MARY WILSON of THE SUPREMES

It was a vision of musical stardom as a Detroit teenager that inspired Mary Wilson to become part of what turned into the most successful female singing group in recording history – the Supremes. As a chronicle to that success, Wilson became a bestselling author with her 1986 autobiography, “Dreamgirl... My Life As A Supreme.” On the national bestseller lists, “Dreamgirl” sold over 250,000 copies in hardback, received rave reviews, and went on to become the most successful rock and roll autobiography of all time.

The overwhelming success of that first book prompted Wilson to pen its sequel, “Supreme Faith...Someday We'll Be Together,” published by HarperCollins in 1990. Supreme Faith offers intimate details surrounding the celebrated group and Mary's personal trials and tribulations in keeping their legend alive. This April, Cooper Square Press will re-release both memoirs packaged as one full volume with two new chapters entitled “Theft of a Dream.”

While growing up in Detroit's Brewster Projects, Mary had long fantasized about being a performer. Her love for singing blossomed when, at the age of 13, she befriended Florence Ballard, Betty McGlown, and Diane Ross. Fueled by their mutual obsession with music and their driving ambition for stardom, the quartet formed a singing group, the Primettes. (They were the sister group of the Primes, an all male group that later became the Temptations). When Betty left the group to get married, the girls recruited Barbara Martin. Together they auditioned for Motown and were later signed to the fledgling label. Barbara eventually dropped out as well and, now a trio, Mary, Flo, and Diane became the Supremes.

At first, success eluded the girls. While such fellow Motown acts as The Miracles, Marvin Gaye, Mary Wells, Martha and the Vandellas, and the Marvelettes churned out hit after hit the Supremes could barely crack the Hot 100 with each single release. Soon almost every producer at Motown, including Smokey Robinson scrambled to help the newly dubbed “no-hit” Supremes score their first hit.

Undaunted, the girls fervently honed their talents at Motown's Artist Development, studying music under the direction of Maurice King, choreography under Cholly Atkins, and etiquette and grooming under Maxine Powell.

Once they hooked up with the songwriting team of Holland-Dozier-Holland, the Supremes became America's most prolific hitmakers and helped establish the distinct “Motown sound.” With twelve #1 hits, including “Where Did Our Love Go,” “Baby Love,” “Come See About Me,” “Stop in the Name of Love,” “My World is Empty Without You,” and nearly forty albums, the Supremes were without a doubt one of the most influential, memorable, and successful icons of the turbulent 1960s. Only Elvis and the Beatles proved to have a far-reaching appeal and impact on the pop music of the times.

As testimony to the success of the Supremes, Mary shared the stage with Mick Jagger, Ringo Starr, and George Harrison in January 1988 when the Supremes were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Seven years later, the Supremes were given their own exhibit for

the museum opening in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1994, the Supremes were honored with their star on the prestigious Hollywood Walk of Fame. Mary accepted the honor on behalf of Diana and Flo.

Once Diana Ross left to pursue her own solo career in 1970, Mary took up the mantle and sustained the Supremes until their official breakup in 1977. "I didn't want my dream to die," she says. In 1979, Motown released Mary's first solo album, "Mary Wilson" which yielded the dance hit, "Red Hot." In 1992, Wilson inked a deal with CEO Records and released her first album in thirteen years, "Walk the Line," just days before the independent label folded. In a review of the album's first single "One Night With You," Billboard stated, "It appears that the other ex-Supreme has created a bona-fide pop radio hit with this dramatic power ballad. Wilson delivers a stirring performance."

On the concert stage, Wilson performs classic torch songs, Supremes standards, and modern greats with a "springwater alto" rich with emotion and fire. In a review of a recent concert performance, the South Bend Tribune raved, "With a voice as vibrant now as it was at 15 when she started her music career, Wilson worked her way through more than three decades of diverse material, from Mick Jagger to Michael Jackson to Mariah Carey. Still Supreme — Mary Wilson delights fans of old and new."

Although music will always be her primary focus, Mary enjoys spreading her creative wings in other areas. The only original Supreme to undertake the challenge of legitimate theatre, Wilson made her stage debut in 1988 starring in "Beehive," a musical tribute to the female groups of the sixties. Playing before sold out audiences across Canada, Wilson received enormous acclaim for her performance. Since then, Wilson has starred in several off-Broadway plays, including "Grandmother Silvia's Funeral," "Mother's Hubbard," and "Idealla's Soul Shack." Wilson's film credits include Disney's TIGERTOWN, the documentaries BROWN SUGAR and THE GIRL GROUPS, and Lifetime Networks' made for television movie, JACKIE'S BACK.

Most recently, Wilson performed for President and Mrs. Clinton, Chelsea, and a veritable who's who of Washington, Hollywood, sports, and literary elite at the private millennium celebration at the White House. The historical occasion, which Wilson described as "undoubtedly a great night of boogieing in presidential history" marked the first and only time a Supreme has performed for and with a U.S. President.

A tireless humanitarian, Wilson has also been touring and lecturing across the U.S., speaking to various groups nationwide and motivating all who come to hear her. Her lecture circuit, "Dare to Dream" focuses on reaching goals and triumph over adversity. Wilson's charity work includes the Susan Komen Breast Foundation, the American Cancer Society, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, the Easter Seals Foundation, UNICEF, NAACP, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, the All-Star Network, and Figure Skaters of Harlem, a youth organization devoted to helping children chase their dream towards Olympic glory.

Wilson currently resides in New York where she hosts her own weekly morning radio show, playing classic R&B hits on WWRL. Embracing new challenges, Wilson enrolled at NYU to pursue a liberal arts education after 30 years of being a performer. Now a third year student with

two more years towards graduation, she intends on honing her skills as a writer as well as embarking on other creative endeavors.

With a successful solo career, an equally successful literary career, and an esteemed performance at the White House, Mary's future couldn't look brighter. Whatever artistic venture she pursues, however, she never forgets who she is and where she came from. "Dreams do come true. I live by the philosophy that dreams don't die; people just stop dreaming."