



Aretha: From These Roots

Aretha Franklin

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Her soulful, soaring voice has earned her mythic status. Now, in her own moving words, the woman behind the myth is revealed. The result is a captivating self-portrait of one of this century's most fascinating artists, an Aretha Franklin as real as the songs she sings.

For the first time anywhere, Aretha tells her story--the glorious triumphs as well as the heartbreaking pain. With refreshing candor, Aretha tells it like it is, the way she sees it, the way she lived it.

A child prodigy of the golden age of gospel, the daughter of a world-famous preacher, Aretha was the anointed successor to Mahalia Jackson and Clara Ward. But her father had a broader vision and helped Aretha enter the field of pop and jazz. By age eighteen, she was under contract to Columbia Records. Six years later, after only a few minor hits, she switched to Atlantic, where she shook the musical world to its roots. Her song "Respect" became the anthem of an epoch, a touchstone for African Americans, for women, for all people struggling to be free. Aretha became the Queen of Soul, the genre's finest interpreter since Ray Charles.

In **Aretha: From These Roots**, the singer gets up-close and personal. In rich detail, she paints a vivid picture of a Detroit long gone: the storefront churches, the basement parties, the explosive R&B shows. She documents her life as a single teenage mother, working to balance home life with career, coping with two challenging marriages and, later, romantic relationships that were the source of both tremendous joy and unforeseen heartache.

Along the way, we meet the characters who lit up her life: her charismatic father, the Reverend C. L. Franklin, "the man with the million-dollar voice"; Sam Cooke, the man of her dreams; her singing sisters, Erma and Carolyn, and her manager-brother, Cecil; her famous colleagues--Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye, the Temptations, Luther Vandross, and Luciano Pavarotti--as well as some famous rivals.

Aretha emerges as a triumphant woman of rare wit, willing to share with us her passion for great music, great food, and great love affairs. Her book does more than illuminate some of the most exciting songs ever sung; it lets you into the heart and mind of the mesmerizing woman who sang them.

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