Butler University
Digital Commons @ Butler University

Scholarship and Professional Work - Communication

College of Communication

2007

Supremes

Ann M. Savage
Butler University, asavage@butler.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/ccom_papers

Part of the Communication Commons

Recommended Citation
Savage, A. M. (2007). The Supremes. In C. Mitchell and J. Reid-Walsh (Eds.), Girl Culture: An Encyclopedia. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group. Avaialable from: digitalcommons.butler.edu/ccom_papers/15

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Communication at Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Scholarship and Professional Work - Communication by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact fgaede@butler.edu.

quested by the federal secretary of education to improve teaching in America. The arts were the first subject area to complete this task. This document continues to guide the music education profession into the twenty-first century.

A final event worth noting was the release of a Miramax movie featuring a woman string educator, Roberta Guaspari. Meryl Streep played the lead role in *Music of the Heart* (1999)—a film about Guaspari, who built a string program in Harlem and fought to keep it when the financial support was eliminated. The *VH1 Save the Music* cable television show, in conjunction with MENC: The National Association for Music Education, NAMM: International Music Products Association, the NARAS foundation, and the American Music Conference, spearheaded efforts to use the movie to promote string teaching, playing, and music education in general in this country.

At the end of the twentieth century there was a greater awareness of the value of string education and of the important role women played in creating that awareness. Women string educators owe a debit of gratitude to the feminists who fought for this awareness in the 1960s and opened doors to a diversity of jobs and leadership roles. Continued work toward the acceptance of women conductors of professional orchestras and an increase of women orchestral players is greatly needed.

See also Music Education; Organizations, Music Education; Performer, String

For Further Reading

American String Teacher. Quarterly publication of the American String Teachers Association with the National School Orchestra Association.

American Suzuki Journal. Quarterly publication of the Suzuki Association of the Americas.

Joanne Erwin

The Supremes

One of the most successful vocal groups of all time, the Supremes originally started as an all-girl group while the members were schoolgirls in Detroit, MI. Formed in 1960 as the Primettes (a sister group to the all-male Primes), the members included Florence Ballard (1943–1976), Diana Ross (b. 1944), and Mary Wilson (b. 1944). At times the group also included Betty Travis and Barbara Martin. After a few recordings with the Detroit-based Lupine label, Ballard, Ross, and Wilson were signed to Motown Records as a trio. Renamed the Supremes, the group released their first album, *Meet the Supremes*, in 1963 (the Primes, who also signed with Motown, were renamed the Temptations). After a number of changes that included Ross being repositioned as lead singer, and the new collaboration with songwriting team Holland-Dozier-Holland, the Supremes had their first major hit with "Where Did Our Love Go?" (Motown MOTD-5270) in 1964. This was the first of 12 number one hits the group would have, including "Baby Love," "Come See about Me," "Stop! In the Name of Love," and "Someday We'll Be Together." Poised and glamorous, they represented the trademark Motown sound and look.

In 1967 Ballard left the group and was replaced by former backup singer Cindy Birdsong (b. 1939). At that time the focus of the group almost completely shifted to Ross, and the group was renamed Diana Ross and the Supremes. Ross left the Supremes in 1970 for a solo career, and Jean Terrell (b. 1944) was brought in to fill the vacancy. Following Ross's departure, the trio continued to record songs that charted in the Top 20, such as "Stoned Love" (1970), "Nathan Jones"

(1971), and "Floy Joy" ([1972] Motown 37463-5441-2). The lineup did not remain permanent, however, and the group went through several other manifestations throughout the 1970s. Birdsong left in 1972 and was replaced by Lynda Laurence. Scherrie Payne replaced Terrell when she left in 1973. Birdsong returned, and left again, to be replaced by Susaye Greene. The 1976 album *Mary, Scherrie, and Susaye* (Motown S-873) was the Supremes' last album before disbanding. In 1988 the Supremes, with the original lineup of Ballard, Ross, and Wilson, were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

See also Motown; Rock and Popular Music Genres; Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

For Further Reading

Taraborrelli, J. Randy. *Call Her Miss Ross: The Unauthorized Biography of Diana Ross*. New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1989.

Wilson, Mary, and Patricia Romanowski. *Supreme Faith: Someday We'll Be Together*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990.

Kristina Lampe Shanton

Suzuki, Pat (1930–)

Pat Suzuki was one of the first Asian American women to take a starring role in American musical theater with her role as Linda Low in the 1958 original Broadway production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Flower Drum Song*, the first Broadway production to feature an all-Asian cast. Despite negative attitudes toward Americans of Japanese descent in the post–World War II years, Suzuki rose to stardom through her talent and perseverance. Her career as a singer and actress has taken her from nightclubs to the recording studio, from Broadway to television. In her prime, she was compared to Judy Garland (1922–1969), Eartha Kitt (b. 1927), Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996), Billie Holiday (1915–1959), Sarah Vaughan (1924–1990), and Ethel Merman (1909–1984).

Pat Suzuki was born Chiyoki ("a thousand times good") Suzuki in Cressy, CA, on 23 September 1930. Her parents emigrated from Toyohashi, Japan, and settled on a farm in Yamato Colony in Merced County, where she grew up. At the outbreak of World War II, when thousands of Japanese American families were gathered into internment camps, she and her family were held in Amache (Granada), CO, for four years. Suzuki studied fine arts and education and graduated from San Jose State University with a B.F.A. degree (1953). After graduating she moved to New York City, where she auditioned and was cast in a walk-on part in the national touring company of *Teahouse of the August Moon*. She left the tour in Seattle and launched her singing career at the Colony, a then-fashionable supper club, where she attracted the attention of RCA Records and talent scouts at the William Morris Agency. In 1957 Suzuki was voted Best Female Singer of the annual *Downbeat Magazine* Disc Jockey Poll. During the next three years she released four solo albums of jazz standards and Broadway show tunes with RCA Victor Records: *The Many Sides of Pat Suzuki* (VIK LX-1127), *Pat Suzuki's Broadway '59* (RCA Victor LSP-1965), and *Looking at You* (RCA Victor LSP-2186).

In 1958 Suzuki was approached by Richard Rodgers to play the role of Linda Low in his forthcoming musical *Flower Drum Song*, an adaptation of C. Y. Lee's book of the same title. The musical opened on 1 December 1958 at the St. James Theatre on Broadway, and Suzuki was catapulted to stardom as a musical theater personality. Later that month she