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Diana always supreme

There was never really any doubt that Diana Ross could continue to dominate the record scene, for she possesses the experience and the determination to reinforce her habit of having hit after hit, never satisfied with second best. For Diana, the big question, which she herself stated at her solo debut this March at Miami's posh Eden Roc, was if "Diana Ross can do it by herself" where it really counts for a performer—before a live audience.

With a varied routine that included several Supreme hits, a medley of Broadway show-stoppers, a sprinkle of comedy and a moving performance of Billy Holliday's classic torch song, "My Man," Diana proved she could—all by herself. This 95-pound girl from Detroit's ghetto showed the world what makes a superstar, singing everything from Beatles to Broadway and earning a standing ovation from a once skeptical audience.

Soaring on this initial conquest and the added impetus of her first solo reaord, "Reach Out and Touch," Diana sailed through performances in the Now Grove of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles and the prestigous Waldorf-Astoria in New York, winning over some of the toughest audiences in show business.

The acid test for Diana's solo career, however, came in June, when she again returned to the Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas, scene of her final performance with the Supremes and the formal introduction of Jean Terrell into the trio. Diana had polished her act to a fine-honed edge after two break-in engagements and came prepared to knock 'em dead.

In a fast-paced fifty minutes, Diana sang, joked, danced and changed costumes to keep the audience constantly enthralled. She never slackened her pace right up to her final encore, leaving the audience transfixed by the impact of her fully realized potential as a solo performer. Thus, the Frontier was added to Diana's growing string of conquests in the top night club circuit.

Diana Ross

Diana's second single, "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," which followed her introductory album "Diana Ross", soared straight to the top in "Supreme" fashion and easily reached the million mark as her first solo gold record. Her second LP, "Everything is Everything," released three weeks ago, is already making an impression on sales charts across the country.

What about the second question—do the Supremes still make records? Anyone who listens to the radio or watches television could answer that one. The "New88 Supremes, including Mary Wilson, Cindy Birdsong and Jean Terrell, bridged the changeover in personnel with little effort, reviving the old Supremes magic on their very first release sans Diana. "Up the Ladder to the Roof" became an instant success, assuring Supremes fans that the Famous Supremes Sound, albeit slightly altered, was still intact and that this lovely trio was yet a potent force in the world of entertainment.

The Supremes had moved forward with full speed after the famous split, with a TV debut Feb. 15 on The Ed Sullivan Show and a quick plunge into the night club circuit with an international tour. After preliminary engagements that were well received in Freeport and Houston, the Supremes hit the epitome of the top club circuit, New York's Copacabana, with the successful surge of their hit record and a brand new act polished to perfection. Advance bookings were running so strong special shows had swelled their itinerary to meet the growing demands.

Their opening at the Copa was a delight to the patrons who packed the club, either out of curiosity or loyalty, with each girl taking her turn in the spotlight, revealing a depth of talent here-to-fore undiscovered by even their most ardent fans. Mary Wilson, Cindy Birdsong and Jean Terrell proved they could undergo a dramatic change and still retain the charisma and special magic that had made the Supremes supreme.

They played all the clubs the "old" Supremes had played, capturing audiences in Dallas, Miami, New York, Las Vegas and Los Angeles. The "show me" attitude has vanished in their audiences and the persons who pack each performance now are believers, at least when they come away. Jean Terrell has proven to be a strong asset to the trio, with a naturally warm voice that complements Mary's and Cindy's in an incredibly perfect manner. Record sales have reflected their popular acceptance, as well as capacity crowds at their every performance, leaving absolutely no doubt who the top female group is—still. Even Cindy's marriage in May to Charles Hewlett, a midwest pharmaceutical executive, didn't hamper their stardom, substanciating Cindy's notion that marriage and a career in show business aren't necessarily incompatible.

The Supremes premier album, "Right On," included their hit single "Up the Ladder"; but their second LP, "New Ways But Love Stays," was a reversal of things. The album showed signs of being a smash immediately and introduced "Stoned Love," an overnight sensation that has been released as a single due to popular demand and will be their biggest hit to date.

Following their appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show, the Supremes were signed by all three major networks for fall shows, appearing on NBC's "Andy Williams Show", "The Glen Campbell Show" on CBS and, most recently, ABC's "This Is Tom Jones." Their night club appearances continue to be booked years in advance and in every criteria of entertainment, the Supremes have met with ultimate success a Cinderella story in triplicate.

In the solo spotlight, Diana is attracting the attention of movie makers and TV moguls even more. Her guest shot on Dinah Shore's CBS TV Special "Like Hep!" in April matched her comedic antics with such big league comedy talent as Lucille Ball, Dan Rowan and Dick Martin, not to mention Miss Shore herself. Viewers were surprised by the many-faceted talent of Diana Ross, just as audiences have been delighted by the revelations of new talent with the "new" Supremes.

Their momentous decision to go their separate ways has been amply justified and the decade of the 70's promises to be an era of discovery, an era in which the full spectrum of talent for Diana Ross and the Supremes will be revealed. Motown's superstars have gone supernova, filling the universe with new brilliance, new energy, and radiating a warmth that penetrates the hearts of all who see and hear them. The Supremes and Diana Ross prove two good things are better than one.

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