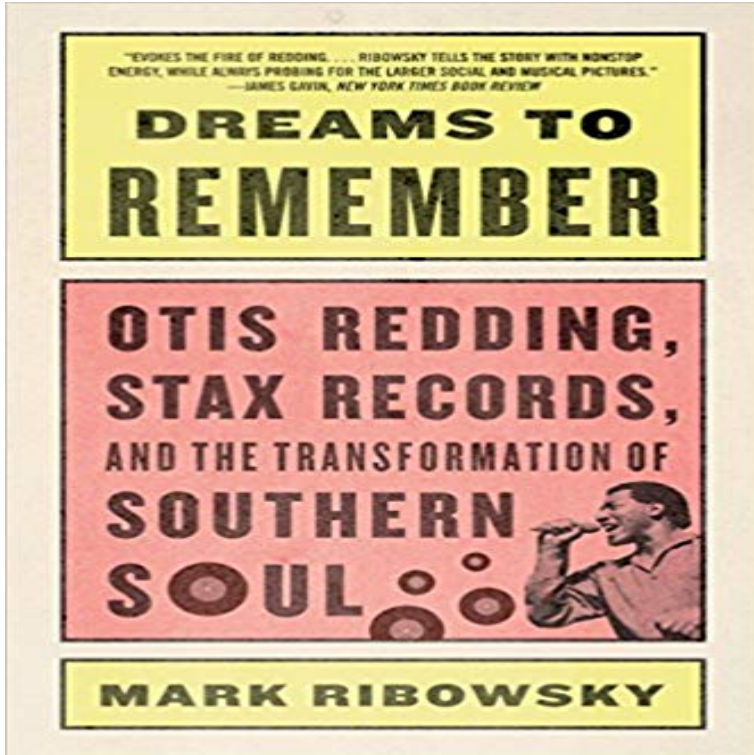


Dreams to Remember: Otis Redding, Stax Records, and the Transformation of Southern Soul



Evokes the fire of Redding. . . . Ribowsky tells the story with nonstop energy, while always probing for the larger social and musical pictures. New York Times Book Review When he died in one of rocks string of tragic plane crashes, Otis Redding was only twenty-six, yet already the avatar of a new kind of soul music. The beating heart of Memphis-based Stax Records, he had risen to fame belting out gospel-flecked blues in stage performances that seemed to ignite not only a room but an entire generation. If Berry Gordy's black-owned kingdom in Motown showed the way in soul music, Redding made his own way, going where not even his two role models who had preceded him out of Macon, Georgia—Little Richard and James Brown—had gone. Now, in this transformative work, New York Times Notable Book author Mark Ribowsky contextualizes his subject's short career within the larger cultural and social movements of the era, tracing the crooners' rise from preacher's son to a preacher of three-minute soul sermons. And what a quick rise it was. At the tender age of twenty-one, Redding needed only a single unscheduled performance to earn a record deal, his voice so utterly unique (Atlantic) that it catapulted him on a path to stardom and turned a Memphis theater-turned-studio into a music mecca. Soon he was playing at sold-out venues across the world, from Finsbury Park in London to his ultimate conquest, the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival in California, where he finally won over the flower-power crowd. Still, Redding was not always the affable, big-hearted man the PR material painted him to be. Based on numerous new interviews and prodigious research, *Dreams to Remember* reintroduces an incredibly talented yet impulsive man, one who once even risked his career by shooting a man in the leg. But that temperament masked a deep

vulnerability that was only exacerbated by an industry that refused him a Grammy until he was in his grave even as he shaped the other Stax soul men around him, like Wilson Pickett, Sam and Dave, and Booker T. and The MGs. As a result, this requiem is one of great conquest but also grand tragedy: a soul king of truth, a mortal man with an immortal voice and a pain in his heart. Now he, and the forces that shaped his incomparable sound, are reclaimed, giving us a panoramic of an American original who would come to define an entire era, yet only wanted what all men deserve a modicum of respect and a place to watch the ships roll in and away again.

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