



A Thousand Honey Creeks Later: My Life in Music from Basie to Motown_and Beyond (Music/Culture)

Preston Love

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Preston Love's resume reads like a Who's Who of American music: member of the Count Basie Band during its heyday in the 40s, studio musician in Los Angeles, cohort of Jo Jones, Lester Young, Ray Charles, and Dizzy Gillespie, and back-up player for Marvin Gaye, the Temptations, Smokey Robinson, Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight, and Stevie Wonder. In this autobiography Love shows that, while the music centers of New York, New Orleans, Chicago, and Kansas City nurtured the development of those uniquely African American forms, jazz and the Motown sound, significant contributions were also being made by territory bands tirelessly performing in outposts like St. Cloud, Minnesota, Guthrie, Oklahoma, and Honey Creek, Iowa.

It was in the latter town where Love, a 15-year-old from the black ghetto of Omaha, made his musical debut. Captivated by the sweet alto sax sounds of Earle Warren, Love took up the instrument and within a decade was sitting in Warren's chair. But Love's personal odyssey is more than a chronicle of endless bus rides, bad crowds in backwater clubs, and feast-or-famine finances endured en route to the top. In a distinctive and passionate voice he outlines significant facets of African American history: the central importance of the family in musical development, institutional racism in American popular culture, and the interracial nature of the music world. He also describes the growth of the music industry, especially Motown, what he calls "the powerful colossus from Detroit." Love's story, told with uncanny memory and unfailing honesty, provides an important view into the career of a musician and the evolution of a major musical form.

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