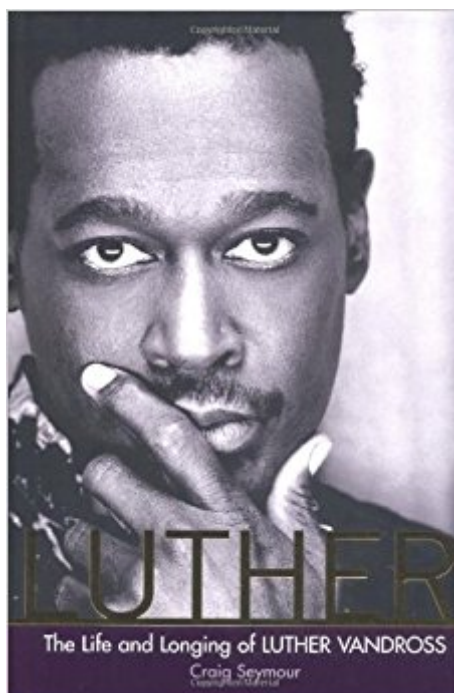


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# Luther: The Life And Longing Of Luther Vandross



## Synopsis

On April 16, 2003, Luther Vandross suffered a near-fatal stroke, and the world held its breath. Inside sources said he might never sing again. He was too weak to receive visitors, but cards and good wishes came from Aretha Franklin, David Bowie, Anita Baker, Halle Berry, Patti LaBelle, Jesse Jackson, Burt Bacharach, Bette Midler, Star Jones, Gladys Knight, and Dionne Warwick, among others. With a will to live matched only by the enormous strength and power of his heart, soul, and singing talent, Luther survived and is regaining his voice. This biography is a loving tribute to the man who has entertained millions. Luther remains one of the music industry's most private celebrities. In *Luther*, the first biography of the hugely popular and beloved singer, Craig Seymour investigates and illuminates Luther's life, from his early obsession with soulful girl groups to the day he was discovered by glam rocker David Bowie to his devastating stroke and inspiring recovery. Seymour explores Luther's elusive sexuality, the taboo question that has plagued him for his entire career. He talks about Luther's yo-yo dieting, and the pain his weight has caused him and those around him. He tells the whole story behind the widely publicized feuds between Luther and R&B icons Aretha Franklin and Anita Baker as well as the group En Vogue. And he frankly and honestly explores the tragedies of Luther's life: the 1986 car crash that killed his best friend and nearly destroyed his career, and the 2003 stroke that almost ended his life. An authentic R&B legend, Luther Vandross is one of the most popular and talented vocalists in the world. His life has been full of pain and love, tragedy and redemption. And now, for the first time ever, Luther gives you a backstage pass into his life and longing.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In April 2003, Vandross suffered a devastating stroke. When he opened his eyes from his comatose state almost one month later, Vandross added yet one more page to the many chapters in his life: later in the year, his song "Dance with My Father" won a Grammy. Seymour, a music critic for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, chronicles the mercurial ups and downs of the golden-throated singer in this superficial biography. Seymour recounts Vandross's lifelong love of music and the singer's early infatuations with girl groups, particularly Patti LaBelle and the Bluebelles and Dionne Warwick. Vandross enrolled in Western Michigan University, but eventually dropped out to pursue a career as a composer. His first big break came when he met David Bowie and composed the chorus for Bowie's "Young American." Vandross's fame as a composer and backup singer, which he preferred to the spotlight of a soloist, steadily grew until he was producing such acts as Aretha Franklin, Anita Baker and En Vogue. In spite of his success, the singer struggled with his insecurities, which often led him to seek solace in overeating, and he battled obesity and its attendant health problems throughout his career. Vandross's life and career, however, often get lost in Seymour's mini-profiles of the many musicians who helped him along his way. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Seymour's keen, often empathetic insights .reveal a man facing the dichotomy of public fame and private pain." (David Nathan, the "British Ambassador of Soul," author of *The Soulful Divas: Personal Portraits of over a dozen divine divas from Nina Simone, Aretha Franklin, & Diana Ross, to Patti LaBelle, Whitney Houston, & Janet Jackson*) "Full of juicy anecdotes, fast-paced writing and interesting analysis, the book .paints an intimate portrait of the beloved balladeer." (E. Lynn Harris, author of *What Becomes of the Brokenhearted*) "Craig Seymour gives this great artist his rightful due." (Christopher John Farley, author of *Aaliyah: More Than a Woman*) "Seymour's brilliant book is like a great Luther song: elegantly written, effortlessly executed and eloquently delivered. A majestic tribute." (Michael Eric Dyson, author of *Mercy, Mercy Me: The Art, Loves, and Demons of Marvin Gaye*)

I really enjoyed this read, and I learned so much about Luther I didn't know. I just wish he had been able to enjoy his success more. If the book is accurate, his biggest dream was to have a number one pop chart hit. His dream was finally realized, but by then he had had a stroke and was not even

able to attend the Grammy's to receive his award. There were a lot of interesting stories and revelations in the book. At one point in college he told people Dionne Warwick was his sister. He was that infatuated with her singing style. He idolized Aretha Franklin. They also had a major fight. He also had bitter disagreements with Anita Baker, but toward the end of his life he had rekindled those relationships. David Bowie gave him his first major break. He was famous for doing countless commercial jingles and made a ton of money doing so. He used food like a drug and his up and down weight loss fueled rumors that he had contracted AIDS many times. He lost all his siblings to Diabetes. His father as well and his mother after his death. I thank God for giving us Luther and the music he has left behind. I wish he could have found the love he so longed for. I believe in death he found the ultimate love in the hands of the Creator.

It is often said, though unsure of how meaningful, that life can be blessed with dreams so vividly realized. Nothing quite captures the night I was invited to an "Ashford & Simpson/Radio City After Party". One of my beloved friends, Jay, Executive Administrator of Marketing" at Radio City not only added me to this exclusive music industry guest list, BUT, seated at my table was the guest of honor(s), Nick & Val, still there was more.....the Effervescent Mr. Luther Vandross and his close friend and oftentimes vocal collaborator, Fonzi Thornton gracefully completed my evening's entourage. Luther, by that time, was to the late 80s/early 90s Urban Contemporary scene, what Ashford & Simpson previously reigned supreme the entire 70s decade. So it is fair to say that I humbly sat court side at the evening's most coveted table. If that were not enough to create an unbelievable affair, Luther and I spent most of the evening paying homage to the one and only Diva Divine Diana. As immediately, repeatedly stated in this entertaining opus, Luther lived for the Supreme Dark Divas, Diana, Aretha and Dionne. So many serendipitous moments in Luther's life mirrored mine anticipating the magical moments, pre-Internet/DVD Home recording era, Diana Ross & The Supremes graced the diminutive video equipment or celebrating the miraculous Aretha journey from the church to smokey venues or transforming one of Dionne's delivery of a Bacharach/David forthcoming classic into the definitive version. In this era of video editing, there seems to be a lost appreciation of the talent these ladies continuously displayed every night. In a more personal portrait, it cuts too deep to consider a man who could convincingly croon about love, may possibly been denied the chance to fully experience it for himself. As Diana divinely danced with Fred Ross, Aretha testified on the dance floor Rev. C.L. Franklin or Whitney and John Houston tripped the light fantastic to Luther's "Dance with My Father", he posthumously relished Grammys, many of them including "Record/Song of the Year"....."It's Hard for Me to Say".....this was long overdue.

The author did a thoroughly research into Luther's life and career, the book is well written and I enjoyed it. One thing I noticed that I didn't like is that Luther comes across as a terrible person who sometimes treated people badly, was shallow and greedy I mean he was rich and an international celebrity but he was not happy always longing for no1 spot. Anyway it's a great book.

I loved Luther Vandross's music and still listen to it all the time. However, I thought the bio was poorly written. It was more like reading a long newspaper article and it was just a list of names and places. It also cast a lot of judgement and suspicion on Luther. I liked learning about a few new things about his life that I had no idea about, but the book could have been a lot more well written and compelling.

I am not impressed with some of the "diva-like" behavior of Luther, but, I had no idea of the contributions he made to music, from his jingles, background singing and the passion that he wanted to express in his music. Not many people get to develop close friendships with their idols. He did. Bless you Luther. I plan to listen to your songs with a different ear, now.

Excellent!

VERY well researched and written!

I really enjoyed this book. It told a side of Luther Vandross's life that most people including myself would never have imagined. He was such a great singer and songwriter. It's such a shame that his life ended at such a promising time in his career.

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