

Meet Shirley Murdock: The Unsung "First Lady of Zapp" Who Changed the Face of R&B

In the annals of R&B music, Shirley Murdock stands tall as a pioneering force. Known as the "First Lady of Zapp," she left an indelible mark on the genre with her powerful vocals, captivating stage presence, and timeless songs that continue to resonate with audiences today.

Early Life and Influences

Shirley Murdock was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on May 21, 1954. Growing up in a musical family, she was exposed to a wide range of sounds, including gospel, soul, jazz, and funk. From a young age, she showcased an extraordinary talent for singing and songwriting.

Influenced by the likes of Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan, and Stevie Wonder, Murdock developed a vocal style that was both soulful and dynamic. She possessed a remarkable range and a distinctive, velvety tone that could effortlessly convey a spectrum of emotions.



Girl In The Band: 1st Lady of ZAPP by Tim Rayborn

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
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Breakthrough with Zapp

In 1978, Murdock's career took a pivotal turn when she joined the groundbreaking funk band Zapp. Led by brothers Roger and Larry Troutman, the group quickly rose to prominence with their innovative blend of R&B, funk, and electro.

Murdock's formidable vocals and stage presence made her an integral part of Zapp's success. She became known as the "First Lady of Zapp" and was featured prominently on several of their hit songs, including "More Bounce to the Ounce," "Dancefloor," and "Computer Love."

Solo Career and Collaborations

In 1986, Murdock embarked on a solo career that would further solidify her status as a vocal powerhouse. Her debut album, "Shirley Murdock," included the smash singles "As We Lay" and "Husband," which showcased her songwriting abilities and her knack for creating songs that resonated with listeners on a personal level.

Throughout her career, Murdock collaborated with numerous renowned artists, including Whitney Houston ("I Wanna Dance with Somebody"), Luther Vandross ("Here and Now"), and Gerald Levert ("Something to Talk About"). These collaborations not only showcased her versatility but also cemented her reputation as one of the most sought-after vocalists in the industry.

Musical Legacy

Shirley Murdock's musical legacy extends far beyond her chart-topping hits. She was a pioneering force for women in R&B, proving that a female singer could command both the stage and the spotlight. Her powerful vocals and heartfelt lyrics paved the way for a generation of female artists to come.

Murdock's music continues to be embraced by audiences worldwide. Her songs have been sampled by countless hip-hop and R&B artists, and her voice remains a timeless testament to the enduring power of soul music.

Personal Life and Philanthropy

Beyond her musical endeavors, Shirley Murdock was a devoted mother and philanthropist. She used her platform to support various causes, including HIV/AIDS awareness and education for underprivileged children.

In 2003, Murdock was diagnosed with breast cancer. Despite her illness, she continued to perform and inspire others with her unwavering spirit. She passed away peacefully on March 5, 2007, at the age of 52.

Shirley Murdock's legacy as the "First Lady of Zapp" and a trailblazing R&B vocalist will forever be etched in the annals of music. Her powerful vocals, captivating stage presence, and timeless songs continue to captivate audiences today. As a pioneer for women in the music industry, she paved the way for countless female artists to follow in her footsteps.

The music of Shirley Murdock remains a testament to her extraordinary talent and the enduring power of soul music. Her voice and her spirit will forever be remembered by her fans and the countless lives she touched through her music.



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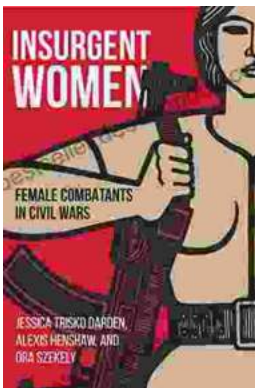
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