



# **I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You: Aretha Franklin, Respect, and the Making of a Soul Music Masterpiece**

*Matt Dobkin*

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*I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You*, Aretha Franklin's first album for Atlantic Records and famed producer Jerry Wexler, was a pop and soul music milestone that jump-started Franklin's languishing career. Almost overnight, Aretha became a top-selling recording artist and a cultural icon. But the album almost didn't happen. Matt Dobkin has unearthed fascinating details about the recording session in Muscle Shoals, Alabama: about the volatile behavior of Aretha's manager/husband, Ted White; about Aretha's reaction to the lack of black musicians in the session; and about how tempers and alcohol almost derailed the session with only a track and half in the can.

This book goes far beyond anything that's been written about "The Queen of Soul" or her music before. *I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You* is the story of a great achievement and includes scores of fresh interviews: Wexler, the session men from Muscle Shoals, Aretha's own musicians, and others. It gives insight into a star more complex and determined than her modern diva image would seem to indicate. Aretha, a teenage mother and daughter of a commanding preacher father, rose above her circumstances and transformed them into art. She gave the civil rights movement, already well under way in 1967 when the album came out, a passionate call to arms. And with "Respect"-along with the title track, one of the album's first two singles-she provided the burgeoning feminist movement with an enduring theme song.

The first serious, nonbiographical look at Aretha Franklin's work, *I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You* will deepen even ardent fans' understanding of one of the great soul artists of our time, a direct descendant of Bessie Smith and Billie Holliday.

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