The Shirelles Encyclopedia Article

The Shirelles

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The Shirelles

In 1961, four young African American women known as the Shirelles—original members: Doris Kenner Jackson (1941—), Addie "Micki" Harris (1940-1982), Beverly Lee (1941—), and Shirley Alston Reeves (1941—)—ushered in the girl group era with the Gerry Goffin-Carole King composition "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" Released on Scepter Records, the song reached number one on *Billboard's* pop charts. The first all-female act to reach the number one position, the Shirelles demonstrated that girl groups could be commercially successful, challenging the music industry's prejudice against female rhythm and blues groups. Subsequent hits included "Baby, It's You" (later recorded by the Beatles) and "Soldier Boy." When their final Top Ten single appeared in 1963, they were competing with other girl groups and their label had turned its attention to new artists, including Dionne Warwick. The Shirelles disbanded in the late 1960s; decades later, original members of the group teamed with new singers to play oldies revival shows. In 1996 the Shirelles were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Further Reading:

Betrock, Alan. *Girl Groups: The Story of a Sound.* New York, Delilah Books, 1982.

Gaar, Gillian G. *She's a Rebel: The History of Women in Rock and Roll.* Seattle, Seal Press, 1992.