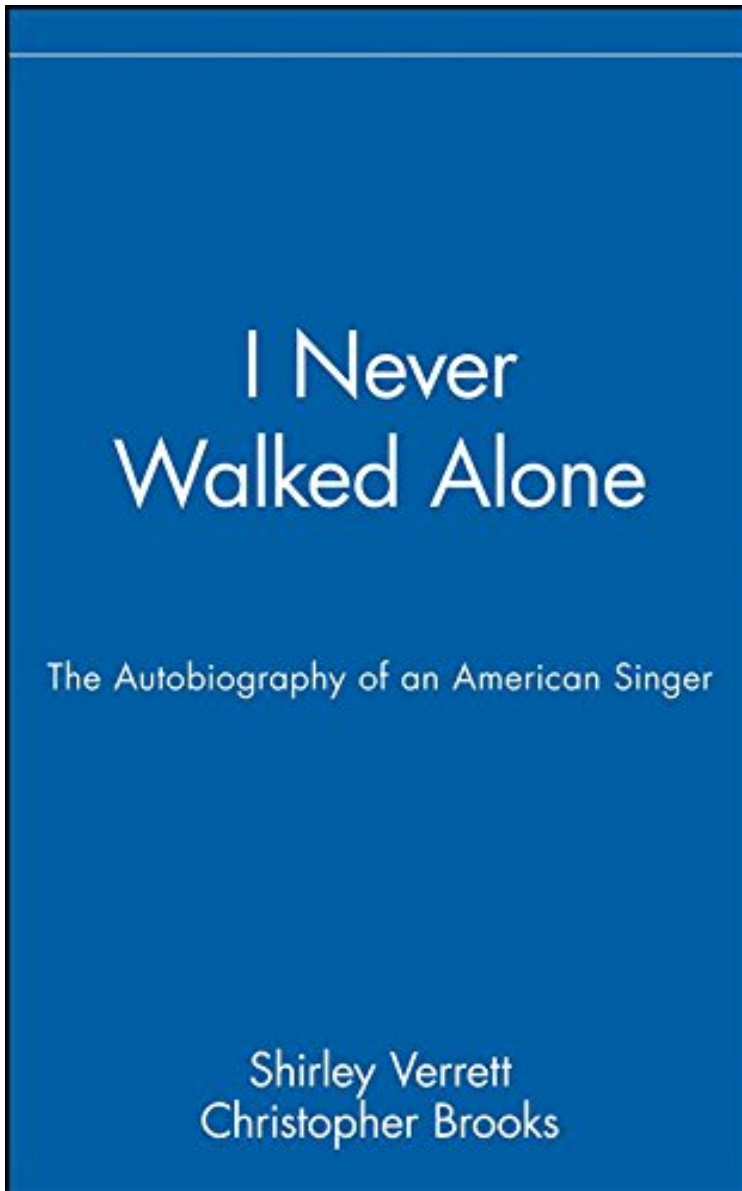


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# I Never Walked Alone: The Autobiography of an American Singer



*Par Shirley Verrett, Christopher Brooks*  
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**Par Shirley Verrett, Christopher Brooks : I Never Walked Alone: The Autobiography of an American Singer** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised I Never Walked Alone: The Autobiography of an American Singer:

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAn inspiring self-portrait of a world-renowned African American vocal artistThis is a fascinating account of a gifted woman's coming of age and rise to success at a time when black classical musicians faced barriers at every turn. Shirley Verrett possessed a talent and ambition so dazzling she could not be denied?and she became one of the most celebrated artists of her time. I Never Walked Alone draws the reader into the world of this graceful, fiery artist, dramatically telling the story of her childhood and her

brilliant international career. The book is filled with behind-the-scenes tales of this diva's great performances, roles, and collaborations, offering insight into her stormy personal relationships as well as her private struggles and critical decisions. Featuring forewords and afterwords by such figures as Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, Zubhin Mehta, and Claudio Abbado, this richly detailed book paints a vivid picture of a magnificent survivor and an indelible artist known around the world as the black Maria Callas. Shirley Verrett (Ann Arbor, MI, and New York, NY) is currently Professor of Voice at the University of Michigan School of Music. Christopher Brooks is a biographer and award-winning musicologist.

*I Never Walked Alone* is a presentation of a musical life. African American opera singer Verrett dryly relates details mainly of her impressive career. Readers unfamiliar with opera will appreciate the translations provided for all non-English phrases and titles, but they may not recognize all the names that Verrett drops as she lists her teachers, colleagues, and friends in the world of serious music. Now a professor at the University of Michigan, she includes insightful comments on interpreting some of her favorite roles, especially that of Norma in Bellini's masterpiece. Revelations about her private world are few and relatively shallow until she discusses her tormenting health problems toward the end of their opera career. The title refers to her last big role, that of Nettie Fowler in the 1994 Broadway revival of *Carousel*, who sings "You'll Never Walk Alone." Succinct synopses of all the operas in which Verrett sang and a discography of Verrett performances close the book. Recommended for large music libraries for its value as a career chronicle. Bonnie Jo Dopp, Univ. of Maryland Libs., College Park (Library Journal, May 15, 2003)

At the age of 5, Shirley Verrett's mother taught her the song "Jesus Loves Me." Her father, who conducted the choir in a Seventh Day Adventist church in New Orleans, asked her, "Do you know you have a very lovely voice, little girl?" "I think," she writes, "it was at the exact moment I became a singer." But she did not resume singing until she was 24 years old, married and bored selling real estate in California. She then made up her mind that "I'm really a singer, and I'm ready to sing." In her fascinating and down-to-earth autobiography, *I Never Walked Alone* (written with Christopher Brooks, who teaches African American studies at Virginia Commonwealth University), Verrett, now 72 years old, reminisces, often with funny anecdotes, of her life before and during her career, which began when she won a place on the Arthur Godfrey talent show, followed by study at the Juilliard School. Her first onstage appearance was in Kurt Weill's "Lost in the Start," followed by four decades of singing in opera houses of the world, from the Metropolitan and San Francisco to La Scala, Covent Garden and the Paris Opera. Verrett focuses on singers she admires, for example Maria Callas: "She understood every word, every nuance of idea and emotion. She sang with conviction, as if she had written the opera herself." (The New York Times Book Review, Sunday, September 7, 2003)

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