

pulled back the blackout curtains and gasped—for there, snugly settled in the concrete square of the courtyard, was the incendiary bomb.” A BBC show led to a London musical at age 12: “My song literally stopped the show. People rose to their feet and would not stop clapping.” Her mother’s revelation of her true father left her reeling when she was 15, but she continued touring, did weekly BBC broadcasts and was Broadway-bound by 1954 to do *The Boyfriend*. The heart of her book documents the rehearsals, try-outs and smash 1956 opening of *My Fair Lady*. Readers will rejoice, since Andrews is an accomplished writer who holds back nothing while adding a patina of poetry to the antics and anecdotes throughout this memoir of bittersweet backstage encounters and theatrical triumphs. (Apr. 1)

Pretty Is What Changes: Impossible Choices, the Breast Cancer Gene, and How I Defied My Destiny

JESSICA QUELLER. Spiegel & Grau, \$24.95 (256p) ISBN 978-0-385-52040-9

TV writer Queller (*The Gilmore Girls*) was 31, single and healthy when her mother succumbed to ovarian cancer at the age of 58, having battled breast cancer six years earlier. Queller chronicles her mother’s long and anguished struggle in vivid detail. After her mother’s death, at the suggestion of an acquaintance, Queller opted to discover whether she carries the breast cancer gene; indeed, she tested positive for the BRCA-1 gene mutation, which gave her an 87% chance of breast cancer before age 50 and a 44% chance of ovarian cancer in her lifetime. With this knowledge in hand, Queller began the journey toward her pivotal choice: a prophylactic double mastectomy at age 35. Along the way she traveled between the West Coast and New York City, seeking medical opinions, information and unsuccessfully—but not for lack of trying—a man she can love who will father her children before she follows up with voluntary surgery to remove her ovaries. This Hollywood writer’s story is seamless and gripping; readers will be rooting for Queller and her heroic decision to confront her genetic destiny. (Apr.)

The Lost Supreme: The Life of Dreamgirl Florence Ballard

PETER BENJAMINSON. Lawrence Hill, \$24.95 (240p) ISBN 978-1-55652-705-0

Journalist and author Benjaminson (*The Story of Motown*) attempts valiantly, painstakingly to resurrect the reputation of founding Supreme member Florence Ballard, who left the group early on and descended into litigiousness and alcoholism. Then a reporter with the *Detroit Free Press*, Benjaminson interviewed Ballard a year before her death in 1976 and elicited a sad story of a starry-eyed, single-minded high school dropout whose dream, and fortune, was co-opted by Berry Gordy’s Motown empire. Growing up together in Detroit’s black working-class Brewster Projects, gospel-singing Ballard and Mary Wilson first formed the Primettes, joined by Diane (as she was then known) Ross and Betty McGlown, who eventually dropped out. In 1961, the teenagers auditioned for Berry Gordy, who kept them doing backup as they matured, touring with the Motortown Review across country by bus until the newly configured Supremes (Ballard chose the name) had their first hit in 1964 with “Where Did Our Love Go?” The boom-boom beat coupled with the nasally sound of Ross’s voice prompted Gordy to promote Ross rather than Ballard as lead. Over the Supremes’ several heady years in the spotlight, Benjaminson explains in this engaging biography, gobs of money vanished through flimsy contracts and the fingers of unscrupulous managers, costly clothes and glamorous acquaintances, and Ballard’s resentment of Ross’s ambition and Gordy’s manipulation got her fired. (Apr.)

★ Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population

MATTHEW CONNELLY. Harvard/Belknap, \$35 (448p) ISBN 978-0-674-02423-6

Passionate and troubling, this study by Columbia University historian Connelly (*A Diplomatic Revolution*) tells the story of the 20th-century international movement to control population, which he sees as an oppressive movement that failed to deliver the promised economic and environmental results. According to Connelly, some proponents of the movement thought it was

the key to women’s health and well-being; others saw it as a way to eliminate the poor population; still others believed it would protect the environment. But Connelly also shows how larger economic and social contexts shaped the movement. For example, during the 1930s international Depression, ordinary people increasingly felt that couples planning families should focus on financial considerations; at the same time, as the state offered increased economic aid, it became acceptable to believe the state should also have a role in regulating reproduction. Far from disinterested, Connelly challenges many of the population control movement’s claims: to those who argue that the slowed population growth in Asia has helped save the planet, Connelly notes tartly that “if Asians have 2.1 children, but also air conditioning and automobiles, they will have a much greater impact on the global ecosystem than a billion more subsistence farmers.” Ambitious, exhaustively researched and clearly written, this is a highly important book. 22 b&w illus. (Mar.)

On Speed: The Many Lives of Amphetamine

NICOLAS RASMUSSEN. New York Univ., \$29.95 (349p) ISBN 978-0-8147-7601-9

Rasmussen, who has taught life sciences and medicine at UCLA and other universities, examines amphetamine as a case study on the place drugs occupy in our culture and our fantasies (of miracle cures and elixirs). The story begins with chemist Gordon Alles’s creation of amphetamine in 1929 and continues through its use for weight loss, attention deficit disorders and today’s crystal meth craze. Smith, Kline & French (now GlaxoSmithKline) bought the rights for use of the drug and marketed it to treat depression. During WWII, British and American soldiers developed an amphetamine appetite as RAF medics distributed “wakey-wakey” tablets to bomber crews. At the book’s core is an outstanding chapter, “Bootleggers, Beatniks and Benzedrine Benders,” describing how Benzedrine inhalers, available without a prescription, could be cracked open for a “totally new kind of amphetamine experience,” exerting a potent influence on music and literature, from Charlie Parker to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. Rasmussen