

THE WORLD'S MOST ENDURING FEMALE POP GROUP COMES TO BRITAIN TO JOIN A NOSTALGIC TOUR

THE SUPREMES

The Supremes, the world's most successful female pop group, still can't get over it. Scherrie Payne flashes the letter for all to see at her Los Angeles home: the letter John Major wrote the other day saying what a big fan he was of the group. He reminded them that when he was on radio's *Desert Island Discs* he chose a Supremes number one hit *The Happening*.

In fact, learning that they are going to be in Britain in April as part of the spectacular Giants of Motown concerts at the Wembley Arena and Birmingham's NEC, he wrote them an unashamed fan letter. He said he wanted to welcome them to Britain and expressed the hope that he might meet them one day.

"Isn't that just something!" squeals Lynda Laurence.

"It's great," enthuses Jean Terrell. "We couldn't believe it when his letter arrived," beams Lynda, the most voluble of the beautiful trio. "My goodness, 10 Downing Street — it's really something."

"We're hoping the Prime Minister

"I did sound like her in those days, which was why I was chosen, but it didn't worry me because I always liked Diana — and I still think she's great. My voice is now totally different from hers."

"I think," says Lynda, "Jean's given The Supremes a more soulful sound, added to which I thought she was one of the most beautiful women I'd seen."

"Our sound today has changed again. Now Jean and I can sound like one voice — but so can Scherrie and I — which is really wonderful."

Although they have been together for so long and get on famously when they're not working, the Supremes pursue separate lives. Jean has business interests, Lynda runs her own show business agency and Scherrie is a songwriter and screenwriter.

But the group comes first. "We're going through a nostalgic period at the moment. People love the Supremes." **H**

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PHOTOS: PETER KREDENSER



Jean, Scherrie and Lynda now (above). With their families (below). In front: Jean's son Jason, Jean, Scherrie, Soshana, Lynda and Scherrie's nephew Gregory. Behind: Jean's son Jonathan and Lynda's nephew Trevor



will be at Wembley on April 5," adds Jean, the girl from Texas who replaced Diana Ross in 1969. "He'll certainly be getting an invitation."

"We don't usually announce in advance what we'll be singing," says Lynda, "but we can tell you one thing — we'll be doing *The Happening*."

The three singers, now in their mid to late forties and based in Los Angeles, interrupted their hectic touring schedule to talk exclusively to *HELLO!* Their UK appearance in *Giants of Motown*, which will see them reunited with legendary Motown soulmates The Four Tops, The Temptations and Gladys Horton and The Marvelettes, is the culmination of an amazing success story.

The Supremes were three young girls in the early Sixties who hung around the rambling, run-down offices of Motown Records in Detroit and, as The Primettes, begged for a singing break. It came when they made a girl called Diana Ross the lead singer, changed their name to The Supremes and recorded *Where Did Our Love Go?* It became a huge hit in America and reached number three in the UK charts.

The rest is history. Chart-toppers like *Baby Love*, *Stop! In The Name Of Love* and *You Keep Me Hangin' On* made theirs a product as recognisable as Coca-Cola. As original group members Diana Ross, Mary Wilson and Florence Ballard left to pursue solo careers they were replaced by the current line-up of Jean, Lynda and Scherrie.

"It was inevitable that I'd be compared with Diana when I took over from her in 1969," says Jean.

Gregory. Behind: Jean's son Jonathan and Lynda's nephew Trevor

