

## An Insider's History of the Swingin' Medallions

**Carroll Bledsoe**

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*An Insider's History of the Swingin' Medallions is a light, informal musical biography.*

Carroll Bledsoe's *An Insider's History of the Swingin' Medallions* chronicles the rollicking journeys of the beach music captains.

Following the early years of the Swingin' Medallions from the perspective of a founding member of the singing group, the book's tone is breezy, in the style of beach music. The text acknowledges the amount of hard work and luck that carried eight young men who enjoyed playing music together to a national stage, where they became celebrities with well-regarded records.

Their story begins with high school music experiences in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Vignettes capture memorable moments—funny or odd experiences, as well as the moments that gave the group a chance to access new levels of stardom. Newspaper clippings and photographs follow their journey, which culminates with a declaration that the fun will continue with each new generation of Swingin' Medallions.

Insights into the regular life experiences of a group that achieved notable fame are achieved through the book's overt first-person perspective, though the details aren't comprehensive and not all anecdotes feel complete. The book's short chapters are easy to read but leave the reader craving more details—especially given travelogue aspects of the band's story. Bledsoe mentions many locations where the band traveled to, but they are not brought to life or individualized. People are handled more ably; characters tend to be well shaped, particularly when it comes to the original band members.

The book takes a casual storytelling approach, with diction and a story structure that is simple, clear, and concise. Some details are covered multiple times, with a quick reference in one section and a fuller description later, and sections of the book feel repetitive, particularly when it comes to recounting album sales or the details of individual songs.

Present-day commentary—such as reflections that things that seem funny now weren't so funny when they happened—pulls attention from the stories themselves. More interesting are discussions of booking agents, record labels, and other necessary factors to success. The most touching parts of the book revolve around band members and other influential figures who have since passed on.

A foreword by radio personality Dave "Rockin'" Roddy gives credence to the influence that the Swingin' Medallions held over their audiences at the time of their original recordings and, to a lesser extent, throughout their careers. *An Insider's History of the Swingin' Medallions* is a light, informal musical biography, an airy recollection as nostalgic as a beach song.

LAURA LEAVITT (October 15, 2018)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to*

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