

The Sound of Stevie Wonder: His Words and Music (Praeger Singer-Songwriter Collections)

James E. Perone



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Since his professional debut in 1962, Stevie Wonder has recorded sixty-four singles that have made the *Billboard* top 100, including ten that reached number one. Wonder was one of the first Motown artists to have complete control over the writing, arranging, and recording of his songs, and achieved that stature before he was 20 years old. He has won 17 Grammy awards, was elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1989, and earned the Grammy's Lifetime Achievement Award in 1996. Equally important, his work as a producer, arranger, and instrumentalist on other artists' recordings has put him in the highest rank of musical collaborators. This is the first work of criticism on this important documentarian of American life, as well as the introductory volume in *The Praeger Singer-Songwriter Collection*. Through a combination of biography and critical analysis, James Perone's groundbreaking new book reveals the many ways in which Stevie Wonder's body of work emerged, developed, reflected its time, and influenced myriad other artists.

After revealing the social, cultural, and political context of Wonder's work, the book provides detailed analysis of his compositions and recordings, with a focus on both his well-known songs and those known only to his hardcore fans. The volume also contains discussions of cover versions of Wonder's compositions, a discography of his recordings, a song title index, an annotated bibliography, and a general index.

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