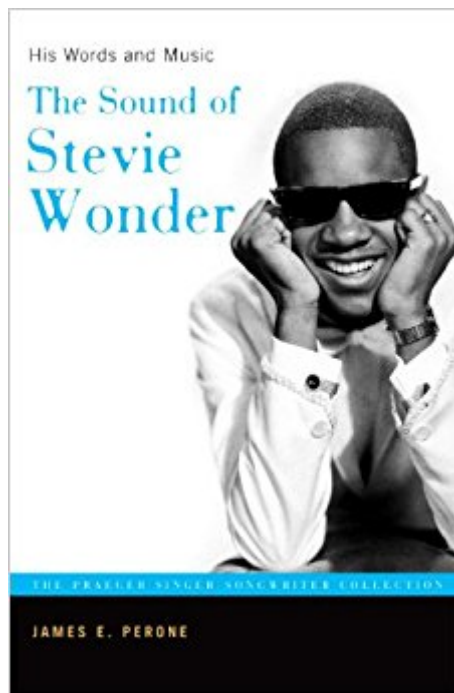




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# The Sound Of Stevie Wonder: His Words And Music (Praeger Singer-Songwriter Collections)



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In this first release in the Praeger Singer-Songwriter Collection series, Perone (Mount Union College and editor of the series) examines the music, lyrics (texts), and sound recordings of Wonder's songs, including covers of Wonder's music and his covers of songs performed previously by others. Since Wonder did not compose many of the songs he recorded during his Motown years and was controlled artistically by Motown producers, Perone focuses on Wonder's post-1970 output, when Wonder had gained full artistic control, defined himself as a singer-songwriter, embraced diverse musical styles, emerged as producer and arranger, and developed into a popular-culture icon. Readers with less knowledge of music will be able to follow the chronologically ordered discussions about Wonder's music and what these recordings sound like; readers knowledgeable about music analysis will appreciate that Perone investigates in detail Wonder's compositional, vocal, instrumental, and recording production techniques and asks important questions (for instance, about what techniques Wonder employed in his most successful songs and why certain songs are historically significant). Essential. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty; general readers." - Choice

"Every pop music fan has a sense of the work and accomplishments of Stevie Wonder, from his start as a child prodigy to the acclaimed singer-songwriter he was known as throughout the Sixties, Seventies, and Eighties. Even though his heyday seems to be over, he retains a spot in the American pop music pantheon. While numerous biographies on the artist exist, this is the first to critique and interpret his work. And as Perone covers in great depth all of the artist's albums-both major and minor-readers are likely to learn a lot about some of the less well-known albums and may consequently seek them out. This thoughtfully researched and finely written book, the first in a new series edited by Perone to highlight various singer-songwriters of note, should be in all public and college libraries; highly recommended." - Library Journal

"[S]erves as a useful introduction to the music of Stevie Wonder." - Popular Music

"The Sound of Stevie Wonder critiques and interprets the works of this notable composer and performer. Readers learn about Wonder's most famous works and lesser-known albums along with the many cover versions of his compositions. Included are a song title index, a discography of his recordings, notes, an annotated bibliography, and a general index." - MultiCultural Review

"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." - Easton's Public Library eNewsletter

"The Sound of Stevie Wonder: His Words and Music, by James E. Perone, is the first work of criticism on this

important American artist. The book 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." - Library Media Connection

James E. Perone is Associate Professor of Music at Mount Union College, Ohio. He is the author of nearly a dozen books, including *Woodstock: An Encyclopedia of the Music and Art Fair* (2005), *Music of the Counterculture Era* (2004), and *Songs of the Vietnam Conflict* (2001). He currently serves as the series editor for the Praeger Singer-Songwriter series.

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