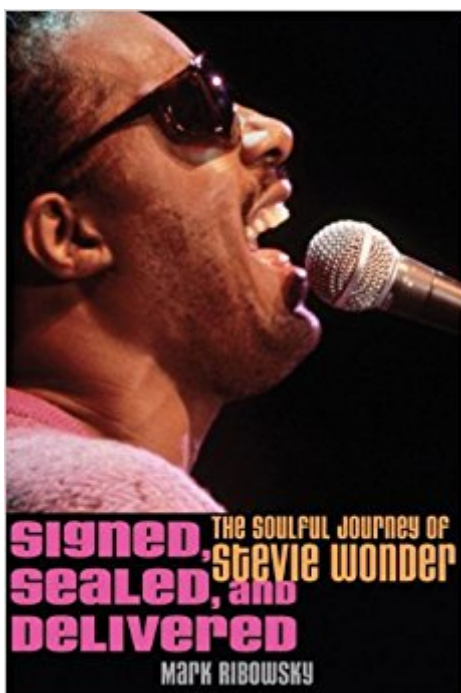


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# Signed, Sealed, And Delivered: The Soulful Journey Of Stevie Wonder



## Synopsis

The first definitive biography of music legend Stevie Wonder. Stevie Wonder's achievements as a singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and producer are extraordinary. During a career that has spanned almost fifty years, he has earned more than thirty Top 10 hits, twenty-six Grammy Awards, and a place in both the Rock and Roll and Songwriter Halls of Fame—and he's not finished yet. On the verge of turning sixty, he is still composing, still touring, and still attracting dedicated fans around the world. For the first time, *Signed, Sealed, and Delivered* takes an in-depth look at Stevie Wonder's life and his evolution from kid-soul pop star into a mature artist whose music helped lay the groundwork for the evolution of hip hop and rap. Explores the life, achievements, and influence of one of America's biggest musical icons, set against the history of Motown and the last fifty years of popular music. Based on extensive interviews with Motown producers, music executives, songwriters, and musicians, including founding Temptation Otis Williams, Mickey Stevenson, surviving Funk Brother Eddie Willis, synthesizer genius Malcolm Cecil, guitar legend Michael Sembello, and many others. Traces Stevie's personal and musical development through the decades, from the early 1960s R&B of "Fingertips" to the social and political themes of "Living for the City" and other 1970s classics, through periods of musical and personal confusion, uncertainty, and, later, renewal. Read *Signed, Sealed, and Delivered* to explore the life and work of one of pop music's most compelling masters of invention.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

From the rollicking debut of *Fingertips*—Part 2 to the funk piano and synthesizers of *Superstition* to the political rap of *Superstition*, Stevie Wonder's brilliant music has managed to capture the hearts of his listeners while at the same time probing the limits of musical styles and moving soul and rhythm and blues to new musical levels. Born in poverty in Saginaw, Mich., Wonder lost his sight soon after he was born. His blindness heightened his sense of hearing, and he soon began to master the toy musical instruments that his absentee father brought him. Very soon, Wonder graduated from toys to the real things: his barber gave him a Hohner chromatic harmonica; his church choir director, as well as his neighbor, allowed him to play for hours on their pianos; and the local Lions Club gave a drum set to Stevie after hearing him play it. Soon Wonder was the hit of Motown, and his career took off like a comet, only to burn out and lose some of its fiery glow in the 1980s and 1990s. Music journalist Ribowsky (*The Supremes; He's a Rebel*) traces the rapid ascent of Wonder's musical career as well as the tumultuous ups and downs of his personal life in this workmanlike and pedantic book. Ribowsky's exploration of Wonder's music is first-rate, but his tendency to overlook Wonder's faults turns this into one fan's hagiography. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

\* "A good read" (Echoes, May 2010) "A fluid and lively read, critical and celebratory..." (Time Out, May 2010) From the rollicking debut of *Fingertips*—Part 2 to the funk piano and synthesizers of *Superstition* to the political rap of *Superstition*, Stevie Wonder's brilliant music has managed to capture the hearts of his listeners while at the same time probing the limits of musical styles and moving soul and rhythm and blues to new musical levels. Born in poverty in Saginaw, Mich., Wonder lost his sight soon after he was born. His blindness heightened his sense of hearing, and he soon began to master the toy musical instruments that his absentee father brought him. Very soon, Wonder graduated from toys to the real things: his barber gave him a Hohner chromatic harmonica; his church choir director, as well as his neighbor, allowed him to play for hours on their pianos; and the local Lions Club gave a drum set to Stevie after hearing him play it. Soon Wonder was the hit of Motown, and his career took off like a comet, only to burn out and lose some of its fiery glow in the 1980s and 1990s. Music journalist Ribowsky (*The Supremes; He's a Rebel*) traces the rapid ascent of Wonder's musical career as well as the tumultuous ups and downs of his personal life in this workmanlike and pedantic book. Ribowsky's exploration of Wonder's music is first-rate, but his tendency to overlook Wonder's faults turns this into one fan's hagiography. (May) (Publishers Weekly, March 22, 2010)

Wow, if you only know Stevie from his 60s and 70s hits, you need this book. What an amazing life he has led. He was on the charts before the Beatles, Dylan and the Stones, and he's still selling out theaters today. He had accomplished more at age 17 than most of us will in several lifetimes. Now I know who the songs are about, how he wrote them. I have new respect for Stevie, and nothing but praise for the author and his book.

Really enjoy this book!!!!

An honest, balanced, informational book. Pretty damn good!

This is a good book.. It's a must read...

I will admit.. I never knew much about Stevie Wonder.. But this book had some great insight into who he is and his rise to fame and stardom.I now understand why Stevie is considered one of the Greatest. He was the Michael Jackson of the 70's before Michael Jackson hit it big in the 80's. This man is literally a musical genius.I just wasn't fond of the detail analysis in this book's writing style. It really didn't have to be worded in the way it was, it took away from enjoying learning who Stevie was a man. It took me forever to finish.So for that, I give it 3 stars.

I brought this book some time last year and i got around to reading it last week! I finished reading it tonight and i must say that i am very pleased,i learned alot about Stevie and i really think that anyone who loves the music of stevie wonder should really read this book

When I purchased this book I was under the inpression that Stevie Wonder had coauthored this book. Instead this book was written by a person who had pulled up various interviews with people who were edither dead or had an ax to grind with Motown or Berry Gordy. It seems that the Author must have been turned downed by Mr Gordy for an interview or a job because he does one hell of a hatchet job on Berry Gordy. It seems that everyone is open game for this guy. Not a lot to learn from this book. Trust me!!!!!!!!!!

This is a really good book about Stevie Wonder, and really the only biography out there. Like his book on the Supremes, Ribowsky tells the story of Wonder alongside the story of Motown itself. The most surprising parts of the book are the early life of Wonder and his mother. The early pre and

immediately post-Fingertips period and how Gordy kept holding Wonder back are very interesting as well. The issues I have with the book have been aired by other reviewers. Ribowsky is a little too deferential to Wonder, and he lets him off the hook far more easily than he does Diana Ross in his Supremes biography. While Ribowsky is clearly a fan and admirer (as we all are) he goes to great lengths and very purple prose to describe Wonder's talents and career. At times the book is a tad boring, especially after Wonder's big 70s run of hit albums. And yes, by the time you get to Innervisions, the author repeatedly makes reference to Rolling Stone's best 500 albums list. It does get a little annoying, but only when you get to that part of the book. The author does go out of his way to laud Innervisions, Songs in the Key of Life, Talking Book, and Fulfillingness' First Finale. And like I said, aside from understanding that these are great albums (on Great Album lists no doubt), you don't really get a sense of why they're great from the author. To this reader, the book gives a good overview of Wonder's life and career, but I don't think I learned anything about him as a person. This might be because Wonder is reticent to discuss his childhood in interviews, and Ribowsky doesn't seem to stray too far into what really pushed Wonder forward. Still it is a good foray into one of the best musicians of the 20th century, and lays the foundation (I hope) for a better biography of Wonder in the future.

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