

# Respect Yourself: The Untold Story of Stax Records and the Soul Explosion

Are you a fan of soul music? Do you want to learn about the birth of an iconic record label that became a cultural phenomenon? Join us as we take a deep dive into the history of Stax Records, the home of legends like Otis Redding, Isaac Hayes, and Booker T. & the M.G.'s. Discover how this small record label from Memphis, Tennessee, had a profound impact on the American music scene and the rise of soul as a genre. Get ready for a captivating journey that will make you want to respect yourself and the artists who made it all possible.

## The Birth of Stax Records

In the early 1960s, Memphis was a city divided by racial segregation. However, amidst this social turmoil, a small record store called Satellite Records, owned by Jim Stewart and Estelle Axton, became a gathering place for young musicians eager to break racial barriers and express themselves through music. Inspired by the success of their record store, Stewart and Axton decided to establish their own record label. In 1961, Stax Records was born.

Although initially struggling to find their unique sound, Stax Records discovered their golden opportunity when they signed a young singing sensation named Otis Redding. With his raw, passionate style, Redding became the cornerstone of Stax's success and drew attention to the label from both black and white audiences. This marked the beginning of what would become known as the "Soul Explosion."

**Respect Yourself: Stax Records and the Soul Explosion** by Robert Gordon (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5



Language	: English
File size	: 9911 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 583 pages
Lending	: Enabled



## The Soul Explosion

During the mid-60s, Stax Records experienced unprecedented growth and success. Their roster expanded to include talented artists such as Sam & Dave, Rufus Thomas, and Carla Thomas. Stax's house band, Booker T. & the M.G.'s, created a unique blend of soul, R&B, and funk, providing the backbone for countless hit records.

One of the defining moments of the Soul Explosion was the release of Otis Redding's "Respect" in 1965. This timeless anthem became an instant classic and established Stax Records as a force to be reckoned with in the music industry. Redding's tragic death in 1967 shocked the world and left a void that was hard to fill, but Stax continued to push forward, determined to honor his legacy.

## The Cultural Impact

Beyond the music, Stax Records played a significant role in breaking down racial barriers in the entertainment industry. The integrated roster of the label became a symbol of unity and served as an example of what could be achieved when people from different backgrounds worked together towards a common goal.

Stax's commitment to social justice was showcased in the legendary 1967 tour known as "Stax/Volt Revue," where black and white musicians shared the stage, defying segregation laws and promoting equality. This groundbreaking tour played a crucial role in inspiring change and fostering racial harmony during a time of deep social unrest.

## **The Fall and Resurgence**

Despite years of success, Stax Records faced financial difficulties in the late 1960s and filed for bankruptcy in 1975. The label's iconic building was demolished, and its catalog was sold to a major label.

However, the story of Stax Records does not end there. In the early 2000s, a group of dedicated music lovers, known as the "Soul Survivors," rebuilt the label from scratch. They aimed to recapture the magic and soul of the original Stax, bringing in new talent and taking care of the legendary artists who once called Stax home.

## **Respect Yourself: A Legacy Worth Preserving**

Stax Records and the Soul Explosion left an indelible mark on the music industry. Their influence can still be heard in contemporary music, with countless artists from various genres drawing inspiration from the soulful sounds that originated in Memphis.

Today, Stax Records stands as a testament to the power of music to transcend boundaries. It serves as a reminder to respect yourself, embrace diversity, and channel the spirit of unity that characterized the golden era of Stax.

So, the next time you immerse yourself in the soulful tunes of Otis Redding or groove to the infectious rhythm of Booker T. & the M.G.'s, remember the story of

Stax Records and the Soul Explosion. Respect yourself, respect the music, and let the soul take you on a journey that will leave you forever changed.



## Respect Yourself: Stax Records and the Soul

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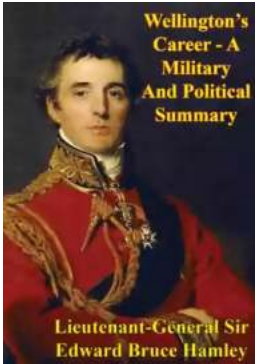


The story of Stax Records unfolds like a Greek tragedy. A white brother and sister build a record company that becomes a monument to racial harmony in 1960's segregated south Memphis. Their success is startling, and Stax soon defines an international sound. Then, after losses both business and personal, the siblings part, and the brother allies with a visionary African-American partner. Under integrated leadership, Stax explodes as a national player until, Icarus-like, they fall from great heights to a tragic demise. Everything is lost, and the sanctuary that flourished is ripped from the ground. A generation later, Stax is rebuilt brick by brick to once again bring music and opportunity to the people of Memphis.

Set in the world of 1960s and '70s soul music, Respect Yourself is a story of epic heroes in a shady industry. It's about music and musicians -- Isaac Hayes, Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Wilson Pickett, the Staple Singers, and Booker T. and the M.G.'s, Stax's interracial house band. It's about a small independent

company's struggle to survive in a business world of burgeoning conglomerates. And always at the center of the story is Memphis, Tennessee, an explosive city struggling through heated, divisive years.

Told by one of our leading music chroniclers, Respect Yourself brings to life this treasured cultural institution and the city that created it.



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