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Stax Records

Making Soul Music and Breaking Boundaries

Gail Mitchell

ISBN	9781788843942
Publisher	ACC Art Books
Binding	Hardback
Territory	USA & Canada
Size	9.45 in x 10.63 in
Pages	240 Pages
Illustrations	82 color, 100 b&w
Price	$50.00

- Published to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the Stax/Volt Revue European Tour and the 70th anniversary of the founding of the label
- Amazing images of the artists that shaped Stax legacy by photographer Bill Carrier Jr.
- Contributions from the musicians, executives and producers who worked at the label
- Insights into the era's creative, social and political background

Stax Records: Making Soul Music and Breaking Boundaries tells the story of the origins and early years of Stax Records through the archive of photographer Bill Carrier Jr., featuring over 30 Stax superstars and the moments that made the label famous.

Founded by visionary Jim Stewart as a country music label in a Black neighborhood in segregated Memphis, and co-owned with his sister, Estelle Axton, Stax would become a beacon for the unifying force of music, transcending racial divides. The label's legendary in-house bands, with their basslines, organs and horn sections, backed up a roster of headliners that included Otis Redding, Carla Thomas, Isaac Hayes and Booker T. & The M.G.'s, producing a string of anthems that changed American music and soundtracked an era of civil rights and social revolution.

From the ground-breaking Stax/Volt Revue European Tour to the tragic deaths of Otis Redding and members of the Bar-Kays in 1967, this volume covers the highs and lows of the label's historic rise and heyday, showcasing the people behind one of the most important eras in popular music and American cultural history.

Written by Billboard's R&B/hip-hop editor-at-large, Gail Mitchell, with a foreword by award-winning songwriter and former Stax publicity director Deanie Parker.

Gail Mitchell serves as Billboard's editor-at-large of R&B and hip-hop, covering the R&B and rap genres as well as music industry business news across all genres and sectors for the magazine and Billboard.com. She has moderated panels and keynote Q&As for industry organizations and companies such as ASCAP, BMI, the Recording Academy, the Grammy Museum, the Revolt Music Conference, Music Biz, Warner Records, Pollstar and MIDEM Digital 2020. She has also represented Billboard in stories and broadcast interviews for media outlets including Anderson Cooper 360, CNN's *Don Lemon Tonight*, NBC's *TODAY*, *CBS This Morning, CBS News Radio, CBS Evening News*, MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show*, BET, A&E, Associated Press, Cheddar News, USA Today, the *New York Times' Popcast*, the 2021 Showtime documentary *Bitchin: The Sound and Fury of Rick James* and the 2024 A&E documentary *James Brown: Say It Loud.* A graduate of Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, Gail also serves on the advisory boards for the National Museum of African American Music in Nashville and the Living Legends Foundation.

Publish date 9th Mar 2027