



Stevie Wonder



Stevie Wonder

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Stevie Wonder at a conference in Salvador, Brazil, in July 2006	
Background information	
Birth name	Stevland Hardaway Judkins
Also known as	Stevland Hardaway Morris, Little Stevie Wonder, Eivets Rednow
Born	May 13, 1950 Saginaw, Michigan, U.S.
Origin	Detroit, Michigan
Genres	Soul, pop, R&B, funk, jazz
Occupations	Musician, singer-songwriter, record producer, multi-instrumentalist
Instruments	Vocals, keyboards, harmonica, drums, bass guitar, congas, bongos, keytar, accordion, harpejji
Years active	1961–present
Labels	Tamla, Motown
Website	steviewonder.net ^[1]

Stevland Hardaway Morris (born May 13, 1950 as **Stevland Hardaway Judkins**),^[2] known by his stage name **Stevie Wonder**, is an American musician, singer-songwriter, record producer, and multi-instrumentalist. A child prodigy, he developed into one of the most creative and loved musical figures of the late 20th century.^[3] Wonder signed with Motown's Tamla label at the age of eleven and continues to perform and record for Motown as of the early 2010s. He has been blind since shortly after birth.

Among Wonder's best known works are singles such as "Superstition", "Sir Duke", "You Are the Sunshine of My Life" and "I Just Called to Say I Love You". Well known albums also include *Talking Book*, *Innervisions* and *Songs in the Key of Life*. He has recorded more than thirty U.S. top ten hits and received twenty-two Grammy Awards, the most ever awarded to a male solo artist. Wonder is also noted for his work as an activist for political causes, including his 1980 campaign to make Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a holiday in the United States.^[4] In 2009, Wonder was named a United Nations Messenger of Peace. In 2008, *Billboard* magazine released a list of the Hot 100 All-Time Top Artists to celebrate the US singles chart's fiftieth anniversary, with Wonder at number five.

By popular vote, Stevie was inducted into The SoulMusic Hall of Fame at SoulMusic.com in December 2012.^[5]

Early life

Stevie Wonder was born in Saginaw, Michigan, in 1950, the third of six children to Calvin Judkins and Lula Mae Hardaway. Owing to his being born six weeks premature, the blood vessels at the back of his eyes had not yet reached the front and their aborted growth caused the retinas to detach. The medical term for this condition is retinopathy of prematurity, or ROP, and it was exacerbated by the oxygen therapy given while in his hospital incubator.

When Stevie Wonder was four, his mother left his father and moved to Detroit with her children. She changed her name back to Lula Hardaway and later changed her son's surname to Morris, partly because of relatives. Morris has remained Stevie Wonder's legal surname ever since. He began playing instruments at an early age, including piano, harmonica, drums and bass. During childhood he was active in his church choir.

Discovery and early Motown recordings

Ronnie White of The Miracles gives credit to his brother Gerald White for persistently nagging him to come to his friend's house in 1961 to check out Stevie Wonder.^[6] Afterward, White brought Wonder and his mother to Motown. Impressed by the young musician, Motown CEO Berry Gordy signed Wonder to Motown's Tamla label with the name **Little Stevie Wonder**. Before signing, producer Clarence Paul gave Wonder his trademark name after stating "we can't keep calling him the eighth wonder of the world". He then recorded the regional Detroit single, "I Call It Pretty Music, But the Old People Call It the Blues", which was released on Tamla in early 1962.^[7] Later in 1962, Wonder released his first two albums, *The Jazz Soul of Little Stevie* and *Tribute to Uncle Ray*, to little success.

Music career

Early success: 1963–71

By age 13, Wonder had a major hit, "Fingertips (Pt. 2)", a 1963 single taken from a live recording of a Motor Town Revue performance, issued on the album *Recorded Live: The 12 Year Old Genius*. The song, featuring Wonder on vocals, bongos, and harmonica, and a young Marvin Gaye on drums, was a No. 1 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 and R&B charts, making him the youngest artist to top the former in its history and launching him into the public consciousness.

In 1964, Wonder made his film debut in *Muscle Beach Party* as himself, credited as "Little Stevie Wonder". He returned in the sequel released five months later, *Bikini Beach*. He performed on-screen in both films, singing "Happy Street," and "Happy Feelin' (Dance and Shout)," respectively.



with Burt Bacharach in the 1960s


Dropping the "Little" from his name, Wonder went on to have a number of other hits during the mid-1960s, including "Uptight (Everything's Alright)", "With a Child's Heart", and "Blowin' in the Wind", a Bob Dylan cover, co-sung by his mentor, producer Clarence Paul. He also began to work in the Motown songwriting department, composing songs both for himself and his label mates, including "Tears of a Clown", a number one hit performed by Smokey Robinson & the Miracles.

In 1968 he recorded an album of instrumental soul/jazz tracks, mostly harmonica solos, under the pseudonym (and title) *Eivets Rednow*, which is "Stevie Wonder" spelled backwards. The album failed to get much attention, and its only single, a cover of "Alfie", only reached number 66 on the U.S. Pop charts and number 11 on the U.S. Adult Contemporary charts. Nonetheless, he managed to score several hits between 1968 and 1970 such as "I Was Made to Love Her"; "For Once in My Life" and "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours". In September 1970, at the age of 20, Wonder married Syreeta Wright, a songwriter and former Motown secretary. Wright and Wonder co-wrote the songs on the next album, *Where I'm Coming From*, which did not succeed in the charts. Reaching his twenty-first birthday on May 13, 1971, he allowed his Motown contract to expire.^[8]

In 1970, Wonder co-wrote, and played numerous instruments on the hit "It's a Shame" for fellow Motown act The Spinners. His contribution was meant to be a showcase of his talent and thus a weapon in his ongoing negotiations with Gordy about creative autonomy.

Classic period: 1972–76

During this period, Wonder independently recorded two albums and signed a contract with Motown Records. The 120-page contract was a precedent at Motown and gave Wonder a much higher royalty rate. Wonder returned to Motown in March 1972 with *Music of My Mind*. Unlike most previous albums on Motown, which usually consisted of a collection of singles, B-sides and covers, *Music of My Mind* was a full-length artistic statement with songs flowing together thematically. Wonder's lyrics dealt with social, political, and mystical themes as well as standard romantic ones, while musically Wonder began exploring overdubbing and recording most of the instrumental parts himself. *Music of My Mind* marked the beginning of a long collaboration with Tonto's Expanding Head Band (Robert Margouleff and Malcolm Cecil).^[9]

	<p>"Superstition" (reduced quality) from Talking Book by Stevie Wonder, Motown 1972-10-27. Sample from <i>Stevie Wonder Song Review: A Greatest Hits Collection</i>, Motown, 1996-12-10</p>
<p><i>Problems playing this file? See media help.</i></p>	

Released in late 1972, *Talking Book* featured the No. 1 hit "Superstition", which is one of the most distinctive and famous examples of the sound of the Hohner clavinet keyboard.^[10] The song features a rocking groove that garnered Wonder an additional audience on rock radio stations.^[citation needed] *Talking Book* also featured "You Are the Sunshine of My Life", which also peaked at No. 1. During the same time as the album's release, Wonder began touring with the Rolling Stones to alleviate the negative effects from pigeon-holing as a result of being an R&B artist in America. Wonder's touring with the Stones was also a factor behind the success of both "Superstition" and "You Are the Sunshine of My Life". Between them, the two songs won three Grammy Awards. On an episode of the children's television show *Sesame Street* that aired in April 1973,^[11] Wonder and his band performed "Superstition", as well as an original song called "Sesame Street Song", which demonstrated his abilities with the "talk box".

Innervisions, released in 1973, featured "Higher Ground" (#4 on the pop charts) as well as the trenchant "Living for the City" (#8). Both songs reached No. 1 on the R&B charts. Popular ballads such as "Golden Lady" and "All in Love Is Fair" were also present, in a mixture of moods that nevertheless held together as a unified whole. *Innervisions* generated three more Grammy Awards, including Album of the Year. The album is ranked No. 23 on *Rolling Stone Magazine's* 500 Greatest Albums of All Time. Wonder had become the most influential and acclaimed black musician of the early 1970s.

On August 6, 1973, Wonder was in a serious automobile accident while on tour in North Carolina, when a car in which he was riding hit the back of a truck.^[] This left him in a coma for four days and resulted in a partial loss of his sense of smell and a temporary loss of sense of taste. Despite the setback, Wonder re-appeared in concert at Madison

Square Garden in March 1974 with a performance that highlighted both up-tempo material and long, building improvisations on mid-tempo songs such as "Living for the City". The album *Fulfillingness' First Finale* appeared in July 1974 and set two hits high on the pop charts: the #1 "You Haven't Done Nothin'" and the Top Ten "Boogie On Reggae Woman". The Album of the Year was again one of three Grammys won.

The same year Wonder took part in a Los Angeles jam session which would become known as the bootleg album *A Toot and a Snore in '74*. He also co-wrote and produced the Syreeta Wright album *Stevie Wonder Presents: Syreeta*.

On October 4, 1975, Wonder performed at the historical "Wonder Dream Concert" in Kingston, Jamaica, a benefit for the Jamaican Institute for the Blind.^[12]

By 1975, in his 25th year, Wonder had won two consecutive Grammy Awards: in 1974 for *Innervisions* and in 1975 for *Fulfillingness' First Finale*^[citation needed]. In 1975, he was featured on the album *It's My Pleasure* by Billy Preston, playing harmonica on two tracks.

The double album-with-extra-EP *Songs in the Key of Life*, was released in September 1976. Sprawling in style, unlimited in ambition, and sometimes lyrically difficult to fathom, the album was hard for some listeners to assimilate, yet is regarded by many as Wonder's crowning achievement and one of the most recognizable and accomplished albums in pop music history. The album became the first of an American artist to debut straight at No. 1 in the *Billboard* charts, where it remained for 14 non-consecutive weeks.^[13] Two tracks became No. 1 Pop/R&B hits "I Wish" and "Sir Duke". The baby-celebratory "Isn't She Lovely?" was written about his newborn daughter Aisha, while songs such as "Love's in Need of Love Today" (which years later Wonder would perform at the post-September 11, 2001 *America: A Tribute to Heroes* telethon) and "Village Ghetto Land" reflected a far more pensive mood. *Songs in the Key of Life* won Album of the Year and two other Grammys. The album ranks 56th on *Rolling Stone Magazine's* 500 Greatest Albums of All Time.

After such a concentrated and sustained level of creativity, Wonder stopped recording for three years, releasing only the 3 LP *Looking Back*, an anthology of his first Motown period. His classic 1970s albums were very influential on the music world: the 1983 *Rolling Stone Record Guide* said they "pioneered stylistic approaches that helped to determine the shape of pop music for the next decade"; *Rolling Stone* magazine's 2003 list of the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time included four of the five albums, with three in the top 90; and in 2005, Kanye West said of his own work, "I'm not trying to compete with what's out there now. I'm really trying to compete with *Innervisions* and *Songs in the Key of Life*. It sounds musically blasphemous to say something like that, but why not set that as your bar?"^[14]

Commercial period: 1979–90

It was in Wonder's next phase that he began to commercially reap the rewards of his legendary classic period. The 1980s saw Wonder scoring his biggest hits and reaching an unprecedented level of fame evidenced by increased album sales, charity participation, high-profile collaborations, political impact, and television appearances.

When Wonder did return, it was with the soundtrack album *Journey through the Secret Life of Plants* (1979), featured in the film *The Secret Life of Plants*. Mostly instrumental, the album was composed using the Computer Music Melodian, an early sampler. Wonder toured briefly in support of the album, and used a Fairlight CMI sampler on stage. In this year Wonder also wrote and produced the dance hit "Let's Get Serious", performed by Jermaine Jackson and (ranked by *Billboard* as the No. 1 R&B single of 1980).

Hotter than July (1980) became Wonder's first platinum-selling single album, and its single "Happy Birthday" was a successful vehicle for his campaign to establish Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday as a national holiday. The album also included "Master Blaster (Jammin')", "I Ain't Gonna Stand for It", and the sentimental ballad, "Lately".

In 1982, Wonder released a retrospective of his 1970s work with *Stevie Wonder's Original Musiquarium*, which included four new songs: the ten-minute funk classic "Do I Do" (which featured Dizzy Gillespie), "That Girl" (one of the year's biggest singles to chart on the R&B side), "Front Line", a narrative about a soldier in the Vietnam War that

Wonder wrote and sang in the 1st person, and "Ribbon in the Sky", one of his many classic compositions. Wonder also gained a No. 1 hit that year in collaboration with Paul McCartney in their paean to racial harmony, "Ebony and Ivory".

In 1983, Wonder performed the song "Stay Gold", the theme to Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation of S.E. Hinton's novel *The Outsiders*. Wonder wrote the lyrics.

In 1983, Wonder scheduled an album to be entitled *People Work, Human Play*. The album never surfaced and instead 1984 saw the release of Wonder's soundtrack album for *The Woman in Red*. The lead single, "I Just Called to Say I Love You", was a No. 1 pop and R&B hit in both the United States and the United Kingdom, where it was placed 13th in the list of best-selling singles in the UK published in 2002. It went on to win an Academy award for best song in 1985. The album also featured a guest appearance by Dionne Warwick, singing the duet "It's You" with Stevie and a few songs of her own. The following year's *In Square Circle* featured the No. 1 pop hit "Part-Time Lover". The album also has a Top 10 Hit with "Go Home." It also featured the ballad "Overjoyed" which was originally written for *Journey Through the Secret Life of Plants*, but didn't make the album. He performed "Overjoyed" on *Saturday Night Live* when he was the host. He was also featured in Chaka Khan's cover of Prince's "I Feel For You", alongside Melle Mel, playing his signature harmonica. In roughly the same period he was also featured on harmonica on Eurythmics' single, "There Must Be an Angel (Playing with My Heart)" and Elton John's "I Guess That's Why They Call It The Blues".

By 1985, Wonder was an American icon,^[citation needed] the subject of good-humored jokes about blindness and affectionately impersonated by Eddie Murphy on *Saturday Night Live*.^[15] Wonder sometimes joined in the jokes himself such as in *The Motown Revue* with Smokey Robinson. He was in a featured duet with Bruce Springsteen on the all-star charity single for African Famine Relief, "We Are the World", and he was part of another charity single the following year (1986), the AIDS-inspired "That's What Friends Are For". He also played the harmonica on the album *Dreamland Express* by John Denver in the song "If Ever", a song Wonder co-wrote with Stephanie Andrews. He also wrote the track "I Do Love You" for The Beach Boys' 1985 self-titled album. Wonder also played the harmonica on a track called "Can't Help Lovin' That Man" from "Showboat" on "The Broadway Album" by Barbra Streisand.

In 1986, Wonder appeared on *The Cosby Show*, as himself, in the episode "A Touch of Wonder".

In 1987, Wonder appeared on Michael Jackson's *Bad* album on the duet "Just Good Friends". Michael Jackson also sang a duet with him titled "Get It" on Wonder's 1987 album *Characters*. This was a minor hit single, as were "Skeletons" and "You Will Know". In the fall of 1988, Wonder duetted with Julio Iglesias on the hit single "My Love", which appeared on Iglesias' album *Non Stop*.^[citation needed]

Later career: 1991–2001

After 1987's *Characters* LP, Wonder continued to release new material, but at a slower pace. He recorded a soundtrack album for Spike Lee's film *Jungle Fever* in 1991. From this album, singles and videos were released for "Gotta Have You" and "These Three Words". The B-side to the "Gotta Have You" single was "Feeding Off The Love of the Land", which was played during the end credits of the movie *Jungle Fever* but was not included on the soundtrack. A piano and vocal version of "Feeding Off The Love of the Land" was also released on the *Nobody's Child: Romanian Angel Appeal* compilation.

Conversation Peace and the live album *Natural Wonder* were also released in the 1990s. The former received its European launch at a high-profile March 1995 press conference in Paris, where Stevie mentioned how the tearing down of The Wall between East and West Berlin and the desire for a united Europe had played a significant part in the inspiration behind the album.

In 1994, Wonder made a guest appearance on the KISS cover album *KISS My Ass: Classic KISS Regrooved*, playing harmonica and supplying background vocals for the song "Deuce", performed by Lenny Kravitz.

In 1996, Wonder's *Songs in the Key of Life* was selected as a documentary subject for the Classic Albums documentary series. This series dedicates 60 minutes to one groundbreaking record per feature. The same year, he performed John Lennon's song "Imagine" in the closing ceremony of the Atlanta Olympic Games. The same year, Wonder performed in a remix of "Seasons of Love" from the Jonathan Larson musical *Rent*.

In 1997, Wonder collaborated with Babyface for a song about abuse (domestic violence) called "How Come, How Long" which was nominated for an award.^[*citation needed*]

In December 1999, Wonder announced that he was interested in pursuing an intraocular retinal prosthesis to partially restore his sight. That same year, Wonder was featured on harmonica in the Sting song "Brand New Day".

In 2000, Wonder contributed two new songs to the soundtrack for Spike Lee's *Bamboozled* album ("Misrepresented People" and "Some Years Ago").

Current career: 2002–present

In March 2002, Wonder performed at the opening ceremonies of the 2002 Winter Paralympics in Salt Lake City.

On July 2, 2005, Wonder performed in the Live 8 concert in Philadelphia.

Wonder's first new album in ten years, *A Time to Love*, was released on October 18, 2005, after having been pushed back from first a May, and then a June release. The album was released electronically on September 27, 2005, exclusively on Apple's iTunes Music Store. The first single, "So What the Fuss", was released in April. A second single, "From the Bottom of My Heart" was a hit on adult-contemporary R&B radio. The album also featured a duet with India.Arie on the title track "A Time to Love".

Wonder performed at the pre-game show for Super Bowl XL in Detroit in early 2006, singing various hit singles (with his four-year-old son on drums) and accompanying Aretha Franklin during "The Star Spangled Banner".



Stevie Wonder at the Grammy Awards of 1990



Stevie Wonder at a conference in Salvador, Brazil, in July 2006

In March 2006, Wonder received new national exposure on the top-rated *American Idol* television program. Wonder performed "My Love Is on Fire" (from *A Time To Love*) live on the show itself. In June 2006, Wonder made a guest appearance on Busta Rhymes' new album, *The Big Bang* on the track "Been through the Storm". He sings the refrain and plays the piano on the Dr. Dre and Sha Money XL produced track. He appeared again on the last track of Snoop Dogg's new album *Tha Blue Carpet Treatment*, "Conversations". The song is a remake of "Have a Talk with God" from *Songs in the Key of Life*.

In 2006, Wonder staged a duet with Andrea Bocelli on the latter's album *Amore*, offering harmonica and additional vocals on "Canzoni Stonate". Wonder also performed at Washington, D.C.'s 2006 "A Capitol Fourth" celebration.

On August 2, 2007, Wonder announced the A Wonder Summer's Night 13 concert tour—his first U.S. tour in over ten years. This tour was inspired by the recent passing of his mother, as he stated at the conclusion of the tour on December 9 at the Jobing.com Arena in Glendale, Arizona.



Wonder performs during the final day of the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado.

On August 28, 2008, Wonder performed at the Democratic National Convention at Invesco Field at Mile High in Denver, Colorado. Songs included a previously unreleased song, "Fear Can't Put Dreams to Sleep," and "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours".

On September 8, 2008, Wonder started the European leg of his Wonder Summer's Night Tour, the first time he had toured Europe in over a decade. His opening show was at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham. During the tour, Wonder played eight UK gigs; four at The O2 Arena in London, two in Birmingham and two at the M.E.N. Arena in Manchester. Wonder's other stops in the tour's European leg also found him performing in Holland (Rotterdam), Sweden (Stockholm), Germany (Cologne, Mannheim and Munich), Norway (Hamar), France (Paris), Italy (Milan) and Denmark (Aalborg). Wonder also toured Australia (Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane) and New Zealand (Christchurch, Auckland and New Plymouth) in October and November.

By June 2008, Wonder was working on two projects simultaneously: a new album titled *The Gospel Inspired By Lula* which will deal with the various spiritual and cultural crises facing the world, and *Through The Eyes Of Wonder*, an album which Wonder has described as a performance piece that will reflect his experience as a blind man. Wonder was also keeping the door open for a collaboration with Tony Bennett and Quincy Jones concerning a rumored jazz album.^[16] If Wonder was to join forces with Bennett, it would not be for the first time; Their rendition of "For Once in My Life" earned them a Grammy for best pop collaboration with vocals in 2006. Wonder's harmonica playing can be heard on the 2009 Grammy-nominated "Never Give You Up" featuring CJ Hilton and Raphael Saadiq.^[17]

Wonder performed on January 18, 2009 at the We Are One: The Obama Inaugural Celebration at the Lincoln Memorial. On Inauguration Day, January 20, 2009, Wonder performed the song "Brand New Day" with musician Sting. He performed his new song "All About the Love Again" and, with other musical artists, "Signed, Sealed & Delivered". On February 23, 2009, Wonder became the second recipient of the Library of Congress's Gershwin Prize for pop music, honored by president Barack Obama at the White House.

On July 7, 2009, Wonder performed "Never Dreamed You'd Leave in Summer" and "They Won't Go When I Go" at the Staples Center for Michael Jackson's memorial service. On October 29, 2009, Wonder performed at the 25th anniversary concert for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Among songs with B.B. King, Wonder performed Michael Jackson's 'The Way You Make Me Feel', during which he became distraught and was unable to continue until he regained his composure.



Wonder is presented the Gershwin Award for Lifetime Achievement by United States president Barack Obama.



Wonder at the October 16, 2011 Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial dedication concert

On January 22, 2010, Wonder performed "Bridge Over Troubled Water" for the Hope for Haiti Now: A Global Benefit for Earthquake Relief event to help victims of the earthquake in Port-au-Prince on January 12, 2010.

On March 6, 2010, Wonder was appointed a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters by French Culture Minister Frédéric Mitterrand. Wonder had been due to be invested with this honor in 1981, but scheduling problems prevented this from happening. A lifetime achievement award was also given to Wonder on the same day, at France's biggest music awards.

His 2010 tour included a two-hour set at the Bonnaroo Music Festival in Manchester, Tennessee,^[18] a stop at London's "Hard Rock Calling" in Hyde Park, and appearances at England's Glastonbury Festival, Rotterdam's North Sea Jazz Festival, and a concert in Bergen, Norway and a concert in Dublin, Ireland at the O2 Arena on June 24.

In February 2011, the Apollo Theater announced that Wonder will be the next in line for the Apollo Legends Hall of Fame. The theater said that the singer will be inducted into the New York City institution's Hall of Fame in five months.^[19]

On June 25, 2011, Wonder performed at the opening ceremony of the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens, Greece. On January 28, 2012, Wonder and Christina Aguilera gave a musical tribute at Etta James' funeral. Wonder played "Shelter in the Rain" and The Lord's Prayer while Aguilera sang "At Last."

Wonder performed at the February 19, 2012 memorial service for Whitney Houston at the New Hope Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey. He changed some of the lyrics of his song "Ribbon in the Sky" in dedication to Ms. Houston.

On June 4, 2012, Wonder performed at the Jubilee Concert for HM Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee celebrations at a mass open air concert outside Buckingham Palace, London.

Wonder appeared on singer Celine Dion's studio album *Loved Me Back to Life* performing a cover of his 1985 song "Overjoyed".^[20] The album was released in October 2013.

On October 29, 2013, Wonder confirmed that he is to release his first album in eight years, with two albums in 2014. He revealed that he had been recording new material for the albums *When the World Began* and *Ten Billion Hearts*, in collaboration with producer David Foster.^[21]

Legacy

A prominent figure in popular music during the latter half of the 20th century, Wonder has recorded more than thirty U.S. top ten hits and won twenty-two Grammy Awards^[1] (the most ever won by a solo artist) as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award. He has also won an Academy Award for Best Song,^[22] and been inducted into both the Rock and Roll^[23] and Songwriters^[24] halls of fame. He has also been awarded the Polar Music Prize.^[25] American music magazine *Rolling Stone* named him the ninth greatest singer of all time.^{[26][27]} In June 2009 he became the fourth artist to receive the Montreal Jazz Festival Spirit Award.^[28]

He has ten U.S. number-one hits on the pop charts as well as 20 R&B number one hits, and album sales totaling more than 100 million units. Wonder has recorded several critically acclaimed albums and hit singles, and writes and produces songs for many of his label mates and outside artists as well. Wonder plays the piano, synthesizer, harmonica, congas, drums, bass guitar, bongos, organ, melodica, and clavinet. In his childhood, he was best known for his harmonica work, but today he is better known for his keyboard skills and vocal ability. Wonder was the first Motown artist and second African-American musician to win an Academy Award for Best Original Song, which he won for his 1984 hit single "I Just Called to Say I Love You" from the movie *The Woman in Red*.

Wonder has recorded with Jon Gibson, a Christian soul musician, on a remake of his own song, "Have a Talk With God" (from the 1989 album *Body & Soul*), covered by Gibson in which Wonder plays harmonica.^[29] The two men met in the early 1980s through a shared music agent (Bill Wolfer).

Classic period

Wonder's "classic period" is generally agreed to consist of the concept albums he created in the early- to mid-1970s, peaking in 1976. Some observers see in 1971's *Where I'm Coming From* certain indications of the beginning of the classic period, such as its new funky keyboard style which Wonder used throughout the classic period. Some determine Wonder's first "classic" album to be 1972's *Music of My Mind*, on which he attained personal control of production, and on which he programmed a series of songs integrated with one another to make a concept album. Others skip over early 1972 and determine the beginning of the classic period to be *Talking Book* in late 1972, the album in which Wonder "hit his stride".

Impact

Wonder's songs are renownedWikipedia:Manual of Style/Words to watch#Unsupported attributions for being quite difficult to sing. He has a very developed sense of harmony and uses many extended chords utilizing extensions such as ninths, elevenths, thirteenth, diminished fifths, etc. in his compositions. Many of his melodies make abrupt, unpredictable changes. Many of his vocal melodies are also melismatic, meaning that a syllable is sung over several notes. Some of his best known and most frequently covered songs are played in keys which are more often found in jazz than in pop and rock. For example, "Superstition", "Higher Ground" and "I Wish" are in the key of E flat minor, and feature distinctive riffs in the E flat minor pentatonic scale (i.e. largely on the black notes of the keyboard).^[citation needed]

Wonder played a large role in bringing synthesizers to the forefront of popular music. In 1981, Wonder became the first owner of an E-mu Emulator. Wonder also owned the New England Digital Synclavier Digital Audio System as well as the Fairlight.

Personal life

Wonder has been married twice: to Motown singer/songwriter and frequent collaborator Syreeta Wright from 1970 until their amicable divorce in 1972; and since 2001 to fashion designer Kai Millard Morris. He has seven children from his second marriage and several relationships. In August 2012, it was revealed that Wonder had filed for divorce from Kai Millard, agreeing to pay Millard for spousal support as well as child support for their two children, asking for joint custody. Wonder and his wife had been separated since October 2009.

Wonder met Yolanda Simmons when she applied for a job as his secretary for his publishing company.^[30] Simmons bore Wonder a daughter on February 2, 1975: Aisha Morris. According to Wonder, the name Aisha is "African for strength and intelligence". After she was born, Stevie said "she was the one thing that I needed in my life and in my music for a long time. It was this in mind, she was the inspiration for his hit single "Isn't She Lovely". Aisha Morris is a singer who has toured with her father and accompanied him on recordings, including his 2005 album, *A Time 2 Love*. Wonder has two sons with Kai Millard Morris; the older is named Kailand and he occasionally performs as a drummer on stage with his father. The younger son, Mandla Kadjay Carl Stevland Morris, was born May 13, 2005, his father's 55th birthday. In May 2006, Wonder's mother died in Los Angeles, at the age of 76. During his September 8, 2008 UK concert in Birmingham, he spoke of his decision to begin touring again following his loss. "I want to take all the pain that I feel and celebrate and turn it around."

Wonder's Taxi Productions owns Los Angeles radio station KJLH.

Charting discography

- *The Jazz Soul of Little Stevie* (1962)
 - *Tribute to Uncle Ray* (1962)
 - *With a Song in My Heart* (1963)
 - *Stevie at the Beach* (1964)
 - *Up-Tight* (1966)
 - *Down to Earth* (1966)
 - *I Was Made to Love Her* (1967)
 - *Someday at Christmas* (1967)
 - *Eivets Rednow* (1968)
 - *For Once in My Life* (1968)
 - *My Cherie Amour* (1969)
 - *Signed, Sealed & Delivered* (1970)
 - *Where I'm Coming From* (1971)
 - *Music of My Mind* (1972)
 - *Talking Book* (1972)
 - *Innervisions* (1973)
 - *Fulfillingness' First Finale* (1974)
 - *Songs in the Key of Life* (1976)
 - *Stevie Wonder's Journey Through "The Secret Life of Plants"* (1979)
 - *Hotter than July* (1980)
 - *The Woman in Red* (1984)
 - *In Square Circle* (1985)
 - *Characters* (1987)
 - *Jungle Fever* (1991)
 - *Conversation Peace* (1995)
 - *A Time to Love* (2005)
-

Top 40 singles

Year	Title	Chart positions				
		US [31]	US R&B	US Dance	US AC	UK
1963	"Fingertips – Pt. 2"	1	1	–	–	–
1966	"Uptight (Everything's Alright)"	3	1	–	–	14
	"Blowin' in the Wind"	9	1	–	–	36
	"A Place in the Sun"	9	3	–	–	20
1967	"I Was Made to Love Her"	2	1	–	–	5
1968	"For Once in My Life"	2	1	–	–	3
	"Shoo-Be-Doo-Be-Doo-Da-Day"	9	1	–	–	–
1969	"My Cherie Amour"	4	4	–	–	4
	"Yester-Me, Yester-You, Yesterday"	7	5	–	–	2
1970	"Never Had a Dream Come True"	26	11	–	–	5
	"Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours"	3	1	–	–	15
	"Heaven Help Us All"	8	2	–	–	29
1971	"We Can Work It Out"	13	3	–	–	27
	"If You Really Love Me"	8	4	–	–	20
1972	"Superwoman (Where Were You When I Needed You)"	33	13	–	–	–
	"Superstition"	1	1	–	–	11
1973	"You Are the Sunshine of My Life"	1	3	–	–	3
	"Higher Ground"	4	1	–	–	29
	"Living for the City"	8	1	–	–	15
	"Don't You Worry 'bout a Thing"	16	2	–	–	–
1974	"He's Misstra Know It All"	–	–	–	–	10
	"You Haven't Done Nothin'" (with The Jackson 5)	1	1	–	–	30
	"Boogie On Reggae Woman"	3	1	–	–	12
1977	"I Wish"	1	1	–	–	5
	"Sir Duke"	1	1	–	–	2
	"Another Star"	32	18	–	–	29
	"As"	36	36	–	–	–
1979	"Send One Your Love"	4	5	–	–	–
1980	"Master Blaster (Jammin')"	3	1	1	1	2
	"I Ain't Gonna Stand for It"	10	4	–	–	11
1981	"Lately"	–	–	–	–	3
	"Happy Birthday"	–	17	–	–	2
	"That Girl"	3	1	–	–	39

1982	"Do I Do"	7	2	–	–	10
	"Ebony and Ivory" (with Paul McCartney)	1	8	–	–	1
	"Ribbon in the Sky"	–	9	–	–	–
1984	"I Just Called to Say I Love You"	1	1	–	1	1
1985	"Part-Time Lover"	1	1	1	1	3
	"That's What Friends Are For" (with Dionne Warwick, Elton John and Gladys Knight)	1	1	–	1	16
	"Love Light in Flight"	17	4	6	10	–
1986	"Go Home"	10	2	1	1	–
	"Land of La La"	–	19	–	–	–
	"Overjoyed"	24	8	–	1	17
1987	"Skeletons"	19	1	20	–	–
1988	"Get It" (with Michael Jackson)	–	4	–	–	37
	"My Eyes Don't Cry"	–	6	12	–	–
	"You Will Know"	–	1	–	–	–
1989	"With Each Beat of My Heart"	–	28	–	–	–
1990	"Keep Our Love Alive"	–	24	–	–	–
1991	"Fun Day (From "Jungle Fever")"	–	6	–	–	–
	"Gotta Have You (From "Jungle Fever")"	–	3	–	–	–
1992	"These Three Words"	–	7	–	–	–
1995	"For Your Love"	–	11	–	30	23
2003	"Signed, Sealed, Delivered (I'm Yours)" (Blue feat. Stevie Wonder & Angie Stone)"	–	–	–	–	11
2005	"So What the Fuss"	–	34	–	40	19
	"From the Bottom of My Heart"	–	25	–	7	–

U.S. and UK albums

Year	Album	Chart positions		
		US	US R&B	UK
1963	<i>Recorded Live: The 12 Year Old Genius</i>	1	–	–
1966	<i>Up-Tight</i>	33	2	–
1966	<i>Down to Earth</i>	72	8	–
1967	<i>I Was Made to Love Her</i>	45	7	–
1968	<i>For Once in My Life</i>	50	4	–
1969	<i>My Cherie Amour</i>	34	3	17
1970	<i>Signed, Sealed, and Delivered</i>	25	7	–
1971	<i>Where I'm Coming From</i>	–	7	–
1972	<i>Music of My Mind</i>	21	6	–
1972	<i>Talking Book</i>	3	1	16
1973	<i>Innervisions</i>	4	1	6

1974	<i>Fulfillingness' First Finale</i>	1	1	5
1976	<i>Songs in the Key of Life</i>	1	1	2
1979	<i>Journey through the Secret Life of Plants</i>	4	4	7
1980	<i>Hotter than July</i>	2	1	2
1982	<i>Stevie Wonder's Original Musiquarium</i>	4	1	8
1984	<i>The Woman in Red</i>	4	1	2
1985	<i>In Square Circle</i>	5	1	5
1987	<i>Characters</i>	17	1	33
1995	<i>Conversation Peace</i>	17	2	8
1996	<i>Natural Wonder</i>	–	88	–
1996	<i>Song Review A Greatest Hits Collection</i>	–	100	19
2000	<i>At the Close of a Century</i>	–	100	–
2002	<i>The Definitive Collection</i>	35	28	–
2004	<i>Best of Stevie Wonder: 20th Century Masters Christmas Collection</i>	–	90	–
2005	<i>A Time to Love</i>	5	2	24
2007	<i>Number 1's</i>	171	40	23

Awards and recognition

Grammy Awards

Wonder has won 22 Grammy Awards: as well as a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award which he was presented in 1996.

Year	Award	Title
1973	Best Rhythm & Blues Song	"Superstition"
1973	Best R&B Vocal Performance, Male	"Superstition"
1973	Best Pop Vocal Performance, Male	"You are the Sunshine of My Life"
1973	Album of the Year	<i>Innervisions</i>
1974	Best Rhythm & Blues Song	"Living for the City"
1974	Best Male R&B Vocal Performance	"Boogie On Reggae Woman"
1974	Best Male Pop Vocal Performance	<i>Fulfillingness' First Finale</i>
1974	Album of the Year	<i>Fulfillingness' First Finale</i>
1976	Best Male R&B Vocal Performance	"I Wish"
1976	Best Male Pop Vocal Performance	<i>Songs in the Key of Life</i>
1976	Best Producer of the Year*	N/A
1976	Album of the Year	<i>Songs in the Key of Life</i>
1985	Best Male R&B Vocal Performance	<i>In Square Circle</i>
1986	Best Pop Performance by a Duo Or Group With Vocal (awarded to Dionne Warwick, Elton John, Gladys Knight, and Wonder)	"That's What Friends Are For"
1995	Best Rhythm & Blues Song	"For Your Love"
1995	Best Male R&B Vocal Performance	"For Your Love"

1998	Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocal(s) (awarded to <i>Herbie Hancock, Robert Sadin, and Wonder</i>)	"St. Louis Blues"
1998	Best Male R&B Vocal Performance	"St. Louis Blues"
2002	Best R&B Performance by a Duo Or Group With Vocals (awarded to <i>Wonder and Take 6</i>)	"Love's in Need of Love Today"
2005	Best Male Pop Vocal Performance	"From the Bottom of My Heart"
2005	Best R&B Performance by a Duo Or Group With Vocals (awarded to <i>Beyoncé and Wonder</i>)	"So Amazing"
2006	Best Pop Collaboration With Vocals (awarded to <i>Tony Bennett and Wonder</i>)	"For Once in My Life"

- From 1965 to 1980 a self-produced artist received one GRAMMY Award as an artist and an additional one as a producer in the Record of the Year and Album of the Year categories

Other awards and recognition

- 1983: inducted to the Songwriters Hall of Fame.
- 1984: received an Academy Award for Best Song for "I Just Called to Say I Love You" from the movie *The Woman in Red*.
- 1989: inducted to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
- 1999: received the Polar Music Prize and Kennedy Center Honors.^[32]
- 2002: received the George and Ira Gershwin Lifetime Achievement Award at UCLA's Spring Sing. The same year, Wonder received the Sammy Cahn Lifetime Achievement Award from the Songwriters Hall of Fame.
- 2004: received the Billboard Century Award. Also in 2004, Rolling Stone Magazine ranked him No. 15 on their list of the 100 Greatest Rock and Roll Artists of All Time^[33].
- 2006: was inducted, as one of the first inductees, into the Michigan Walk of Fame. The same year, Wonder received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis.
- 2008: Ranked at number five on "The Billboard Hot 100 Top All-Time Artists", making him as the third most successful male artist in the history of *Billboard* Hot 100 chart.
- 2009: Recipient of the second Gershwin Prize For Popular Song.
- 2009: Recipient of the Montreal Jazz Festival Spirit Award. This special award underlines a popular artist's extraordinary contribution to the musical world. The Montreal Jazz Festival Spirit Award is in bronze.
- 2009: Named a Messenger of Peace by the United Nations.
- 2012: Inducted into The SoulMusic Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement Award at SoulMusic.com.
- 2013: received the Music Makes One Global Ambassador Award from the outstanding music award ceremony of Asia and the World, Mnet Asian Music Awards.

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Further reading

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External links

Main sites

- Official website (<http://www.steviewonder.net>)
- Stevie Wonder (<http://www.discogs.com/artist/Stevie+Wonder>) discography at Discogs
- Stevie Wonder (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005567/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- Stevie Wonder (<http://www.ibdb.com/person.asp?ID=73087>) at the Internet Broadway Database
- Appearances (<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/steviewonder>) on C-SPAN
- Stevie Wonder (http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/w/stevie_wonder/index.html) collected news and commentary at *The New York Times*
- Works by or about Stevie Wonder (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n50-13801>) in libraries (WorldCat catalog)

Other sites

- *Never That Simple: Stevie Wonder* (<http://www.robertchristgau.com/xg/music/wonder-kc.php>) by Robert Christgau
- *Classic interviews with Stevie Wonder at SoulMusic.com* (<http://www.soulmusic.com/steviewonder.html>)

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