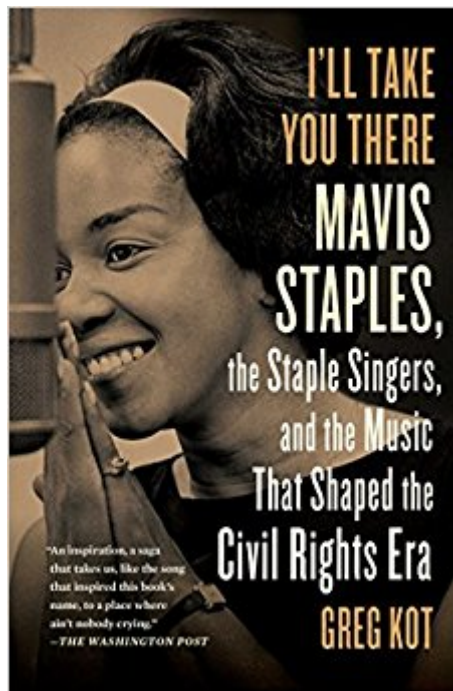




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# I'll Take You There: Mavis Staples, The Staple Singers, And The Music That Shaped The Civil Rights Era



## Synopsis

“A biography that will send readers back to the music of Mavis and the Staple Singers with deepened appreciation and a renewed spirit of discovery” (Kirkus Reviews, starred review) from the acclaimed music journalist and author featured prominently in the new HBO documentary *Mavis! This is the untold story of living legend Mavis Staples* lead singer of the Staple Singers and a major figure in the music that shaped the civil rights era. One of the most enduring artists of popular music, Mavis and her talented family fused gospel, soul, folk, and rock to transcend racism and oppression through song. Honing her prodigious talent on the Southern gospel circuit of the 1950s, Mavis and the Staple Singers went on to sell more than 30 million records, with message-oriented soul music that became a soundtrack to the civil rights movement inspiring Martin Luther King, Jr. himself. Critically acclaimed biographer and Chicago Tribune music critic Greg Kot cuts to the heart of Mavis Staples’s music, revealing the intimate stories of her sixty-year career. From her love affair with Bob Dylan, to her creative collaborations with Prince, to her recent revival alongside Wilco’s Jeff Tweedy, this definitive account shows Mavis as you’ve never seen her before. *I’ll Take You There* was written with the complete cooperation of Mavis and her family. Readers will also hear from Prince, Bonnie Raitt, David Byrne, and many others whose lives have been influenced by Mavis’s talent. Filled with never-before-told stories, this fascinating biography illuminates a legendary singer and group during a historic period of change in America. “Ultimately, Kot depicts the endurance of Mavis Staples and her family’s music as an inspiration, a saga that takes us, like the song that inspired this book’s name, to a place where ain’t nobody crying” (The Washington Post).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**\*Starred Review\*** Never forgetting their down-home southern roots even as musical styles changed, the Staple Singers for decades maintained an integrity that strongly appealed to fans and musicians. Music journalist Kot chronicles the amazing story of a family that went from a hardscrabble life in Mississippi to Chicago's church circuit to worldwide fame, merging the genres of roots, gospel, and soul. Pops' distinctive guitar playing and Mavis' big voice became their signatures. They rode the chitlin' circuit in a Cadillac, with Pops carrying a gun in his attaché case along with their earnings. Kot details their friendships with scores of artists, including Mahalia Jackson, Aretha Franklin, Curtis Mayfield, Bob Dylan (who proposed to Mavis), Johnny Cash, Ray Charles, Bonnie Raitt, and Prince. Drawing on interviews with Mavis and other musicians, Kot details the creative process behind the hits "Heavy Makes You Happy," "Respect Yourself," and "I'll Take You There." With an exuberance that matches the Staples' sound, Kot portrays their ups and downs through gospel, the message music of the civil rights era, R & B pop music, the disastrous move to disco, and, finally, trying to find themselves again. Meanwhile, Mavis' career as a solo artist culminated in a 2011 Grammy for best Americana album. This is a moving tribute to a very talented family and one gracious woman, in particular. --Vanessa Bush --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Kot depicts the endurance of Mavis Staples and her family's music as an inspiration, a saga that takes us, like the song that inspired this book's name, to a place where ain't nobody crying." (Washington Post) "[I'll Take You There] takes us deep into the golden age of Mavis and her marvelously talented group." (Publishers Weekly) "A biography that will send readers back to the music of Mavis and the Staple Singers with deepened appreciation and a renewed spirit of discovery." Through it all, the ebullience of Mavis Staples and her music shine through. (Kirkus Reviews (starred review)) "Kot chronicles the amazing story of a family that went from a hardscrabble life in Mississippi to Chicago's church circuit to worldwide fame, merging the genres of roots, gospel, and soul." This is a moving tribute to a very talented family and one gracious

woman, in particular. (Booklist (starred review)) "A lively, engaging family biography, written with the Stapleses' cooperation and filled with vivid portraits, celebrity cameos and descriptions of music so evocative I kept wishing the book had come with a set of CDs. (Tampa Bay Times) "Emotional honesty resonates throughout I'll Take You There. Kot provides an unflinching look into the Stapleses' struggles to maintain their spiritual and artistic integrity I'll Take You There is a biography that's well worth the heavenly journey. (NPR)" [A] fascinating testimony. . . . Kot's portrayal of Mavis is deft and balanced, worthy of a performance that, no matter how often you play it, never fails to live up to the promise of its title." (Chicago Tribune) "Mavis Staples and the Staple Singers are a mighty river running through more than a half-century of song, connecting Sam Cooke to Prince and Bob Dylan to Wilco. Thoroughly researched and elegantly told, I'll Take You There offers powerful and inspiring insight into not only American music, but American history. (Alan Light, author of The Holy or the Broken: Leonard Cohen, Jeff Buckley, and the Unlikely Ascent of Hallelujah) "Kot's take on the singer's immense discography is invaluable, and Staples' indomitable spirit shines through." (The A.V. Club) "A thorough and illuminating biography that offers plenty of revealing details about a group the Band's Robbie Robertson once likened to 'a lonely train in the distance.' (Paste) "Involving from beginning to end. . . . [Kot] charts the [Staples] family's origins in gospel music; their gradual drift into folk, soul and pop; the reverberations of their increasingly political songs during the civil rights era. . . 'I'll Take You There'...is rich musical history." (New York Times) "Kot has a knack for distilling the stuff of interviews and research into pithy descriptions of the Staple Singers' lean years." (The Nation) "Mr. Kot is deft at describing music on its own terms.... Like the best music biographies, I'll Take You There sends readers running for their collections to investigate the book's many musical premises and revelations." (New York Observer)

An amazing inside look not only at the Staple Family but at the musical landscape of American Folk, Blues and Black Gospel music!! How the music of the 60's, and 70's crossed all categorical lines in the public arena!! A great read for all music lovers!!

This is a fascinating book that tells the story of race in America through one family's eyes, and through popular music. The Staples family experienced slavery, Jim Crow, share cropping, the northern migration from Mississippi to Chicago, the civil rights movement and more. Their family

band started in gospel and incorporated folk, blues, funk, soul and rock music into their mix. Kot's use of interviews and archival materials, and his experience as a popular music critic, make for a very readable story. If you read just one book about music this year, this should be it.

Before I read this book, the only thing I knew about Mavis Staples the Staple Singers was their songs "I'll Take You There" and "Let's Do It Again". After reading this book, I realized how little I knew about the Staples family and how unfair I was to judge them by only two songs. The book presents the history of the family; their roots and their beginnings. It continues through through their early performances up to the present day. The author tells us about their friends in the music industry and I enjoyed imagining backyard barbeques with the Staples Family and Mahalia Jackson. Because they were somewhat before my time, I didn't know how popular they were at the height of their career nor how influential they were and the impact they had during the Civil Rights Movement. The author clearly enjoys their music as he describes their songs with a critics ear. Because some of his descriptions were so thoughtful, I looked up some of the songs on YouTube so I could hear what the author appreciated so much. He describes why they were game-changers in the music industry giving the reader an appreciation for their musical innovations and for their courage to sing their style music without mimicing others. I enjoyed reading this book. I just wish it came with an accompanying CD!

An excellent narative and historic document from personal point of view.

It Gives You Insight on Pop Staples and how he started the group and how the group progressed to stardom. It had some heartfelt and touching family moments. The author did a good job but, I usually like to get a story like this, in the first person's voice. It seemed a lot of the information later on, came from other people and not so much the Staples. I believe a lot of it was true but, I would have rather heard more of the actual Staple's thoughts and/or opinions. Otherwise, if you love the Staple Singers like I do it's worth having this slice of their history.

Love Mavis. Love her family and its rich history, integrity and style. A good read. Music that stems from truth, history, faith, depth and joy. Just saw Mavis in concert last year. The power of Grace in this family and in Mavis is palpable. The concert was incredible and this is a great book to find out more about this elegant, magnificent soul and her family, and how it was in the beginning.

My husband and I both are reading itMavis is a first class lady and singerMy husband and I met her and the family in the 1970's at a club in Georgetown DC called the Cellar DoorMavis with her dad and the rest of the group stood and talked with us, like we were friendsThe book give a lot of insight of the times and the hardships many black artist had to endureGreat reading you will not be disappointedPatricia Adams of Beltsville Maryland

Greg Kot does a fantastic job capturing the life and times of Mavis and the Staples family. This book takes me back down memory lane and brings forth bountiful thoughts of good times and experiences. In the pages of this book, I can see and feel the actions of Cleo, Pervis, Yvonne, and Cynthia. Additionally, Mavis' effervescence shines through and lights the way through the entire journey. Long live the legacies of Pops and Moms Staples.

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