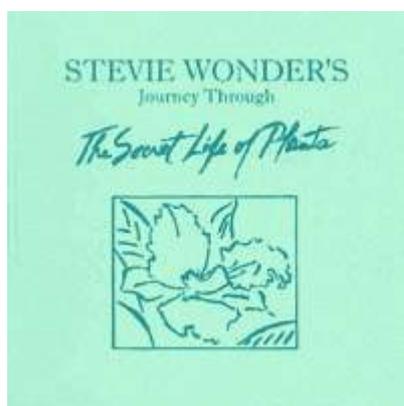


STEVIE WONDER'S

SOUNDTRACK ALBUMS



SIGNATURE
S O U N D S
O N L I N E . C O M



DID YOU KNOW THAT STEVIE WONDER IS THE ONLY MOTOWN RECORDS RECORDING ARTIST TO HAVE ACHIEVED SUCCESS WITH THREE LANDMARK SOUNDTRACK ALBUMS?

The follow-up studio album, after the anthology album "Looking Back" (1977), was "Stevie Wonder's Journey Through The Secret Life of Plants", the first soundtrack album of his career, released in 1979.

It was based on the book of the same name written by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird. The album can be described as a soundtrack documentary relating to plant life.

The album only produced one major hit single, "Send One Your Love", which topped the Billboard Adult Contemporary Singles Chart week-ending 22nd December 1979 (2 weeks). The single features Stevie Wonder on vocal and Ben Bridges and Rick Zunigar on guitars. It is a very slow tempo track, with Rick Zunigar playing standing bass, and Ben Bridges playing rhythm acoustic guitar. Wonder also plays the drums on the track. This is a very relaxing track compared to many of his previous recordings, similar in tempo to "You Are The Sunshine of My Life".

The track was recorded at the famous Sigma Sound Studios, Philadelphia, PA, known for "The Philadelphia Sound". The beginning of the track features voices of people that explode into a funky jazz fusion number, in a style that was very popular during the 1970s. You can hear a funky bass line with Vocoder voice box used in the

middle of the track and a choir of beautiful voices singing in the background.

Ken Tucker of the Rolling Stone music magazine wrote an article dated 24th January 1980, that contains some unusual advice: "Begin at the end. *Stevie Wonder's Journey through the Secret Life of Plants* is so uneven, so full of tiny pleasures and bloated tedium, that for some assurance that Wonder hasn't lost his touch, you ought to start by listening to the LP's last cut. "Finale" commences with a quick, slapstick keyboard fill and then expands into an undulating instrumental whose billowing bass and synthesizers evoke a quivering field of flowers in bloom. Not only that, but the song works on an additional level as a sly parody of the kind of sweet bombast associated with silent-film melodramas".

The track closes with sound effects and the sound of a bird. Sadly the album was a commercial failure in America compared with the last four studio albums. However the album did extremely well overseas, especially in the UK, where it received tremendous buying public support and on 30th October 1979 was awarded gold certification for 100,000 copies sold according to the BPI. It peaked at number eight on the UK Official Albums Chart week-ending 10th November 1979 (1 week). The single performed better in North America, going to number seven on Canada's National 100 Singles Survey (RPM Singles Chart) week-ending 12th January 1980. On the Cash Box Pop Singles Chart, the Billboard Hot 100 Singles Chart and the Billboard Hot Singles Chart it went to number five.

"STEVIE WONDER'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE SECRET LIFE OF PLANTS"

RELEASED

- 1979

PEAK POSITION

- No.8 – UK Official Albums Chart (1 Week)

PRODUCTION

- Sigma Sounds Studios (Philadelphia)
- Ben Bridges (Guitars)
- Rick Zuniger (Guitars)

"SEND ONE YOUR LOVE"

PEAK POSITION

- No.1 – Billboard Adult Contemporary Singles Chart (2 weeks)
- No.7 – Canada's National 100 Singles Survey
- No.5 – Cash Pop Singles Chart
- No.5 – Billboard Hot 100 Singles Chart
- No.5 – Billboard Hot Singles

AFTER WONDER'S SUCCESSFUL RUN WITH THE ALBUM "STEVIE WONDER'S ORIGINAL MUSIQUARIUM I" HE HAD A QUIET YEAR THEN RE-EMERGED IN 1984 WITH A SOUNDTRACK ALBUM ENTITLED "THE WOMAN IN RED" WHICH ONCE AGAIN BROUGHT HIM INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS.



The soundtrack album features one of Wonder's biggest hit singles across the world. "I Just Called To Say I Love You" topped the Billboard charts on several singles listings: the Billboard Hot 100 Singles Chart week-ending 13th October 1984 (3 weeks), the Cash Box Pop Singles Chart week-ending 13th October 1984 (4 weeks), the Billboard Hot Black Singles Chart week-ending 13th October 1984 (3 weeks) and the Billboard Adult Contemporary Singles Chart week-ending 13th October 1984 (3 weeks). In the UK, the single peaked at number one on 8th September 1984 (6 weeks). It also went to number one on the Irish Pop Singles Chart week-ending 8th September 1984 (5 weeks).

In addition the song made it to number one on singles chart listings in several other European countries that year!

On "I Just Called To Say I Love You" Stevie Wonder played all instruments: synthesizer, drums, vocoder and organ. Once again Wonder creates a rich sound as the only musician on the track, with the support of his long-serving sound engineer Gary Olazabal, who was also associate producer, with additional assistance and technical help from Bob Harlan and Olivier de Bosson as sound engineers working at the Wonderland

Sound Studios where the entire album "Woman in Red" was recorded.

Together the engineers and Stevie Wonder managed to produce a sound which was a mixture of Contemporary Pop and Soul with an urban touch, elegant, smooth, sweet and romantic at the same time. It was a typical recording of the 1980s in some ways, but uniquely Stevie Wonder too. The track was a worldwide smash and reached the top of the charts in many countries, including Australia and New Zealand.

The soundtrack album was also a huge success on both sides of the Atlantic, obtaining platinum certifications in America on the 8th November 1984 according to the RIAA for over one million copies sold and in England, where the BPI awarded the album multi-platinum status for sales in excess of one million copies on the 10th September 1985.

By the mid 1980s Stevie Wonder was at the top of his game in terms of commercial success and was regularly adding more entertainment industry awards to his growing collection.

The soundtrack reflected the popular sound of that period with great emphasis on the use of synthesizers, drums and various percussion instruments, with the addition of some horn instruments on occasions. "Love Light in Flight" consists of Stevie Wonder playing synthesizer and drums and Lenny Castro playing congas. On "Woman in Red" Wonder plays the synthesizer and drums, sings lead and background vocals with other background vocalists.

Another track of interest which he recorded with Donnie Warwick as a duet is entitled "Weakness", which sounds like a classic soulful performance of

"WOMAN IN RED"

RELEASED

- 1984

PEAK POSITION

- No.8 – UK Official Albums Chart (1 Week)

PRODUCTION

- Wonderland Sounds Studios
- Gary Olzabal (Sound Engineer)
- Bob Harlan (Assistance)
- Oliver de Bosson (Assistance)
- Lenny Castro (Congos)
- Isaiah Sanders (Synthesizer)
- Bob Malach (Saxophone)
- Dionne Warwick (singer)

"I JUST CALLED TO SAY I LOVE YOU"

PEAK POSITION

- No.1 – Billboard Hot Singles Chart (3 Weeks)
- No.1 – Cash Box POP Singles Chart (4 Weeks)
- No.1 – Billboard Adult Contemporary Singles Chart (3 Weeks)
- No.1 – UK (6 weeks)
- No.1 – Irish Pop Singles Chart (5 weeks)

the 1970s with a combination of lush strings, synthesizers played by Wonder and Isaiah Sanders and a saxophone solo by Philadelphia-born session musician legend Bob Malach. He recorded the beautiful track "It's You" with Dionne Warwick with string arrangements by British leading classically-trained musician, songwriter, producer and pianist Jeremy Lubbock. It is a song worth listening to with Miss Warwick's rich, polished and mature voice. The "Woman in Red" album was platinum-certified for one million plus sales in America awarded by the RIAA in 1984. In England Wonder received another platinum plaque in 1984 for over 300,000 copies sold.

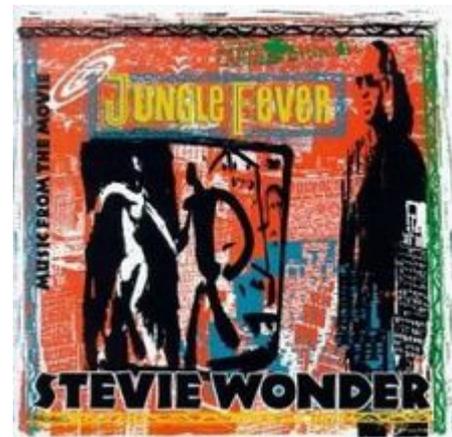
AFTER TWO SUCCESSFUL STUDIO ALBUMS, ONCE AGAIN WONDER RECORDED AN ENTIRE SOUNDTRACK CALLED "JUNGLE FEVER", CO-PRODUCED WITH HIS TOUR BAND LEADER NATHAN WATTS. IT WAS RELEASED ON 28TH MAY 1991.

The album obtained gold certification in America in 1991 for over half a million copies sold. "Jungle Fever" the movie, directed by African American Spike Lee, did very well at the box office and grossed over \$40 million.

The album peaked at number one on the Billboard Soul and R&B Albums Chart week-ending 3rd August 1991 (2 weeks). It performed extremely well against other black soundtrack albums such as "Boyz n the Hood" and "New Jack City", all produced and directed by African American film makers. The gold-certified "Boyz n the Hood" soundtrack was produced by various producers and released by Quincy Jones' label Qwest Records in 1991.

The first single released from Wonder's soundtrack, "Gotta Have You", bought Wonder back into the winning circle with its funky groove. It certainly features a more blues-infused lead vocal melody line through the whole song, similar to his performances during his golden era of the 1970s.

The song was mixed by another long-serving staff member at Wonderland Studios, sound engineer Steve Van Arden, who worked with Stevie Wonder on the "In Square Circle", "Characters"



"JUNGLE FEVER"

RELEASED

- 1991

PEAK POSITION

- No.1 – Billboard Soul and R&B Charts (2 Week)

PRODUCTION

- Wonderland Sounds Studios
- Nathan Watts (Co-Producer)
- Steve Van Arden (Sound Engineer)

"GOTTA HAVE YOU"

PEAK POSITION

- No.3 – Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs

and "Conversation Peace" albums. Van Arden also worked with Eddie Murphy on his album "How Could It Be" (1985), on Vanessa Williams' album "The Right Stuff" (1988) and mixed the track "We Didn't Know" for Whitney Houston on her multi-platinum "I'm Your Baby Tonight" album (1990). He recorded and performed a mid-tempo duet with her.

The song "Gotta Have You" captures the mood of the film "Jungle Fever", focusing on relationships during the 1990s in inner cities such as New York City and Chicago. The song's musical fusion is made up of Urban and Contemporary R&B, with elements of New Jack Swing and Pop-Soul.





This is artistic interpretation of Stevie Wonder performing live by music historian, artist and author Kevin Tomlin.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT STEVIE WONDER'S IMPRESSIVE CAREER, BUY THE E-BOOK WRITTEN BY MUSIC HISTORIAN KEVIN TOMLIN, AVAILABLE ON THIS WEBSITE.