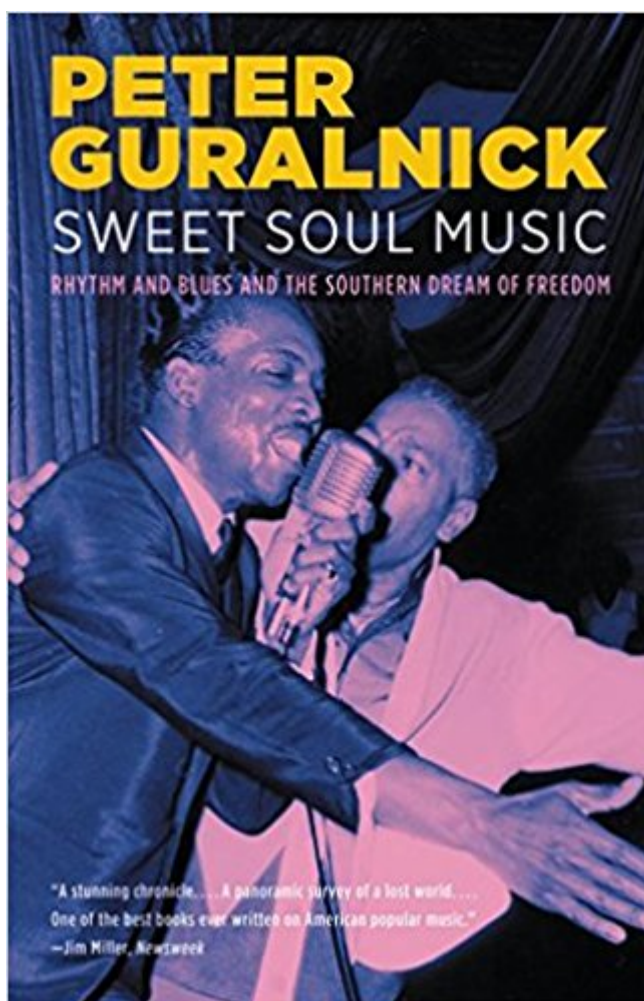


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# Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm And Blues And The Southern Dream Of Freedom



## Synopsis

A gripping narrative that captures the tumult and liberating energy of a nation in transition, *Sweet Soul Music* is an intimate portrait of the legendary performers--Sam Cooke, Ray Charles, James Brown, Solomon Burke, Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, and Al Green among them--who merged gospel and rhythm and blues to create Southern soul music. Through rare interviews and with unique insight, Peter Guralnick tells the definitive story of the songs that inspired a generation and forever changed the sound of American music.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A definitive chronicle of one of the great creative periods in American pop history," said LJ's reviewer of this 1986 volume, which tracks the rise and fall of a collaboration of white and black musicians, songwriters, and singers from the 1950s to its peak and disintegration a decade later. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Peter Guralnick has written extensively on American music and musicians. His books include: the prize-winning two-volume Elvis Presley biography *Last Train to Memphis* and *Careless Love*; the acclaimed trilogy on American roots music, *Sweet Soul Music*, *Lost Highway*, and *Feel Like Going Home*; the biographical inquiry *Searching for Robert Johnson*; and the novel *Nighthawk Blues*.

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Like Robert Palmer's superb "Deep Blues," Guralnick's extensive look back at the roots of R&B and soul music combines criticism, biographical profiles and social history into one rich, printed tapestry. Meticulously researched, the book shows its author's deep love of the music without sacrificing objectivity. Guralnick provides plenty of background on the "race music" that spawned R&B and the great soul music of the sixties and early seventies, on which much of the book concentrates. Like most, if not all, of the great blues musicians, the early pioneers of soul came from humble, mostly southern beginnings, and made little or no money from their work, which was liberally sampled by white musicians. A good portion of the narrative revolves around the fascinating rise and fall of Stax Records, the tiny Memphis-based label that brought together white executive leadership and musicians with raw black talent from the South. Despite initially primitive recording conditions, Stax developed into a powerhouse that was home to some of the greatest musicians in soul music, from Otis Redding to William Bell to Carla Thomas to Sam and Dave to Johnny Taylor. The label became representative of the growing sense of black pride that defined the era, one in which civil rights, of course, moved to the forefront of America's consciousness. All of these musicians and many more, including Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett and James Brown, to name a few, are given finely drawn profiles by Guralnick, and he treats their contributions to American music with the respect that they deserve. Throughout, he is intent on letting the artists tell their stories in their own words, and remains content to use his own fine writing to direct and bind together the narrative. Another great accomplishment of the book, for me, was Guralnick's successful effort to illuminate the ties between white and black musicians during this period. Yes, many of the most successful producers, notably Atlantic's Jerry Wexler, were white, but so were many of the musicians. Most had grown up in the south around blacks and were intimately familiar with African-American music. The Stax house band, which included Steve Cropper and Donald Dunn, was white, and they performed on many songs penned by great black songwriters such as David Porter and Isaac Hayes. Think of the great, ominous organ introduction to Aretha Franklin's "I Ain't Never Loved a Man." The white player is Spooner Oldham. This musical cross-fertilization is a notable point, one not often brought into considerations of the era. As a young kid coming up in the mid-60s, I loved the music that Guralnick writes about here, and I could tell -- even if he hadn't said so -- that he did too. He goes beyond that love to really dig into its roots and understand it, and succeeds admirably.

I own every Guralnick music book in print and I don't lend them out. I'll buy a copy for a friend but never give up custody of my copy. He's that good. If you love reading about the icons of R&R, R&B etc you have found your author. From Elvis to Sam Cooke to his work on different genres you will

put the book down feeling satisfied. He writes like an unbiased observer; never judgmental nor sanguine about his subject. Just the 'way it was". His piece on Charlie Rich was so moving and illustrates his style. You leave with a feeling of understanding that life and it's ups and downs. Think no one could put a new spin on Elvis? Well he does. He will take you into the nitty gritty of the process and avoid the puff and plunder. He's so good he becomes transparent in the writing.

The digital content is completely unavailable. I've tried it on my tablet, phone, the cloud reader, and on the PC app. What a waste of money - and time. I could have purchased a used paper back copy but thought the additional digital content would enhance my understanding of the topic. What a disappointment. Don't waste your time.

How did this moment in time happen? What is the beginning of Stax? The origins of the Memphis sound in a thoroughly segregated city--the horn section, Booker T and the MGs, through to Otis Redding, ending sadly in the assassination of King. Connections with Atlantic and Muscle Shoals. Combination of Gospel and the secular rise of R&B All go together to produce much of what we know as soul music Guralnick got to know the people involved: there are plenty of anecdotes, but the book is rooted in careful research and a love for the music. It's well-written too

Another extraordinary work of art by Peter Guralnick. Can't put it down and don't want it to end! Each person's story told with respect and kindness. I refer to You Tube to see and hear the performers and the power and depth of their music. A great tribute! Love it!

I'm not finished yet but I love this book. If you like reading about the story behind the music, then this is the book for you. However the very best book ever written about R&B remains Nowhere To Run by Gerri Hirshey. That book should be available as an e- book.

A must read for any serious or not so serious lover of soul. The music flows off the pages and into that cd player in your head.

A classic historical and personal exploration of Soul Music. And to think that we used to have popular music like this. Peter Guralnick is a great writer.

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