



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**DEFINITIVE COLLECTION OF STAX RECORDS'  
SINGLES TO BE REISSUED**

***Two volumes, due out December 16, 2014  
and Spring 2015, cover 1968-1975.***

***Volumes to be made available digitally for first time.***

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Concord Music Group and Stax Records are proud to announce the digital release and physical reissue of two comprehensive box set titles: *The Complete Stax/Volt Soul Singles, Vol. 2: 1968-1971* and *The Complete Stax/Volt Soul Singles, Vol. 3: 1972-1975*. Originally released in 1993 and 1994, respectively, these two compilations will be re-released back into the physical market in compact and sleek new packaging. Each set includes full-color booklets with in-depth essays by Stax historian and compilations co-producer Rob Bowman. The volumes feature stalwart Stax R&B artists including Isaac Hayes, the Staple Singers, Rufus Thomas, Johnnie Taylor, Carla Thomas, the Bar-Kays and William Bell, as well as bluesmen Little Milton, Albert King and Little Sonny, and "second generation" Stax hitmakers like Jean Knight, the Soul Children, Kim Weston, the Temprees, and Mel & Tim. Many of the tracks included in these collections will be made available digitally for the very first time.

The story of the great Memphis soul label Stax/Volt can be divided into two distinct eras: the period from 1959 through the beginning of 1968, when the company was distributed by Atlantic and was developing its influential sound and image (chronicled in acclaimed 9-CD box set *The Complete Stax/Volt Singles 1959-1968*, released by Atlantic in 1991); and the post-Atlantic years, from May 1968 through the end of 1975, when Stax/Volt began its transition from a small, down-home enterprise to a corporate soul powerhouse.

In Stax's early years as an independent label, founders Jim Stewart and Estelle Axton struggled with the loss of its back catalog to Atlantic/Warner Brothers Records and the loss of the label's most lucrative artist, Otis Redding, who tragically died in a plane crash months before. In need of funding and new stars, Axton and Stewart sold the label to Gulf + Western, bringing on promotion head Al Bell (who would soon become an equal partner and major figurehead of the label). In his *Vol. 2* essay, Rob Bowman recalls, "As the sun arose in Memphis on May 6, 1968 [the day Stax officially became independent of Atlantic], Stax had been essentially gutted. For all intents and purposes it was a new record company poised to issue its first few records."

Comprised of nine CDs, *Vol. 2* focuses on this period, 1968 through 1971, when Stax/Volt was forging ahead as its own entity. The 216-song collection includes all of the singles issued by the label during this time period, and features some of the biggest and best-loved hits of the day, including Isaac Hayes' "Theme From Shaft," The Staple Singers' "Respect

Yourself" and Johnnie Taylor's "Who's Making Love," as well as a number of little-known gems by both major and less-familiar artists.

By the end of 1971, Bowman notes, "Al Bell's dream of [Stax/Volt] becoming a diversified full-line record company was several steps further along the line to being reality. The label now recorded a wealth of different styles and flavors of black popular music, ranging from the jazz and easy-listening proclivities of Isaac Hayes to the blues of Little Milton to the '70s disco-infused vocal style of the Dramatics to the gutsy soul of the Staple Singers." Indeed, the early 1970s found Stax/Volt a much bigger entity than ever thought possible during its initial split from Atlantic, with Isaac Hayes as its breakout star. Spurred by the success of Hayes' GRAMMY Award-Winning *Shaft* soundtrack in early 1972, the label was casting its net across a wide cross section of the entertainment industry, entering into new territory with soundtracks, comedy records, and even investing in a Broadway play. *The Complete Stax/Volt Soul Singles, Vol. 3: 1972-1975*, coming Spring 2015, covers this era of success and excess, when Stax's stars were shining bright, but the label was on the verge of its dramatic denouement. The 10-disc box set contains all 213 soul singles issued by Stax/Volt during this time, including such hits as Shirley Brown's "Woman to Woman" and the Staple Singers' "I'll Take You There."

In 1976, faced with involuntary bankruptcy and an unsuccessful distribution deal with CBS Records, Stax was forced to close its doors. In his liner notes for *Vol. 3*, compilation co-producer Bill Belmont writes, "Stax's difficult and inglorious end in no way diminishes its vital contributions to rhythm and blues and soul. Today, the music of Stax maintains a strong and steady presence, heard continually in cover versions by major artists, in movies and on television. Simply put, the Memphis Sound lives." And indeed it does.

With a revival of the label in recent years, through Fantasy Records, the 2003 opening of the Stax Museum of American Soul Music in Memphis, Tenn., as well as several developing theatrical performances around the label, the music of Stax will continue to influence generations of musicians and fans alike.

For a complete track listing, as well as packaging shots and artist images, please visit our Online Media Kit: <http://mediakits.concordmusicgroup.com/p/completestaxsingles/>

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**For more information on Stax Records and Concord Music catalog, please contact:**

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