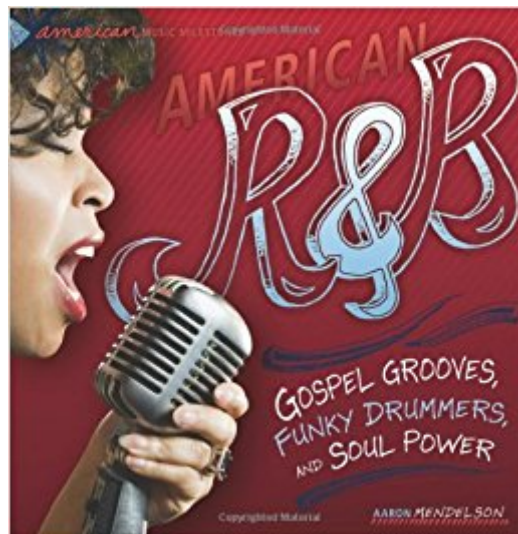




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# American R And B: Gospel Grooves, Funky Drummers, And Soul Power (American Music Milestones)



## Synopsis

A singer calls out to the crowd. An electric bass thumps out a beat. Horns blare and strings swirl. These are the sounds of R & B. Rhythm and blues music evolved from all sorts of sounds: swinging jazz, gritty blues, and African American spiritual songs. The music's smooth mix of styles made it unique, and its passionate performers made it a sensation. Ever since Ray Charles hit the charts in the 1950s, R & B fans have held it down on dance floors. And R & B singers have belted out messages of love and calls for social change. Find out what drove R & B's earliest performers to stand up and sing. Follow the music's path from gospel choirs to wild funk bands. And learn more about legends such as James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Michael Jackson, and Beyoncé.

## Book Information

Series: American Music Milestones

Library Binding: 64 pages

Publisher: Twenty-First Century Books (August 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0761345019

ISBN-13: 978-0761345015

Product Dimensions: 9.8 x 9.9 x 0.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 6 Up-From bluegrass to blue-eyed soul and bubblegum pop to hip-hop, readers discover the exciting evolution of music in America. Origins, influences, controversies, and artists are presented in a writing style that is engaging and accessible. Revealing quotes by artists are highlighted. Musical terms such as "melisma," "grunge," and "punk" are worked in seamlessly and defined in the texts as well as in the glossaries. "Must Download" playlists (which include songs that span styles and decades) appear throughout each title, encouraging readers to listen to the best music in each genre. Every title is packed with color and black-and-white photographs, snazzy fonts, and vivid sidebars. The indexes are not thorough (e.g., Pearl Jam has its own page, but the band is not in the index), but the books are short and well organized enough that this, most likely, is not a problem.

This informative set will be useful for reports and of high interest to reluctant readers. (c)  
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**\*Starred Review\*** It's not easy to trace the roots of rhythm and blues music, but this book in the American Music Milestones series does a fine job of doing just that, primarily through the voices of those who brought R & B to life. After a brief introduction to the genre, Ray Charles takes center stage as one of the first to use gospel music underpinnings and turn them secular. The book goes on to look at some of the biggest stars of doo-wop, girl groups, Motown, soul, funk, disco, and hip-hop. This personalized touch as a way to get to the music is a winner, and it's aided and abetted by a truly inviting format that's sophisticated yet accessible. The well-chosen photos and informative sidebars are a plus, but best of all is the periodic "Must Download Playlist," written on lined notebook paper, that appears for various subsets of R & B. It's the next best thing to having a CD accompany the book. Very solid back matter, including "R & B Must-Haves" and a rundown of the music industry's major awards, ties a bow on the package. Grades 6-9. --Ilene Cooper

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