

Stephanie Phillips

Author



Books

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Biography

Stephanie Phillips is a London-based arts and culture journalist whose work has featured in publications such as the Guardian, the Independent, VICE, Crack Magazine, The Wire, and more. She is the author of the non-fiction book *Why Solange Matters*, which recounts the unconventional journey to international success of musician and artist Solange Knowles. Phillips is also the singer and guitarist in the Black feminist punk band Big Joanie and is part of the collective behind Decolonise Fest, a London-based annual music festival celebrating the work of people of colour in the punk scene.

Publications

Why Solange Matters - University of Texas Press (US) and Faber (UK)

Why Solange Matters is the dramatic story of a musician and artist whose unconventional journey to international success was far more important than her family name.

Growing up in the shadow of her superstar sister Beyoncé, and defying an industry that attempted to bend her to its rigid image of a Black woman, Solange Knowles has become a pivotal musician and artist in her own right.

In *Why Solange Matters*, Stephanie Phillips chronicles the creative journey of Solange, a beloved voice for the Black Lives Matter generation. A Black feminist punk musician herself, Phillips addresses not only the unpredictable trajectory of Solange's career but also how she and other Black women see themselves through the musician's repertoire.

First, she traces Solange's progress through an inflexible industry, charting the artist's development up to

2016, when the release of her third album, *A Seat at the Table*, redefined her career. Then, with *A Seat at the Table* and 2019's *When I Get Home*, Phillips describes how Solange has embraced activism, anger, Black womanhood, and intergenerational trauma to inform her remarkable art.

Why Solange Matters not only cements the subject in the pantheon of world-changing twenty-first century musicians; it introduces its writer as an important new voice.

Praise:

'*Why Solange Matters* is a significant and dober treatise on popular music. A music which has come to blur the lines between commercial and experimental. This book is more than necessary.' – Thurston Moore

'Stephanie Phillips (a rockstar in her own right) deftly interweaves Solange's ascendance from 'black girl weirdo' to one of contemporary pop music's most innovative artists with her own coming-of-age story in London's underground music scene.' – Laina Dawes, author of *What Are You Doing Here? A Woman's Life and Liberation in Heavy Metal*

'Every once in a while, a musician comes along who so beautifully, so poignantly speaks that Black women remember that we are more than our vulnerability. In *Why Solance Matters*, Stephanie Phillips gracefully positions Solange amongst that elite cohort.' – Shana Redmond, author of *Everything Man: The Form and Function of Paul Robeson*

'[A] celebration of free spirit... [a] hymn to black individualism... the author's prose sparkles... as moving as it is insightful.. It's wonderful to read Philips's own story alongside Solange's – the two are similar in age and share a DIY ethic, as well as a belief in the power of community, and their lives are vividly detailed... This is a book about what freedom could look like for Black women, in which Phillips provides a framework, a vision of a new world, one she hopes Solange would be proud to be a part of' – Caleb Azumah Nelson, *Observer*