

Anita Baker

Anita Denise Baker (born January 26, 1958)^[1] is an American singer-songwriter. Starting her career in the late 1970s with the funk band Chapter 8, Baker released her first solo album, *The Songstress*, in 1983. In 1986, she rose to stardom following the release of her platinum-selling second album, *Rapture*, which included the Grammy-winning single "Sweet Love". She is regarded as one of the most popular singers of soulful romantic ballads during the height of the quiet storm period of contemporary R&B in the 1980s.^[1] As of 2017, Baker has won eight Grammy Awards and has five platinum albums and one gold album. Her vocal range is contralto.^{[2][3][4][5]}

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Early life

Anita Baker was born on January 26, 1958 in Toledo, Ohio. When she was two, her mother abandoned her and Baker was raised by a foster family in Detroit, Michigan.^[6] When Baker was 12, her foster parents died and her foster sister raised her afterwards.^[6] By the time Baker was 16, she began singing R&B at Detroit nightclubs. After one performance, she was discovered by bandleader David Washington, who gave her a card to audition for the funk band, Chapter 8.

Baker joined Chapter 8 in 1975 and the group toured until securing a deal with Ariola Records in 1979. The group's first album, *Chapter 8*, was released that year and featured the singles "Ready for Your Love," a duet between Baker and bandmate Gerald Lyles, and the Baker-led "I Just Want to Be Your Girl."^[7] After

Anita Baker



Baker in 1998

Background information

Birth name	Anita Denise Baker
Born	January 26, 1958 <div>Toledo, Ohio, U.S.</div>
Origin	Detroit, Michigan, U.S.
Genres	R&B ^[1] · soul
Occupation(s)	Singer-songwriter
Years active	1979–2013 2018–present
Labels	Ariola · Beverly Glen · Elektra · Atlantic · Blue Note
Associated acts	Free Spirit · Chapter 8 · Michael J. Powell

Ariola was bought out by Arista Records in 1979, Chapter 8 was dropped by the label who were convinced that Baker, as the group's lead singer, didn't have "star potential."^[8] Baker returned to Detroit, working as a waitress and a receptionist until, in 1982, Otis Smith, a former associate of Ariola, convinced Baker to start a solo career under his Beverly Glen label.

Music career

Baker released her debut solo album, *The Songstress*, in 1983.^[1] The album produced four singles: "No More Tears" and its B-side, "Will You Be Mine", "Angel" and "You're the Best Thing Yet". "Angel" became Baker's first top ten single, reaching number five on the R&B charts in late 1983. "You're the Best Thing Yet" followed it in the R&B top 40 early the following year. Despite this early success, Baker later complained that she hadn't received any royalties from the work. In addition, the label delayed work on Baker's follow-up of *The Songstress*. By 1984, after two years, Baker sought to leave the label but was sued by Smith for breach of contract in 1985. After months in court debating the matter, it was concluded that Baker should be allowed to record for other labels, winning the case against Smith. Baker then signed with the Warner Music Group-associated Elektra Records label in 1985 and began working on her next album. Her Elektra contract allowed the singer to have creative control and produce her own music, something she wasn't allowed to do at Beverly Glen. Baker used her old Chapter 8 bandmate, songwriter and producer Michael J. Powell on her first Elektra album, though label execs were initially unhappy with her choice of Powell over more established producers.

In March 1986, Baker released her second album, *Rapture*. While sales were initially slow following the release of the album's debut single, "Watch Your Step", Elektra released the mid-tempo ballad, "Sweet Love", which became her first pop hit, reaching number eight on the Billboard Hot 100 and also reaching the UK Top 20. The album eventually launched three further hit singles, including "Caught Up in the Rapture", "No One in the World" and "Same Ole Love (365 Days a Year)". Throughout 1986 and 1987, Baker promoted the album by touring, headlining her first tour, *The Rapture Tour*, a show from which was later released on home video as *A Night of Rapture*. By 1988, the album had sold over 8 million copies worldwide, 5 million of which were sold in the United States alone. The album resulted in Baker's winning two Grammy Awards at the 1987 ceremony. In 1987, Baker collaborated with The Winans on their song, "Ain't No Need to Worry", which gave Baker a third Grammy, this time in the Best Soul Gospel Performance by a Duo or Group, Choir or Chorus category.

Baker's follow-up, *Giving You the Best That I Got*, was released in October 1988 and immediately became a success, topping the Billboard 200 and selling 5 million copies worldwide, 3 million of which sold alone in the United States. The title track reached number three on the Billboard Hot 100 and topped the R&B and adult contemporary charts, becoming her most successful charted single.^[9] The follow-up, "Just Because", reached the top 20 on the pop chart, while a third single, "Lead Me Into Love", became a top ten R&B hit. The album resulted in three more Grammy Awards for the singer. In 1990, Baker released *Compositions*, which had Baker more involved in the songwriting and production process and the first in which she began incorporating more jazz elements than in previous albums. The album launched the singles "Talk to Me", "Soul Inspiration" and "Fairy Tales", and eventually sold over a million copies. After the end of the album's touring and promotion schedule in 1991, Baker took a break from the business when she settled down with her husband at the time, later having two children together. Also in 1991, Elektra re-issued Baker's first album, *The Songstress*, after buying rights to the album. It has sold more than 300,000 copies since its release.

After appearing on Frank Sinatra's *Duets* album, Baker officially returned to the charts with *Rhythm of Love* in 1994. The album featured the hit "Body and Soul", which became her first top 40 pop hit since 1989; the second single, the mid-tempo "I Apologize", later won Baker an eighth Grammy. The album eventually sold over 2 million copies, resulting in her fourth consecutive platinum-selling album. Baker undertook the *Rhythm of Love World Tour* from December 14, 1994 to November 14, 1995. Baker was transferred to another label within the Warner Music Group, Atlantic Records, in 1996.

Taking a hiatus after the end of the *Rhythm of Love Tour* to care for her two sons, Baker returned to the studio in 2000. In May 2001, Baker filed a lawsuit against Zomba Recording and its Dreamhire division for alleged damage to her recordings caused by the hired 24-track tape machine.^{[11][10]} Due to a label restructuring, Baker was let go from Atlantic that November without

releasing any material with the company.^[11] During this hiatus, Rhino Records released the compilation, *The Best of Anita Baker* (named *Sweet Love: The Very Best of Anita Baker* in the UK) in June 2002. The album eventually was certified platinum by the RIAA, denoting sales in excess of 1,000,000 units in the US. That year, Baker returned to live performing, signing with Blue Note Records in March 2004. That September, Baker released the album, *My Everything*. The album peaked at number four on the Billboard 200 and number-one on the R&B charts, eventually being certified gold.

In 2005, Baker released *Christmas Fantasy*, winning a Grammy nomination for the song, "Christmas Time Is Here". In May 2005, Baker was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Berklee College of Music.^[12] Starting in 2007, Baker embarked on a two-year concert tour titled *An Evening with Anita Baker*. She occasionally sang the American national anthem at sports events.^[13] In August 2012, Baker released her version of Tyrese's hit, "Lately". The song made headlines for Baker after the song was played on every single hour of the hour throughout the day on urban adult contemporary radio, making her the first artist to make this kind of debut. Baker had been working on the album featuring the single, "Only Forever", since 2010.^[14] Though Blue Note set release dates for the album in October and December 2012, Baker decided she still needed to work on the album, causing delays. The album never materialized. In February 2013, Baker returned to the national spotlight, performing "Lately" and "Same Ole Love" on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*. That same month, she appeared at the Grammys where "Lately" was nominated for a Grammy Award. In January 2017, Baker confirmed she had retired.^[15] In 2018 Anita Baker came out of retirement.

Personal life

Baker married Walter Bridgeforth, Jr. on December 24, 1988. The couple separated in 2005 and finalized their divorce two years later.^[16] They have two sons, Walter Baker Bridgeforth (born January 1993) and Edward Carlton Bridgeforth (born May 1994).^[17] Baker currently lives in Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan.^[18] Her son Walter is now attending Berklee College of Music in Boston, as a drum principal, majoring in Music Production & Engineering.

More than five years after her divorce, Baker filed for a legal name change from Bridgeforth to Baker in her private life.^[19]

Awards and honors

In 2013, Anita Baker was inducted into the Michigan Rock and Roll Legends Hall of Fame.^[20]

BET Awards

The BET Awards were established in 2001 by the Black Entertainment Television network to celebrate African Americans in music, acting, sports, and other fields of entertainment over the past year. The awards are presented annually, and are broadcast live on BET.^[21]

Year	Nominee / work	Award	Result
2018	Anita Baker	Lifetime Achievement Award	Won

Grammy Awards

The Grammy Awards are awarded annually by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. Baker has received eight awards from 18 nominations.

Year	Nominee / work	Award	Result
<u>1987</u>	<u>Rapture</u>	<u>Best R&B Vocal Performance, Female</u>	Won
	"Sweet Love"	<u>Best Rhythm & Blues Song</u>	Won
<u>1988</u>	"Ain't No Need to Worry" (with The Winans)	<u>Best Soul Gospel Performance by a Duo, Group, Choir or Chorus</u>	Won
<u>1989</u>	"Giving You the Best That I Got"	<u>Record of the Year</u>	Nominated
		<u>Song of the Year</u>	Nominated
		<u>Best R&B Vocal Performance, Female</u>	Won
		<u>Best Rhythm & Blues Song</u>	Won
<u>1990</u>	<u>Giving You the Best That I Got</u>	<u>Best R&B Vocal Performance, Female</u>	Won
<u>1991</u>	<u>Compositions</u>	<u>Best R&B Vocal Performance, Female</u>	Won
	<u>Compositions</u>	<u>Best Album Package</u>	Nominated
<u>1995</u>	"Body and Soul"	<u>Best Female R&B Vocal Performance</u>	Nominated
	<u>Rhythm of Love</u>	<u>Best R&B Album</u>	Nominated
<u>1996</u>	"When You Love Someone" (with James Ingram)	<u>Best Pop Collaboration with Vocals</u>	Nominated
	"I Apologize"	<u>Best Female R&B Vocal Performance</u>	Won
<u>2005</u>	"You're My Everything"	<u>Best Traditional R&B Vocal Performance</u>	Nominated
	<u>My Everything</u>	<u>Best R&B Album</u>	Nominated
<u>2007</u>	"Christmas Time Is Here"	<u>Best Traditional R&B Vocal Performance</u>	Nominated
<u>2013</u>	"Lately"	<u>Best Traditional R&B Performance</u>	Nominated

American Music Awards

The American Music Awards is an annual awards ceremony created by Dick Clark in 1973. Baker has received four awards from nine nominations.

Year	Nominee / work	Award	Result
<u>1987</u>	Anita Baker	<u>Favorite Soul/R&B Female Artist</u>	Nominated
	<u>Rapture</u>	<u>Favorite Soul/R&B Album</u>	Nominated
<u>1988</u>	Anita Baker	<u>Favorite Soul/R&B Female Artist</u>	Won
	<u>Rapture</u>	<u>Favorite Soul/R&B Album</u>	Won
<u>1990</u>	Anita Baker	<u>Favorite Pop/Rock Female Artist</u>	Nominated
		<u>Favorite Soul/R&B Female Artist</u>	Won
	"Just Because"	<u>Favorite Soul/R&B Single</u>	Nominated
<u>1995</u>	Anita Baker	<u>Favorite Soul/R&B Female Artist</u>	Won
<u>1996</u>	Anita Baker	<u>Favorite Soul/R&B Female Artist</u>	Nominated

Soul Train Music Awards

The Soul Train Music Awards is an annual award show aired in national broadcast syndication that honors the best in African American music and entertainment established in 1987.

Year	Nominee / work	Award	Result
1987	"Sweet Love"	<u>Best Single, Female</u>	Won
		<u>Best Music Video</u>	Nominated
	<u>Rapture</u>	<u>Album of the Year, Female</u>	Nominated
1989	"Giving You the Best That I Got"	<u>Best R&B/Urban Contemporary Song of the Year</u>	Won
		<u>Best R&B/Urban Contemporary Single, Female</u>	Won
	<u>Giving You the Best That I Got</u>	<u>Best R&B/Urban Contemporary Album of the Year, Female</u>	Won
1991	"Talk to Me"	<u>Best R&B/Urban Contemporary Single, Female</u>	Nominated
	<u>Compositions</u>	<u>Best R&B/Urban Contemporary Album of the Year, Female</u>	Nominated
1995	"Body and Soul"	<u>Best R&B/Soul or Rap Music Video</u>	Nominated
		<u>Best R&B/Soul Single, Female</u>	Won
	<u>Rhythm of Love</u>	<u>R&B/Soul Album of the Year, Female</u>	Won
2010	Anita Baker	<u>Legend Award, Female</u>	Won

Other honors

Year	Category	Organization	Result
1994	<u>Hollywood Walk of Fame</u>		Star at 7021 Hollywood Blvd.
2005	<u>International Artist of the Year</u>	<u>Canadian Smooth Jazz Award</u> ^[22]	Won

Discography

- 1983: The Songstress
- 1986: Rapture
- 1988: Giving You the Best That I Got
- 1990: Compositions
- 1994: Rhythm of Love
- 2004: My Everything
- 2005: Christmas Fantasy

Tours

- The Rapture Tour (1986/87)
- Giving You the Best World Tour (1988/89)
- Compositions World Tour (1990/91)
- Rhythm of Love World Tour (1994/95)
- Anita Live! (2002/04)
- An Evening with Anita Baker (2007/09)
- Anita Baker Farewell Tour (2018)

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External links

- Anita Baker (<https://www.discogs.com/artist/64805>) discography at [Discogs](#) 
 - Anita Baker (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1179722/>) on [IMDb](#)
 - Anita Baker (http://www.soultracks.com/anita_baker.htm) at [SoulTracks](#)
 - Anita Baker Music Videos (<http://www.anitabakermusic.com>) at Anita Baker Music
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