



ARETHA FRANKLIN



Timeline

1942	1952	1954	1960	1968	1982	1987	2009	2018
Aretha is born on March 25 th in Memphis, Tennessee, U.S.A.	Learns to play the piano by ear not sight.	Starts performing in churches.	Signs with Columbia Records	Two years after signing for a new company called Atlantic Records, she wins 2 Grammys	Moved from Los Angeles to Detroit to be back near family.	Aretha is the first female to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.	Sings at the Barak Obama's inauguration ceremony.	Aretha dies at home in Detroit aged 76.

Key Songs

I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Loved You)	1967 – Her first single with Atlantic Records with soaring, swooping vocals which paved the way for her career and the history of soul music generally.
Do Right Woman, Do Right Man	1967 – With no success at Columbia Records, her move to Atlantic brought her more success with this. She also added the organ and piano parts to this cover song.
Chain of Fools	1967 – A very strong gospel vocal on this hit song.
(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman	1967 – Many of Aretha's songs are about the suffering and unhappiness inside relationships but this one was all about rejoicing in the beauty of love.
Respect	1967 – Originally written by Otis Reading in 1965, Aretha went on to make this her own and possibly her most recognised song.
Ain't No Way	1968 – An emotional song about loving someone who does not love you back.
Say a Little Prayer	1968 – Cover version of the original which became one of her most famous songs. It is about a women's concern for someone who has gone to the Vietnam War.
Think	1968 – A song about female and ethnic empowerment.
Amazing Grace	1972 – Aretha releases a live gospel album, selling over 2 million copies.
Freeway of Love	1985 – Aretha earned a Grammy for this (12 in total).

DID YOU KNOW?

Aretha Franklin is not a fan of flying. After in-flight turbulence during one of her flights in 1982, she decided she'd stop flying altogether. *"I've been to California from Detroit four times this year and Florida. I go wherever I choose to go, comfortably on my custom bus."*

The Importance of Aretha

The Queen of Soul

Aretha Franklin released 112 charted singles and is the most charted female artist in history. She has sold over 75 million records worldwide, making her one of the biggest-selling music artists of all time. She was the first woman to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. She also received a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Music Style

The world had not heard a voice like Franklin's – one that felt so modern and captured the range of emotions felt by the U.S.A. at the time, especially during the political, cultural and racial difficulties of the 1960s and '70s. Her voice was characteristic of her gospel upbringing. Gospel music is usually performed in churches with Christian lyrics and powerful singing. It was her ability to use her powerful gospel voice, and bring elements of jazz and blues into her songs, which stood her out from the crowd.

The Rights of Others

Aretha spent much of her life involved in the struggle for both civil rights and women's rights. She gave money to civil rights groups who wanted black people to have the same rights as white people. She also performed at benefits and protests. Her songs "Respect" and "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" became anthems of these movements for social change. She was also a strong supporter for Native American and Indigenous Peoples' rights worldwide.

Famous Events

Substitute Opera Singer

Disaster nearly struck at the 1998 Grammy award show. Luciano Pavarotti (a famous Italian opera singer) bowed out at the last moment, due to illness, leaving the other members of the group desperately needing a backup. Luckily, Aretha Franklin was on hand to save the day. With only 20 minutes to prepare, Franklin delivered a lush operatic aria on "Nessun Dorma" that made it look as though she'd been practicing classical music her entire career.

Presidential Inaugurations

Aretha Franklin performed 'My Country 'tis of thee' when Barak Obama won the U.S. election and was inaugurated in 2009. She also performed at Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton's inaugurations too.

Personal Life

Aretha Franklin had four children in her lifetime and was married twice. She left her first husband after he was violent towards her. She moved to Detroit when she was five-years-old and returned there later in life to be with her family. She was a very private person and did not often share her personal life with the media.