

SHOW INTEL

Issue 5: Summer: The Donna Summer Musical



SYNOPSIS

The life and music of the legendary singer Donna Summer are seen through the three stages of her career: Duckling Donna, Disco Donna, and Diva Donna in this lively, heartfelt musical.

MUSICAL INFLUENCES

Donna Summer's musical influences range widely, including Gospel, Broadway, Rock, Funk, Soul, and Disco. She adapted the best of each of these, ultimately crafting her own sound and greatly influencing the emerging genre of electronic dance music.

Her debut public performance came at age 10, when she replaced a missing vocalist in church. After this auspicious start, she continued to sing in church, and performed in musicals in high school in Boston.

She moved to NYC to be the lead singer of a blues rock band in 1967. A year later, she joined the cast of a German production of *Hair* in Munich, followed with roles in *Godspell* and *Show Boat*. While in Europe, she also worked as a background singer for Three Dog Night.

After meeting producers Giorgio Moroder and Pete Bellotte in Germany, she recorded her first hits, "Love to Love you Baby" and "I Feel Love" in Europe, before returning to the United States in 1976. Moroder and Bellotte collaborated with Summer on writing many hits including "I Feel Love," which was added to the National Recording Registry by the Library of Congress in 2012.

With hits such as "Last Dance," "Hot Stuff," "MacArthur Park," "She Works Hard for the Monday," and "Dim All the Lights," Summer cemented her role as the Queen of Pop and Disco through the 1970s and 1980s.

She continued to develop new musical interests throughout her career, leaving a rich legacy as well as a large catalogue of music, which will continue to inspire and influence generations of new artists.

MEDIA



Watch the trailer for Summer: The Donna Summer Musical!

FUN FACTS

- » Donna Summer was born LaDonna Adrian Gaines and used the stage name Donna Gaines for her early career in Germany.
- » She took the professional name Donna Summer after her divorce from her first husband, Helmuth Sommer in 1976.
- » Billboard ranked her as the 6th most successful dance artist of all time, with 16 number 1 songs on the Dance Club Songs chart and 14 Top Ten Pop songs.
- » From 1974 to 2008, she released 18 studio albums.
- » She won 5 Grammy Awards and 6 American Music Awards.
- » Summer sang at President Reagan's 2nd Inaugural Ball in 1985, and at the Nobel Peace Prize Concert for President Obama in 2009.
- » She played the role of Aunt Oona in the tv series *Family Matters*.
- » In her later years, she took up painting and had several art exhibits.
- » After her death in 2012, she was inducted posthumously into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2013.

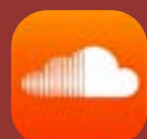
BROADWAY CONNECTIONS

- » *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical* premiered on Broadway in 2018 and was nominated for two Tony Awards and two Drama League Awards.
- » Ariana DeBose (*Hamilton*, *A Bronx Tale*, *West Side Story*) starred as Disco Donna. LaChanze (*Once On This Island*, *The Color Purple*) portrayed Diva Donna.
- » One of the show's producers was music producer Tommy Mottola, who also produced *A Bronx Tale: The Musical*.

BROADWAY BUZZ EPISODE

LISTEN TO THE THREE DONNAS:

AMAHRI EDWARDS-JONES, CHARIS GULLAGE & BRITTNY SMITH



IN TRIBUTE

"She was an honest and gifted singer with flawless vocal talent."

— Beyoncé

"She was a queen, The Queen of Disco, and we will be dancing to her music forever."

— Liza Minnelli.

"She was a super-diva and a true superstar who never compromised when it came to her career or her family."

— David Foster



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