



## ROBERTA FLACK Biography

Born into a family where music was a natural outlet for self-expression and entertainment, it is the backdrop through which her earliest memories are often referenced. Perhaps it was God's divine orchestration at work providing and overseeing the environments for Roberta's innate gift to be nourished and allowed to flourish. No other explanations seem plausible as each phase of her musical life is consistently punctuated by a kind of grace that appears when truth integrity, faith and dedication precede it.

Perhaps she has always known that her life would be about music. Roberta Flack is one of the world's most gifted performers. She is a combination of ability, heart, hard work and determination, which drives her to ever-greater triumphs.

Born in Asheville, North Carolina, Ms. Flack's earliest musical influences, in addition to those in her immediate family, came from the church and from hearing such luminaries as Mahalia Jackson and Sam Cooke.

Although she would probably not think of herself as having been a child prodigy, her admission to Howard University on a full music scholarship at the age of fifteen would suggest otherwise. Trained in classical piano and voice she excelled and by the time Les McCann heard her sing to a crowded audience in 1968 he knew that the rest of the world was waiting to hear her voice as well. And they did...

Her debut album (*First Take*) included the #1 hit *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face*. This resulted in Clint Eastwood including it on the sound track for the movie *Play Misty for Me* in 1972. Atlantic Records immediately released it as a single.

To Roberta's credit, she insisted that she be allowed to sing it at the originally intended slow tempo. The album won the Grammy for Record of the Year in 1972.

Other classic Roberta Flack songs include: *Killing Me Softly* (Grammys for Record of the Year and Best Pop Vocal - Female 1973), *Where is The Love* (Grammy for Best Pop Vocal by a Duo 1972 with Donny Hathaway), *Feel Like Making Love*, *The Closer I Get to You*, *Tonight I Celebrate My Love for You* and *Set the Night to Music*.

Throughout the eighties and nineties, Roberta continued to record while maintaining a heavy concert touring schedule and made a conscious decision to perform for charities and nonprofit organizations.

The turn of the millennium showed that Roberta had no intention of slowing down. With international tour dates including Turkey, Argentina, Australia and Japan, she is constantly inspired by seeing first hand that her music continues to be loved and enjoyed around the world.

In 2002, *Roberta Flack In Concert* was released on DVD. It was that year that she took a leadership role in response to the aftermath of September 11th. She, along with other celebrities, participated in Nile Rogers' *We Are Family* (directed by Spike Lee), which set an example of unity among all Americans.

She also participated in the nationwide *Come Back to D.C.* television campaign, a joint collaboration between the Federal Government and the DC Tourism board.

She remains an inspiration to her fans, peers and younger musicians in the music industry. Roberta has appeared with soul artists like Alicia Keyes, India.Arie and Angie Stone.

Roberta is an outspoken participant in the AEC (Artist Empowerment Coalition) whose primary goal is advocacy for artists' rights and control of their creative properties.

Through it all, she always comes back to the music - which is why it is not surprising that Roberta was asked by VH1 to participate in *100 Greatest Love Songs* and *100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll*.

Roberta's current release is her Christmas album, *Holiday* (2003), a timeless collection of seasonal favorites, a Roberta classic or two, plus a few goodies thrown in for good cheer...