

Nina Simone (b.2/21/33, d.4/21/03) Nina Simone was born Eunice Kathleen Waymon in Tryon, North Carolina. She began playing piano at the age of 4 and singing in her church's choir. Her mother was a minister and domestic worker, and her mother's employer, upon hearing of Nina's talent arranged and paid for piano lessons for the young girl. Her music teacher also set up a special fund for Nina to attend a private school for girls. After finishing High School, she won a scholarship to the Juilliard School, but she eventually had to leave when she ran out of funds. She then for the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music, but was rejected and would insist that she was denied admittance because she was African-American. This experience began her turn away from Classical music, and turn towards American standards, jazz and blues. In 1954, she adopted the name Nina Simone.

In 1958 her debut album "Little Girl Blue" was released on Bethlehem Records. Nina had become fond of folk material, especially with the events leading up to the onset of the American Civil Rights Movement and wished to record some of it. Bethlehem scoffed at the idea, which prompted her departure from the label. She soon signed with Colpix Records, on the condition that she would have complete artistic control, and she recorded a multitude of records for the company. After signing in 1964 to the Phillips label, she began to openly address racial inequality with the song "Mississippi Goddam" recorded and released that same year. In 1968, the live album "*Nuff Said*" was recorded three days after the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr and the release included the song "*Why (The King Of Love Is Dead)*" written by her bass player, Gene Taylor, directly after the news of King's death had reached them.

As the 1960's drew to a close, Nina grew tired of the American music scene and the countries deeply divide racial politics. She moved abroad, eventually settling down in the South of France. After going through years of troubled times, she underwent a career renaissance in the late 1980's when her song "My Baby Just Cares For Me" was used in a perfume commercial in the United Kingdom. She began to tour again periodically, and she maintained a strong fan base whenever she performed. In her final years, she battled with health problems, and she passed away on April 21, 2003, at her home in Carry-le-Rouet, France.