

Otis Redding

Otis Redding was born in Dawson, Georgia on September 9, 1941. Otis was one of the brightest stars of 60s soul music, but his greatest fame came only after a tragic plane crash in 1967.

When Otis was 5 his family moved to Macon, Georgia where his father, a Baptist Minister had obtained a job at **Robbins Air Force Base**. Otis played drums in school and also backed the local gospel groups that sang on **WIBB Radio**. Otis dropped out of school at the age of 16 to help support his family. He worked at odd jobs and also performed with **Little Richard's** former band, ***The Upsetters***. In the late fifties, Otis began to concentrate more on his singing. He entered several amateur talent contests and won so many of them that he was no longer allowed to compete.

Otis' first hit was ***Shout Bamalama***, which he recorded for Confederate Records in 1961. Otis' first big break came in 1962 as a member of **Johnny Jenkins'** band the Pinetoppers. The group was recording at **Stax Studios** in Memphis and the session was not going well. Otis was allowed to cut two songs of his own at the end of the session. One of those songs, ***These Arms of Mine*** became a Rhythm and Blues hit and helped launch Otis' career.

Otis had a powerful voice and he sang with such sincerity that Jerry Wexler of Atlantic Records once stated that, "***Otis wore his heart on his sleeve.***" Otis signed with ***Stax*** and recorded the R&B hit songs, ***Mr. Pitiful*** (1965), ***I've Been Loving You Too Long to Stop Now*** (1965), ***Respect*** (1965), ***Satisfaction*** (1966), and ***Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa (Sad Song)*** (1966). He recorded the duets ***Tramp*** and ***Knock on Wood*** with **Carla Thomas**, in 1967. The house band at ***Stax*** was **Booker T and the MGs** a legend in their own right. They provided backup to many of R&B's greatest artists such as, **Wilson Pickett**, **Carla Thomas**, **Albert King** and **Sam & Dave**.

Otis starred at the **Monterey Pop Festival** in 1967 and was becoming ever more popular when on December 10, 1967, the plane that Otis and his band had chartered crashed near Madison, Wisconsin killing all on board. Otis was 26 years old.

Sitting on the Dock of the Bay recorded by Otis, just days before his death, became one of the top hits of 1968 staying at number one for over four weeks. Three of his other songs also became hits after his death; ***The Happy Song***, ***Amen*** and ***Papa's Got a Brand New Bag***. Otis was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1989.

Sources:

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame
Atlanta Music Group (AMG)