

R.I.P. Angie Stone



Soul and hip-hop pioneer Angie Stone passed away on March 1st in a car accident after leaving a show in Montgomery, Alabama. Stone was a rare artist who made her mark in the hip-hop and soul music worlds. Stone started her career as a teenager in her native Columbia, South Carolina, by forming the female rap trio The Sequence. An audition backstage at a Sugar Hill Gang show for Sugar Hill Records co-founder Sylvia Robinson landed them a deal, and they became the second act to sign to the label. They were the first all-female rap group, and they had a hit with “Funk You Up” and maintained their popularity with “Monster Sound,” featuring Spoonie Gee, and “Funky Sound (Tear the Roof Off).” The group dissolved in 1985 after Stone’s refusal to continue to do business with Sugar Hill. During this time she started working as a songwriter for Mantronix, Jill Jones, and Lenny Kravitz. She also sang backup for Malcolm McLaren and singer Junior. A job working at KISS FM in New York City introduced her to the musicians that would join her in the R&B trio Vertical Hold. They had a hit with “Seems You’re Much Too Busy,” which Stone co-wrote with Kurtis Khaleel. The trio disbanded in 1995 after releasing two albums. Her gifts as a songwriter surfaced again when she embarked on a personal and professional relationship with D’Angelo, making contributions to his *Brown Sugar* and *Voodoo albums*.

The next reinvention would be as a solo artist after she signed to Arista, and *Black Diamond* was released in 1999. “No More (Rain In This Cloud)” was a hit, and her voice became known by the mainstream. Her rise continued in the early 2000s with her recording the theme song to the TV show *Girlfriends* and the release of her sophomore album, *Mahogany Soul*. “I Wish I Didn’t Miss You,” “Brotha,” and her “More Than A Woman” duet with Calvin Richardson became signature songs. Stone also did

some acting and appeared in five movies and one Broadway production of Chicago.

Stone's ascent as a solo artist was a great comeback story from her early days as a rapper, and her list of stellar collaborations grew. Prince, Raphael Saadiq, Calvin Richardson, Betty Wright, Omar, and Guru were some of the voices that she made music with on top of her writing, arranging, and vocal support work. She released 10 studio albums and had plans for new music at the time of her passing. In 2024, she was inducted into the Songwriters' Hall Of Fame.