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Nina Simone was one of the most influential Musicians and Civil Right activists throughout the history of Black Americans. Simone was born in Tryon, North Carolina on February 21st 1933 she died on April 21st, 2003. As a young child Simone was always surrounded by music everywhere she went. She was initially introduced to the piano when she was age 3 or 4. As a matter of fact, her mother was a pastor at her church, which gave her the opportunity to perform every Sunday as the church's pianist. At the age of 7 Nina was introduced to a program created by that very same church. This led to Simone's first official recital as a pianist. As a result, of the tremendous job done by Nina, she was approached by Mrs. Mazzanovich a music teacher and the current employer of her mother; which eventually led to Mrs.Mazzanovich deciding to take Simone as her student. Everyday Simone would walk along the sides of the railroad which divided both the white community and the black community. According to the documentary, "what happened Miss Simone" Simone stated, "I was so scared. Mrs. Mazzanovich Frightens me. It was her being white in the sense that I had never seen. she was an alien to me". Though there was a feeling of unfamiliarity between Simone and her teacher she continued to accept the lessons. Despite the fact that this was a time of segregation Mrs. Mazzanovich held high expectations for Nina. Based on the documentary, " Mrs. Mazzanovich had in her mind that I was gonna be one of the World's greatest concert pianists". This was an issue because Children were meant to be spoiled , mischievous and free in their childhood but unfortunately Simone was very disciplined. But although this would lead to many accomplishments in her life, this was like a " double edged sword"; meaning that Simone had absorbed this knowledge like a sponge absorbing water; causing Nina to have a very lonely life. She would spend hours upon hours practicing; trying to perfect the technique.

Many years later, after high school Simone had access to a fund created by Mrs. Mazzanovich ( the Eunice Waymon Fund), which sent her to New York in order for her to expand her study at Julliard but it was only enough for a year and a half. After that she applied for a scholarship at Curtis institution of Music in Philadelphia. Unfortunately for her reality hit her very hard; She was not accepted because she was black. Eventually she ran out of money; she couldn't ask her family because they had moved closer to her and were struggling themselves. This left only one option open, which was to find a job. Therefore, she took up a job in Atlantic City for the summer at a bar. At this point in her

life, she began her career as a singer. Well to be honest, she was forced into singing because her boss threatened her and she needed the money. The reason Simone changed her name was because she didn't want her family to figure out that she worked at the bar because they thought it was a place of the devil; therefore she changed her name from Eunice Waymon to Nina Simone; Nina meaning "little girl" and the name Simone came from a french actress Simone Signoret. Now, with the experience over the past few years Nina was able to convey her emotion through music which would reach the hearts of the listeners. In 1958, Bethlehem Records offered her very first recording contract. Then 1959 she recorded "I Love You, Porgy" "I Put a Spell on You" "My Baby Just Cares For Me" including multiple other songs. Bethlehem Records was only the starting point for Nina; other studio's such as Colpix, Philips and RCA helped boost her concert career as an artist.

Later on in the 1960's, When the beginning of the civil rights movement began, she became an activist and started to "... involve the discussion of social issues of society in her songs. For example, Nina Simone had wrote "Mississippi Goddam" in protest to the assassination of Medgar Evers, which was a civil right activist and also a veteran of World War II. And as a response to the racism she wrote "Sunday in Savannah". In addition Nina had sung "Backlash Blues" written by langston Hughes. But unfortunately as the years went on the power behind the civil rights movements had declined; therefore Simone made the decision to leave the United states; this lasted for the next 15 years. After living in multiple countries such as Switzerland, Liberia, Egypt, the Netherlands etc, she finally settled in France but didn't stay for long. In 2000 she returned to the U.S to participate in the Wiltern Theatre, where she performed along with her daughter Lisa Simone (stage name Simone). In the end she moved back to France to continue living her life, where she died at age 70 from natural causes.



