

# After 50 years in music, Dionne Warwick still 'Rocks'

Singer Dionne Warwick, 71, received the Living Legend Award last month at BET's annual "Black Girls Rock!" ceremony, which recognizes the "achievements of remarkable women of color." With 50 years in the game, Dionne's accomplishments are many. Only Madonna has tied her record for the most songs by a female on *Billboard's* Hot-100 chart, after Aretha Franklin. These days Dionne's celebrating her career with a new album, *Now*.

Dionne reunited with long-time collaborators Burt Bacharach and Hal David to record four new songs and re-record some of her classic hits, including "I Say a Little Prayer."

"We updated them musically without disturbing what was written originally and without losing the integrity of the song," Dionne told *S2S*.

As Dionne won Grammys, achieved international success and appeared in films and TV shows, she paved the way for generations of artists with multifaceted careers—including that of her cousin, the late Whitney Houston, and current chart-toppers like Beyoncé and fellow Black Girls Rock! honoree Alicia Keys.

"I don't know if I'm a role model, but I'm certainly hopeful that I have lived and presented myself in a manner that (African-American females) would wish to emulate as I did coming up ... people like Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan," Dionne said. "Those that are presently as big as they are have to also be cognizant that young girls are looking at them and wanting to be who they are," Dionne said.

Dionne is also touring throughout the world to support her new album.

"I thought my career would be over in 10 years," she said. "I just didn't think I wanted to be on the road that long. It's about cause and demand. People want to hear what I have to sing."

—Erica Thompson



Photo by Sakuray/WENN.com

Dionne Warwick is touring to promote her 50th anniversary album, *Now*.

## Four reasons why **Dionne** rocks

### She's a pioneer.

In 1968, Dionne became the first African-American female performer to appear before the Queen of England at a Royal Command Performance.

### She's an educator.

Dionne's working to develop a two-edition African and African-American history book for students in kindergarten through college. She's working with Maya Angelou, Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. and other professors of African-American history.

### She's fighting to stop AIDS.

Dionne's raised millions for AIDS research and organizations through proceeds from her Grammy-winning song "That's What Friends are For" and a benefit concert. She continues to raise AIDS awareness by touring. "It's still a very, very dangerous disease. It's still very, very prevalent. It's going to be around until we decide that it is not," she said.

### She shares the spotlight.

Dionne invited her sons to contribute to her new album, *Now*. David Elliott, who co-wrote Luther Vandross' "Here and Now," duets with Dionne on "I Say a Little Prayer." Damon Elliott, who has worked with Destiny's Child, Pink and Mya, mixed the album and helped produce Dionne's vocals.