

Anita Baker - My Everything (2004)

Written by bluesever

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1. "You're My Everything" – 5:03 2. "How Could You" – 4:21 3. "In My Heart" – 5:06 4. "Serious" – 5:25 5. "How Does It Feel" – 4:42 6. "Like You Used To Do" – 5:11 7. "Close Your Eyes" – 4:42 8. "You're My Everything" (Revisited) – 1:12 9. "I Can't Sleep" – 5:08 10. "Men in My Life" – 3:37 Anita Baker (vocals); Philip Hamilton, Philip Hamilton (guitar); Eric Marienthal (alto saxophone); Gary Bias (tenor saxophone); Gary Grant (trumpet); Reggie C. Young, Reggie Young (trombone); George Duke (synthesizer, percussion); Leo Colon, Eric Rehl (synthesizer); Gerald Albright, Jimmy Haslip, Nathan East, Reggie Hamilton, Alex AI, Ronald Jenkins, Al Turner (bass guitar); Rafael Padilla (percussion); The Perri Sisters, Esther Ridgeway, Gloria Ridgeway, Gordon Chambers, The Ridgeway Sisters, Gracie Ridgeway, Kenya Ivey (background vocals); Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds (guitar, background vocals); Paul Jackson, Jr., Robert Randolph (guitar); Dan Higgins (tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone); Jerry Hey (trumpet); Russell Ferrante (piano); Barry J. Eastmond (keyboards, percussion); Ricky Lawson, William Kennedy, Bernard Davis, Steve Ferrone (drums); Bashiri Johnson (percussion).

Anita Baker's *My Everything* is her first studio outing in a decade. Family life seems to have claimed most of that time, as the album's last cut, "Men in My Life," seems to indicate. Baker co-wrote seven of the album's nine songs (one is a reprise of the title track), authored the aforementioned tune, and assisted producer Barry J. Eastmond in the arrangements. The disc's first single, "You're My Everything," is indicative of the album's sound: finely wrought and executed urban adult soul. Most of the set falls into this category, too, with the exception of "Like You Used to Do," a duet with Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds that walks a line between it and new-school groove. Another cut, the stellar "I Can't Sleep," offers Baker in full-on jazz mode, careening through a skittering and swinging arrangement with a full horn section pushing the groove; it showcases Baker's ability to croon, and she comes very close to Betty Carter's scat. Some may be frustrated that, after such a long time, Baker doesn't push the envelope more stylistically. This may be true in terms of the material itself, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Right down the line, Baker delivers on what she does best. But in one sense she has expanded her palette. On these cuts, most of the rhythm section's tracks were cut live from the floor, and on three, the vocals were as well. This gives the album a reedy immediacy that

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contrasts sharply with the rest of her studio catalog. This is a worthy return, qualitatively standing head and shoulders above most everything else in its class. ---Thom Jurek, allmusic.com

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