

Go read this story of why Aaliyah's 'One in a Million' album took 20 years to come to streaming

The 1996 album "One in a Million," by Aaliyah finally came to streaming platforms on Friday, almost 20 years after the singer's death in a 2001 plane crash. A huge star in the 1990s and early 2000s, much of Aaliyah's music has been missing from streaming platforms for the past two decades. As *Billboard* magazine reported in a lengthy feature earlier this month, Aaliyah's uncle, music producer Barry Hankerson, and her estate, controlled by her mother Diane Haughton and brother Rashad Haughton, have been at odds for years.

According to *Billboard*, Hankerson has made a distribution deal to release the entire catalog of Blackground Records— which includes Aaliyah's music as well as recordings from other artists including Timbaland & Magoo, and Toni Braxton— to streaming starting this month. He told *Billboard* he had not released Aaliyah's recordings previously because he was trying to respect his sister's wishes. *Billboard* reports that's up for debate:

That claim, however, is under some dispute. But regardless of the reason, over the years the catalog has sat on the shelf, untouched, as Hankerson says he waited for the tenor of the conversation to change. From time to time an artist or label would inquire about sampling or covering one of the songs in the catalog, but with the path to success unlikely, one source says that rarely did anyone try very hard. The early,

low monetary returns from streaming in the first part of the 2010s did little to encourage a reversal, and with the record business in financial freefall, there seemed little to be gained from the endeavor but backlash.

At the same time the news was breaking that Aaliyah's past albums and some previously-unreleased music would be coming to streaming starting this month, the estate released a statement, saying that protecting the singer's legacy "is and will always be, our focus." The statement made reference to "shadowy tactics of deception" and called the plan to release her music an "unscrupulous endeavor," but added that the plan "compels our hearts to express a word— forgiveness."

Go read this *Billboard* report that tells the inside story of how Aaliyah's music has been in limbo for two decades, and why it's finally available.

<https://www.theverge.com/2021/8/21/22635598/aaliyah-music-20-years-streaming-one-in-a-million>