

Barbados' National Hero: Rihanna [C2]

Sette anni dopo essersi allontanata dai riflettori del mondo della musica, la cantante torna in scena. Sempre fedele alle sue radici caraibiche, Rihanna è stata riconosciuta come eroina nazionale delle Barbados, dove vi è anche una giornata dedicata a lei.



Not only has she been an official ambassador for culture and youth in the country, the singer remains Barbados' most famous citizen and she has never softened her Bajan accent. Rihanna's designation as a national hero of Barbados, to coincide with the country's transition to an independent republic, could not be more apt. Not only has she been an official ambassador for culture and youth in the country since 2018, the singer remains the country's most famous citizen and indeed advocate. She has never softened her Bajan accent, and her music, while tapping into pop, R&B and dance music, has remained rich with her Caribbean heritage. In her investiture ceremony, the country's prime minister Mia Mottley addressed the pop singer, fashion icon and hugely successful entrepreneur as "ambassador Robyn Rihanna Fenty: may you continue to shine like a diamond" — a reference to 2012's global hit Diamonds — "and bring honour to your nation, by your words, by your actions, and to do credit

[wherever you shall go](#).” Rihanna’s career began with [Pon de Replay](#) in 2005, a track that used a [bass-heavy](#) dancehall [beat](#) and insistent [handclaps to usher](#) listeners to the dancefloor, with Rihanna singing instructions in patois to a DJ [over the top](#). She was clearly a charismatic singer with a distinctive voice. Rihanna’s star potential was given some equally [starry](#) support, though. A [demo](#) of [Pon de Replay](#) and other songs reached the office of the Def Jam record label, where Jay-Z was then president and CEO. She [nailed](#) an in-person audition and they signed her to a six-album [deal on the spot](#). Her [Bajan](#) roots shone on debut album “Music of the Sun” — [released](#) when she was just seventeen years old. She continued [to branch out](#) with her true [breakthrough](#), “Good Girl Gone Bad” (2007), but it was the hit song Umbrella that installed Rihanna as one of the world’s biggest pop stars, and in 2008 her country’s prime minister David Thompson announced an annual Rihanna Day on 22 February. She maintained a remarkable [work rate](#), releasing an album a year for the next four years. She [leaned into](#) her sexuality. She [endured](#) a shocking physical assault at the hands of R&B singer boyfriend Chris Brown (and the tabloid [melee](#) around it) to emerge with one of the best tracks from the early 00s — We Found Love with Scottish producer Calvin Harris, and forged other megastar pairings with Drake, Eminem and Britney Spears. 2016’s “Anti” is regarded by many as her masterpiece, and its lead single Work saw her return to the patois of her home region. No new solo music has emerged since (it was once rumoured that she was making a reggae album), but her [cultural standing](#) has continued to grow via her remarkable Fenty group of companies. Make-up brand Fenty Beauty and lingerie line Savage x Fenty [spotted shamefully](#) under-served [gaps](#) in the market, [namely](#) women of colour and those who didn’t [cleave](#) to the [slim](#) figures [lauded](#) by underwear rivals such as Victoria’s Secret. Her companies, authentically represented by Rihanna, who remains proudly sexual and body positive, have made her hugely wealthy: Forbes estimated her fortune in 2022 at \$1.7bn, making her the world’s richest female musician. Some of that wealth has been diverted to her Clara Lionel Foundation, named after her grandparents, which has frequently benefited Barbados with emergency hurricane [relief](#), healthcare and education programmes. Published in The Guardian on November 30, 2021. Reprinted with permission.

WATCH THIS VIDEO

La cantante delle Barbados già da tempo si dedica principalmente al mondo della moda e della cosmesi, contribuendo al body positive. Da artista ribelle a magnate, oggi Rihanna è un marchio che muove masse.

Glossary

- **remained** = restare
- **released** = pubblicare
- **spotted** = trovare
- **gaps** = lacune
- **bass-heavy** = con elevata intensità dei bassi
- **to usher** = guidare
- **starry** = stellare
- **deal** = acuerdo
- **melee** = baraonda
- **cultural standing** = livello culturale
- **shamefully** = trovare
- **cleave** = aderire
- **indeed** = indubbiamente
- **Bajan** = barbadiano
- **wherever you shall go** = ovunque tu vada
- **beat** = ritmo
- **to branch out** = espandersi
- **slim** = magre
- **advocate** = rappresentante
- **Pon de Replay** = metti il replay
- **lauded** = lodare
- **relief** = soccorso
- **heritage** = patrimonio, tradizione
- **over the top** = in cima, in alto
- **nailed** = eseguire con entusiasmo (slang)
- **on the spot** = su due piedi
- **apt** = adatta
- **tapping into** = attingere a
- **addressed** = rivolgersi a
- **work rate** = ritmo lavorativo
- **leaned into** = fare leva
- **softened** = attenuare
- **handclaps** = battiti di mani

- **endured** = soffrire
- **namely** = per esempio
- **demo** = dimostrazione, demo
- **breakthrough** = svolta, primo grande successo