

= Un @-@ Break My Heart =

" Un @-@ Break My Heart " is the second single performed by American recording artist Toni Braxton , from her second studio album , Secrets (1996) . The ballad was written by Diane Warren . Braxton expressed a dislike for the song ; however , L.A. Reid was able to convince the singer to record it and include on her album . It was released as the second single from the album in October 1996 , through LaFace Records . Lyrically , the song alludes to a " blistering heartbreak " in which Braxton begs a former lover to return and undo the pain he has caused . It won a Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance in 1997 .

" Un @-@ Break My Heart " attained commercial success worldwide . In the United States , the song reached number one on the Billboard Hot 100 , where it stayed a total of eleven weeks , while reaching the same position on the Hot Dance Club Songs and Adult Contemporary component charts . When Billboard celebrated their 40 years charting from 1958 to 1998 , the song was declared as the most successful song by a solo artist in the Billboard Hot 100 history . In Europe , the song reached the top five in more than ten countries while peaking at number one in Austria , Belgium (Wallonia) , Sweden , and Switzerland .

Bille Woodruff directed the accompanying video for the single . It portrays Braxton mourning the death of her lover , while remembering the good times they had together . Braxton performed the song on the opening ceremony of the 1996 Billboard Music Awards . " Un @-@ Break My Heart " has been covered by several artists , including American alternative rock band Weezer on the album Death to False Metal .

= = Background = =

Diane Warren wrote " Un @-@ Break My Heart " in 1995 . When asked about her songwriting process , she said that songs usually come to her from a title , a chorus , or a drum beat . " Un @-@ Break My Heart " was conceived from its title , and , according to Warren , " it popped into my head , and I thought , ' I don 't think I 've heard that before , that 's kind of interesting . ' I started playing around on the piano with these chords and did a key change , and then I knew , ' OK , this is magic . ' " Warren further explained that she wrote " Un @-@ Break My Heart " as a ballad and dance song , because that was the way she heard it . She said : " some people only know it as a ? gay ? dance song ! " .

When Warren played the finished song to Arista Records ' president L.A. Reid , he thought it would fit Braxton 's then upcoming album . When " Un @-@ Break My Heart " was sent to Braxton , she expressed dislike for the song . According to Warren , " Toni hated the song . She didn 't want to do it . " Reid was able to convince Braxton to record it , and later it became her signature song . Following the recording sessions of the song , Braxton approached Warren and explained why she was skeptical about recording it , further explaining that she didn 't want another " heartbreak track " .

Recording sessions occurred at The Record Plant and Chartmarker Studios in Los Angeles , California in the same year . " Un @-@ Break My Heart " was released as the second single from Secrets on November 11 , 1996 .

= = Composition = =

Produced by David Foster , " Un @-@ Break My Heart " is a four minute @-@ 25 second pop and R & B power ballad . The song 's theme alludes to a " blistering heartbreak " in which Braxton begs a former lover to return and undo the pain he has caused . According to sheet music published by Realsongs at Musicnotes.com , the verses of " Un @-@ Break My Heart " are composed in the key of B minor , and the piece modulates to D minor for the chorus and G @-@ sharp minor for the bridge ; the song is set in a time signature of common time with a moderately slow tempo of 55 beats per minute . Braxton 's vocal range spans from the low @-@ key of B2 to the high @-@ note of E ? 5 . David Willoughby , author of The World of Music (2009) , said a few phrases such as "

Don't leave me in all this pain " are sufficient to reveal the " sadness and the longing " in the song . The song was remixed by several DJs such as Hex Hector and Soul Solution . As noted by Jose F. Promis of Allmusic , the song " in its original form , was a massive adult contemporary and pop hit , and , with its larger @-@ than @-@ life chorus , worked equally well as an unstoppable dance number , even if the vocals were never re @-@ recorded . " The " Soul @-@ Hex Vocal Anthem " remix , with a length over nine minutes , was influenced by tribal house music ; while the " Classic Radio Mix " is a piano @-@ driven house music edit . A Spanish version of " Un @-@ Break My Heart " , titled " Regresa a Mi " , was included as a bonus track on Secrets . MusicOMH contributor Uma Uthayashanker considered it " an easy listen " version " that encapsulates the passion and meaning of the original but opens it up to a wider audience . "

= = Reception = =

= = Critical response = = =

Spin journalist Charles Aaron positively reviewed the song and joked : " this exquisitely crafted , heart @-@ pumping I @-@ u @-@ v song has been droning in the produce department of my grocery store for about a year now , but I 'd just like to go on record as saying that if it ever stops , I 'll really be heartbroken . " Bob McCann , author of Encyclopedia of African American actresses in film and television (2010) , considered it " simply one of the most haunting R & B records ever made " , while Robert Christgau named it " miraculous " and explained " the miracle being that it 's by Diane Warren and you want to hear it again . " About.com reviewer Mark Edward Nero named it one of the best R & B break @-@ up songs and considered it Braxton 's " finest moment " . He further commented , " damn , this song is so sad it can make people cry for hours at a time . " In 1997 , " Un @-@ Break My Heart " won a Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance .

While reviewing the album , Stephen Thomas Erlewine of Allmusic said the songs produced by David Foster are too predictable due to their " slick commercial appeal " . However , Erlewine noted that Braxton " manages to infuse the songs with life and passion that elevates them beyond their generic confines " due to her vocal ability . Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly considered the track " a tearjerker so grandiose and yet so intrinsically , assuredly hit @-@ bound , it 's the kind of mass @-@ appeal grabber that 's probably already sent a jealous Diana Ross diving for a comfort gallon of Häagen @-@ Dazs . " Tucker also named it the worst track on Secrets , and further stated : " Un @-@ Break My Heart " is " one of those the @-@ verses @-@ exist @-@ only @-@ for @-@ the @-@ swelling @-@ chorus showstoppers that allude to emotions without ever actually embodying them . Braxton does her darnedest to plug some life into the song , to no avail " . J.D. Considine of The Baltimore Sun described " Un @-@ Break My Heart " as " overblown " .

= = Chart performance = = =

In the United States , " Un @-@ Break My Heart " managed to peak at number one on Billboard Hot 100 for eleven weeks , from the week of December 7 , 1996 to the week of February 15 @,@ 1997 , and stayed in the same position on the Adult Contemporary chart for fourteen weeks . It sold 2 @.@ 4 million copies domestically and was certified platinum by the RIAA . " Un @-@ Break My Heart " also achieved commercial success worldwide , reaching number one in Austria , Belgium (Wallonia) , the European Hot 100 Singles , Sweden , and Switzerland , while reaching the top five in several European countries .

In the week of November 4 , 1996 , the song debuted at number four in the UK Singles Chart , reaching a peak at number two after seven weeks on the chart . According to the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) , it has shipped over 600 @,@ 000 copies there , being certified Platinum . In Australia , the song peaked at number six , and was later certified Platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) , for shipments of more than 70 @,@ 000 units

of the single .

= = Promotion = =

= = = Music video = = =

LaFace Records commissioned a music video to be directed by Bille Woodruff . The concept evolves around the ending of Braxton 's relationship with her lover , played by model Tyson Beckford . As the video begins , Beckford is seen leaving their home , with Braxton giving him a goodbye kiss , then going to check the mailbox . After he leaves the garage , a fast car suddenly appears and causes an accident , leaving him lying on the street while Braxton cries over his body . She then walks around the house , remembering the good moments she had with him , such as swimming in the pool and playing Twister . During the bridge and final chorus , Braxton is seen singing the song during a live concert , an allusion to the film " A Star is Born " . As applause rises , the video fades to black . The music video premiered on September 10 , 1996 on MTV .

= = = Live performances and covers = = =

" Un @-@ Break My Heart " was performed during the opening of the 1996 Billboard Music Awards . During the up @-@ tempo rendition of the track , Braxton sported an outfit similar to the ones of theatrical productions Ziegfeld Follies . She also performed it as the closing number of the Libra Tour (2006) .

Saxophonist Marion Meadows covered the song for his album Pleasure in 1997 , while Filipino singer Nina recorded her own version of it for her 2008 album Nina Sings the Hits of Diane Warren . Italian group Il Divo cover of the Spanish version of the track received positive appreciation from critics , who said the cover " has the potential to be a hit and to open doors for many of opera 's most acclaimed stars . " American alternative rock band Weezer also covered " Un @-@ Break My Heart " in 2005 . Their version was released on the album Death to False Metal in 2010 . Lead vocalist Rivers Cuomo explained why the band covered the track :

" I loved that song . It was actually Rick Rubin 's suggestion . We both loved that song and we both thought it would be great for Weezer , and for my voice , and it ? d be great to do like a rock version of it with more of an alternative aesthetic . And you know , just the way I would sing it versus in the way Toni Braxton would sing it . And I love the way it came out , and I think probably the rest of the band really does not like it , and that ? s probably why it didn ? t make our fifth record , in 2005 when we were recording it . "

= = Track listings = =

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =