

Aretha Franklin – Knew You Were Waiting The Best Of Aretha Franklin 1980-1998 (2012)

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01 – United Together 02 – Love All The Hurt Away (With George Michael) 03 – Jump To It 04 – Get It Right 05 – Freeway Of Love 06 – Who's Zoomin' Who 07 – Sisters Are Doin' It For Themselves 08 – Another Night 09 – Jumpin' Jack Flash (With Keith Richards) 10 – Jimmy Lee 11 – I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)(With George Michael) 12 – Through The Storm (With Elton John) 13 – It Isn't, It Wasn't, It Ain't Never 14 – Ever Changing Times (With Michael Mcdonald) 15 – Willing To Forgive 16 – A Rose Is Still A Rose

Legacy's *Knew You Were Waiting: The Best of Aretha Franklin 1980-1998* is the first serious attempt at chronicling Aretha's RCA and Arista recordings since her stint at the label wrapped up. In between 1994's *Greatest Hits (1980-1994)* and this 2012 collection, there was 2003's *Platinum & Gold*, released as part of BMG's ongoing new millennium midline series, which hit the high points but also shoehorned in "Respect" and "Think," two classics that don't fit in this context even when placed at the beginning of the collection. *Knew You Were Waiting* never attempts to disguise itself as something other than a retrospective of the Queen's last act and, by doing so, it makes a convincing case that Aretha's '80s work was pretty strong on its own merits. Most of the record is devoted to her work with Narada Michael Walden -- the producer behind her smash 1985 LP *Who's Zoomin' Who*, he has credits on seven of the 16 cuts here, including the hits "Freeway of Love," "Who's Zoomin' Who," the George Michael duet "I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)," the Elton John duet "Through the Storm," and the Whitney Houston duet "It Isn't, It Wasn't, It Ain't Never Gonna Be" -- and this crisp, synth-heavy soul-pop remains bright and cheery, having aged particularly well. So have the early-'80s quiet storm "United Together," "Love All the Hurt Away," and the two Luther Vandross productions "Jump to It" and "Get It Right," all four sleekly appealing in their smooth surfaces, leaving the '90s coda as the only cuts that don't quite convince, but even so, *Knew You Were Waiting* is a more than worthwhile chronicle of the Queen of Soul's late-career peak. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, allmusic.com

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