

# My Heart Will Go On

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**"My Heart Will Go On"**, also called the **"Love Theme from *Titanic*"**, is the main theme song to James Cameron's blockbuster film *Titanic*. Its music was composed by James Horner, its lyrics were written by Will Jennings, and it was produced by Walter Afanasieff and Simon Franglen,<sup>[1]</sup> recorded by Celine Dion, and released in 1997.<sup>[2]</sup>

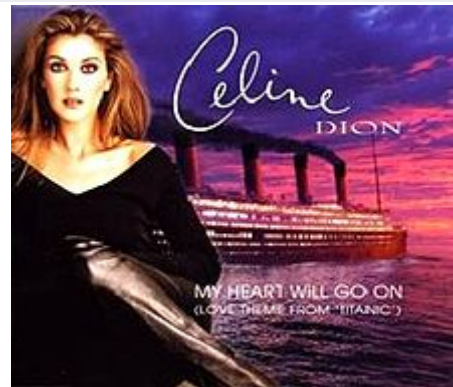
Originally released in 1997 on Dion's album *Let's Talk About Love* and the *Titanic* soundtrack album, the romantic song went to number one all over the world, including the United States, Canada, Ireland, United Kingdom and Australia. "My Heart Will Go On" was released in Australia and Germany on 8 December 1997, and in the rest of the world in January and February 1998.<sup>[3]</sup>

The song became Dion's biggest hit, and one of the best-selling singles of all time, and was the world's best-selling single of 1998. The music video was directed by Bille Woodruff and released at the end of 1997. Due to the song's widespread popularity when it was released, it is considered to be Dion's signature song.<sup>[4]</sup> It was also included in the list of *Songs of the Century*, by the Recording Industry Association of America and the National Endowment for the Arts. Dion performed the song to honor the 20th Anniversary of the film at the 2017 Billboard Music Awards on 21 May 2017.<sup>[5]</sup>

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## "My Heart Will Go On"



One of the international cover arts

### Single by Celine Dion

from the album *Let's Talk About Love* and *Titanic: Music from the Motion Picture*

Released	8 December 1997
Format	CD · cassette · 12"
Recorded	22 May 1997 Wallyworld, The Hit Factory
Length	4:39 (album version) 5:11 (soundtrack version)
Label	Columbia · Epic
Songwriter(s)	James Horner · Will Jennings
Producer(s)	Walter Afanasieff · James Horner · Simon Franglen

### Celine Dion singles chronology

"The Reason" (1997)	<b>"My Heart Will Go On"</b> (1997)	"Immortality" (1998)
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### Audio sample



Celine Dion – "My Heart Will Go On"  
[file](#) · [help](#)

### Music video

"My Heart Will Go On" on YouTube

## Origins

James Horner had originally composed the music for the song as an instrumental motif which he used in several scenes during *Titanic*; the main theme of the song being inspired by the song "Flying Dutchman" by Jethro Tull. He then wanted to prepare a full vocal version of it, for use in the end credits of the film. Lyricist Will Jennings was hired, who wrote the lyrics "from the point of view of a person of a great age looking back so many years."<sup>[6]</sup> Director James Cameron did not want such a song, but Will Jennings went ahead anyway and wrote the lyrics. When Dion originally heard the song, she did not want to record it<sup>[7]</sup> as she felt she was pushing her luck by singing another film theme song after *Beauty and the Beast*.<sup>[6]</sup> Horner showed the piano sketch to Simon Franglen, who was working with him on electronic textures and synthesizers for the film score. Franglen, who had, himself, worked with Dion for several years on many of her major hits to date,<sup>[8]</sup> programmed and arranged an extensive demo to take to Dion.

## Recording

In *Hitmaker: The Man and His Music* by Tommy Mottola, he claims that Dion recorded the song in one take, and that demo is what was released. Mottola states that since so much money was on the line for Cameron's film that Cameron felt obligated to include a theme song to promote the movie.

Dion's manager and husband René Angélil convinced her to sing on this demo version, which she had not done for many years. Horner waited until Cameron was in an appropriate mood before presenting him with the song. After playing it several times, Cameron declared his approval, even though he worried that he might be criticized for "going commercial at the end of the movie". Cameron also wanted to appease anxious studio executives and "saw that a hit song from his movie could only be a positive factor in guaranteeing its completion."<sup>[9]</sup>

## Composition

The song is written in the key of E major, though the leitmotif (as heard in the intro) is in the relative key of C# minor. The verses follow the chord progression of E–Bsus4–Aadd9–E–B. The chorus has the chord progression of C#m–B–A–B. The song modulates to F minor in the final chorus, and ends in the key of A♭ major.<sup>[10]</sup> It contains heavy emphasis on the instrumental arranging. Usage of flute is prominent, backed by melodic use of strings and rhythm guitars. The song features both acoustic and electronic instrumentation. Dion's vocal performance is described as "emotional" and "demanding" by Pandora radio.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Versions

The original Horner/Franglen produced "demo" version of the ballad runs a little over five minutes and has an extended ending with longer, segmented vocalizations by Dion. Franglen mixed the final film and soundtrack version, expanding on the demo and adding orchestra to the final chorus. It is this version that appears on the *Titanic* soundtrack album and is also played over the ending credits of the film.<sup>[12]</sup>

When the single was to be released to radio, it was produced further by Walter Afanasieff who added string and electric guitar, as well as rearranged portions of the song. This version, which runs a little over four and a half minutes, appears on both the 4-track maxi single and Dion's album *Let's Talk About Love*.<sup>[13]</sup> At the height of the song's popularity, some radio stations in the US and the UK played an edited version of the song, that had dramatic moments of dialog from the Jack and Rose lead characters in the film inserted in between Dion's vocal lines.

## Critical reception

AllMusic senior editor Stephen Thomas Erlewine wrote that this song "shines the most brilliantly" and marked it as a standout track.<sup>[14]</sup> Another AllMusic reviewer, single editor Heather Phares, who rated the single 4 out of 5 stars, wrote, "Indeed, her performances of it on VH1 Divas, the 1998 Academy Awards (wearing the film's 'Heart of the Ocean' pendant, no less), and on her 1997 album *Let's Talk About Love* have cemented 'My Heart Will Go On' as the quintessence of Dion's sweeping, romantic style."<sup>[15]</sup> Yahoo.com described the song as an "emotional power ballad that perfectly captured [Titanic's] romantic yearning".<sup>[6]</sup> *Vulture* said that it is a powerful song and has "one of the most glorious key changes in recorded music history", and that "its legacy is eclipsed only by" Whitney Houston's "admittedly far superior" song "I Will Always Love You".<sup>[16]</sup> *Washington Post* appreciated how the song was not just tagged on the end of the three-hour film, but has a lyrical motif that was already placed throughout the key moments of the film's love story in order to create a musical narrative.<sup>[17]</sup>

In latter years, "My Heart Will Go On" proved not to be popular with readers of *Rolling Stone* magazine; nor did it become popular with Kate Winslet, who played Rose DeWitt Bukater – the notional protagonist of the song – in the film. In 2011, *Rolling Stone* readers rated it the 7th worst song of the '90s, with the magazine writing, "Celine Dion's song and the movie have aged very poorly...Now [the song] probably just makes you cringe".<sup>[18]</sup> Winslet stated that the song made her feel "like throwing up", due to people's tendency to start playing it when she was around: "I wish I could say, 'Oh listen, everybody! It's the Celine Dion song!' But I don't. I just have to sit there, you know, kind of straight-faced with a massive internal eye roll."<sup>[19]</sup> *The Atlantic* attributed the song's decline in popularity to its overexposure and added that over the years there have been many jokes that parody the song's lyrics by claiming "My Heart Will Go On" goes "on and on and on".<sup>[20]</sup> *Vulture* reasoned that it has become fashionable to dislike the song because it "encapsulates most everything that once-enthusiastic moviegoers now dislike about *Titanic*: It's outdated, cheesy, and overly dramatic".<sup>[16]</sup> *Maxim* deemed it "the second most tragic event ever to result from that fabled ocean liner".<sup>[20]</sup>

## Accolades

"My Heart Will Go On" won the 1997 Academy Award for Best Original Song.<sup>[21]</sup> It dominated the 1999 Grammy Awards, winning Record of the Year — marking the first time to be won by a Canadian — Song of the Year, Best Female Pop Vocal Performance and Best Song Written Specifically for a Motion Picture or Television.<sup>[22]</sup> "My Heart Will Go On" also won the Golden Globe Award for "Best Original Song – Motion Picture" in 1998.<sup>[23]</sup>

The song also won a Japanese Gold Disc Award, for Song of the Year,<sup>[24]</sup> as well as a *Billboard* Music Award for Soundtrack Single of the Year.<sup>[25][26]</sup>

It has been named one of the Songs of the Century.<sup>[27]</sup> It is one of the best-selling singles ever in the United Kingdom,<sup>[28]</sup> selling over a million copies, the second single released by Dion to do so. This made Dion the only female artist to date to have released two million-selling singles in Britain.<sup>[29]</sup> In December 2007, the song peaked #21 on VH1's "100 Greatest Songs of the 90's".<sup>[30]</sup> In April 2010, the UK radio station Magic 105.4 voted the single the "top movie song of all time" after listeners's votes.<sup>[31]</sup> It was ranked at number 14 on AFI's 100 Years...100 Songs, celebrating the 100 greatest songs in American film history.<sup>[32]</sup>

## Influence and legacy

The song became "imprinted on the movie's legacy", and every listen prompts a reminder of the blockbuster and the hype surrounding it.<sup>[20]</sup> *USA Today* agreed that the song will be forever tied to the film *Titanic*.<sup>[33]</sup> *The Washington Post* says it is the marriage of music and image that make both the song and film greater than the sum of their parts.<sup>[17]</sup>

After the song had become a huge worldwide hit, many movie studios and record labels tried to duplicate the process. Although many soundtrack singles had become hits before "My Heart Will Go On", a string of similar songs followed afterward, such as Aerosmith's "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing" from *Armageddon* and Faith

Hill's "There You'll Be" from *Pearl Harbor* (both of which directed by Michael Bay). Each followed in the footsteps of the "Titanic" theme, a love ballad for a tragedy. Although those two songs became hits, they did not achieve the same success of "My Heart Will Go On".

Horner himself repeated the formula of making a song from his film themes with films such as *A Beautiful Mind*, *Bicentennial Man*, *The Perfect Storm*, and *Avatar*.

The Atlantic noted that its popularity didn't stem from being played at events such as high school proms, weddings, and funerals, but by being indelibly placed into pop culture through numerous plays on the radio station, speakers, and passing cars.<sup>[20]</sup>

Reportedly, the song was playing when cruise liner *Costa Concordia* crashed into rocks and sank.<sup>[20]</sup>

Dion has said retrospectively "My Heart Will Go On gave me the opportunity to be associated with a classic that will live forever".<sup>[34]</sup>

## In popular culture

- On 11 September 2010, Matthew Wilkening of AOL Radio ranked the song No. 11 on his list of the "100 Worst Songs Ever", while stating a new rule: "From now on, the Canadian warbler, and not the captain, has to go down with this ship." This was in reference to the *Titanic* itself.<sup>[35]</sup>
- The song was also featured as an episode title for The CW series, *Supernatural* in 2011. The episode featured the angel Balthazar going back in time to stop the *Titanic* from sinking and save its passengers. He (facetiously) claims that he did it purely because he hated the song and wanted to remove the reason for its existence. He mentioned that Dion had become a "destitute lounge singer" in Quebec as a result.<sup>[36]</sup>
- The song appears in the Sacha Baron Cohen film *Brüno*, in a parodical sequence wherein the eponymous character and his gay lover strip and embrace in front of an irate crowd towards the end of the movie.

## Chart performance

"My Heart Will Go On" became Dion's biggest hit and one of the best-selling singles in history, having sold more than 15 million copies worldwide.<sup>[37]</sup> In the United States, the song was given a limited number of copies – 658,000. Regardless, it debuted at number-one on the *Billboard* Hot 100, with sales of 360,000 copies,<sup>[38]</sup> where it stayed for two weeks. In addition, the song spent ten weeks at number-one on the *Billboard* Hot 100 Airplay, and was number one for two weeks on the Hot 100 Singles Sales. As a testament to the popularity of the song on the radio, the song broke the record for the then-largest radio audience ever, garnering 117 million listeners in February 1998.<sup>[39]</sup> The single was eventually certified gold in the United States.<sup>[40]</sup> *Billboard* reported that the digital copy of the single has sold 1,133,000 units since being available bringing total sales to 1,791,000 copies sold in the US.<sup>[41]</sup>

In addition "My Heart Will Go On" reached number one in several other U.S. charts, including, *Billboard*'s Hot Adult Contemporary Tracks,<sup>[38]</sup> Top 40 Mainstream,<sup>[38]</sup> Hot Latin Pop Airplay, and Hot Latin Tracks. For the latter, the single became the first English-language song to top the Hot Latin Tracks chart,<sup>[38]</sup> to which Dion was given a *Billboard* Latin Music Award for that achievement.

Internationally, the song was phenomenally successful, spending many weeks at the top position in various countries, including 17 weeks on the Eurochart Hot 100 Singles, 15 weeks in Switzerland, 13 weeks in France and Germany, 11 weeks in the Netherlands and Sweden, ten weeks in Belgium Wallonia, Denmark, Italy, and Norway, seven weeks in Belgium Flanders, six weeks in Ireland, four weeks in Australia and Austria, two weeks in Spain and the United Kingdom, and one week in Finland.

In Germany, "My Heart Will Go On" was certified 4x platinum for selling over two million copies,<sup>[42]</sup> and was ranked as one of the most popular singles ever released there.<sup>[43]</sup> It sold over 1.2 million copies in France, being certified Diamond. Additionally, the song was certified 3× Platinum in Belgium, 2× Platinum in Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, Platinum in Greece, and Gold in Austria. "My

"Heart Will Go On" was released twice in Japan. The regular edition from January 1998 sold 205,300 and was certified 2× Platinum, for 200,000 copies sold. The remixed edition released in June 1998 sold 111,920 copies and was certified Gold for 100,000 copies sold, due the fact that maxi-singles are treated as an album.

In the United Kingdom, the song sold 1.58 million copies,<sup>[44]</sup> becoming Dion's second million-selling single in Britain following "Think Twice" in 1995 and Britain's second best-selling single of 1998 behind Cher's "Believe".<sup>[45]</sup> This made her the only solo female artist to have two million-selling singles in Britain, a record which stood until early 2012 when Rihanna's singles "Only Girl (In the World)" (2010) and "We Found Love" (2011) both topped a million sales.<sup>[46]</sup>

## Album appearances

The song was included on the *All the Way... A Decade of Song & Video* DVD and on the *Titanic* (Three-Disc Special Collector's Edition) DVD release in 25 October 2005. In addition to Dion's *Let's Talk About Love* and the *Titanic* soundtrack, "My Heart Will Go On" appears on several other albums, including *VH1 Divas Live*, *Au cœur du stade*, *All the Way... A Decade of Song*, *A New Day... Live in Las Vegas*, *Complete Best*, *My Love: Essential Collection*, *Taking Chances World Tour: The Concert*, and *Céline... une seule fois / Live 2013*. It was also included on the DVDs for *Au cœur du stade*, *All the Way... A Decade of Song & Video*, *Live in Las Vegas: A New Day...*, and *Celine: Through the Eyes of the World*.

It was included later on the *Back to Titanic* second soundtrack album. In France, "My Heart Will Go On" was released as a double A-side single with "The Reason". In the *Let's Talk about Love* album booklet, the lyrics of the song contain an additional line between a second chorus and the final verse. The words "There is some love that will not go away" are not performed by Dion in any available version of the song, however, they are still included on Dion's official site.

## Track listing

### European CD single

1. "My Heart Will Go On" – 4:40
2. "Because You Loved Me" – 4:33

### European CD single #2

1. "My Heart Will Go On" – 4:40
2. "My Heart Will Go On" (Tony Moran mix) – 4:20

### French CD single

1. "The Reason" – 5:01
2. "My Heart Will Go On" – 4:40

### French CD single #2

1. "My Heart Will Go On" – 4:40
2. "Southampton" – 4:02

### French CD single #3

1. "My Heart Will Go On" – 4:40
2. "My Heart Will Go On" (Tony Moran mix) – 4:21

### Australian CD maxi single #2

1. "My Heart Will Go On" (Tony Moran mix) – 4:21
2. "My Heart Will Go On" (Richie Jones mix) – 4:15
3. "My Heart Will Go On" (Soul Solution) – 4:18
4. "Misled" (The Serious mix) – 4:59
5. "Love Can Move Mountains" (Underground vocal mix) – 7:10

### Brazilian CD maxi single #2

1. "My Heart Will Go On" (Cuca's radio edit) – 4:22
2. "My Heart Will Go On" (Tony Moran's anthem edit) – 4:21
3. "My Heart Will Go On" (Richie Jones unsinkable edit) – 4:15
4. "My Heart Will Go On" (Tony Moran's anthem vocal) – 9:41

### European CD maxi single #2 / UK 12" single

1. "My Heart Will Go On" – 4:40
2. "My Heart Will Go On" (Tony Moran mix) – 4:21

### **Japanese CD single**

1. "My Heart Will Go On" – 4:40
2. "Beauty and the Beast" – 4:04

### **UK cassette single**

1. "My Heart Will Go On" – 4:40
2. "I Love You" – 5:30

### **US CD single and Cassette**

1. "My Heart Will Go On" – 4:40
2. "Rose" – 2:52

### **Australian/Brazilian/European/UK/Korean CD maxi single**

1. "My Heart Will Go On" – 4:40
2. "Because You Loved Me" – 4:33
3. "When I Fall in Love" – 4:19
4. "Beauty and the Beast" – 4:04

3. "My Heart Will Go On" (Richie Jones mix) – 4:15
4. "My Heart Will Go On" (Soul Solution) – 4:18

### **Japanese/Korean CD maxi single**

1. "My Heart Will Go On" (Tony Moran mix) – 4:21
2. "My Heart Will Go On" (Richie Jones mix) – 4:15
3. "My Heart Will Go On" (Soul Solution) – 4:18
4. "My Heart Will Go On" (Richie Jones unsinkable club mix) – 10:04
5. "My Heart Will Go On" (Matt & Vito's unsinkable epic mix) – 9:53

### **UK CD maxi single #2**

1. "My Heart Will Go On" (soundtrack version) – 5:11
2. "Have a Heart" – 4:12
3. "Nothing Broken but My Heart" – 5:55
4. "Where Does My Heart Beat Now" – 4:32

## **Charts**

### **Weekly charts**

### **Year-end charts**



Chart (1990–99)	Position
Austria (Ö3 Austria Top 40) <sup>[78]</sup>	18
Canada (Canadian Artists Digital Songs) <sup>[79]</sup>	3
France (SNEP) <sup>[80]</sup>	10
UK Singles (Official Charts Company) <sup>[81]</sup>	11

## Certifications and sales

Region	Certification	Certified units/Sales
Australia (ARIA) <sup>[106]</sup>	2× Platinum	140,000 <sup>^</sup>
Austria (IFPI Austria) <sup>[107]</sup>	Gold	25,000 <sup>*</sup>
Belgium (BEA) <sup>[108]</sup>	3× Platinum	150,000 <sup>*</sup>
Denmark (IFPI Denmark) <sup>[109]</sup>	Gold	30,000 <sup>^</sup>
France (SNEP) <sup>[110]</sup>	Diamond	1,200,000 <sup>[111]</sup>
Germany (BVMI) <sup>[112]</sup>	4× Platinum	2,000,000 <sup>^</sup>
Japan (RIAJ) <sup>[113]</sup> <i>Single version</i>	2× Platinum	200,000 <sup>^</sup>
Japan (RIAJ) <sup>[114]</sup> <i>Dance mixes</i>	Gold	100,000 <sup>^</sup>
Japan (RIAJ) <sup>[115]</sup> <i>Ringtone version</i>	Gold	100,000 <sup>^</sup>
Mexico (AMPROFON) <sup>[116]</sup>	Gold	30,000 <sup>*</sup>
Netherlands (NVPI) <sup>[117]</sup>	2× Platinum	150,000 <sup>^</sup>
Norway (IFPI Norway) <sup>[118]</sup>	2× Platinum	40,000 <sup>*</sup>
Sweden (GLF) <sup>[119]</sup>	2× Platinum	60,000 <sup>^</sup>
Switzerland (IFPI Switzerland) <sup>[120]</sup>	2× Platinum	100,000 <sup>^</sup>
United Kingdom (BPI) <sup>[121]</sup>	2× Platinum	1,580,000 <sup>[44]</sup>
United States (RIAA) <sup>[122]</sup>	Platinum	2,358,000 <sup>[123][124]</sup>
<p><sup>*</sup> sales figures based on certification alone  <sup>^</sup> shipments figures based on certification alone</p>		

## Release history

Country	Date	Format
Japan <sup>[125]</sup>	14 January 1998	Mini CD
United Kingdom <sup>[126]</sup>	9 February 1998	CD • cassette
United States <sup>[126]</sup>	10 February 1998	
Japan <sup>[127]</sup>	20 June 1998	CD


## Other recordings




## Sissel recording

- Sissel Kyrkjebø recorded the song for the movie in 1997, but Celine Dion's vocals was preferred due to James Horner decision to support Dion's career.<sup>[128][129][130][131][132]</sup> In an interview from December 2014, Horner quotes: "When I had completed the *Titanic* [movie], I had to decide for Celine Dion or Sissel[']s [vocals]. Sissel I am very close, while Celine I had known since she was 18, and I had already written three film songs for [here]. But that was before Celine was known and filmmakers and marketing people had not done what they should have done for Celine and [here] songs. So I felt I owed her a *Titanic* chance, but I could [still] have used Sissel there."<sup>[133]</sup>

## External video

 Sissel performing "My Heart Will Go On" on world premiere of *Titanic 3D* at Royal Albert Hall, March 27 2012, YouTube video

 Sissel performing "My Heart Will Go On" on world premiere of *Titanic Live* at Royal Albert Hall, April 27 2015, YouTube video

## Other recordings

- Neil Diamond covered the song with orchestration by Elmer Bernstein for the 1998 album *The Movie Album: As Time Goes By*.
- Thorleifs recorded the song on their 1998 album *Saxgodingar 4*.<sup>[134]</sup>
- The Irish Tenors recorded the song on their 2004 album *Heritage* with main vocals by Finbar Wright.
- Jackie Evancho recorded the song on her 2012 album *Songs From The Silver Screen*.
- Onyria recorded the song in 2013 and released a video performance on YouTube.<sup>[135]</sup>

## See also

- 1998 in British music
- Academy Award for Best Original Song
- Billboard Year-End Hot 100 singles of 1998
- French Top 100 singles of the 1990s
- Golden Globe Award for Best Original Song
- Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance
- Grammy Award for Best Song Written for Visual Media
- Grammy Award for Record of the Year
- Grammy Award for Song of the Year
- List of artists who have achieved simultaneous UK and US number-one hits
- List of Australian chart achievements and milestones
- List of best-selling singles
- List of best-selling singles in France
- List of best-selling singles in Germany
- List of best-selling singles in the United Kingdom
- List of best-selling singles of the 1990s in the United Kingdom
- List of best-selling singles of the 20th century in the United Kingdom
- List of Billboard Hot 100 chart achievements and milestones
- List of Billboard Hot 100 number-one singles of 1998
- List of Billboard Hot 100 number-one singles of the 1990s
- List of Billboard Hot 100 top 10 singles in 1998
- List of Billboard Mainstream Top 40 number-one songs of the 1990s
- List of Dutch Top 40 number-one singles of 1998
- List of European number-one hits of 1998
- List of million-selling singles in the United Kingdom
- List of number-one adult contemporary singles of 1998 (U.S.)
- List of number-one Billboard Hot Latin Tracks of 1998
- List of number-one hits (Germany)
- List of number-one hits of 1998 (Austria)
- List of number-one hits of 1998 (Denmark)
- List of number-one hits of 1998 (Italy)
- List of number-one singles and albums in Sweden
- List of number-one singles in Australia during the 1990s
- List of number-one singles of 1998 (Canada)
- List of number-one singles of 1998 (Finland)
- List of number-one singles of 1998 (France)
- List of number-one singles of 1998 (Ireland)
- List of number-one singles of 1998 (Spain)
- List of number-one singles of the 1990s (Switzerland)
- List of number-one songs in Norway
- List of Top 25 singles for 1998 in Australia
- List of UK Singles Chart number ones of the 1990s

- List of UK top 10 singles in 1998
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- Ultratop 50 number-one hits of 1998

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## External links

- "My Heart Will Go On" (Music Video) on YouTube
- "My Heart Will Go On" (Live in Las Vegas) on YouTube
- Lyrics of this song at MetroLyrics

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