

= Monkey Gone to Heaven =

" Monkey Gone to Heaven " is a song by the American alternative rock band Pixies and is the seventh track on their 1989 album Doolittle . The song was written and sung by frontman Black Francis and was produced by Gil Norton . Referencing environmentalism and biblical numerology , the song 's lyrics mirrored themes that were explored in Doolittle . " Monkey Gone to Heaven " was the first Pixies song to feature guest musicians : two cellists , Arthur Fiacco and Ann Rorich , and two violinists , Karen Karlsrud and Corine Metter .

" Monkey Gone to Heaven " was released as the first single from Doolittle in the United States and United Kingdom . As the band had signed to Elektra Records shortly before , the single also marked their first American and major label release . It was critically well @-@ received ; Rolling Stone 's David Fricke said " Monkey Gone to Heaven " was " a corrosive , compelling meditation on God and garbage " . In the years since its release , the song has received several accolades from music publications .

= = Lyrics and meaning = =

" Monkey Gone to Heaven " ' s main theme is environmentalism . The song mainly deals with man 's destruction of the ocean and " confusion of man 's place in the universe " . " On one hand , it 's [ the ocean ] this big organic toilet . Things get flushed and repurified or decomposed and it 's this big , dark , mysterious place " , Black later said , " It 's also a very mythological place where there are octopus 's gardens , the Bermuda Triangle , Atlantis , and mermaids . " Francis came up with the song 's hook , " this monkey 's gone to heaven " , long before the song itself was written . The line itself forms a basis for the song , which revolves around man 's relationship with the divine and environmentalism . After Francis set the developing lyrics to music , he rushed to lead guitarist Joey Santiago 's apartment to play it to him . Santiago later commented on the nascent performance : " It was early in the morning , I was still so tired . [ Francis said ] ' Hey Joe , I need to come over . I need to show you something . ' [ ... ] It was awesome , really good . He had the ' If man is five ' part there , and he was laughing . [ ... ] It was hilarious " .

" Monkey Gone to Heaven " includes references to numerology in the lyrics " If man is five / then the Devil is six / and God is seven " . Francis later expanded on the significance of the lyrics in an interview to Alternative Press , saying " It 's a reference from what I understand to be Hebrew numerology , and I don 't know a lot about it or any of it really . I just remember someone telling me of the supposed fact that in the Hebrew language , especially in the Bible , you can find lots of references to man in the 5th and Satan in the 6th and God in the 7th . [ ... ] I didn 't go to the library and figure it out " . The song 's numerology is alluded to on the single 's cover , which features figures of five , six and seven , and also a monkey with a halo .

Ben Sisario , author of Doolittle 33 ? , offers a slightly different interpretation of the song : " Neptune , the god of this realm [ in reference to Francis ' ocean comment ] , the ' underwater guy who controlled the sea , ' hung out down there , the personification of man 's relationship with the earth . And what happens to Neptune ? He gets ' killed by ten million pounds of sludge from New York to New Jersey . ' Same thing with the " creature in the sky , " who gets stuck up there in a hole in the ozone layer . Man the divine manifestation effectively dies , and what remains is his degraded animal nature ; the chintzy halo stuck on the primate 's head is the symbol of that unhappy fall " .

= = Structure = =

" Monkey Gone to Heaven " is written in the key of D major , and opens with Francis ' rhythm guitar playing a short chord progression backed by the bass guitar of Kim Deal and drums of David Lovering . The guitar intensity fades as Francis begins to sing , leaving Deal 's bassline and Lovering 's steady drum @-@ beat . Between each line of the verse , Francis pauses , leaving the drums and bass playing . Joey Santiago 's lead guitar does not feature at all during the verses . By the end of the second line of each verse , the cello part joins in , following the bassline closely .

As the first verse finishes , the opening chord progression is repeated . This leads into the chorus ( where Francis and Deal repeat " This monkey 's gone to heaven " ) with the lead guitar of Santiago playing two notes repeatedly . The two violins play a melody throughout , accompanied by a piano in the background . There is then a short solo by Santiago , who repeats the melody three times , to bridge the chorus and second verse . The second verse and chorus follow the same format . At the end of the second chorus , Francis shouts " Rock me Joe ! " ; Santiago then begins a guitar solo lasting seventeen seconds , with backing violins for the second half of the solo .

After the solo , Francis sings " If man is five " several times . There is no backing , apart from the lead guitar , for several seconds , but then the song 's chord progression is heard again . This is repeated for " If the devil is six " . At the end of the second chord progression , the song 's main backing restarts again , with Francis screaming " Then God is seven " as the chorus approaches . The final repeated chorus of " This monkey 's gone to heaven " ends the song as the string section becomes more prominent .

= = Recording and production = =

The band 's parts were recorded at Downtown Recorders in Boston , Massachusetts . The string section of " Monkey Gone to Heaven " was recorded while Doolittle was being mixed at Carriage House Studios in Stamford , Connecticut . Gil Norton , the album 's producer , was inspired to add a string section to the song after seeing Deal plucking the strings of a grand piano during recording . The production team , led by Norton , asked the studio owner John Montagnese to bring in string players for one evening session . The studio was often used for recording orchestral scores for B @-@ movies such as Missing in Action and Silver Bullet . Montagnese hired four classical musicians from a local orchestra for the recording , with the session taking place on the afternoon of December 4 , 1988 .

Arthur Fiacco , a cellist , arrived at Carriage House first . He was dressed in formal black and white attire , having traveled from an afternoon concert . Fiacco was surprised to find there were no scores written for the musicians to play ; he then wrote a part based on riffs Francis had shown him . The violinists , Corinne Metter and Karen Karlsrud , also followed the directions of Francis and Norton . Another cellist , Ann Rorich , credited on the album and single , was sent home ; according to Fiacco he doubled her parts .

= = Release and music video = =

" Monkey Gone to Heaven " , the first single from Doolittle , was released to radio stations for rotation in April 1989 in the United States . The single reached number five on the US Modern Rock Tracks chart , with the help of Elektra Records ' marketing . In the United Kingdom , " Monkey Gone to Heaven " was released on April 1 , 1989 and spent three weeks in the UK chart , debuting at number 60 .

The music video , the Pixies ' first , features the band playing their instruments on a stage , with the camera alternating to focus on each band member . Filmed in black @-@ and @-@ white , " searchlights " cross the stage and several camera effects are used , such as slow @-@ motion . The camera switches to color for a few seconds several times during the video , before reverting to black @-@ and @-@ white . Halfway through the video , fog appears on @-@ stage , covering the band . The members of the string section are not seen in the video .

The song would later be re @-@ recorded by Black Francis and released on his 2004 album Frank Black Francis .

South African band Absinthe covered the song on their album A Rendezvous at Nirvana .

= = Reception = =

In general , " Monkey Gone to Heaven " received a positive critical reaction . British magazine NME , reviewing the UK 7 " single in March 1989 , said : " All the smart bastards are mixing strings with

grunge guitars nowadays and the Pixies are no exception . Sharled vocals , sci @-@ fi lyrics , and the usual molten lava flow of guitars burn another crater where your ears used to be . ' Monkey Gone to Heaven ' pukes acid and poetry into America 's AOR heartland before being splattered by the faster and more direct sting of the second track ' Manta Ray ' . " Upon the release of Doolittle in April 1989 , NME 's Edwin Pouncey added : " the wonderful ' Monkey Gone to Heaven ' is laced with lush but unobtrusive strings which nibble round the edge of the song and push it into a new realm of arrangement for the band . The opportunity to give ' Monkey ' the full Philharmonic treatment , complete with heavenly harp , must have been a temptation to them . Wisely such a folly has been resisted . "

Q , in their review of Doolittle , described " Monkey Gone to Heaven " : " It 's not pretty , but its carefully structured noise and straight forward rhythmic insistence makes perfect sense : a gut feeling that is doubled when it gets within sniffing distance of a tune , as on ' Monkey Gone to Heaven ' or ' Debaser ' . " Rolling Stone 's David Fricke , reviewing Doolittle , said " Monkey Gone to Heaven " was " a corrosive , compelling meditation on God and garbage . " The critical success of " Monkey Gone to Heaven " was also reflected commercially ; the song reached number five on the Billboard Modern Rock Tracks chart , marking the Pixies ' debut in the American charts . However , the song did not perform as well in the British charts , reaching a peak position of number 60 and falling off the charts after three weeks .

= = Track listing = =

All songs were written by Black Francis

UK 7 " single

" Monkey Gone to Heaven " ? 2 : 56

" Manta Ray " ? 2 : 38

UK / US 12 " / CD single

" Monkey Gone to Heaven " ? 2 : 56

" Manta Ray " ? 2 : 38

" Weird at My School " ? 1 : 59

" Dancing the Manta Ray " ? 2 : 13

= = Accolades = =

The information regarding accolades attributed to " Monkey Gone to Heaven " is adapted from Acclaimed Music .