

= Nothing Fails =

" Nothing Fails " is a song by American singer @-@ songwriter Madonna from her ninth studio album , American Life ( 2003 ) . Written by Madonna , Guy Sigsworth and Jem Griffiths , and produced by the singer along with Mirwais Ahmadzaï and Mark " Spike " Stent , it was released as the third single from the album on October 26 , 2003 . Originally titled " Silly Thing " , " Nothing Fails " is a love song which has acoustic guitar chords and a gospel choir appearance . Lyrically , the song discusses a lover who is the one , and how their meeting was not just chance . A number of remixes of the song were done , with one of them being included on Madonna 's remix album Remixed & Revisited ( 2003 ) .

The song received generally positive reviews , with music critics praising it as one of the best tracks from American Life , while others compared it with Madonna 's previous single " Like a Prayer " ( 1989 ) , as both songs feature a gospel choir . " Nothing Fails " was released in the US in hopes of attaining sales from American Life . However , it did not chart on the US Billboard Hot 100 , making it the second single from the album to fail to chart in the US . However , the song reached number one on the Hot Dance Club Songs and Hot Singles Sales charts . Internationally , the song was a success , reaching the top ten in Australia , Belgium , Canada and Italy while topping the charts in Spain .

Although initially reported on the contrary , no music video was filmed for " Nothing Fails " . The song was performed during a promotional tour for American Life in 2003 , along with other songs from the album and her past hits . One of these performances was shown by MTV in a special named Madonna on Stage & on the Record . It was also performed during Madonna 's sixth concert tour , the Re @-@ Invention World Tour ( 2004 ) , with Madonna alone on stage singing the song accompanied by an acoustic guitar . Many reviewers noted that Madonna in the performance was a " solitary figure " as it was herself alone playing the acoustic guitar .

= = Background and recording = =

According to Lucy O 'Brien , author of Madonna : Like an Icon , the main concept of American Life was about " nothing " . This was evident in the titles of the songs like " Nobody Knows Me " , usage of " no " in " Love Profusion " , as well as " Nothing Fails " . Usage of the negative tone led Madonna to be sarcastic on people 's assumptions about her and emphasize about her knowledge of romantic love . " Nothing Fails " began as a humble track that musician @-@ producer Guy Sigsworth wrote for his wife . He asked singer Jem Archer to collaborate with him and during their first collaborative session , they wrote a song called " Silly Thing " , inspired by Sigsworth 's wife . He said : " I never write love songs , but I was moved to write one for her . I 've never had a problematic relationship with her , there 's not been a lot of drama . But I wanted to write something naive and honest . " The demo , which sounded like an offbeat folk song , was later played for Madonna , who loved it and added to and changed parts and the title of the song . In September 2012 , Sigsworth leaked the original version of " Nothing Fails " , describing it as a " work @-@ in @-@ progress demo of a song I originally wrote with Jem , and which later became ' Nothing Fails ' , co @-@ written and recorded by Madonna . It 's over ten years old " . On " Nothing Fails " , Archer said :

" When I actually heard it I was so shocked , [ be ] cause it was the first time I believed [ my career ] was actually going to happen . And to hear Madonna singing it was like , oh my [ God ] , so bizarre . My mom keeps calling me whenever it 's on . She 'll go to shops in the UK and hold the phone up to the thing and I 'm like , ' They 're going to arrest you . ' "

" Nothing Fails " was produced by Madonna , along with Mirwais Ahmadzaï and Mark " Spike " Stent . The recording sessions for American Life started at late 2001 , then was put on hold as Madonna filmed Swept Away in Malta and starred in the West End play Up for Grabs . She returned to the Olympic Recording Studios in late 2002 and finished off the sessions . The mixing for the track was done by Mark " Spike " Stent at the Westlake Recording Studios at West Hollywood , California , while Tim Young did the mastering of the song at Metropolis Studios in London . Michael Colombier did the string arrangement with Geoff Foster acting as the strings engineer , conducting

at AIR Studios . For the instrumentation featured in the song , Ahmadzaï played the guitars , and Stuart Price played the piano .

= = Composition and remixes = =

" Nothing Fails " features an acoustic guitar introduction , which is a recurring theme of American Life . The guitar is accompanied by a " light " drum section and low @-@ pitched vocals from Madonna and also features a cello in the first part of the song , while gospel music comes in at the later half . According to the sheet music published at Musicnotes.com by Alfred Publishing , " Nothing Fails " is written in the time signature of common time with a moderately slow tempo of 92 beats per minute . It is composed in the key of B ? major with Madonna 's voice spanning from F3 to B ? 4 . The song follows a basic sequence of Gm ? F ? E ? ? B ? ? Gm as its chord progression .

Lyrically , the song discusses a lover who is the one , and how their meeting was not just chance , a reference to the " tree of life " is made during the song while Madonna makes denouncements of religion by singing " I 'm not religious " but she wishes to pray . Bill Friskics @-@ Warren , author of I 'll Take You There : Pop Music and the Urge for Transcendence , described the lyrics as consisting of double entendre , talking about both spiritual and sexual rebirth . The London Community Gospel Choir , led by Nicki Brown , recorded backing vocals for the song . The strings engineer for the choir , Geoff Foster , recalls that the group consisted of " a bunch of great singers giving it loudly , it was impressive . " According to Rolling Stone and The Advocate , the song glides from a lean arrangement and then reaches its peak with the gospel chorus , which resembles that of Madonna 's single , " Like a Prayer " ( 1989 ) .

A remix version for the song , " Jackie 's In Love In The Club Mix " , done by DJ Jackie Christie , was made available as one of the exclusive tracks of the American and European maxi @-@ single release of the song . She maintained Madonna 's vocals and the gospel choir appearance , commenting that " I was asked to remix ' Nothing Fails ' [ ... ] I wanted it to be a mainfloor mix with a big choir breakdown so you felt the magic of the Madonna and the choir , like church . " Peter Rauhofer 's remix of the song was added along with the remixes of the follow @-@ up single , " Love Profusion " . Another version , the " Jason Nevins Mix " , was included on Madonna 's 2003 remix album Remixed & Revisited . Stephen Thomas Erlewine from Allmusic commented that on this remix , Madonna sounds as if she is out of step with the music of 2003 .

= = Critical reception = =

" Nothing Fails " received mostly positive reviews from music critics . O 'Brien listed it as a " hymn of devotion " and " the most majestic song on American Life " . She complemented the " dramatic , theatrical air " of the song and noted that the addition of the choir made the song revelatory and ecstatic . J. Randy Taraborrelli wrote in his book , Madonna : An Intimate Biography , that although the album was not a strong , cohesive package , " Nothing Fails " stood out as one of the few gems . In a review for the album as a whole , Michael Paoletta from Billboard called it a highlight of American Life , describing the song as " tear @-@ inducing " . Entertainment Weekly 's Ken Tucker called it " lovely " and named it , among other songs from the album " refreshingly ? hell , shockingly ? earnest " .

Alexis Petridis from The Guardian praised its choral finale . Slant Magazine 's Sal Cinquemani labeled it one of the moments of greatness on the album . Ian Youngs from BBC Music gave a positive review for " Nothing Fails " , writing that less is more when it comes to Mirwais ' electronic tricks . Johnny Davis from NME commented that " only ' Nothing Fails ' and ' Intervention ' dip beneath the frenetically poppy , with neither a ' Ray of Light ' -style glitterball stomper , nor a big ballad to act as a breather " . Josh Tyrangiel from Time found Madonna 's singing in " Nothing Fails " as relaxed and woeful , consisting of " plenty of soul " . A review in the Telegram & Gazette complimented the song for successfully blending between the " spiritual and the sensual " .

Jon Pareles from The New York Times believed that " Nothing Fails " was able to raise sentiments likened by other people and was prone to introspection , unlike other Madonna tunes . Stephen

Thompson of The A.V. Club considered the song "emotionally resonant", but characterized the introduction of a choir as "busy". Instead of praising "Nothing Fails", Chuck Taylor from Billboard said that the song "illustrates everything that makes [American Life] a grind". Ben Ratliff from Rolling Stone compared it negatively to "Like a Prayer" and commented it is much closer to what she's become good at: the idea of transfiguration through love, declaring that the difference in 2003 is she doesn't have the ambition. Stylus Magazine also compared it negatively to "Like a Prayer", calling it "an off @-@ hand denouncement of religion" and stating that "the same old song, over 10 years later, just doesn't cut it anymore". Jim DeRogatis of the Chicago Sun @-@ Times found the lyric "I'm not religious" to be "confusing and befuddling", as Madonna references Jesus Christ and Satan in other songs on the album.

= = Chart performance = =

Following the commercial disappointment of "American Life" and "Hollywood"? the first two singles from American Life? Maverick sent a radio remix of "Nothing Fails" in hopes of attaining sales. The song was sent to Mainstream Top 40 radio on October 28, 2003. "Nothing Fails" did not chart in the United States; however, it was a commercial success on the dance charts. According to Fred Bronson, the single release of the remixes of the song debuted at number @-@ one on the Hot Singles Sales and Hot Dance Single Sales chart, on the issue dated December 27, 2003, the same week it also moved up to the top @-@ twenty of the Dance Club Songs chart. "Me Against the Music" by Britney Spears, on which Madonna was featured, and "Nobody Knows Me", both were also present in the top @-@ twenty, making Madonna the only artist to have three songs within the top @-@ twenty on the chart simultaneously. However, the single sold less than 10 @, @ 000 units according to Nielsen SoundScan, marking the lowest total for a number @-@ one song on the chart. At the year @-@ end Hot Dance Singles Sales recap, "Nothing Fails" was at number two position, while "Me Against the Music" and "Love Profusion" was at numbers one and three respectively. Billboard reported that Madonna was the first artist in its chart history to have the top three Dance Sales song.

In Australia, Warner Bros. Records released a maxi @-@ CD single of "Nothing Fails". The release was considered an album by ARIA due to the number of different tracks; it failed to chart on the ARIA Albums Chart. However, it did appear on the ARIA Dance Albums Chart at number six. The song also reached the top ten in Canada. In Europe, "Nothing Fails" achieved moderate success on the charts. In Austria, "Nothing Fails" had moderate success, debuting at number 74, and one week later, reached number 51, and spent only six weeks inside the chart. On January 3, 2004, "Nothing Fails" debuted at its peak of number 50 on the Belgian Flanders Singles Chart. However, it peaked at number three on the Ultratip chart of Wallonia. The song debuted at number 16 on the Danish Singles Chart, peaking at number 11 the next week. The song debuted at its peak of number 34 on the French Singles Chart on November 30, 2003. In its second week, the song began its decline, falling out of the chart at number 97, almost four months later. The song had commercial success in Italy, reaching the top ten on its singles chart, and also in Spain where it reached the top of the chart. On the German Singles Chart, the song peaked at number 36.

= = Promotion and live performances = =

No music video was filmed for promotion of "Nothing Fails". Initially it was reported by Daily Mirror that Madonna planned to shoot the video in Israel with actor Michael Douglas. According to Polly Graham from the newspaper, Warner Bros. executives were concerned about the singer's safety in Israel, but Madonna was adamant. "Her record bosses are really worried about it. They are trying to talk her around, but she's having none of it. She has told them it makes sense to shoot it in Israel as the Kabbalah originates from there. Madonna is not particularly bothered about her safety and potential risks. She doesn't think it's as bad as it seems." Her then husband Guy Ritchie was also facing difficulty with his project, Revolver, which was rejected by Sony Pictures executives since it contained references to Kabbalah, and they asked Ritchie to re @-@ write the script. Since

the video itself would have included symbolism from Kabbalah , Madonna ultimately decided to not film the music video . These reports were later refuted by the artist during an interview with San Francisco radio station Alice 97 @. @ 3 , where she explained that no music video would be shot for the single .

To start marketing American Life , Madonna embarked on a promo tour . One of these performances , presented at the Total Request Live studios in New York , was shown by MTV in a special named Madonna on Stage & on the Record . Hosted by Carson Daly , she sang " Nothing Fails " and other songs from American Life while answered questions from the audience . Madonna also performed the song at HMV store in Oxford to around 500 people . She wore a black beret , polka @-@ dot blouse , black trousers and heels . The setlist included " American Life " , " Hollywood " , " Nothing Fails " , " X @-@ Static Process " and " Mother and Father " before performing her previous singles " Like a Prayer " and " Don 't Tell Me " . She also played the acoustic guitar during some songs and played the wrong chords at the beginning of " X @-@ Static Process " .

The next year , Madonna performed the song on the Re @-@ Invention World Tour as the first song from the acoustic segment of the concert . As the " Bedtime Story " interlude , in which three acrobatic dancers on swings dropped from the ceiling ended , Madonna arrived on stage dressed in a black Stella McCartney suit and accompanied by an acoustic guitar to sing the song . Jane Stevenson from Toronto Sun described Madonna in the performance as a " solitary figure " as it was herself alone playing the acoustic guitar . Bret McCabe from Baltimore City Paper described it as a " warm @-@ up " performance . During the concert in Dublin , Ireland , she wore a black coat and was protected by an umbrella while performing the song during the rain . This occurrence was shown in the I 'm Going to Tell You a Secret documentary , which chronicled the whole tour .

= = Track listings and formats = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Madonna ? lead vocals , songwriting , producer  
Mirwais Ahmadzaï ? guitar , producer , programming  
Stuart Price ? piano  
Guy Sigsworth ? songwriting  
Jem Griffiths ? songwriting  
Mark " Spike " Stent ? production , audio mixing  
London Community Gospel Choir ? choir arrangement  
Michael Colombier ? string arrangement  
Tim Young ? audio mastering  
Credits for " Nothing Fails " are adapted from American Life liner notes .

= = Charts = =