

= Me Against the Music =

" Me Against the Music " is a song recorded by American singers Britney Spears and Madonna for Spears ' fourth studio album , In the Zone (2003) . It was written by Spears , Madonna , Christopher " Tricky " Stewart , Thabiso " Tab " Nkhereanye , Penelope Magnet , Terius Nash and Gary O'Brien . The song was released on October 14 , 2003 , by Jive Records , as the lead single of In the Zone . After bonding with Spears during a night in New York City , Stewart and Magnet started working on the song for her . During rehearsals for the 2003 MTV Video Music Awards , Spears played Madonna the track and asked her to do the song with her .

" Me Against the Music " contains influences of hip hop and usage of funk guitars . Spears and Madonna trade lines during the verses , and Madonna sings the bridge . Lyrically , the song talks about battling the music and the pleasures of letting go on the dancefloor . The song received generally mixed reviews from music critics . Some felt it was a strong dance track of In the Zone , while others referred to it as lackluster and disappointing . The song was a commercial success , peaking atop of the charts in countries such as Australia , Denmark , Hungary , Ireland and Spain , as well as the European Hot 100 Singles . It also peaked at number two in Canada , Italy , Norway and the United Kingdom , and inside the top five in many other nations . The song won the " Hot Dance Single of the Year " accolade at the 2004 Billboard Music Awards .

The accompanying music video for " Me Against the Music " shows Spears and Madonna playing opposites in a nightclub . A cat @-@ and @-@ mouse chase ensues , and Spears finds Madonna in the end , only for the latter to disappear before they kiss . The video received positive reviews from critics , who noted it as symbolic of the sexual roles between the women . Spears has performed the song in a number of live appearances including the 2003 NFL Kickoff Live , Saturday Night Live , 2003 American Music Awards and TRL . She has also performed remixed versions with elements of bhangra music at The Onyx Hotel Tour (2004) and The Circus Starring Britney Spears (2009) . Spears is currently performing the song on her Las Vegas residency show Britney : Piece of Me . " Me Against the Music " has been sampled by Justice , while the music video was recreated by television series Glee and included an appearance by Spears .

= = Background and writing = =

American producers Christopher " Tricky " Stewart and Penelope Magnet , known collectively as RedZone Entertainment , presented Spears with the third song they had written and produced , " Pop Culture Whore " . While her management liked the track , she rejected it , telling them the song " sucked " . After bonding with Spears during a night in New York City to " get in her world " , as Magnet explained , it was easier to " actually write and know what she would and wouldn't say , to know where her real vibe is " . Stewart and Magnet began working on the first version of the song ; Stewart came up with the track , while Magnet developed the melody on a piano and some of the lyrics . American producer The @-@ Dream became involved after Stewart proposed him to work together on the track for Spears . He explained , " I was just getting into the business . I'm in Atlanta , driving home in a ' 92 Cadillac , and I get the call [...] I hung up and just screamed out joyous sounds . " During the recording sessions , Stewart recalls that the studio 's air @-@ conditioning died for three days , but Spears " didn't complain or anything , and for me that shows she 's where she is for a reason . "

While rehearsing for their performance at the 2003 MTV Video Music Awards , Spears played a finished version of " Me Against the Music " to Madonna . After Madonna commented that she liked the track , Spears asked her to do the song with her . RedZone then handed " Me Against the Music " to Madonna , who arranged and recorded her vocal additions on her own , therefore making the song a duet . Spears , who has been a Madonna fan for years , was " beyond surprised " when she heard Madonna 's verse . She said " I just asked her to do a little thing , but she really went there . She did a lot of stuff to it . " Jive Records hoped " Outrageous " would be released as the first single from the album , but Spears pushed for " Me Against the Music " . After she performed the song for the first time at the 2003 NFL Kickoff Live , Spears refused to answer if it was the first single from

the album , but said that " there are some surprises that are going to come up in the song that I 'm really excited about . " On September 16 , 2003 , it was confirmed that " Me Against the Music " would be released as the first single from In the Zone .

= = Composition = =

" Me Against the Music " is a dance and hip hop song with usage of funk guitars . The song features Madonna , but was constructed as a duet after she was added to the track . Spears and Madonna trade lines during the verses , and Madonna sings solo in the bridge . Stewart described the sound as " half @-@ rapping , half @-@ singing " and " beat @-@ driven " . According to the sheet music published at Musicnotes.com by Hal Leonard Corporation , " Me Against the Music " is set in a moderate dance beat , with a tempo of 120 beats per minute . Spears 's vocal range span from the low @-@ note of G2 to the high @-@ note of B4 . Gavin Mueller of Stylus Magazine deemed Spears 's vocals as " sexy and sultry " and compared them to those of Prince .

In the song , Spears and Madonna sing of the pleasures of letting go on the dancefloor , in lyrics such as " I 'm up against the speaker / Trying to take on the music / It 's like a competition " . Spears explained the concept of the song as " basically about just going to a club and letting yourself go and battling with whoever is around you and battling against the music as well . " Magnet continued , saying , " Like she was hearing the music and trying to out @-@ dance the track or out @-@ beat the drum or out @-@ pluck the guitar . It 's as if she 's in the club , losing herself in the music . " William Shaw of Blender stated Madonna 's verse could be interpreted as her passing the baton to a new talent , as well as " a taunt from the old guard to the uptight youngster . "

= = Critical response = =

Stephen Thomas Erlewine of Allmusic selected " Me Against the Music " as one of the ' track picks ' from In the Zone . Caryn Ganz of Spin called the song " a fine specimen of Britney 4 @. @ 0 ? a fast @-@ paced dance anthem , all grinding percussion shuttling through a traffic jam of synths . " Dave De Sylvia of Sputnikmusic said that " Aside from numerous rather awful name @-@ dropping passages and a disappointing chorus , the track is an ideal way to open the album . It 's an up @-@ tempo dance track with a big name attached ; what else could you ask for ? " Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine deemed it as " arguably one of Britney 's finest moments and one of her mentor 's worst " . Nick Southall of Stylus Magazine said that " Madonna vamps it up (literally ? her appearance here is not Sapphic but vampiric , the wizened old crone bleeding another period of forced longevity into her career like a cruenating corpse leaking plasma backwards) on ' Me Against The Music ' , but can 't make it a bad tune . " Gavin Mueller , also writing for Stylus Magazine , said that the single " benefits from a kinetic garage @-@ inspired beat , even when a tepid Madonna threatens to spoil the fun . "

Spence D. of IGN commented , " Initially catchy , it 's ultimately forgettable other than it 's the musical counterpart / fallout to / from the duo 's lip lock publicity stunt on the 2003 MTV Music Video Awards . " Jamie Gill of Yahoo ! Music Radio stated that " Madonna 's appearance on the brilliantly titled but deeply dreary ' Me Against The Music ' was a postmodern prank designed to make all sane listeners think ' actually , American Life was pretty good , after all . ' " While reviewing The Singles Collection , Mayer Nissim of Digital Spy said that " the only arguable weak link is the Madonna @-@ featuring ' Me Against The Music ' , but in this context what once looked like a respectful passing of the baton now seems like an unconditional surrender of pop Queendom to its rightful heir . " David Browne of Entertainment Weekly called " Me Against the Music " " the album 's coy , overly busy single " . Dorian Lynskey of The Guardian noted it as " the only duff track " of the album . Jon Pareles of Rolling Stone wrote , " Madonna shows up in the album 's first song , ' Me Against the Music ' , as if endorsing Spears 's foray into come @-@ hither posing and club @-@ land beats . "

Larry Flick from The Advocate denounced the track as an " ' Into the Groove ' redux " . He added that the song " propels the listener into Spears ' collaborations with heavy @-@ hitting producers . There 's nary a hint of her pristine pop past on Kelly 's hip @-@ grinding ' Outrageous ' or Perry 's "

Girls & Boys ' . Instead Spears swims through dark , often hip @-@ hop hued waters with occasional forays into minor keyed electro dance terrain . " Ali Fenwick of The Johns Hopkins News @-@ Letter said , " Despite bringing out the big guns in a duet with Madonna , ' Me Against The Music ' is not danceable , the measure of success in any pop tune . " Linda McGee of RTÉ.ie commented that although much of the content of In the Zone is " catchy " , " it is hard to see any potential singles impressing as much as ' Me Against The Music ' . " Kelefa Sanneh of The New York Times deemed it as " an odd , overstuffed track , not so much a song as a series of party chants " . Mim Udovitch of Blender called it " lackluster " .

= = Remixes = =

A number of remixes were commissioned by Jive Records , to accompany the song . The Australian CD singles included remixes by artists such Peter Rauhofer , Rishi Rich , Passengerz and Terminalhead . The US CD single also contained remixes by Trak Starz , Gabriel & Dresden , Bloodshy & Avant and Kanye West . The Rishi Rich 's Desi Kulcha Remix was later included in the tracklist of In the Zone . The remix removes the original melody of the song and adds a clattering backbeat and Punjabi shouts . Kelefa Sanneh of The New York Times called the remix " excellent " , noting that it is " so frenetic you barely notice Ms. Spears and Madonna ? it 's odd to hear two such ubiquitous figures sounding so anonymous . " Britney had also contacted Outkast to remix " Me Against the Music " but the remix was not released .

= = Commercial performance = =

On October 25 , 2003 , " Me Against the Music " debuted at number 50 on the Billboard Hot 100 . It was Spears 10th chart hit , as well as the first of her entries that she had co @-@ written . " Me Against the Music " was incidentally Madonna 's 50th chart entry , 20 years after her first appearance on the Hot 100 with " Holiday " the week of October 29 , 1983 . It was also the first song in chart history to feature Madonna , and her first chart entry not produced by her since " Love Don 't Live Here Anymore " in 1996 . On the issue dated November 29 , 2003 , " Me Against the Music " peaked at number 35 . On the component charts , the song peaked at the top of Hot Dance Club Songs and at number 11 on Pop Songs . It won the " Hot Dance Single of the Year " accolade at the 2004 Billboard Music Awards . As of June 2012 , it has sold 60 @,@ 000 physical copies and 281 @,@ 000 digital downloads according to Nielsen Soundscan . " Me Against the Music " also peaked at number two on the Canadian Singles Chart .

In Australia , " Me Against the Music " debuted at number one on November 17 , 2003 , replacing Kylie Minogue 's " Slow " , and remained at the top for two weeks . It was certified platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) for shipments of 70 @,@ 000 units . On November 24 , 2003 , the song debuted at number 13 in New Zealand . " Me Against the Music " debuted in the United Kingdom at number two , on the week of November 16 , 2003 . It was blocked from ascending the top spot by Busted 's " Crashed the Wedding " . The song became Spears ' most successful single since " I 'm Not a Girl , Not Yet a Woman " in April 2002 . According to the Official Charts Company , the song has sold 240 @,@ 000 copies there . " Me Against the Music " also topped the Eurochart Hot 100 Singles chart for three consecutive weeks . The song topped the charts in Denmark , Hungary and Ireland ; reached number two in Italy and Norway ; the top five in Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia) , Czech Republic , Finland , Sweden , Switzerland and the Netherlands . " Me Against the Music " also charted in the top 20 of Austria and France .

= = Music video = =

= = = Development = = =

The music video for " Me Against the Music " was filmed over three days in October 2003 , at

Silvercup Studios in Long Island City , New York . It was directed by Paul Hunter , who revealed that the concept was setting Spears and Madonna apart , hence Spears wore a black outfit whereas Madonna sported a white suit . Spears stated , " The video is more sensual than I'm used to [...] It was my first time doing a collaboration and I got Madonna . It 's really interesting to see the two different styles together . " Kevin Tancharoen was the choreographer of the video . The vehicle used in the video , a Mazda RX @-@ 8 , was autographed by Spears on the hood and auctioned off to benefit the Britney Spears Foundation . In 2009 , Hunter talked to MTV News about the video , saying , " Madonna is an icon of an earlier generation , and then Britney of the newer generation . She was at her peak at that point [...] So it was a challenge to kind of bring both of the worlds together . I wanted it to be a bit of a cat @-@ and @-@ mouse sort of game and a little bit of a foreplay between Britney and Madonna and just sort of tease the audience . "

= = = Synopsis = = =

The video starts with Britney parking the Mazda vehicle and going into a New York nightclub . She enters a wooden room populated with ' cool kids ' flaunting pink and purple hair while taking whiffs from an oxygen tank . Madonna , who is in a room filled with men smoking cigars , observes her from television monitors throughout the club . She wears a white trouser suit and carries a cane , signifying a position of moneyed power . Her suit is also notably fitted , especially in the waistcoat , revealing Madonna 's body to be female and not masculine . Although the areas are separated by a wall , Spears and Madonna sense their presences through extrasensory perception and dance in synchronicity . Julie Andsager in *Sex in consumer culture* (2006) noted that the video hints at a same @-@ sex relationship between the two .

This is followed with Spears performing a dance routine inside a blacklight paint graffiti room , and the two women dancing around a metal bedframe . Spears then begins chasing Madonna in a wooden @-@ like maze , and the latter enters a room covered with fallen leaves and stands in a swing . Once Spears finds the room , Madonna is nowhere to be found . Throughout the video , Madonna gradually loses her symbolic power , paralleled by her disposing the cane and jacket , becoming less phallic and more noticeably female biologically and more feminine socially . Although it ultimately seems that Spears becomes the dominant figure , Madonna recovers her phallic power in the form of a cigar from an onlooking male . Spears appears in Madonna 's room and throws her against the wall , and Madonna vanishes just as they are about to kiss . The video ends as Madonna 's laugh is heard in the background .

= = = Release and reception = = =

The video premiered on television on *Making the Video* on October 21 , 2003 at 23 : 00 EDT . Its online premiere was on Yahoo ! Music . It was viewed more than 2 million times in its first five days . The video reached number one on the AOL Music Top Video chart in November 2003 , with 3 @,@ 356 @,@ 007 million streams . In January 2004 , the video topped the same chart again with 1 @,@ 198 @,@ 920 million streams . Jocelyn Vena of MTV said , " It was the changing of the guard ? or at least the meeting of two of the most influential pop divas of all time . [...] The superstars tantalize the audience (and each other) throughout the flirty video . " Antonella Lazzeri of *The Sun* commented , " Just weeks after snogging at the MTV Video Music Awards they teamed up for another raunchy double act . [...] The video highlight comes with the pair embracing against a wall , only for Madonna [...] to vanish just as they are about to kiss . "

Julie Andsager stated the ' fantasy @-@ fulfillment ' strategy of Spears continued with the Madonna kiss and the " *Me Against the Music* " video , but added that " she has , perhaps , taken her sexuality to its extreme ? for network television , at least ? at the age of 22 " . Laurenz Volkmann said that it showcases an entire range of different female roles between ' older ' and ' younger ' sign systems . Author Judith Ann Peraino commented , " In 1963 , Judy Garland presented Barbra Streisand as her protégée as songstress and gay icon ; in 2003 , Madonna instated Spears as her protégée in same @-@ sex erotica and icon of polymorphous sexuality . "

= = Live performances = =

Spears performed " Me Against the Music " at the 2003 NFL Kickoff Live on September 4 , 2003 at the National Mall . She sported shoulder @-@ length blond hair and was dressed in black football pants , a black @-@ and @-@ white referee halter top and boots from Reebok . The performance segued into a medley of " ... Baby One More Time " and " I 'm a Slave 4 U " , which included pyrotechnics . Her outfit was later auctioned off to benefit the Britney Spears Foundation . On September 14 , 2003 , Spears played a surprise concert at Rain Nightclub in the Palms Casino Resort , and " Me Against the Music " was the first song in the set . On October 18 , 2003 , the song was performed by Spears during the twenty @-@ ninth season of the American comedy show Saturday Night Live . William Shaw of Blender stated , " Dancing and singing , Spears is in her element . She drips song @-@ and @-@ dance confidence . Within a few seconds , her shiny hat falls off , sending her blond hair everywhere , but Spears doesn 't miss a step . When it comes to Madonna 's verse , she can 't help mouthing along to the words . " Spears opened the 2003 American Music Awards telecast with a performance of " Me Against the Music " . She floated down on a wire from the rafters in a gold overcoat , which she quickly shed to reveal a pink bustier , black vinyl thigh @-@ high boots and black hot pants . She was accompanied by a troupe of brightly dressed faux punk rock dancers and a dizzying set that featured shooting flames , Vegas @-@ style neon signs and a massive video screen .

It was also performed by Spears at Britney Spears : In the Zone , a concert special that aired in ABC on November 17 , 2003 . The following day , she performed on the American music show TRL at Times Square , wearing a fedora and her signature half @-@ shirt . " Me Against the Music " was also performed on American late @-@ night show The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and American morning show Live with Regis and Kelly on November 17 and 24 , 2003 . She performed the song as the headliner of the Jingle Ball on December 8 , 2003 , at the Staples Center . The Rishi Rich 's Desi Kulcha Remix of " Me Against the Music " was performed as the encore number of 2004 's The Onyx Hotel Tour . It began with a system malfunction where a female voice counted down as the screens sketched Spears 's outline , which then rose to reveal her at the top of a staircase . Spears wore a red ensemble , an ended the performance on the staircase where the screen is lowered . She made her exit as a shower of confetti was shot towards the audience . " Me Against the Music " was also performed on 2009 's The Circus Starring Britney Spears , in a Bollywood @-@ inspired group dancing routine which included mudras . Spears wore green and gold harem pants ensemble . Jim Farber of Daily News said , " In a nod to trendiness , the shows included a mock @-@ Bollywood dance sequence during ' Me Against The Music , ' eagerly riding the ' Slumdog ' gravy train . " Spears performed the song during her Las Vegas residency show Britney : Piece of Me . During the performance , Spears is seen doing a dance routine with walls made of wood , which is a resemblance to the labyrinth scene from its music video .

= = Cover versions and samples = =

The music video was parodied during the 2003 French & Sanders Christmas Special episode of American comedy show MADtv . " Me Against the Music " was sampled by Justice on their tracks " D.A.N.C.E. " and " Valentine " , from their debut album ? (2007) . The music video was recreated on the 2010 American series Glee episode " Britney / Brittany " . The characters of Brittany Pierce (Heather Morris) and Santana Lopez (Naya Rivera) are put under general anesthesia during a trip to the dentist 's office . They share an hallucination , in which Morris appears as Spears , whereas Rivera plays Madonna . Morris explained , " The ' Me Against the Music ' montage , it 's literally copied exactly from the video , the shots and looks , but the choreography is made so much more for a dancer ? none of it is from the video . [...] It 's insane . " At the end of the number , Spears replaces Santana and pins Brittany against the wall , announcing to her that she is in a fantasy . Spears applauded the cover , pointing out that it " looks just like the original , " and adding , " Santana does a great Madonna impression . " The song charted at number ninety @-@ three in

Australia , fifty @-@ four in Canada and fifty @-@ six in the United States .

= = Track listings = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Britney Spears ? lead vocals and background vocals , songwriting , co @-@ production

Madonna ? lead vocals and background vocals , songwriting

RedZone Entertainment ? songwriting , production , background vocals

Thabiso Nkhosane ? songwriting

Terius Nash ? songwriting

Gary O'Brien ? songwriting , guitar

Courtney Copeland ? background vocals

Emma Roads ? background vocals

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =