

= Borderline (Madonna song) =

" Borderline " is a song by American singer Madonna from her eponymous debut studio album Madonna (1983) . It was released on February 15 , 1984 by Sire Records as the album 's fifth single . Written and composed by producer Reggie Lucas , the song was remixed by Madonna 's then @-@ boyfriend John " Jellybean " Benitez . She used a refined and expressive voice for the song . Its lyrics dealt with the subject of a love that is never fulfilled .

Contemporary critics and authors applauded the song , calling it harmonically the most complex song from the Madonna album and complimenting the dance @-@ pop nature of the song . " Borderline " became Madonna 's first top ten hit on the Billboard Hot 100 , peaking at number ten . In the United Kingdom it reached number two after it was re @-@ released as a single in 1986 . Elsewhere , the song reached the top 10 or top 20 of a number of European nations while peaking the singles chart of Ireland . The song was placed at 84 on Blender magazine 's " The 500 Greatest Songs Since You Were Born " , while Time included it on the critic list " All @-@ Time 100 Songs " .

The accompanying music video portrayed Madonna with a Latin @-@ American man as her boyfriend . She was enticed by a British photographer to pose and model for him , but later returned to her original boyfriend . The video generated interest amongst academics , who noted the use of power as symbolism in it . With the video , Madonna was credited for breaking the taboo of interracial relationships and was considered one of her career @-@ making moments . The release of the video on MTV increased Madonna 's popularity further . Madonna has performed the song on her Virgin Tour (1985) and the Sticky & Sweet Tour (2008) , where a punk @-@ rock version of the song was performed . " Borderline " has been covered by a number of artists , including Duffy , Jody Watley , Counting Crows , and The Flaming Lips .

= = Background = =

In 1982 , Madonna was working with producer Reggie Lucas on her debut album . She had already composed three songs , when Lucas brought one of his own compositions to the project and called it " Borderline " . However , after recording the song , Madonna was unhappy with the way the final version turned out . According to her , Lucas used too many instruments and did not consider her ideas for the song . This led to a dispute between the two . After finishing the album , Lucas left the project without altering the songs to Madonna 's specifications . Hence , Madonna brought her then boyfriend John " Jellybean " Benitez to remix " Borderline " and some of the other recorded tracks . On hearing the final version , Seymour Stein , head of Sire Records declared , " I dared to believe this was going to be huge beyond belief , the biggest thing I 'd ever had , after I heard ' Borderline ' ... The passion that she put into that song , I thought , there 's no stopping this girl . "

= = Composition = =

" Borderline " was recorded in February 1983 and ushered a change from the normal vocal tone expressed by Madonna in her songs . A sentimental track , the song talks about a love that is never quite fulfilled . According to author Santiago Fouz @-@ Hernández in his book Madonna 's drowned worlds , the lyrics of the song like " Something in way you love me won 't let me be / I don 't want to be your prisoner so baby won 't you set me free " depicted a rebellion against male chauvinism . Madonna used a refined and expressive voice to sing the song , backed by Lucas 's instrumentations . Considered as the best example of the working relationship between Lucas and Madonna , he pushed her to find emotional depth in the song . Although sounding icy , the chorus is contemporary in style and the vocal range for this song , was later used by Madonna as her own personal range through her whole music career . It opens with a keyboard rich intro played on a Fender @-@ Rhodes Electric Piano and a catchy synth melody provided by Fred Zarr . Bass player Anthony Jackson doubled Dean Gant 's synth bass to provide a solid and more complex texture .

The chords in the song were inspired by Seventies disco sound in Philadelphia as well as Elton John 's musical style during the mid @-@ seventies . The chord sequences cite from Bachman

@-@ Turner Overdrive 's song " You Ain 't Seen Nothing Yet " while the synth phases display her typical musical style . The song is set in common time with a moderate tempo of 120 beats per minute . It is composed in the key of D major with Madonna 's vocal range spanning from F ? 3 to B4 . The song follows in the chord progression of D ? C ? G in the first verse to Bm ? Em ? A ? F ? in the pre @-@ chorus , changes to A ? F ? ? Bm ? A ? E and G ? D ? A in the chorus .

= = Critical reception = =

Author J. Randy Taraborrelli , in his biography of Madonna , called " Borderline " along with " Holiday " the two key records which helped in establishing Madonna 's base in the music industry . He added that Madonna 's sober voice made the track " as close to an old Motown production as a hit could get in the dance @-@ music @-@ driven eighties . " Author Maury Dean in his book Rock ' n ' Roll Gold Rush called the song " echoey boogie " with " saucy @-@ style and come @-@ hither magnetism . " Author Rikky Rooksby in his book , The Complete Guide to the Music of Madonna called it harmonically the most complex track of her debut album . Stephen Thomas Erlewine from AllMusic called the song effervescent . Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine called the song soulful . Commentator Dave Marsh in his book The Heart of Rock & Soul said that the " music 's too damn good to be denied , no matter whose value system it disrupts . "

Journalist Roxanne Orgill in her book , Shout , Sister , Shout ! commented that " Borderline " was the song which made Madonna the star she is . Thom Duffy of Orlando Sentinel commented that " Borderline " was a song " introduced Madonna , the helium @-@ induced pop star , and a siren kitten . " The song was placed at number 84 on Blender Magazine 's " The 500 Greatest Songs Since You Were Born . " Time also included it on the critic list " All @-@ Time 100 Songs " , stating that " Madonna went on to sing more @-@ clever songs (' Material Girl ') , more @-@ showy songs (' Like a Prayer ') , more @-@ sexy songs (' Justify My Love ') . But ' Borderline , ' her first top @-@ 10 hit , captures the essence of her pop appeal , its freshness , simplicity and vitality . " Pitchfork Media considered the song the 106th best one of the 1980s , stating that " ' Borderline ' is one of the first laid bricks in the cathedral of Madonna ? s mythology , four minutes of emotional helium that became her first Top 10 hit on the heels of an iconic music video . "

At the 1984 Billboard Music Awards , " Borderline " received two nominations , in the categories of Best New Artist and Best Choreography in a Music Video , but did not win either . In September 2014 , the song was placed at number two on Rolling Stone 's list of " 100 Best Singles of 1984 " . Carrie Grant from the magazine described the track as a " melodic synth @-@ a @-@ palooza with the plunky low end " , and also noting that Madonna 's vocals were restrained on the song , but sounded emotional . " The radio remix , which trims nearly three minutes from the tune , boasts one of Madge 's most iconic fade @-@ outs , standing by as she " la la la " s into the void . "

= = Commercial performance = =

In the United States , the song became Madonna 's first top ten hit when it reached position ten on the Billboard Hot 100 on June 16 , 1984 . The song reached a peak of two on the Hot Dance Music / Club Play chart . It also became a crossover success by charting on the Hot Adult Contemporary Tracks chart at 23 . On October 22 , 1998 , the song was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) for shipment of one million copies . In Canada the song debuted at number 56 on the RPM issue dated August 4 , 1984 and reached a peak of number 25 on September 15 , 1984 . The song was on the chart for 14 weeks .

In the United Kingdom , with the original release of the song on June 2 , 1984 , it was able to reach a peak of only 56 . However , upon re @-@ releasing the song on January 1 , 1986 , it reached a new peak of two on the chart and was present for a total of nine weeks . The song was certified gold by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) on February 1986 , for shipment of 500 @,@ 000 copies of the single . According to the Official Charts Company , the song has sold 310 @,@ 000 copies there . Across Europe the song topped the chart in Ireland and entered the top ten of Belgium and Netherlands . It also peaked at number 23 in Switzerland and number 12 in Australia .

= = Music video = =

" Borderline " was filmed on location in Los Angeles , California from January 30 to February 2 , 1984 and was the first video that Madonna made with director Mary Lambert , who would later also direct the videos " Like a Virgin " , " Material Girl " , " La Isla Bonita " and " Like a Prayer " . Author Allen Metz noted how the video portrayed Madonna 's then " burgeoning star quality " . It is regarded as one of her career @-@ making moments when the video was started to be shown on MTV . She acted as the girlfriend of a Hispanic street guy who is picked up by a British photographer who publishes her picture on a magazine cover . The portrayal of the street life and high @-@ fashion scene in the video was a reference to Madonna 's life in the gritty , multiracial streets and clubs that she used to haunt while her career was beginning as well as the world of popularity and success she was experiencing at that moment . The storyline involved her being emotionally torn between the photographer and her boyfriend . Madonna 's boyfriend in the video is portrayed as Latino and her struggles with this relationship depicted the struggle Hispanic women faced with their men . Lambert said that there was " no formula " used when making the ' Borderline ' video and that they were " inventing it as we went along . " In the January 1997 issue of Rolling Stone , Lambert described the video and its plot as , " Boy and girl enjoy simple pleasures of barrio love , girl is tempted by fame , boy gets huffy , girl gets famous , but her new beau 's out @-@ of @-@ line reaction to a behavioral trifle (all she did was to spray @-@ paint his expensive sports car) drives her back to her true love . "

The video narrative weaved the two relationship stories in color and black and white . In the color sequence , Madonna sings , flirts and seduces the Hispanic guy (Louie Louie) who becomes her boyfriend . In the black @-@ and @-@ white sequence she poses for the photographer , who also courts her . The video had Madonna in her usual sense of style in those years and wore her hair in a haystack , lace gloves , high heeled boots with thick socks and her trademark boy @-@ toy belt . She changes from one shot to another in color as well as black and white while wearing an unusual array of clothes including crop @-@ tops , T @-@ shirts , vests and sweaters coupled with cut @-@ off pants and jeans as well as a couple of evening gowns . Posing for the photographer , Madonna looks towards the camera with challenge in her eyes thus depicting sexual aggression . At one moment in the video , she starts spraying graffiti over some lifeless classical statues thus portraying herself as a transgressor who breaks rules and attempts at innovation . With the video Madonna broke the taboo of interracial relationships . Although at first it seems that Madonna denies the Hispanic guy in favour of the photographer , later she rejects him thus implying her desire to control her own sexual pleasures or going over the established pop borderlines with lyrics like " You just keep on pushing my love , over the borderline " . The contrasting image of Madonna , first as a messy blonde in the Hispanic sequence and later as a fashioned glamorous blonde , suggested that one can construct one 's own image and identity . Portraying herself as a Hispanic also had the clever marketing strategy of appealing herself to Hispanic and black youths thus breaking down racial barriers .

After its airing " Borderline " attracted early attention from academics . They noted the symbolism of power in the two contrasting scenes of the video . The British photographer and his studio is decorated with the classical sculptures and nude statues holding spears in a phallic symbol . In contrast , phallic symbols portrayed in the Hispanic neighborhood included a street lamp which Madonna embraces and a pool cue held erect by Madonna 's boyfriend . Author Andrew Metz commented that with these scenes , Madonna displayed her sophisticated views on the fabrications of femininity as a supreme power rather than the normal views of oppression . Author Carol Clerk said that the videos of " Borderline " and " Lucky Star " established Madonna not as the girl @-@ next @-@ door , but as a sassy and smart , tough funny woman . Her clothes worn in the video were later used by designers like Karl Lagerfeld and Christian Lacroix in Paris Fashion week of the same year . Professor Douglas Kellner in his book Media Culture : Cultural Studies , Identity , and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern commented that the video depicted motifs and strategies which helped Madonna in her journey to become a star .

= = Live performances and covers = =

The song has been performed by Madonna on The Virgin Tour (1985) and the Sticky & Sweet Tour (2008) . In the Virgin Tour , Madonna performed the song wearing a black , fringed micro @-@ top and similar skirt , with her belly @-@ button exposed , and a number of crucifixes in different sizes , hanging from different parts of her body . Madonna performed the song in its original version . She appeared from behind a silhouette , and descended the steps , while waving her hands and singing . The performance was not included in the Madonna Live : The Virgin Tour VHS in 1985 .

" Borderline " was added to the set list of the first leg of her Sticky & Sweet Tour in 2008 during the Old School section of the performance . Madonna wore a pair of gym shorts in this section while wearing sneakers and long socks on her feet . The outfit was designed by Jeremy Scott and was a reference to Madonna 's old days in New York . A punk @-@ pop version of the song was performed by Madonna while playing a purple electric guitar on a microphone as the backdrops displayed Keith Haring 's cartoons and graphical imagery . Jon Pareles of The New York Times called the performance enthusiastic and punk @-@ pop . Nekesa Mumbi Moody of USA Today called it a " rocked out performance " . Caryn Ganz of Rolling Stone called it a " Cheap Trick @-@ style power pop song [performance] . " The song was not included in the 2009 leg of the tour and was replaced by a rock version of Madonna 's other song " Dress You Up . " In June 2016 , Madonna appeared on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon and closed the show by performing " Borderline " , watched by the President of the United States , Barack Obama .

In 2000 , an electro @-@ industrial cover of the song by Nivek Ogre of OhGr was included on the tribute compilation album , Virgin Voices : A Tribute To Madonna , Vol . 2 . Heather Phares of AllMusic said that Ogre 's version " missed the mark . " Chicago pop punk band Showoff recorded a cover for the 2002 compilation album Punk Goes Pop . In 2006 singer Jody Watley covered the song for her album The Makeover . Watley 's downtempo version attained UK release as a single in October 2009 . An acoustic folk cover of the song by The Chapin Sisters was included on the 2007 Madonna tribute album Through the Wilderness . In 2008 , singer Duffy performed " Borderline " at Radio 1 's Big Weekend in Mote Park , Maidstone , Kent , England . The Flaming Lips and Stardeath and White Dwarfs recorded a cover of the song for the 2009 Warner Bros. Records compilation , Covered , A Revolution in Sound . Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic described the cover recording as turning Madonna 's version " inside out " . Counting Crows performed the song at the Royal Albert Hall in 2003 , an MP3 of the song was released on the band 's official website on March 17 , 2009 . The performance was criticised by ABC News , calling it anticlimatic . In 2010 , the TV show Glee covered it in the episode " The Power of Madonna " in a mashup with the song " Open Your Heart " , performed by Cory Monteith and Lea Michele .

= = Track listings and formats = =

Note : Borderline " Dub Remix " is also known as " Instrumental "

= = Credits and personnel = =

Madonna ? lead vocals

Reggie Lucas ? writer , producer , guitars , drum programming

Fred Zarr ? synthesizers , electric and acoustic piano

Dean Gant ? synthesizers , electric and acoustic piano

Ed Welch ? synthesizers

Anthony Jackson ? electric bass

Ira Siegal ? guitars

Bobby Malach ? tenor saxophone

Gwen Guthrie ? background vocals

Brenda White ? background vocals
Chrissy Faith ? background vocals
Credits adapted from the album liner notes .

= = Charts and certifications = =