

= Spark the Fire =

" Spark the Fire " is a song recorded by American singer and songwriter Gwen Stefani . The song was released on December 1 , 2014 . It was originally intended to be featured on Stefani 's third studio album This Is What the Truth Feels Like , but it was scrapped in favor of new material . Stefani wrote " Spark the Fire " in collaboration with the song 's producer Pharrell Williams . It is a dance @-@ pop and hip hop track that incorporates funk . Along with the previous single , " Baby Don 't Lie " , the track was marketed as Stefani 's musical comeback as a solo artist .

Critical responses to " Spark the Fire " were mixed with critics negatively comparing it to Stefani and Williams ' previous collaboration " Hollaback Girl " , while others favored it compared to " Baby Don 't Lie " . Lyrically , the song serves as a " comeback " , discussing topics such as partying , having a good time , and feminism . " Spark the Fire " charted on Russia 's music chart at number 326 , failing to impact any other country 's main chart , managing only to peak on the lower ends of the US Dance Club and Pop Digital Songs charts . Stefani performed the song live during various public appearances , including The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon where she performed it alongside a medley mix of her previous singles .

= = Background = =

After releasing two solo albums , Love . Angel . Music . Baby (2004) and The Sweet Escape (2006) , Stefani returned to work with her band No Doubt , and in 2012 they released their sixth studio album , Push and Shove . During that time , she claimed , " I never need to do that or want to do it again . I 'm happy being in No Doubt . " However , after an appearance during Pharrell Williams ' performance at the 2014 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival , Pharrell teased that the rare live appearance from Stefani was the start of a comeback effort for the singer . Shortly after her Coachella performance , Stefani performed " Hollaback Girl " live on The Voice to further promote her upcoming role on the show .

During an interview for MTV News during New York Fashion Week , Stefani confirmed that she was working on new material for a solo album and a No Doubt album ; she also stated , " I 'm going into the studio tonight with Pharrell [Williams] , I 'm going to be writing and also just seeing what comes along my way . I 've been recording a few things . " Williams completed , " When I tell you she 's killing it , it 's another level . " In an interview with the Windy City Media Group , Stefani said " [the song] was so perfect for my story @-@ for what I was feeling in my own personal life @-@ that I didn 't even get it as a feminist anthem . I thought it was just about me ! I was just feeling me . " After the release of " Baby Don 't Lie " a month prior , " Spark the Fire " was released on December 1 , 2014 .

= = Composition and lyrics = =

" Spark the Fire " was written by Stefani and Pharrell Williams ; Williams serves as the track 's sole producer . The song is a dance @-@ pop and hip hop track , with inclusions of funk music and heavy percussion . August Brown of the Los Angeles Times described the song as " full of vintage Pharrell moves : pep @-@ band drum lines , percussive blips and a lot of open space for Stefani 's gum @-@ smacking shouts " . Lyrically , the song discusses several different themes ; Feminism and " girl power " is made clear in the lyric " It is time for the girl species to grow / I am a Libra / Let 's balance the scales " , while partying and clubbing is made clear in the lyric " Who got the lighter ? / Let 's spark the fire " . In a 2014 interview with Scott T. Sterling , Williams stated that the " coolest part " of the song was " the sound and direction " , particularly the song 's lyrics discussing " feminism and women standing up for themselves , and standing together " . He described the song as inspired by his feeling that " the female species has been suppressed long enough " , calling the lyric " Enough 's enough . Who 's got the lighter ? / Let 's spark the fire " Stefani 's way of demanding more respect for women . In an interview with PopSugar 's Lindsay Miller , Stefani identified the song as being " a very personal song " and " my journey " instead of a feminist anthem , but

supported Williams ' interpretation , saying " I love when people discover their own opinions about a song " . Miller described Stefani 's hesitation with the word feminism as " com [ing] more from a place of humility than an attempt to avoid controversy " .

= = Critical reception = =

" Spark the Fire " received mixed reviews from critics . August Brown , writing for the Los Angeles Times , praised the single for being " a welcome return to the studio styles " of both Stefani and Williams . Hayden Manders of Refinery29 gave the single a positive review , calling it " a throwback for the modern age " and " a song of unity " . BreatheHeavy 's Jordan Miller praised the song for having " that typical Gwen sass combined with Pharrell 's signature quirky beats and rhythm " . Miller chose the lyrics " get off my cloud " as an example of Stefani 's vocal delivery being " rap @-@ sing @-@ talking business " . However , he later criticized both " Spark the Fire " and " Baby Don 't Lie " for being " bland " .

With a more divided opinion , Slant Magazine 's Alexa Camp called the song " an attempt to repeat those past hits than update the singer 's sound for ' 2015 ' " , but described it as an improvement over the previous single " Baby Don 't Lie " , while Eliza Berman of Time said that " though it 's more repetitive and packs less oozing attitude than " Hollaback Girl " , it should serve the club nearly as well . " In a negative review , Lucas Villas of AXS described the song as " a dud " and viewed it as " a whole lot of hot air " that failed in its attempt of " rekindling [the] past magic " behind Stefani and Williams ' 2005 collaboration " Hollaback Girl " . Marc Hogan of Wondering Sound was critical of the song 's lyrics , saying " a look at Stefani 's prior discography might suggest there 's not much fuel left for this particular theme " , and compared them to her previous work with No Doubt on the song " Start the Fire " from the 2001 album Rock Steady .

= = Music video = =

= = = Background and synopsis = = =

The music video was released on December 1 , 2014 on Stefani 's official YouTube account . The video was produced by Stefani 's long @-@ time collaborator , Sophie Muller . At the beginning of the video , Stefani is shown floating on a cloud over an animated cityscape . For the video 's remainder , Stefani parties in an underground nightclub with friends while groups of animated emoticons and animated figures flash on the screen . During the song 's bridge before the last chorus , Stefani visually acts out the song 's lyrics with the help of several emoticons . Scott Lapatine of Stereogum described the video 's storyline as " a cartoon universe and an underground club with pop @-@ up video @-@ style graphics flying by " ; Lapatine further stated that the video also includes glimpses of " a conspicuous workstation that prints pizza and a Chrysler Fiat 500L " .

= = = Reception = = =

The video received predominantly positive reviews from critics . Eliza Berman of Time magazine gave the video a positive review , saying " it comes to life in the colorful blend of animation and reality " . Berman described the video 's feminist message as " consist [ed] of bringing together a bunch of attractive dancers dressed in L.A.M.B. , burning down the club with confidence " . Erin Strecker from Billboard compared the music video to the video for " Baby Don 't Lie " , stating " Stefani dons black and white in an animated , colorful world " .

= = Live performances = =

Stefani and Williams performed the song live on the December 1 , 2014 episode of The Voice . The performance opened with Stefani floating down to the stage on a huge , animated cloud head and

dressed in a powder @-@ blue , cloud @-@ decorated jumpsuit . Williams also joined her on the stage , wearing a dark blue Adidas tracksuit . Stefani then performed " Spark the Fire " on New Year 's Eve with Carson Daly on December 31 , 2014 . On February 2 , 2015 , Stefani performed the song on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon , along with a medley of her previous singles " Rich Girl " , " What You Waiting For ? " , and " The Sweet Escape " .

= = Charts = =

= = Release history = =