

= Stronger (Sugababes song) =

" Stronger " is a song by English girl group Sugababes from their second studio album *Angels with Dirty Faces* (2002) . The Sugababes wrote the song in collaboration with Jony Rockstar , Marius de Vries and Felix Howard ; it was inspired by group member Heidi Range 's experience of being separated from her family and friends . " Stronger " is a downtempo pop and R & B ballad with a self @-@ empowerment theme . It is the third single from *Angels with Dirty Faces* , and was released as a double A @-@ side with the album 's title track . The song received mixed reviews from critics , who were ambivalent towards its composition .

" Stronger " charted at number seven on the UK Singles Chart and reached the top ten on the singles charts in the Netherlands and Norway . It peaked in the top forty in Australia and New Zealand , and many European countries . Alison Murray directed the song 's music video , which was filmed at a swimming pool in London and portrays each group member as a different persona . The single was performed by the Sugababes at the Edinburgh 50 @,@ 000 ? The Final Push concert in July 2005 , and was included in the set lists for their tours in support of *Three , Overloaded : The Singles Collection* and *Change* . Lee Mead covered the ballad for his self @-@ titled studio album .

= = Background and release = =

Soon after the release of the group 's debut album , *One Touch* (2000) , and its singles " New Year " , " Run for Cover " and " Soul Sound " , the Sugababes were dropped by their record label London Records , and band member Siobhán Donaghy left the group amid reports of in @-@ fighting with members Keisha Buchanan and Mutya Buena . Former Atomic Kitten member Heidi Range was announced as Donaghy 's replacement , and the Sugababes subsequently signed to Island Records . " Stronger " was written by Buchanan , Buena and Range , in collaboration with Jony Rockstar , Marius de Vries and Felix Howard , for the group 's second studio album *Angels with Dirty Faces* . The song was conceptualised during the period in Range 's life when she had not yet joined the group and was separated from her family and friends . Range related her experience to the writing process of " Stronger " , a technique which she suggested was essential for songwriting . The song was produced and mixed by Rockstar . Tom Elmhirst also mixed the song , recorded the group 's vocals and programmed it . Range has named " Stronger " as her favourite song from the group 's career , and considers it personal to her . " Stronger " was released as the album 's third single as part of a double A @-@ side with the album 's title track in CD , cassette and 12 @-@ inch single formats on 11 November 2002 . To promote its release , the Sugababes played the track to the Birmingham Mail in October 2002 as part of an interview , and visited 95 @.@ Capital FM in November 2002 .

= = Composition and lyrics = =

" Stronger " is a downtempo pop and R & B ballad , with elements of hip hop . Daily Mail 's Adrian Thrills described it as a " madeto @-@ measure pop ballad " . " Stronger " was composed in the key of A minor in common time , at a relatively slow @-@ paced 74 beats per minute . The song features an orchestral musical arrangement ; its instrumentation is provided by a bass guitar , violin , viola , cello , double bass , drums and keyboards . The song features a slow and dark melody , and is reminiscent of the Sugababes ' 2001 *One Touch* single " Run for Cover " . According to NME 's Alex Needham , " Stronger " features a similar musical style to the American R & B group En Vogue . Graeme Virtue of The Sunday Herald compared the ballad to the music of English group Massive Attack , writing : " The orchestral sweep of ' Stronger ' aims for Massive Attack @-@ style emotional sweep " . " Stronger " is a self @-@ empowerment ballad that contains an " I @-@ will @-@ survive " testimony ; the chorus is opened with the line , " I 'm all alone , and finally , I 'm getting stronger " .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical response = = =

Critical response to "Stronger" was generally positive. Andy Strickland of Yahoo! Music described it as having "splashes of pure Massive Attack". Stuart McCaighy of This Is Fake DIY wrote that it "sounds ace", while Birmingham Post writer Andrew Cowen described the track as "defiant". Dean Piper from Daily Mirror considered it the Sugababes' best release and applauded the group's vocals on the song. Hot Press writer Phil Udell characterised "Stronger" as "an elegant ballad way beyond their tender years". Akin Ojumu of The Guardian was complimentary about the track's R & B elements, writing: "When they get it right on tracks such as 'Stronger' and 'Supernatural' the Sugababes are cool". Fiona Shepherd of The Scotsman praised the song's composition, calling it "tastefully restrained". However, Barry Nicholson from NME named it the weaker track on the double A-side and stated that it "leers at you for a bit, then staggers off to puke up that last Bacardi Breezer". Marianne Gunn from The Herald called the track's strings "inferior" and wrote that it contains "the same cheesy sentiment" as American singer Britney Spears' song of the same name.

= = = Commercial performance = = =

"Stronger" debuted at number seven on the UK Singles Chart in the issue dated 23 November 2002 as part of its double A-side release with the album's title track. It became the third consecutive single from Angels with Dirty Faces to reach the top ten in the UK. The single eventually spent thirteen weeks on the chart. The double A-side has sold 125,000 copies in the United Kingdom, placing it twelfth on the Sugababes' list of highest-selling singles. The double A-side debuted and peaked at number thirty-four on the Australian Singles Chart on 9 March 2003 and spent nine weeks on the chart. It performed better on the New Zealand Singles Chart, where it peaked at number twenty-four and remained on the chart for eighteen weeks. "Stronger" charted individually in other countries. The song performed most notably on the Dutch Top 40 chart, where it peaked at number five, spent six weeks in the top ten, and was placed 29th on its list of best-performing singles in 2003. "Stronger" reached number six on the Norwegian VG-lista chart and spent fourteen weeks in the top twenty. The single peaked at number eleven on the Danish Singles Chart, and number thirteen on the Irish Singles Chart. "Stronger" debuted at number forty-three on the Ultratop chart in Belgium (Flanders) and later peaked at number twenty. It peaked at number 23 on the Swedish and Swiss singles charts and reached the top forty on the German and Hungarian charts.

= = Music video = =

The accompanying music video for "Stronger" was directed by Alison Murray. It was filmed in September 2002 at a swimming pool, located in London. Range played a stripper in the video, while Buena portrayed a gangster and Buchanan was a heartbroken woman. Range described being semi-naked in front of the camera as "weird, and very invasive". The video opens with a scene of Buena in a moving car down the streets in London, where she is sitting next to a man on the phone. She boils up the courage to leave her superstar boyfriend. After the car stops at a red light, she gets out of it and walks away, leaving her boyfriend behind yelling at her.

The following scenes show Buchanan, Range and Buena at an outdoor swimming pool; Buchanan is sitting on a chair, Range is standing in front of a fence, and Buena is sitting on the pool's stairs. Five women are later shown dancing simultaneously by the pool. The video cuts to Buchanan sitting in the middle of a support group in a room in a university, with a blackboard behind her reading "Heartbroken" and "Anonymous". She later leaves the room, and the video then shows the Sugababes sitting on a bench near the pool. Range is shown on the stage in a nightclub disco as a stripper. Like Mutya Buena, she acts up the courage and leaves her profession, then she

throws the microphone into the water in the nightclub . Meanwhile , all three Sugababes appear under the running water of a shower tap , and are shown dancing with the group of women from the previous scenes . The final scenes of the video show three children swimming underwater in the pool , resembling the members of the Sugababes .

= = Live performances and other appearances = =

The Sugababes performed " Stronger " on 27 August 2002 during an Up Close gig for the launch of Angels with Dirty Faces , organised by Scottish Radio Holdings and the Royal Bank of Scotland . They performed the single on 5 October 2002 at the University of Leeds . The trio played " Stronger " , along with many of their other songs , at the Edinburgh Corn Exchange on 18 August 2004 . The song was performed by the band at the Edinburgh 50 @, @ 000 ? The Final Push concert in July 2005 , which was part of the Live 8 concert series to persuade G8 leaders to increase the assistance of poverty in Africa . The performance received mixed reviews from critics , who considered it weak . " Stronger " was included in the set list for the group 's 2004 tour in support of their album Three . In October 2006 , the Sugababes performed it as part of an acoustic set with " Shape " at the 100 Club on Oxford Street , to promote the release of their greatest hits album , Overloaded : The Singles Collection .

" Stronger " was featured in the set list for the group 's Overloaded tour , in which the performances were accompanied by footage of their Comic Relief trip to Africa . The band performed the song in December 2007 in Glasgow , Scotland , as part of an acoustic gig . The single also appeared on the set list for their 2008 Change Tour , in support of their fifth studio album Change . The Journal 's Kat Keogh wrote that their performance at the Newcastle City Hall " displayed a confident shift from moody pop princesses to sassy Supremes @-@ style harmony " . The group performed " Stronger " on 27 June 2009 at the Cannock Chase Forrest as part of a 75 @-@ minute show , and on 10 July 2009 at County Durham 's Riverside Ground along with many of their other singles . The fourth line @-@ up of the Sugababes , consisting of Range , Amelle Berrabah and Jade Ewen , performed the song at the London Superclub in March 2010 as part of a gig .

English musical theatre actor Lee Mead covered " Stronger " for his self @-@ titled album . Alex Fletcher of Digital Spy characterised the cover as " the only tune on the record with the sort of story @-@ telling lyrics that are fitting for Mead 's dramatic style " , while Michael Quinn from the BBC described it as " more sweetly plaintive " than the Sugababes ' version . " Stronger " was used in an anti @-@ bullying advertisement that depicts a fifteen @-@ year @-@ old girl with her mouthed stitched up . The advertisement was banned from appearing on television , although it was permitted by the Cinema Advertising Association to appear in cinemas across Britain from 19 January 2010 . The music video for " Stronger " became the subject of media attention in June 2011 after a member of Scotland 's SlutWalk movement posted it on the group 's website , claiming that it was in encouragement for victims of rape .

= = Track listings and formats = =

= = Personnel = =

Songwriting ? Keisha Buchanan , Mutya Buena , Heidi Range , Jony Rockstar , Marius de Vries , Felix Howard

Production ? Jony Rockstar

Mixing ? Tom Elmhirst , Jony Rockstar

Recording ? Tom Elmhirst

Programming ? Tom Elmhirst

String arrangement ? Chris Elliott

Vocals ? Keisha Buchanan , Mutya Buena , Heidi Range

Guitar ? Jeremy Shaw

Bass guitar ? Simon Benson

Drums ? Jony Rockstar

Keyboards ? Jony Rockstar

Violin ? Perry Montague @-@ Mason , Chris Tombling , Dermot Crehan , Kathy Shave , Warren Zielinski , Mark Berrow , Julian Leaper , Simon Fischer , Benedict Cruft , Everton Nelson , Gavin Wright , Patrick Kiernan , David Woodcock , Jackie Shave , Rebecca Hirsch , Peter Hanson , Boguslav Kostecki

Viola ? Donald McVay , Philip Dukes , Rachel Bolt , Peter Lale , Timothy Grant , Bruce White , Zoe Lake

Cello ? David Bucknail , Michael Stirling , Chris Elliott , Naomi Wright , David Daniels , Frank Schaefer , Nick Cooper , Anthony Lewis

Double bass ? Mary Scully , Leon , Patrick Lannigan

Credits are taken from the liner notes of Overloaded : The Singles Collection .

= = Charts = =