

= Circus (song) =

" Circus " is a song recorded by American singer Britney Spears for her sixth studio album of the same name (2008) . It was released on December 2 , 2008 , by Jive Records as the second single from the album . Written by Dr. Luke , Claude Kelly and Benny Blanco , " Circus " is a metaphor for the public 's perception of Spears ' life . After she listened to the track for the first time , she felt inspired to create an album and a tour with a circus theme . " Circus " is an uptempo electropop and dance @-@ pop song with elements of pop rock and " half @-@ rapped " vocals . The song 's lyrics talk about being an entertainer and putting on shows .

" Circus " was well received by contemporary critics , with reviewers complimenting Spears ' confident persona and praising the song 's electronic production . " Circus " was a commercial success , peaking inside the top @-@ ten in Australia , Canada , Denmark , New Zealand , and Sweden , while reaching top @-@ twenty positions in many European countries . In the United States , " Circus " reached number three on the Billboard Hot 100 and number one on Pop Songs and is her second best @-@ selling digital song in the country , having sold over 3 @.@ 1 million copies .

The music video , directed by Francis Lawrence , was released on December 4 , 2008 . It portrays Spears as the ringmaster of a circus accompanied by different performers , and it is interspersed with scenes of Spears in different circus settings . The video received positive reviews from critics , but was criticized by PETA for featuring " cruelly trained animals " . However , the exhibitors denied these claims . Spears performed the song on Good Morning America on December 2 , 2008 . It was also the opening number of The Circus Starring Britney Spears (2009) , where she was dressed in a ringleader outfit , designed to represent a metamorphosis . Spears has also performed the song during her residency concert Britney : Piece of Me . The song will appear in Just Dance 2016 .

= = Background = =

" Circus " was written by Dr. Luke , Benny Blanco and Claude Kelly , while produced by Luke and Blanco . Luke and Kelly were initially commissioned to work on a new track for Spears , and entered the studio with no concept prepared , as Kelly explained , " just knowing her style and knowing what she does . " After Luke came up with the music , they based the song on the public 's perception of her life at the time . Spears explained that after listening to " Circus " for the first time , she felt inspired and imagined a story behind it . She also stated , " [' Circus '] put the whole album together as far as what I wanted my show to be like . You can play with a circus in so many different ways " . " Circus " was recorded at Conway Recording Studios and Chalice Recording Studios in Los Angeles , California , and at Glenwood Place Studio in Burbank , California . Background vocals were provided by Cathy Dennis , Kelly and Myah Marie . Main instrumentation was done by Luke and Blanco . The song was mixed by Serban Ghenea at MixStar Studios in Virginia . " Circus " was announced on October 31 , 2008 , as the second single from the album , and was officially serviced to American radio stations on December 2 , 2008 .

= = Music and lyrics = =

" Circus " is an uptempo electropop and dance @-@ pop song , with a stomp box beat and elements of pop rock . The song opens with the sound of a drum and builds until Spears starts singing , " There 's only two types of people in the world / The ones that entertain and the ones that observe " . Spears delivers confident and " half @-@ rapped " vocals , with the verses having usage of synthesizers . Lyrically , the song talks about being an entertainer and putting on shows . She explains her emotions while performing in lines such as : " I feel the adrenaline moving through my veins / Spotlight on me and I 'm ready to break " . The chorus begins with an electronic sound , while she compares herself , as well as performing to being on the center of a circus ring . According to the sheet music published at Musicnotes.com by Alfred Publishing , " Circus " is composed in the key of F # minor with 120 beats per minute , however on the album the song is 115 beats per minute

. Spears 's vocal range spans from G # 2 to D # 5 . Kelly commented that " Circus " was " a cool way to get people dancing and having fun " , but also have a slight message .

= = Critical reception = =

Nick Levine of Digital Spy described it as " a rampaging monster of a song whose chorus kicks off with a Max Martin @-@ style and Timbaland thump " . Popjustice praised the production of the song , compared it to " Break the Ice " and added , " there 's a lot of stopping and starting , including a built @-@ in MTV @-@ style dance breakdown segment . " Chris Williams of Billboard in its single review appreciated the song for surrounding Spears with " an electronic cyberpop landscape " . In the album review , Ann Donahue of Billboard criticized the lyrics for rehashing the theme of fame and compared it to " Lucky " (2000) and " Piece of Me " (2007) . Dave De Sylvia of Sputnikmusic said that while " Womanizer " sounded like a Blackout track , " Circus " is more reflective of the album ' s general mood . Dan Cairns of The Sunday Times named it one of the standout tracks of the album , along with " If U Seek Amy " and " Mannequin " . Entertainment Weekly writer Chris Willman noted that , despite the album being titled Circus , the title track is " not about the madhouse her life has become but just a brag about her prowess as a whip @-@ cracking sexual ringmaster . "

Poppy Cosyns of The Sun said Spears " reaffirm [s] her bad @-@ girl image on the album 's infectious second single " , while BBC Music 's Talia Kraines thought that the singer " loves the attention being shone directly on her as the ' ringleader ' as she sings of adrenaline flowing through her veins when it 's time to put on a show . " Ben Norman of About.com considered the song a " true and triumphant Britney Spears pop song with a pensive underbelly (the first verse in particular) and a supremely executed hook . " Jonny Mugwump of The Quietus said , " a paean to her performance adrenalin , [" Circus " is] a medium @-@ paced , big power @-@ popper topped with an orbit @-@ esque guitar , " and commented that the song 's lyrics highlight Spears ' uniqueness ? " the fuck you attitude . Despite everything , regardless of the personal destruction and undoubted hell she might still be haunted by , within the fictional space of the music , this woman couldn 't give a damn . She rightly taunts the world around her , sounding utterly defiant . There is no place for apology or humble platitudes . " John Murphy of musicOMH also praised its lyrics , describing them as " a confident , and encouraging , return to form . " " Circus " was nominated at the 2009 Teen Choice Awards in the category of Choice Music : Single , but lost to Miley Cyrus 's " The Climb " .

= = Commercial performance = =

On December 20 , 2008 , " Circus " debuted at number three on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 due to digital sales of over 212 @,@ 000 units . It was her first top @-@ ten debut on the chart . On the week of March 7 , 2009 , the song reached number one on the Pop Songs chart and number three on the Hot Dance Club Songs chart . As of March 2015 , " Circus " has sold 3 @.@ 1 million digital downloads in the United States according to Nielsen Soundscan . It is her second best @-@ selling digital single in the country .

In Canada , the track debuted at number two based solely on digital downloads , being blocked from ascending to the top spot by Lady Gaga 's " Poker Face " . On December 8 , 2008 , " Circus " entered the Australian Singles Chart at number fifteen , becoming the " Highest Debut " of the week . On December 22 , 2008 , the song peaked at number six . It was certified platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) for sales over 70 @,@ 000 units . In New Zealand , " Circus " peaked at number four , and was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of New Zealand (RIANZ) for selling over 7 @,@ 500 copies . The song was also successful in Europe , peaking at number twenty two on the European Hot 100 Singles on March 21 , 2009 . " Circus " also reached the top ten in Sweden and the top twenty in Austria , Czech Republic , Finland , Norway , the Netherlands and the United Kingdom . According to The Official Charts Company , the song has sold 223 @,@ 000 copies in the United Kingdom and is her thirteenth best selling single in the country . It became the tenth best selling digital single of 2009 , selling 6 million

copies worldwide .

= = Music video = =

= = = Development and release = = =

The music video for " Circus " was filmed from October 28 to November 2 , 2008 in Los Angeles , California . It was directed by Francis Lawrence , who previously worked with Spears on the music video for her 2001 single " I 'm a Slave 4 U " . Spears chose Lawrence , since he was the " only person who could capture it , make it really twisted , eccentric and different " . On November 17 , 2008 , an exclusive three @-@ second clip premiered during a promo for her documentary Britney : For the Record . The video was set to be released on December 5 , 2008 on Entertainment Tonight , but it was moved at the last minute to December 4 , 2008 .

= = = Synopsis = = =

The video begins with Spears at a vanity , putting Curious on and earrings by Bulgari . She is then seen holding a top hat in front of her face , while doves fly out of another hat . Spears starts singing in the vanity but stands up and puts on a ringmaster jacket . She walks through an aisle while dancing suggestively with several circus dancers . Throughout the video , there are interspersed scenes of different circus performers , including ribbon dancers , contortionists , clowns and a mime on stilts . There are also scenes of Spears singing with the top hat , wearing a nude body stocking in front of a red curtain , with a spotlight on her . This is followed by a group dance scene in the middle of a circus ring , where Spears wears the ringmaster jacket , sequined hot pants and a feathered top hat . In the second verse , she dances with a chair and a whip wearing a nude bra covered in leaves . The video continues with a series of intercut scenes , such as Spears in slow motion in front of a shower of sparks , her surrounded by a pair of lions and in front of an elephant . During the bridge , Spears and her dancers perform a routine in front of flames . In the last chorus , Spears returns to the circus ring , surrounded by two elephants , many more circus performers , dancers and fire breathers . The video ends with Spears in the spotlight , laughing with the top hat over her head .

= = = Reception = = =

Davil Balls of Digital Spy described the music video as being " cheeky , seductive and more than a little bit ridiculous " and said that Spears " delivers some killer dance routines " . Tim Stack of Entertainment Weekly compared the dance in the chair with the music video of " Stronger " and added that " best of all , she actually looks animated in this video and appears to be having fun " . James Montgomery of MTV said that after watching the video " you are overcome with the sudden urge to go to the Big Apple Circus . Or pick up some Curious perfume . Or you know , possibly both " . The music video won the category of Best Moves at the MTV Australia Awards 2009 . It was also nominated for four VMAs at the 2009 awards in the categories of Best Art Direction , Best Choreography , Best Cinematography and Best Editing , but lost of all them . It was also nominated for Best Video in the MTV Europe Music Awards 2009 , but lost to Beyoncé 's " Single Ladies " . The video won Best Video of 2009 in Fuse TV , making Spears the only artist to win two years in a row .

On December 9 , 2008 , animal rights organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) issued a press release condemning Spears for using " cruelly trained lions and elephants " and demanding her to " stop using exotic animals in her videos and concerts once and for all " . Spears had previously received criticism from the organization when she used an albino python and a caged tiger during a performance of " I 'm a Slave 4 U " at the 2001 MTV Video Music Awards . Kari Johnson from Have Trunk Will Travel responded , saying , " [the company] has never issued a written endorsement , nor does it condone using electrical devices to discipline and control elephants except in situations where elephant or human safety is at risk . [...] The American

Humane Association monitors animal action in film and television . A representative was on the set of the Britney Spears ' Circus ' video with our elephants , Tai and Kitty , to ensure their safety and welfare [...] Britney , the director , producers and the entire crew were respectful of the elephants ' needs and comfort and a pleasure to work with . " Circus got a certified in the digital platform VEVO after reach 100 million views on YouTube .

= = Live performances = =

" Circus " was performed on December 2 , 2008 at American morning talk show Good Morning America , along with " Womanizer " . She wore a midriff @-@ baring shirt , leather pants , a ringmaster jacket and a top hat . " Circus " was a major part on The Circus Starring Britney Spears (2009) , as the opening number of the show . The costumes of the performance were selected to show a metamorphosis . The show began with a video introduction featuring Perez Hilton as Queen Elizabeth I , welcoming the audience to the circus . In the middle of the video , the cylinder screen surrounding the stage started to rise , while Spears appeared on the video and shot Hilton with a crossbow , causing him to fall backwards onto the floor . As the video ended , Spears started to descend from the ceiling on a suspended platform , wearing a cheetah headdress , a ringmaster jacket , black shorts , high @-@ heeled boots and carrying a whip . The headdress represented an animal . When she reached the stage , she took it off to represent both a ringmaster and a lion tamer and " Circus " started . It featured acrobats taking the stage and spinning on giant rings in the air . The performance ended with Spears taking off her ringleader jacket to reveal a Swarovski @-@ crystal corset , representing a slave . She then ran into the center of the main stage , surrounded by jets of smoke , to enter a golden cage and perform " Piece of Me " . People writer Chuck Arnold wrote that Spears , " descending from above in a red ringmaster @-@ meets @-@ dominatrix outfit " to sing the song , " showed that her body was tight , even if her dancing always wasn ' t . " James Montgomery of MTV considered both " Circus " and " Radar " performances " great " . Spears included the song on her current residency show in Las Vegas , Britney : Piece of Me . For the performance , Spears appears from the back of the stage , in the center of a fiery ring , resembling a circus showgirl .

= = Track listings = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Britney Spears ? lead vocals

Lukasz Gottwald ? songwriting , production , drums , keyboards , programming , guitar

Claude Kelly ? songwriting , background vocals

Benjamin Levin ? songwriting , production , drums , keyboards , programming

Serban Ghenea ? mixing

John Hanes ? Protocols editing

Cathy Dennis ? background vocals

Myah Marie ? background vocals

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =