

= The Fear (Lily Allen song) =

" The Fear " is a song by British recording artist Lily Allen from her second studio album , It 's Not Me , It 's You (2009) . Written by Allen and Greg Kurstin , the song was released as the lead single of the album . Initially , " Everyone 's at It " was announced to be the first single from the album . However , it was ultimately decided on " The Fear " to be released on 26 January 2009 by Regal Recordings , while the demo (which was then titled " I Don 't Know ") leaked onto the Internet in April 2008 . The song incorporates electropop music as the lyrics articulate problems with celebrity lifestyles and include metaphors for recognised tabloid national newspapers such as The Sun . " The Fear " also references , albeit indirectly , the Great Depression of the 1930s .

Contemporary critics complimented the song and its themes of consumerism and the postmodern condition . " The Fear " peaked at number one on the UK Singles Chart , where it remained for four weeks . The single peaked also inside the top 20 of the charts of some European countries and Australia . It is also Allen 's second chart entry in the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 .

The accompanying music video portrayed a fantasy theme , with Allen dancing with giant wrapped gifts and balloons . It was shot at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire and also featured dancers dressed as butlers ; the locations were initially in a caravan in a park , and then in a giant colourful mansion , surrounded by contrasting grey clouds . The song was performed live for the first time via The Scott Mills Show on BBC Radio 1 and during Allen 's 2009 concert tour . " The Fear " was awarded with Best Track prize at the 2009 Q Awards , and also won Allen two Ivor Novello Awards in 2010 , for best song musically and lyrically , and most performed work .

= = Background and composition = =

Initially , the song " Everyone 's At It " was announced to be released as the lead single from the album , but it was ultimately decided on " The Fear " . While discussing It 's Not Me , It 's You , Allen stated that her intention was to make " bigger sounding , more ethereal songs , real songs . [...] I think I 've grown up a bit as a person and I hope it reflects that . " She released a demo version of the song , which was then called " I Don 't Know " , onto her MySpace account , along with another song , " I Could Say " , in April 2008 . The singer declared about the inspiration for the song , which has to do with materialism and the pressures of being rich and famous :

[I 'll] tell you where the inspiration for it came from . I was walking down this street , in this village in the middle of the countryside in the U.K. , and there was this little girl who must have been eight or nine , walking down the street with her mum in , like , high @-@ waisted hot pants and a little crop top . And I just thought , ' That 's not really right . ' And I could tell she was the kind of girl that would be trying out for Pop Idol in five years time , and wants to be famous when she grows up . And there 's definitely the whole culture of that where I come from , and it 's not necessarily a culture that I think is particularly healthy . But at the same time , I 'm very aware that I am a part of that culture ? but it 's not something that I feel particularly comfortable with .

Musically , Allen adopts a more mature electropop groove for the song , which has been described to have " a pulsing , sleekly modern electro dance backing " , while coming through a " flood of soft synths " and being " eminently danceable and slightly trancey " . It is set in common time and in the key of F major and has a metronome of 134 beats per minute . Allen 's voice spans from F3 to A4 . Lyrically , the song is a satire of materialism " sung in the voice of a would @-@ be starlet " , and tackles societal consumerism and overnight @-@ fame @-@ hunting . It also makes reference , through the line " I 'll look at The Sun and I 'll look in The Mirror " , at the daily British tabloid national newspapers The Sun and Daily Mirror , which often report on Allen . The synthesiser parts were written by Greg Kurstin using Apple 's Logic Studio , using its built @-@ in instruments .

= = Critical reception = =

Michael Menachem from Billboard commented on the song , saying it " packs another lyrical punch " , while complimenting Allen 's vocals . The BBC interpreted the song , in which Allen " apologises

for her avarice , confidently blaming the system " , but also complimented the " exquisite " production . Neil McCormick from The Daily Telegraph suggested that the song confirms that the singer 's " pithy observational skills and sweet musicality " remain intact , as she has been a bit bruised by her encounter with 21st @-@ century fame . Clash reporter Natasha Arico concluded that " The Fear " is somewhat trite , though " sickeningly catchy and dance friendly " , while Rolling Stone magazine failed to detect the song 's sarcasm and criticized the song for being a " cliché " delivered by Allen " with sneer " . James Montgomery of MTV gave a good review , saying it is a relatively scathing indictment of today 's glossy , " celeb @-@ ified culture " . Ryan Dombal from Pitchfork Media described the song to have a " part admission , part brag , part apocalyptic vision " and suggested that " for almost any other artist , the lines would be barbed , sarcastic , and , ultimately , uppity and bland indictments . But not for the loudmouth [Allen] " .

Other reviews were also positive ; Sal Cinquemani from Slant Magazine suggested that " The Fear " is proof of the pop singer 's self @-@ awareness , but , given her own personal tabloid history , the song possesses a trail of irony : " I 'll look at The Sun and I 'll look in The Mirror / I 'm on the right track , yeah , we 're onto a winner . " Leah Greenblatt of Entertainment Weekly liked the song , in which Allen makes fun of her own material @-@ girl ID and went on to say that it is in fact " a tale of two Lilys : the naughty postadolescent in the rearview mirror , and the fully realized female coming around the bend . " Chris Buckle from The Skinny gave " The Fear " three stars , commenting that it " is a potent reminder that she ? s more than just gobby gossip @-@ fodder " , but also disliked a few lyrics , which " in particular [are] a clumsy attempt to inject politics amongst the celeb @-@ woe naval @-@ gazing " , while About.com praised the song for being a " pop masterpiece " , Allen 's " witty intelligent lyrics " and compared it to Pink 's " Stupid Girls " .

= = Commercial performance = =

In the United Kingdom , " The Fear " debuted at number 168 on the UK Singles Chart on 25 January 2009 ? for the week ending dated 31 January 2009 . The following week , the song climbed 167 places to reach number one , thwarting Lady Gaga 's " Just Dance " from the summit of the chart . Gaga commented on this , saying " I 'm very familiar with Lily 's music and good job Lily for knocking me off . There always deserves to be a female on top and I don 't want to be the only one to do it . I think generally that pop music is making an enormous comeback and I 'm actually very pleased with Lily Allen 's new record as it 's decidedly pop " . The song managed to remain on top for four weeks , throughout the whole of February , until it was dethroned by Kelly Clarkson 's " My Life Would Suck Without You " . It thus earned Allen 's second chart @-@ topper , since her debut single , " Smile " , achieved the feat in July 2006 . " The Fear " also became the single which spent more weeks atop the chart of 2009 in the UK . On the single 's third week stay at number one , its parent album , It 's Not Me , It 's You topped the UK Albums Chart , having a chart double , to which Allen said : " It 's great being at the top of both charts , especially in the same week as the Brit Awards are once again celebrating the best of British music . "

The song shared similar success in Australia , where it peaked at number three on the ARIA Singles Chart and stayed eight consecutive weeks in the top ten , and was certified Platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association . In Ireland , " The Fear " entered at thirty nine on the Irish Singles Chart , making a slow rise to number five , where it remained for one week after descending the chart . The song became a success in Europe , having entered the top 20 in most of its countries , which resulted in a peak of three on the European Hot 100 . Also , in New Zealand , Allen scored her fourth top 40 hit with the song placing itself at a peak of fourteen on the New Zealand Singles Chart .

In North America , " The Fear " shared moderate success , charting at number 80 on the Billboard Hot 100 , making it Allen 's only second entry in the U.S. Despite low positions in the main chart , the single managed to become the singer 's first Hot Dance Club Play number @-@ one single , topping it for one week . In Canada , it debuted at 57 in late 2008 , afterwards leaving the chart for seven weeks ; it returned in 2009 , peaking at 33 . It was certified Gold by the Canadian Recording Industry Association for shipments of over 20 @,@ 000 copies .

== Music video ==

The music video was principally shot at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire and directed by Nez . It premiered on Channel 4 on 4 December 2008 . It starts off with Allen singing from a caravan window , while a clothes line on the right has underwear and a teddybear hanging from it . As she exits , her clothes are revealed to be a smock dress with a big bow and high heels ; upon returning through the caravan door , the interior changes to that of a luxurious mansion , in reality an English country estate . The chorus starts and she walks down the hall , surrounded by butlers , all making synchronized moves and starting a choreography with Allen . Afterwards , she climbs the stairs and the camera cuts to the next scene , where she is sitting down in front of the mirror in an extravagant bedroom , with dresses , lamps , toys and cupcakes . The scene changes once again , with Allen walking into a room with giant , brightly coloured presents . They suddenly stand up , having two human legs , and begin to spin around , with the singer joining them . After descending the stairs and walking through the same hall she entered , she exits the estate , and the video takes down a darker , more serious tone , while the verse " Forget about guns and forget ammunition / ' Cause I 'm killing them all on my own little mission / Now I 'm not a saint but I 'm not a sinner / Now everything is cool as long as I 'm getting thinner " is sung . The euphoric visual effects appear once again soon after , as the chorus takes place . Allen walks down the estate stairs , being surrounded by dancing balloons , hopping butlers and coloured fog . The camera zooms out showing the estate tied in a giant ribbon , but also grey , melancholic clouds , which contrast the cheerful party from before . Allen stated that she hoped the music video would convey parts of the song 's sarcasm .

The video reportedly cost £ 50 @, @ 000 . During the shoot , the video was documented by MTV ; in the interview , Allen declared :

I wanted to do a dance routine , even though I 'm not really doing a dance routine , other people are doing it , but I 'm part of it . I think people are quite used to girls in this industry really being able to move in front of the camera , but I 'm just rubbish at that kind of thing . I find it quite nerve @-@ racking performing , actually . Because when you write songs , you don 't really think about performing in a video . I think it 's quite fun . Lots of colour and dancing , and it 's about doing something that 's in keeping with the song , actually .

== Live performances ==

While being invited to the BBC show hosted by Scott Mills , Allen talked about her struggles with the paparazzi and also premiered the song by performing it live . Other live performances of the song include the Sound on BBC 2 with Nick Grimshaw and Annie Mac , Friday Night with Jonathan Ross , the Orange unsignedAct , and The Sunday Night Project . In February 2009 , she was invited at The Today Show with Matt Lauer , where she performed the song after an interview . The same month , she made an appearance on The Ellen DeGeneres Show , and while she was singing , DeGeneres freely dispensed copies of It 's Not Me , It 's You to the audience . Afterwards , both Allen and DeGeneres performed a rendition of the song " Womanizer " by American singer Britney Spears . Allen included the song on her 2009 concert tour setlist , as part of the encore . " The Fear " was also performed at the 2010 BRIT Awards , as the opening song . Allen arrived on stage sitting on a rocket hoisted in the air , while wearing a black corset dress . She was later joined on stage by paratroopers dressed in pink military camouflage and women with Silver Cross prams .

== Media appearances ==

The song was featured in the fourth episode of series three of the TV drama Skins , and , also , an instrumental version is used as accompanying music by Match of the Day 2 during the review segment showing the goals . " The Fear " was parodied by the character playing Kevin Rudd on the TV show Double Take , in which the lyrics are altered to deal with the voting campaign for Prime Minister in Australia . The song was covered by JLS for BBC Radio 1 's " Live Lounge " segment of

Jo Whiley 's show on 15 September 2009 , featuring an interpolation of the Beyoncé hit " Halo " .

= = Track listing = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Lead vocals ? Lily Allen

Written by ? Lily Allen and Greg Kurstin

Produced by ? Greg Kurstin

Assistant engineer ? Alex Dromgode

Audio mixing ? Greg Kurstin

Mastered by Geoff Pesche

Other management ? Todd Interland

= = Charts and sales = =