

= Used to Love You =

" Used to Love You " is a song recorded by American singer Gwen Stefani for her third studio album , This Is What the Truth Feels Like (2016) . It was written by Stefani , Justin Tranter , Julia Michaels , Jonathan " J.R. " Rotem and Teal Douville , and produced by Rotem . After scrapping the album and its two singles , " Baby Don 't Lie " and " Spark the Fire " , in favor to start over , Interscope Records released " Used to Love You " as the album 's first official single on October 20 , 2015 . It was then serviced to mainstream radio on October 27 , 2015 .

" Used to Love You " is an emotional midtempo synthpop ballad , with its instrumentation consisting of a piano , restrained synths and drum taps . Lyrically , the song talks about a painful break @-@ up , with the protagonist questioning why she fell in love . Stefani described the song as being inspired by the end of her 13 @-@ year marriage with Bush lead singer , Gavin Rossdale .

" Used to Love You " was critically acclaimed for its lyrical content and Stefani 's emotional delivery , with most critics calling it a heartbreaking song . Critics viewed the single as an improvement over her 2014 releases , which Stefani herself later described as " rushed " . Stefani first premiered the song during a concert on October 17 , 2015 and its music video was released three days later . The music video is a single shot of Stefani on a black background , displaying her emotions , and occasionally mouthing some of the words of the song . The song received its first televised performance on The Ellen DeGeneres Show on October 26 , 2015 .

= = Background and release = =

In October 2014 , Stefani released her first solo single in six years , " Baby Don 't Lie " , and following its moderate impact and reception , a new single , " Spark the Fire " , was released in December of the same year . However , both singles underperformed on the charts , prompting the album to be postponed for a 2015 release . After months with no updates on the album , Stefani revealed in an interview for Entertainment Weekly that she scrapped the entire album in favor of starting over , since she did not feel fulfilled and totally involved with the previous project . Stefani started writing new material in June 2015 , and following her divorce from Gavin Rossdale a month later , she felt very inspired . In the same interview , Stefani claimed : " I needed to go through what I needed to go through to write the record that I needed to write . [...] These songs are really natural ? they ? re from not worrying about what happened or what ? s going to happen but about living in the moment , from trying to be present and trying to feel . "

A & R President Aaron Bay @-@ Schuck at Interscope Records asked songwriters and producers J.R. Rotem , Justin Tranter and Julia Michaels to work with Stefani on the album . Stefani recalled saying the following to them during a recording session : " ' Listen , I don ? t care about anything . I don ? t care about hits . I don ? t care about anything except for coming in this room right now ? all I want to do is just say the truth . I just want the truth to come out ' . " Michaels , revealed that " Gwen had written down of all of these things she was feeling at that moment . There was this one phrase that read , ' I don 't know why I cry but I think it 's because I remembered for the first time since I hated you that I used to love you . ' I said , ' Whoa , what a crazy line that is . ' She just goes , ' Cool , make it a melody . Let 's go . " The song was written after Stefani was told by her label that the album was too personal to release ; she rebelled against their advice and continued writing personal songs . The next day she ended up writing what she thought was the least commercial song on the album , " Used to Love You " , and they approved it .

On October 17 , 2015 , Stefani performed at a MasterCard Priceless Surprises concert at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City . Prior performing the show 's encore , she wrote on her official Twitter account , " Ready for the encore ? Hold tight ? new single in 5 ? 4 ? 3 ? 2 ? 1 ! " . Before performing " Used to Love You " , she said , " I just want to share a song that I wrote recently . This song is really special . " On October 19 , 2015 , Stefani revealed the single 's cover art featuring a close @-@ up picture of herself . A day later , October 20 , 2015 , the song was released to digital download on iTunes and other online platforms , while on October 27 , 2015 , Interscope Records serviced the song to mainstream radio as the official lead @-@ single from the album .

= = Composition = =

" Used to Love You " was written by Stefani , Justin Tranter , Julia Michaels and J.R. Rotem ; Rotem is also one of the song 's producers . The song is a vulnerable and " emotional " midtempo synthpop ballad , having a " driving piano melody " , with a length of three minutes and forty @-@ seven seconds . Spin 's James Grebey wrote that the song " largely showcases her passionate , conflicted vocals over restrained , electropop @-@ leaning swells of emotional synths and drum taps . " Lyrically , " Used to Love You " is a break @-@ up anthem , where Stefani is questioning how she fell in love with her ex in the first place . The majority of music critics noted that the song is inspired by Stefani 's divorce from Gavin Rossdale , after a 13 @-@ year marriage . In an interview for Today 's Matt Lauer , Stefani confirmed that the track was inspired by the end of her marriage , claiming : " I ? ve never put a record out where I ? m actually going through things in real time . [But t] his is like , I wrote that song like a couple weeks ago . " According to Daniel Kreps of Rolling Stone that could be seen in the lines of the chorus , " I don 't know why I cry / But I think it 's cause I remember for the first time / Since I hated you / That I used to love you . " In other poignant lyrics , she sings , " I guess nobody taught you , nobody taught you how to love . " Kreps further compared the lyrical content of " Used to Love You " to " Dreaming the Same Dream " , a song from No Doubt 's sixth album Push and Shove . Alex Kritselis of Bustle claimed that the song " recalls some of [her] best ballads , like ' Cool ' , ' Early Winter ' , and ' 4 in the Morning ' . "

= = Critical reception = =

Since its release , " Used to Love You " has received critical acclaim from contemporary music critics . Madison Vain of Entertainment Weekly felt the song 's " hyper @-@ personal lyrics " were " immediate and affecting " . Immediately following its release , Maeve McDermott from USA Today awarded the track " Song of the Week " in October , further adding that " [t] he song 's spiritual sibling is another of Stefani 's best works : 1996 's No Doubt classic ' Don 't Speak ' , " but noting that " this time around , coming from a more mature artist with fewer things to prove , the pain feels dizzyingly fresh . " Bianca Gracie of Idolator praised the fact that the singer was " stepping away from the pumped @-@ up vibes of previous tracks like ' Spark The Fire ' & ' Baby Don ? t Lie ' , also noting that " [h] eartache is immediately relatable (just ask Adele) and Gwen is often praised for her underrated slow songs [...] , so it is refreshing to witness her jumpstart this current album era with a new vibe . " Alex Kritselis of Bustle called it " a fantastic ' comeback single ' ? a tremendous improvement over ' Baby Don 't Lie ' , " praising that " when she repeatedly sings , ' I don 't know why I used to love you , ' during the climax , you feel it . " Music Times 's Carolyn Menyes agreed , noting that " we haven 't heard a breakup anthem from this girl since her Tragic Kingdom days . After a series of less @-@ than @-@ stellar singles , it 's safe to say Stefani is back . " In a later review of the parent album , Menyes stated she was " impressed with the vulnerability [...] displayed " , comparing it to Stefani 's previous singles " Cool " and " Ex @-@ Girlfriend " . Menyes concluded by saying the potential on This Is What the Truth Feels Like is evident on tracks like " Used to Love You " .

Sean Fitz @-@ Gerald of Vulture wrote that " the song veers toward Stefani 's more mellifluous , sentimental fare , " calling it a " heartrending track " . Amanda Dykan of AltWire praised the track , stating : " [it] reaches through , wraps its acrylic @-@ nailed fingers around your pulsating heart , rips it from your chest , throws it on the floor , and stomps all over it . " Jillian Mapes of Pitchfork Media claimed that " Stefani ? now 20 years wiser ? flips it " ; she continued with : " It ? s a rare moment on the album where you can pick out Stefani from a sea of other pop singers . " Mapes concluded by claiming that " Used to Love You " was her greatest song since " Don 't Speak " , comparing its effect to Madonna 's 1989 single " Like a Prayer " . Sean Fitz @-@ Gerald of Vulture warned that when listening to this " heartrending track " that " tissues are a must " . Consequence of Sound critic Adam Kivel enjoyed the track , calling it a " recognizable moment in heartbreak delivered in a charming falsetto burble " . Nate Jackson from OC Weekly appreciated the " somber [

ness] " of the track , while Marcus Floyd from Renowned for Sound awarded it 4 @.@ 5 out of 5 stars , claiming that " every lyric and every note are sung with heart and chorus just gets you " . Michael Smith from the same website acknowledged " Used to Love You " as one of the strongest songs on This Is What the Truth Feels Like , calling it " unexpectedly heartfelt " .

Spencer Kornhaber , writing for The Atlantic , called " Used to Love You " the " most heartbreaking " on the parent album , due to " its sentiment and execution " . However , Kornhaber stated : " A raw observation and vocal squeak in the chorus might prompt tears like the ones in the accompanying video , but the rest of the song struggles . " In a mixed review , Adam R. Holz of Plugged In found Stefani 's " loiter [ing] precariously close to bitterness " . However , Holz complimented the singer for " illstrat [ing] the beautiful sanctity of matrimony [...] when its sacredness is violated " . Mesfin Fekadu , a critic for The National , claimed the single " do [es] n 't feel connected to Stefani ? it 's as if another pop star could sing the track and you wouldn 't notice the difference " .

= = Chart performance = =

" Used to Love You " was moderately successful after its release . In the United States , " Used to Love You " debuted at number three on the Bubbling Under Hot 100 Singles chart , which serves as an extension to the Billboard Hot 100 . It entered the Hot 100 at number 84 for the week ending November 14 , 2015 , in addition to debuting at number 40 on the Pop Songs component chart . Following a performance at the American Music Awards of 2015 , " Used to Love You " re @-@ entered the Hot 100 at number 77 , its new peak . The performance helped sell an additional 29 @,@ 000 digital copies , also prompting her to chart on the Artist 100 at number 82 . The single lasted a total of nine weeks on the Hot 100 , peaking at number 52 in December 2015 , and departing its position of number 80 in January 2016 . The week after Stefani performed " Used to Love You " on The Voice , the single peaked at number 14 on the Digital Songs component chart , given Stefani the highest increase for the week ending December 19 , 2015 . On October 27 , 2015 , it was released to contemporary hit radio in the United States . Its radio adds prompted the track to enter the Adult Top 40 , where it peaked at number 10 , spending a total of 15 weeks on the charts . It was Stefani 's second highest peak on the chart , nearing 2005 's " Cool " peak of number 4 . For the week ending January 16 , 2016 , the song peaked at number 21 on the Adult Contemporary chart and Mainstream Top 40 charts , her highest entry ever for the former , and second lowest entry for the latter . On March 11 , 2016 , " Used to Love You " was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America , reporting sales of over 500 @,@ 000 copies . This marked Stefani 's first certification since her single " Hollaback Girl " in 2005 .

Outside of the United States , " Used to Love You " was less successful , peaking in only four other countries . In Canada , the track peaked at number 57 , becoming Stefani 's lowest charting single ; however , her follow @-@ up single " Make Me Like You " would later becoming her lowest charting single , peaking at number 62 in February 2016 . Additionally , the single spent several weeks on the Canadian radio charts , spending seven weeks on the Adult Contemporary chart , where it peaked at number 30 . It spent eight weeks on the CHR / Top 40 chart , where it peaked at number 37 , in addition to spending 12 weeks on the Hot AC list , where it charted at number 31 . " Used to Love You " failed to enter the top 100 in the United Kingdom , instead peaking at number 157 on the UK Singles Chart on October 31 , 2015 . On the ARIA Charts in Australia , the single debuted and peaked at number 58 , while in Scotland , it peaked at number 87 for the week of October 30 to November 5 , 2015 .

= = Music video = =

On October 20 , 2015 , the same day of the song 's release , Stefani premiered the music video , directed by Sophie Muller , on Facebook . The minimalistic one @-@ shot video shows Stefani on the verge of tears while sitting in a dark space with a white tank top . Stefani noted that the video had been filmed inside of her dressing room for her New York performance , and was not intended to be released as the track 's official music video . Carolyn Menyes of Music Times remarked that "

though most of the video is spent near tears , Stefani sings key lyrics , just for an additional emotional trigger . " McKenna Aiello of E ! Online emphasized that " it 's her ability to hold them back [tears] that really reveals Stefani 's strong sense of self . " Marc Inocencio , writing for Seacrest 's website , noted that the video " is simple , yet , it ? s enough to tell the story behind a recent heartbreak , " calling it " really , really heartbreaking . " Erin Strecker of Billboard echoed the same thought , while Joe Satran of The Huffington Post called it " spare , vulnerable and raw : the exact opposite of the exuberant , even maximalist videos we 've come to expect from the No Doubt frontwoman . " Bianca Gracie of Idolator described it as " poignant " and " raw " .

= = Live performances = =

On October 17 , 2015 , Stefani performed " Used to Love You " live during a concert for MasterCard users at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City . Stefani made the television debut of the song on The Ellen DeGeneres Show on October 26 , 2015 . In regards to Stefani 's live performance , Joe Satran of The Huffington Post considered it " quite moving " , while Caily Lindberg of Music Times called it " an emotional rendition " . Robbie Daw wrote for Idolator that " [w] hile her black @-@ clad band stood in the shadows quietly playing along and singing backup vocals , Gwen was front and center with her emotional breakup tune during her Ellen appearance , looking quite anguished but sounding on @-@ point . " On November 22 , 2015 , Stefani performed " Used to Love You " at the American Music Awards of 2015 . Stefani performed the song live during various public appearances , including The Voice , The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon , and New Years Eve with Carson Daily shortly after the countdown to the new year had ended .

= = Track listing = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Recording

Recorded at Westlake Studios , Los Angeles , California

Personnel

Credits adapted from the liner notes of This Is What the Truth Feels Like .

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =