

= I 'Il Make a Man Out of You =

" I 'Il Make a Man out of You " is a song written by composer Matthew Wilder and lyricist David Zippel for Walt Disney Pictures ' 36th animated feature film Mulan ( 1998 ) . Appearing on the film 's soundtrack Mulan : An Original Walt Disney Records Soundtrack , " I 'Il Make a Man Out of You " is performed by American singer Donny Osmond as the singing voice of Captain Li Shang in lieu of American actor BD Wong , who provides the character 's speaking voice . The song also features appearances by Lea Salonga as Mulan , Eddie Murphy as Mushu , and Harvey Fierstein , Jerry Tondo and Wilder himself as Yao , Chien @-@ Po and Ling , respectively .

" I 'Il Make a Man Out of You " was written to replace the song " We 'Il Make a Man of You " after the film 's original songwriter Stephen Schwartz departed from the project in favor of working on DreamWorks ' The Prince of Egypt ( 1998 ) . Prior to Mulan , Osmond had auditioned for the role of Hercules in Disney 's Hercules ( 1997 ) , a role for which he was ultimately turned down by the directors because they felt that he sounded too old . Disney eventually cast Osmond as the singing voice of Shang because his singing voice is similar to Wong 's speaking voice . An up @-@ tempo military @-@ style song , " I 'Il Make a Man Out of You " is performed by Shang during a rigorous training montage in which his young , inexperienced soldiers attempt to justify their worth . The song 's title is considered ironic because Mulan , who relies on intelligence , ultimately proves more competent than her male comrades .

" I 'Il Make a Man Out of You " has received mostly positive reviews from film and music critics , some of whom dubbed it the film 's best song , while praising Osmond 's performance . Critics have also drawn comparisons between the song and Disney 's Hercules , while likening Mulan 's role and transformation to actress Demi Moore 's performance as Lieutenant Jordan O 'Neil in the film G. I. Jane ( 1997 ) . The song has since appeared on several " best of " Disney songs lists , including those of Total Film and the New York Post . Discussed by film critics , film historians , academic journalists and feminists , the song has gone on to be recorded and covered in several different languages ? namely Mandarin , Cantonese and Spanish ? by entertainers Jackie Chan and Cristian Castro , respectively .

= = Background = =

" I 'Il Make a Man Out of You " was written by composer Matthew Wilder and lyricist David Zippel , who were hired to write the songs for Mulan because , according to co @-@ director Tony Bancroft , " Disney was trying to find different songwriters that ... would give kind of different sound to each of the songs . " While Zippel , a Broadway lyricist , was recruited because the directors were impressed by the songwriter 's work on Disney 's Hercules ( 1997 ) , at the time Wilder , a pop singer and record producer , was best known for his hit single " Break My Stride " . Bancroft believes that , although the songwriters " had two different sensibilities ... I think the [ y ] blend worked well together , especially on [ ' I 'Il Make a Man Out of You ' ] " .

Originally , songwriter Stephen Schwartz , who had just recently worked as a lyricist opposite composer Alan Menken on Disney 's Pocahontas ( 1995 ) and The Hunchback of Notre Dame ( 1996 ) , was slated to write the lyrics for Mulan , but he was replaced by Zippel " at the last moment . " Schwartz had written a song called " We 'Il Make a Man of You " for " when Mulan is trying to learn to be a soldier " . The song was eventually replaced by Wilder and Zippel 's " I 'Il Make a Man Out of You " when Schwartz was forced to resign from Mulan by Disney executives Peter Schneider and Michael Eisner because the songwriter had also agreed to write the songs for rival film studio DreamWorks ' animated feature film The Prince of Egypt ( 1998 ) . According to The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz : From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond , Schwartz believed that he would have been able to work on both films simultaneously , but ultimately chose The Prince of Egypt instead because he felt pressured by Disney .

Before Mulan , American singer Donny Osmond had auditioned for the lead role of Hercules in Hercules , a role for which he was ultimately not cast because the directors felt that his voice sounded " too old " and " too deep " for the character . Osmond later revealed in an interview with People that

he was so embarrassed by his Hercules audition that he had nearly considered ending his singing career prematurely . A few months later , Disney contacted Osmond with interest in casting him as the singing voice of Shang after comparing his audition tapes to BD Wong and determining that both actors have " very similar voices . " In one scene , Osmond 's character , Shang , is hit in the stomach while singing " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " . In order to sound as realistic as possible , Osmond punched himself in the stomach several times while recording the song .

= = Context and use in Mulan = =

" I 'll Make a Man Out of You " is performed by Captain Li Shang during Mulan 's training montage , which has also been identified as the film 's " boot camp sequence . " The scene explores Shang 's attempt to train his newly recruited squadron of incompetent soldiers in the hopes of ultimately transforming into a skilled army . Occupying a significant portion of the film 's plot , Shang promises to turn his team of " rag @-@ tag recruits " into men . The musical number is used to " compress dramatic time or narrate " in a more compelling way than had solely dialogue been used . The scene begins with Shang shooting an arrow into the top of a tall pole and challenging all of his soldiers to retrieve it , each of whom fail until Mulan eventually succeeds . According to the book *Into the Closet : Cross @-@ Dressing and the Gendered Body in Children 's Literature and Film* by Victoria Flanagan , Mulan is successful in retrieving the arrow because she uses " an ingenuity that is based upon her ability to incorporate aspects of femininity into her masculine performance . " By the end of the scene , all of the soldiers have improved dramatically and the results of their practice and training are finally revealed . In what Joshua and Judges author Athalya Brenner called " a humorous reversal toward the end of the movie , " Mulan and her male comrades disguise themselves as concubines in order to infiltrate the palace and rescue the emperor while " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " reprises in the background .

Critics have observed ways in which the scene explores Mulan 's growth and transformation as the character evolves from a clumsy , inexperienced recruit into one of the army 's most skilled soldiers , in spite of her gender . According to the book *Literacy , Play and Globalization : Converging Imaginaries in Children 's Critical and Cultural Performances* , the montage depicts Mulan 's gender as " an obstacle to overcome . " Author Phyllis Frus wrote in her book *Beyond Adaptation : Essays on Radical Transformations of Original Works* , " The need for inexperienced young men to go through a rigorous training results in a sequence common to many films , " and that the scene " show 's the challenges Ping / Mulan faces due to her " inexperience . As observed by Juanita Kwok in the book *Film Asia : New Perspectives on Film for English* , the irony of the scene lies within the fact that " Mulan proves herself more competent than any of the men . " The author also observed that the scene 's first refrain accompanies shots of Shang , while its second " coincides with Mulan climbing to the top of the pole . " Additionally , while the earlier , all @-@ female musical number " Honor to Us All " " functions as an account of the constructedness of female gender , " " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " " juxtaposes and makes explicit the contention that gender is a cultural product , " according to Johnson Cheu , author of *Diversity in Disney Films : Critical Essays on Race , Ethnicity , Gender , Sexuality and Disability . The Representation of Gender in Walt Disney 's " Mulan "* believes that the song emphasizes desirable masculine traits , namely " discipline ... tranquility , celerity , strength and fearlessness , " while Shang , according to *Putting the Grail Back into Girl Power : How a Girl Saved Camelot , and why it Matters* , " views [ femininity ] as comparable to weakness . " In her article *Disney 's " Mulan " ? the " True " Deconstructed Heroine ?* , Lisa Brocklebank argued the song explores themes such as othering , ostracism and abjection .

Critics have drawn similarities between the " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " sequence and Hercules ' training montage in Disney 's *Hercules* ( 1997 ) , as well as actress Demi Moore 's role as Lieutenant Jordan O 'Neil in the film *G. I. Jane* ( 1997 ) . In the book *Ways of Being Male : Representing Masculinities in Children 's Literature* , author John Stephens wrote that although both Mulan and Hercules depict " the active male body as spectacle , " Mulan 's is less " straight @-@ forward " due to the character 's gender . Michael Dequina of *The Movie Report* observed that " Mulan 's transformation is highly reminiscent of Demi Moore 's in last year 's Disney drama *G.I. Jane* , but

Mulan oneups that film 's hour @-@ long toughening process by efficiently covering the same ground during a single , rousing musical number . "

= = Music and lyrics = =

Written in common time at a tempo of 110 beats per minute and starting out in the key of G major , " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " has been identified as a " heroic power ballad " and anthem that features an upbeat , " thumping " rhythm . The Disney Song Encyclopedia described the song as a " rhythmic military song . " Beginning with " a military @-@ style drum " introduction , " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " , which is immediately preceded by the emotional ballad " Reflection " on the film 's soundtrack album , " breaks up the slower pace of the songs , " according to Filmtracks.com. Similar to the song " A Girl Worth Fighting For " , the " ironically titled " " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " " play [ s ] off Mulan 's secret " because Shang is unaware that she is actually a girl , as observed by Jeffrey Gantz of The Phoenix . Johnson Cheu , author of Diversity in Disney Films : Critical Essays on Race , Ethnicity , Gender , Sexuality and Disability , received the song as a counterpart to the all @-@ female musical number " Honor to Us All " . Going into the last verse , the song 's key shifts up to A ? major and later towards the end , " the backing track falls into silence and [ Osmond 's ] vocals come to the fore . " Osmond 's vocal range spans one octave , from D3 to F4 . Beginning with two verses , followed by a bridge , a refrain , a final verse and repeated choruses , the song is a total of three minutes and twenty @-@ one seconds in length .

Entertainment Weekly identified the number as the film 's " rambunctious peak . " According to Victoria Flanagan , author of Into the Closet : Gender and Cross @-@ dressing in Children 's Fiction : Cross @-@ Dressing and the Gendered Body in Children 's Literature and Film , " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " is " a playful parody of conventional masculinity . " The lyric " I 'll make a man out of you " is constantly repeated and reinforced by Shang . According to author John Stephens of Ways of Being Male : Representing Masculinities in Children 's Literature , the song 's lyrics " initially define masculinity in opposition to femininity , " with its first verse beginning , " Let 's get down to business / To defeat the Huns / Did they send me daughters / When I asked for sons ? " Its chorus reads , " You must be swift as the coursing river / With all the force of the great typhoon / With all the strength of a raging fire / Mysterious as the dark side of the moon " which , according to Ways of Being Male : Representing Masculinities in Children 's Literature , " essentializes masculinity by asserting that it embodies the speed , strength and power of the natural world , and yet contains this within an aura of tranquility and mystery . " According to Beyond Adaptation : Essays on Radical Transformations of Original Works , these lyrics " add a hint of darkness as they celebrate male prowess " by suggesting that one who has " acquired fiery strength " is also " untamed as the moon 's dark side . " The song has been noted by the New York Post for its " slew of one @-@ liners from supporting characters . " According to The Phoenix , Osmond performs the song 's lyrics with " grit . " Meanwhile , the singer is backed up by a macho @-@ sounding choir repeatedly chanting " Be a man ! " "

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical response = = =

" I 'll Make a Man Out of You " has been met with mostly positive reviews from both film and music critics . Irving Tan of Sputnikmusic wrote , " there hasn 't been a single chorus in all of post @-@ Mulan pop music that has managed to rival the roaring power in the refrain . " Scott Chitwood of ComingSoon.net reviewed " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " as " a stirring , testosterone filled piece , " describing the scene as " amusing . " Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly wrote that the song " has a comparable infectious punch , " concluding , " it 's the only song in the movie that escapes Disneyfied blandness . " Jeff Vice of the Deseret News observed that Wong and Osmond 's " voices sound eerily similar . " Tom Henry of The Blade enjoyed Osmond 's delivery , describing the

singer 's performance as " solid . " Lloyd Paseman of The Register @-@ Guard called " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " a favorite of his . While exploring " The History of Movie Training Montages " , Chris Giblin of Men 's Fitness opined , " Mulan served as proof that the fitness montage can work amazingly well in movies for kids . " Giblin continued , " it has the best lyrics of any serious fitness / sports montage song . Overall , a very strong montage . " Disney.com itself cites " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " as a " song that was so epic , so legendary , that it requires an out loud sing along anytime we hear it . "

Despite dubbing the film 's songs its " weak link , " TV Guide wrote that the musical numbers are " crafted with a knowing , almost camp wink that 's totally in keeping with the subtext of the film , " concluding that " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " sounds like " a Village People original . " Writing for The Seattle Times , Moira Macdonald criticized Wilder and Zippel 's songs as " forgettable , " calling " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " " annoying . " The Phoenix 's Jeffrey Gantz wrote that although " Donny Osmond shows some grit , but he 's still the voice of the Whitebread West . " Amazon.ca 's Jason Verlinde commented , " Unfortunately , the voice of Donny Osmond , relegated to anthems such as ' I 'll Make a Man Out of You ' doesn 't really enhance the story line " .

= = = Accolades and recognition = = =

Total Film ranked " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " twenty @-@ ninth on its list of the " 30 Best Disney Songs " . Similarly , M ranked the song twentieth on its list of the " Top 20 Disney Songs of All Time " . Author Stephanie Osmanski cited " Did they send me daughters when I asked for sons ? " as her favourite lyric . Gregory E. Miller of the New York Post cited I 'll Make a Man Out of You " as one of " The best ( and the most underrated ) Disney songs , " writing , " Captain Shang ? s battle @-@ preparation anthem is the movie ? s most quotable , with a memorable chorus and a slew of one @-@ liners from supporting characters . " PopSugar ranked the song the nineteenth " Catchiest Disney Song " . On Empire 's list of the twenty " Most Awesome Training Montages In Cinema History " , " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " was ranked 14th . The author identified it as " a solid training montage in which Mulan and her friends go from hapless duffers to fearless warriors in just over two minutes . " Similarly , Men 's Fitness also ranked " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " among the greatest training montages in film history . Stephen Fiorentine of Sneaker Report wrote that " Training montages aren ? t limited to just live @-@ action movies . With movies like Mulan and Hercules , Disney mastered the art of the montage in their animated films . "

= = Covers and parodies = =

When Mulan was released in China , Hong Kong actor Jackie Chan was hired to dub the voice of Shang and record " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " in Mandarin and Cantonese . The special edition DVD release of Mulan features a music video of Chan performing the song . The video also depicts Chan performing martial arts @-@ inspired choreography . Positively received , Scott Chitwood of ComingSoon.net called Chan 's rendition " a fun addition for Chan fans , " while Nancy Churnin of The Dallas Morning News wrote that he performed the song " very ably . " Mexican singer Cristian Castro , who voiced Shang in the film 's Latin American release , recorded " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " in Spanish , entitled " Hombres de Acción serán hoy " .

In October 2014 , a parody of " I 'll Make a Man Out of You " was uploaded to YouTube entitled " I 'll Make a ' Mon Out of You " . A mashup of Mulan and the popular Pokémon franchise , the video features Digimon Gatomon attempting to masquerade as Pokémon Meowth in lieu of Mulan , while Ash occupies the role of Shang as his trainer , according to Smosh .

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits adapted from the website Discogs .

Donny Osmond ? lead vocals

Lea Salonga , Eddie Murphy , Harvey Fierstein , Jerry Tondo and Matthew Wilder ? additional

vocals

Matthew Wilder ? songwriting and producing

David Zippel ? songwriting