

= Mama (Spice Girls song) =

" Mama " is a song by British pop group Spice Girls . It was written by the Spice Girls , Matt Rowe and Richard Stannard , and produced by Rowe and Stannard for the group 's debut album Spice , released in November 1996 . " Mama " is a pop ballad that features instrumentation from keyboards , a rhythm guitar , a cello , and a violin , and its lyrics deal with the difficulties in relationships between mothers and daughters that appear during adolescence .

It was released as a double A @-@ side with " Who Do You Think You Are " , and became the official single of the 1997 Comic Relief . Its Big TV ! directed music video , featured the group singing to an audience of children and their own mothers . Despite receiving mixed reviews from music critics , " Mama " was commercially successful . Released as the album 's fourth single in March 1997 , it became their fourth consecutive number @-@ one single in the United Kingdom , which made the Spice Girls the first act in UK chart history to have its first four singles reach number one . It was certified platinum by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) . The single performed well internationally , reaching the top ten in many European countries and New Zealand , and the top fifteen in Australia .

= = Writing and inspiration = =

" Mama " was written by the Spice Girls with songwriting partners Matt Rowe and Richard Stannard . In an interview about the writing process between the group and the duo , Rowe credits Mel B as the one who came up with the song 's concept . During the writing process , each member wrote a small verse in a different corner of the recording studio , while the chorus was finished around the piano with a guitar . Then , the producers added a gospel choir filled with the group 's harmonies at the end of the song . Brown explained the song 's inspiration on the book Real Life : Real Spice The Official Story :

We wrote ' Mama ' when I was going through a bad phase with my mum . The sentiments are really that your mum 's probably the best friend that you 've got . Whether she 's an over @-@ protective mother or a bit of a landmine , she probably knows you better than yourself in some ways .

In the same book , Melanie C further elaborated : " ' Mama 's all about how you 're such a cow to your mum when you 're going through that rebellious teenage stage . Then when you get a bit older , you realise that whatever she was doing , she was only doing it for your own good . And you think : ' God , I was really horrible . ' " " Mama " was released in the UK and Ireland as a double A @-@ side along with " Who Do You Think You Are " in March 1997 , timed not only for the Comic Relief telethon , but also for Mothering Sunday .

= = Composition = =

" Mama " is a pop ballad , written in the key of F minor , it is set in the time signature of common time and moves at a moderate tempo of 100 beats per minute . The song is constructed in a verse @-@ chorus form , with a bridge before the third chorus , and its instrumentation comes from keyboards , a rhythm guitar , a cello , and a violin .

It opens with an instrumental introduction , with a chord progression of D ? ? E ? ? Fm ? E ? / G ? A ? , that is used in the entire song . Bunton and Brown sing the first and second verse respectively . The bridge and third chorus follow . Then a choir , arranged by Mark Beswick , supplements the group during the last part of the song . " Mama " ends with the group repeating the chorus until the song gradually fades out . Lyrically , the song deals with the difficulties in the relationships between mothers and teenagers that appears during the adolescence , and it was dedicated to the group 's mothers .

= = Reception = =

== Critical response ==

" Mama " received mixed reviews from music critics . The Daily Mirror criticised the song saying " Yuk ! We don 't want our Spice Girls sweet , ta very much . They should concentrate on the raunch and let Daniel O 'Donnell take care of the mums . " Dev Sherlock of Yahoo ! Music Radio called it a " glossy ballad that would do Mariah Carey proud " . Edna Gundersen of the USA Today said that their album Spice " is assembly @-@ line dance @-@ pop " , adding that " only the funky ' Say You 'll Be There ' and touchingly cornball ' Mama ' hint at depth " .

In a review of their album Spice , Ken Tucker from Entertainment Weekly called it " a fearlessly corny ballad " , and added that it " will likely keep them from being one @-@ hit wonders in America " . Melissa Ruggieri of the Richmond Times @-@ Dispatch said that in the song , the girls " are sunny vocalists who harmonize with perfumey sweetness when called upon " . Daniel Incognito of Sputnikmusic said that in " Mama " the group " sing with heartfelt emotion " , and added that " their somewhat amateurish singing is brought up and pushed along by the production crew , harmonising nicely into a stirring pop hook " .

== Chart performance ==

" Mama " was released in the UK as a double A @-@ side single with " Who Do You Think You Are " on 3 March 1997 . It debuted on the UK Singles Chart at number one , with sales of 248 @,@ 000 copies , becoming the group 's fourth consecutive chart @-@ topper . This achievement made the Spice Girls the first act in UK chart history to have its first four singles reach number one , breaking the record set by Gerry & The Pacemakers , Frankie Goes to Hollywood , Jive Bunny and the Mastermixers , and Robson & Jerome with three number ones each . It spent three weeks at number one , nine weeks in the top forty , fifteen weeks in the top seventy @-@ five , and sold 672 @,@ 577 copies in total , earning a platinum certification by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) .

" Mama " was commercially successful in Europe . It peaked at number three on the Eurochart Hot 100 , and performed similarly in other European charts . It became the group 's third number @-@ one single in Ireland , and peaked inside the top ten in Belgium (both the Flemish and French charts) , Germany , the Netherlands , Sweden , and Switzerland . " Mama " was released as a standalone single in Austria , Finland , and Italy . In Austria , it was released on 23 March 1997 , debuting on the Ö3 Austria Top 40 at number thirty @-@ one . It peaked at number one in its ninth week , and remained fifteen weeks on the chart .

In Oceania , its commercial performance was generally positive , though not as overwhelming as their three first singles . In New Zealand , it debuted on 23 March 1997 at number ten , while their three first singles were slowly descending from the chart . It peaked at number six and stayed fifteen weeks on the chart . In Australia , it did not perform as well as their previous releases . On 27 July 1997 , it debuted on the singles chart at number thirteen , but was unable to reach a higher position and dropped off the chart after fourteen weeks .

== Music video ==

The music video for " Mama " was directed in February 1997 by Big TV ! , and filmed in a studio in Ealing , London . It features the group singing to an audience of children and their own mothers . The video alternated between this scenes and shots of actors playing young versions of the Spice Girls doing various things all together , such as playing and practicing singing and dancing , though none of the group 's members grew up together . It also shows each mother of the girls holding a picture of their daughter .

About the shoot , Victoria Beckham commented : " It took such a long time to film the ' Mama ' video , but it was nice that our mums were there and could see what we 're doing . It 's good , because they were actually knackered at the end of the day and I said to my mum : ' Ha ! Now you know how I feel every day ! " Geri Halliwell commented : " I found it a bit bizarre bringing my mum to

work with me on the ' Mama ' video . You know : ' This is what I do ? come and do it , too . ' If you worked in Sainsbury 's , you wouldn 't get your mum to sit with you on the till " .

= = Live performances = =

The song was performed many times on television , including An Audience with ... , Live & Kicking , Top of the Pops , the 1997 Prince 's Trust Gala , and the 1997 Comic Relief . In October 1997 , the group performed it as the thirteenth song of their first live concert at the Abdi ?pekçi Arena in Istanbul , Turkey . The performance was broadcast on Showtime in a pay @-@ per @-@ view event titled Spice Girls In Concert Wild ! . However , the VHS and DVD release of the concert , Girl Power ! Live in Istanbul , does not include the performance . The song was also used during the climax of their 1997 film , Spice World . In the scene , the group performs " Mama " at London 's Royal Albert Hall , surrounded by the media and thousands of fans . The scene was included as a bonus performance in the VHS and DVD release of the movie .

The group have performed the song on their three tours , the Spiceworld Tour , the Christmas In Spiceworld Tour , and the Return of the Spice Girls . It remained in the group 's live set after Halliwell 's departure at the end of the European leg of the Spiceworld Tour . The performance at the tour 's final concert can be found on the video : Spice Girls Live at Wembley Stadium , filmed in London , on 20 September 1998 . During the Return of the Spice Girls tour , " Mama " was performed as the second song from the show 's fifth segment . All five girls stood together holding hands to perform it , while the LED screens in the background showed photos of their mothers holding baby pictures of the group , and a montage of them and their children . For the British shows , fifty young girls from the Capital Children 's Choir dressed in white came out from a platform and lined the stage against the backdrop screens to sing with the Spice Girls . During some of the shows , the group brought their children onstage .

= = Formats and track listings = =

These are the formats and track listings of major single releases of " Mama " :

= = Credits and personnel = =

Published by Windswept Pacific Music Ltd / PolyGram Music Publishing Ltd .

= = Charts and certifications = =

= = = Weekly charts = = =