

= Maman a tort =

" Maman a tort " is a 1984 song recorded by French artist Mylène Farmer . It was the debut single from Farmer 's first studio album *Cendres de Lune* , and marked the beginning of her collaboration with her long @-@ time composer , Laurent Boutonnat . With lyrics by Jérôme Dahan , who also helped compose the song with Boutonnat , the song was first released in March 1984 . An English @-@ language version , titled " My Mum Is Wrong " and produced by F. R. David , was released in September 1984 . " Maman a tort " was deemed as provocative at the time , as its ambiguous lyrics seem to deal with a lesbian love ; similarly , the video , which shows Farmer lightly dressed , was often censored on television when it was released . Generally well received by critics , the original French version of the song achieved modest success in comparison with the singer 's next singles , while the English @-@ language version was a commercial failure . The song did , however , allow Farmer to launch her singing career and establish her particular artistic style .

= = Background and writing = =

In December 1983 , Jérôme Dahan and Laurent Boutonnat , two friends , composed a song called " Maman a tort " , about lesbian love between a girl committed to a mental hospital and her nurse . To find a performer , they held a casting . A girl aged 15 ? 16 was initially chosen to perform the song , before being rejected because she was too young to sing its sexually ambiguous lyrics . Boutonnat then decided to ask one of his friends , Mylène Gautier , to sing the track . Both composers have said that they thought Gautier seemed psychotic and thus was the ideal person to record the track . Boutonnat said : " As soon as I saw her , with her triangular face , I realized that this would be her and nobody else . She looked crazy , it was perfect . " After they decided to work with her , Gautier took the pseudonym of Farmer , as a tribute to actress Frances Farmer .

According to Jean @-@ Claude Déquéant , Farmer showed limited enthusiasm during the demo recordings and declared : " The voice was surprisingly present and she laughed after each take when listening " . Dahan was satisfied , because Farmer had a clear and deep voice and could easily reach high notes . Initial rehearsals were held at Dahan 's home . Dahan has said of these rehearsals : " There was a large room with a piano and there we repeated the staging of the song . Mylène had a hard time understanding all this , we had to teach her everything , starting with the choreography [...] This probably did not look very professional . "

Recording of the French version of " Maman a tort " took place in Paris in January 1984 , with Farmer stating that the sessions were a " magic " moment . Later , the English @-@ language version of the song was recorded in an afternoon at the Dany Darras studio in Cernay . Farmer had no difficulty in singing in English because she spoke the language very well , having lived in Canada .

Initially Boutonnat and Dahan found it difficult to find a record company who would release the track , either because labels were worried about the song being censored due to the sexual nature of its lyrics or because they did not see any commercial potential in the track . In order to get a second appointment with RCA records the pair claimed they had remixed the song , even though they had not . Only after a third appointment with RCA did the label 's Francis Dacla give them a contract .

According to France Dimanche , the song saved the singer from entering into a loveless marriage . Farmer had become disillusioned with showbusiness after struggling to get even tiny roles in commercials and had resolved to wed a childhood friend , a student of the École nationale d 'administration , before she was selected to sing " Maman a tort " .

= = Release = =

The single was first released in France in March 1984 , but was not commercially successful . Several months later , it gained more success under the management of Bertrand Le Page , a famous artistic director . The song was heavily played on French radio . In view of the song 's success , Frédéric Leibovitz suggested that Farmer record an English @-@ language version of

the single named " My Mum Is Wrong " , in an effort to win over a wider audience . This version was produced by F. R. David who also translated the lyrics , being motivated by affection for Le Page . The song was released in September in France and Canada . The English version was released in Germany , Italy and Scandinavia and was scheduled to be released in England and the United States . Extended versions of " Maman a tort " and " My Mum Is Wrong " were produced by Laurent Boutonnat and issued as 7 " maxi singles .

There were two covers for " Maman a tort " : the first release was produced in black and white and shows the singer looking sad and wearing a nightgown , the second release , in colour , shows her laughing . The second cover was based on an idea by Bertrand Le Page who thought that it would be better to give the public an image it wanted . The single 's Canadian release did not have a cover . A different cover was used for " My Mum Is Wrong " ' s vinyl , with the image used being similar to the second French release of " Maman a tort " . The B @-@ side of the song was an instrumental version of the track , as Farmer 's musical team had no budget to record another song . In 2003 , a remix version was produced by DJ Joaquim Garraud for the compilation album RemixeS but was not released .

= = Lyrics and music = =

The song is constructed like a nursery rhyme in which a young girl , while numbering facts between 1 and 8 , confesses her love for a female nurse . As written on the cover , the song is dedicated to the actress Frances Farmer , as well as King Ludwig II of Bavaria . Farmer explained at the time that the song was not autobiographical .

" Maman a tort " lays the foundation of Farmer 's musical universe , including many themes dealt with by the singer in subsequent releases . Among the topics discussed are transgression , love , the world of childhood , violence and death , mortality and suffering , sexuality , and social demands . The song also deals with psychoanalysis . The rhythm is catchy , and the lyrics , " dark and symbolic " , describe the conflicts between a daughter and her mother , as the title suggests . According to an analysis published by Sophie Khairallah , the lyrics could also refer to incest . They seem to be " innocent " and are sung " in the most ingenuous way " . Biographer Bernard Violet considers the song " a nursery rhyme with enigmatic but quite spicy lyrics which place it rather far from Sabine Paturel and her innocent song " Les Bêtises " " . Journalist Caroline Bee deemed the song as " a small efficient UFO , with a catchy and binary melody and a disconcerting video " .

In a 1984 interview Farmer discussed the song 's lyrics , stating : " It can happen to many children who are in hospital [...] the nurses feed these children , tuck them into bed , kiss them before they sleep and therefore take the place of their mothers . So it is a little girl who tells her mother : I love the nurse " . She said in another interview : " But if people prefer to give this song a perverse sense , it is their problem " . Thus , she does not confirm the lesbian allusions that seem to emerge from the chorus (the French verb " aimer " can mean either " to love " or " to like ") . However , the song has been listed in several books dealing with homosexuality and explains the fact that many gay people were immediately attracted to Farmer 's world .

= = Music video = =

= = = Production and plot = = =

The music video was directed by Laurent Boutonnat who also wrote the screenplay , and produced by RCA , and was shot for one day and cost about 5 @,@ 000 francs (750 ? 760 euro) . Boutonnat wanted that the video would be filmed in cinemascope , but this was unusual at the time and the idea was finally withdrawn .

The video begins with a portrait of Sigmund Freud in close @-@ up , then shows a picture of Farmer 's mother . The song 's lyrics are subtitled . Still images of Farmer are then shown in silhouette wearing a white and transparent nightgown . With each line of the song , an image of

Farmer appears . When the chorus begins , Farmer turns blue and begins to dance in front of a backdrop featuring stars and the moon . Three children are shown looking at Farmer . After another verse , which again features still images of Farmer , shots of the singer jumping are intercut with shots of her singing along with the track with her arms clutched to her breast . Afterwards Farmer and the three children are shown holding placards with the words " Maman a tort " . Following another verse the singer 's decapitated head is pictured on a plate on a table in front of the children who are holding knives and forks . The singer is again shown in blue and cries before being slapped in the face . A low @-@ angle shot of Farmer shows her readjusting the strap of her nightgown and is intercut with images of her in silhouette . The video ends with a portrait of Freud .

Another more ambitious and dramatic video had originally been planned by Boutonnat . Farmer would have been shown in a wheelchair pushed by a nun nurse , who she had feeling for . As the singer cannot understand this relationship , and faces the disapproval of her mother because of it , Farmer decides to commit suicide by throwing herself from the top of a cliff . The story board was even presented in the media , but Farmer 's recording company RCA did not agree with to the project , especially since this video would have cost 70 @,@ 000 euro to make . There was no video for " My Mum Is Wrong " .

= = = Reviews = = =

The video caused " a veritable stir in the music world " because " Boutonnat cast [Farmer] as a kind of provocative Lolita figure " . As she wears a transparent nightgown in the music video , some French television channels censored it . It was first aired on the French television programme Clip Clap in a shortened version . In an interview , Farmer deplored the censorship , saying : " [it] has shocked many people . I find it pretty stupid . Jacques Dutronc said " Merde in France " and everyone went into raptures . As for me , I simply say that I enjoyed the controversy " .

Despite the low cost of the video , it was described in the press as " beautiful " by Chanson and " one of the best music videos of the year " by Télé Star . In contrast , the French newspaper Le Provençal called the video " useless : static , unimaginative " and claimed that it was low @-@ budget . For his part , Violet described the video as being " half way between fotonovela and shadow play " and said that it provides " a blend of ethereal and childish sensuality , of measured provocation and of obsessive victimization " .

= = Critical reception = =

The song was generally very well received by the press at the time . Boys and Girls considered it " undoubtedly one of the hits of the summer of 1984 " , OK called it " a very promising first 7 " " , and Chanson 84 stated that it was " great : rhythmic , spicy , original ; the orchestration , based on a synth and drums , is enriched over the couplets " . Le Matin de Paris said it was " a funny perverse little song " , and Les Grands de la Variété stated : " The tone is original , the music is subtle : it 's a good surprise " .

" Maman a tort " did not appear in the French Top 50 Singles Chart because the chart had not been created at the time . The sales of the single were about 100 @,@ 000 (220 @,@ 000 , according to French magazine Elle) , which was deemed as a " decent performance " and a " first success , not a triumphant one " . " My Mum Is Wrong " was not successful and its sales are unknown . In March 2014 " Maman a Tort " entered the French Singles Chart at number 104 due to digital downloads by Farmer 's fans as a tribute to her thirty @-@ year singing career .

= = Promotion and live performances = =

Bertrand Le Page provided many opportunities for Farmer to perform the song on television . French host Michel Drucker was the first to allow the singer to perform on his show , Champs Élysées . From that moment , the song was widely played on radio and aroused the curiosity of the public .

Throughout 1984 , Farmer actively promoted " Maman a tort " and performed it in on many French television programs broadcast on TF1 , Antenne 2 , FR3 and TMC . From February 1985 to December 1986 , when her next three singles ? " On est tous des imbéciles " , " Plus grandir " and " Libertine " ? were released , Farmer promoted them on many television shows , but she also sang " Maman a tort " on these occasions . In total , the song has been performed over twenty times on television . Her performance on Salut les Mickey was censored because of the song 's ambiguous lyrics . According to author Erwan Chuberre , Farmer 's performances on television were generally deemed as unconvincing , because she had never taken dance lessons at the time , and her colored dresses were not very tasteful . In spite of these performances , Farmer had difficulty achieving notoriety and , on an advice of Le Page , she extended the promotion of the song to include interviews in magazines for teenagers .

The song was included in the set list of Farmer 's 1989 tour and was performed as a duet . Carole Fredericks , one of Farmer 's vocalists , portrayed the nurse , and in a long monologue , she complained about one of her female patients , who was difficult to bear . Farmer , hidden beneath Frederick 's long dress , suddenly appeared , wearing pyjamas , and performed the song by waddling like a little child . The song was also performed during the Mylenium Tour but included in a medley composed of her 1980s greatest hits . A snippet of the song was performed on the opening night of the Timeless Tour on 7 September 2013 in Paris . As for " My Mum Is Wrong " , it does not appear on any of Farmer 's albums and has not been performed on stage .

= = Cover versions = =

The song has been covered five times . First , in the late 1990s , by French singer Lio for a 1984 hits compilation , then in 2000 , by Beyond the Nightmare , but this version was not released as a single . In 2003 the song was released twice : first by Yohann and Gabrielle , two contestants of À la Recherche de la Nouvelle Star , on the album 1ers Tubes on which it appears as 13th track , and then by MF2003 ; his version , released in the United Kingdom as a 7 " maxi single , included an instrumental version named " My Mum Is Dub " as a B @-@ side , was unsuccessful and failed to chart . In 2010 Momus recorded an English translation of this song titled ' The Orderly ' .

= = Formats and track listings = =

These are the formats and track listings of single releases of " Maman a tort " and " My Mum Is Wrong " :

" Maman a tort "
7 " single ? First and second releases
7 " maxi
Digital download (since 2005)
" My Mum Is Wrong "
7 " single
7 " maxi ? Promo

= = Official versions = =

= = Personnel and credits = =

These are the credits and the personnel as they appear on the back of the single :

Jérôme Dahan ? lyrics , music
Laurent Boutonnat ? music
Jean @-@ Claude Déquéant ? recording , at " Le matin calme " studio
Philippe Omnès ? mixing , at Davout studio
Bertrand Le Page ? editions

RCA ? recording company

John Frost ? photo

= = Release history = =