

= S & M ( song ) =

" S & M " is a song by Barbadian singer Rihanna from her fifth studio album , Loud ( 2010 ) . The song was released on January 21 , 2011 , as the fourth single from the album . The American songwriter Ester Dean wrote " S & M " in collaboration with the producers Stargate and Sandy Vee . Backed by bass beats , a keyboard and guitars , it is an uptempo hi @-@ NRG @-@ Eurodance track with lyrics that revolve around sexual intercourse , sadomasochism , bondage , and fetishes .

Critical response to " S & M " was mixed : some critics praised its sound and composition while others criticized its overtly sexual lyrics . After it reached number two on the United States ' Billboard Hot 100 chart , a remix that features Britney Spears was released . When combined with sales of the solo version , it became Rihanna 's tenth and Spears ' fifth number @-@ one single on the chart . It has been certified triple platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) . " S & M " peaked at number one in Australia , Canada , Hungary , Israel , and Poland in addition to the United States while peaking within the top five in France , Germany , Ireland , Spain , and the UK .

To promote " S & M " , Rihanna performed a shortened version at the 31st Brit Awards and sang the remix with Spears at the 2011 Billboard Music Awards . Melina Matsoukas directed the song 's music video , which was , in part , Rihanna 's response to disparaging critics . It portrays softcore sadomasochist acts and fetishes . The music video was banned in many countries and restricted to nighttime television in others . Critics complimented Rihanna 's sensuality and the vibrant colors . Photographer David LaChapelle filed a lawsuit alleging that the video incorporates ideas from his photographs . Rihanna and LaChapelle settled the case for an undisclosed sum of money .

= = Concept and development = =

" S & M " was written by Ester Dean in collaboration with the song 's producers , Stargate and Sandy Vee . Dean explained its conception and the sexually suggestive lyrics to Gail Mitchell of Billboard : " The first thing that came to me was ' Come on , come on . ' I 'm thinking , ' I don 't know what in the hell this is about to be . ' And I remembered I 'd seen something that said , ' Sticks and stones may break my bones . ' Then came ' But chains and whips excite me . ' When people have a great track that speaks to me , it feels like it already has a story in it " . Rihanna told Rolling Stone about her interest in bondage and other sadomasochism activities , themes central to " S & M " : " I like to take charge , but I love to be submissive ... being submissive in the bedroom is really fun . You get to be a little lady , to have somebody be macho and in charge . "

" S & M " was recorded during Rihanna 's Last Girl on Earth Tour : the instrumental parts for the song were recorded by Eriksen and Miles Walker at Roc the Mic Studios in New York City and the Westlake Recording Studios in Los Angeles , and by Vee at The Bunker Studios in Paris . Rihanna 's vocals were recorded by Kuk Harrell and were produced by Harrell , Josh Gudwin and Marcos Tovar ; Bobby Campbell assisted in the singer 's vocal recording . Veronika Bozeman provided additional vocal production . The song was mixed by Vee at The Bunker Studios and by Phil Tan at The Ninja Beat Club in Atlanta , Georgia ; additional and assistant engineering was carried out by Damien Lewis . All instrumental production was completed by Eriksen , Hermansen and Vee .

= = Composition and lyrical interpretation = =

" S & M " is an uptempo hi @-@ NRG @-@ Eurodance song that lasts four minutes and three seconds . The song is composed in the key of E @-@ flat minor using common time and a moderate dance tempo of 128 beats per minute . Instrumentation is provided by synthesizers , a keyboard and a guitar . Chris Ryan of MTV described the song as a " steady @-@ rocking dance track , with ominous , snarling keyboard sounds . "

During the track , Rihanna 's vocal range spans one octave , from the low note of B3 to the high note of B4 . Proposing illicit acts , she uses a " sexually aggressive tone " in her vocal performance . The lyrics are about sex , sadomasochism , bondage and BDSM fetishes , including the sexual fantasies and turn @-@ ons of its protagonist . The song opens with the hook , " Na , na , na , c

'mon " . During the chorus the lyrics include , " ' Cause I may be bad , but I 'm perfectly good at it / Sex in the air , I don 't care , I love the smell of it . " In the song , Rihanna describes herself as " bad " and openly praises her own sexual prowess ; lyrics include , " Sticks and stones may break my bones / But chains and whips excite me . " Rihanna told Spin magazine that the lyrics are metaphoric . She said that she thought the song was mainly about having confidence in one 's identity , and about being impervious to rumors and criticism . According to Jake Conway of Q Magazine at Yale , the lyrics are guilty of " divesting sex of emotion " and re @-@ envisaging violence as fetish ; he went on to say that Rihanna pays homage to the sexual acts in an empowered dance and club mood . Chris Ryan described the song as being about " dirty , naughty , illicit bedroom activities " .

= = Release and remixes = =

" S & M " was the fourth single from the album Loud to be released in the US and the third in other countries . It was sent to contemporary hit and rhythmic radio stations in the US on January 23 , 2011 , and to urban playlists on February 27 , 2011 . The single was released on iTunes Stores throughout Europe and South America on February 11 , 2011 . In Argentina , Brazil and certain territories throughout Europe , the song was released as an extended play ( EP ) on February 18 , 2011 ; this consisted of the single version of " S & M " and two remixes by Audé and Samson . On February 28 , 2011 , a compilation was released worldwide as a digital package consisting of remixes by disc jockeys Audé , Samson and Joe Bermudez . " S & M " was released as a CD single in Germany on March 18 , 2011 . On April 11 , 2011 , the remix single featuring Britney Spears was made available to download worldwide . In the United Kingdom , " S & M " was deemed too explicit for daytime airplay ; it was edited to remove references to sex , chains and whips , and was renamed " Come On " for BBC Radio 1 .

A remix of " S & M " featuring rapper J. Cole was released on the internet on January 17 , 2011 . After the release of the song 's album version , Rihanna asked her followers on Twitter about potential collaborators , of which Spears was the most popular choice . Twitter messages between the two artists caused speculation that they had recorded a remix of the song . The remix , featuring guest vocals by Spears , was released on April 11 , 2011 .

= = Critical reception = =

" S & M " received mixed responses from music critics . Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine described " S & M " as an ode to sadomasochism that compares to Janet Jackson 's The Velvet Rope . Conner felt that " S & M " , as well as other Loud tracks " What 's My Name ? " and " Skin " , were songs which allowed Rihanna to boast about how good she is in certain situations , as she did on Rated R. He chose the lyrics " I may be bad / but I 'm perfectly good at it ... Chains and whips excite me " as an example of her vaunt . USA Today 's Steve Jones opined that " Loud 's pulsating opener , ' S & M , ' makes it clear from the jump where [ Rihanna is ] headed as she acknowledges that ' chains and whips excite [ her ] ' " , while Leah Greenblatt of Entertainment Weekly called " S & M " an " explicitly carnal opener " with " late @-@ night @-@ Cinemax naughtiness " .

Jake Conway of Q Magazine at Yale agreed , writing that the lyrics of " S & M " display why the singer continues to be one of the most provocative recording artists in the music industry , highlighting how she " turns the tables on abusive ex @-@ lover Chris Brown . " Digital Spy 's Nick Levine gave the song a rating of four stars out of five , and wrote that the song makes the listener as " up @-@ for it " as Rihanna herself ; he went on to say that " S & M " consists of " ear @-@ frothing " hooks , synths and pounding beats . James Skinner of BBC Music wrote that Loud lacked the " chart @-@ friendly moments " of Rated R and criticized the overtly sexual lyrics which he found " at odds with " the flirtatious appeal for which Rihanna was aiming . Skinner described the singer 's vocal delivery as " forced " and criticized her for not projecting a " daring " or convincing sound on " S & M " .

= = Chart performance = =

" S & M " made its first chart appearance in the United Kingdom on November 15 , 2010 , at number 55 . It peaked at number three on March 5 , 2011 , where it remained for three consecutive weeks . It was more successful on the UK R & B Chart , where it was number one for five consecutive weeks . The song the second @-@ biggest selling R & B or hip hop single of 2011 in the UK : by December that year , " S & M " had sold 643 @,@ 000 copies in the UK and was certified platinum by the BPI . Elsewhere in Europe , " S & M " was a commercial success and peaked within the top three in many countries .

" S & M " debuted on the Australian Singles Chart at number 87 on November 29 , 2010 , upon the release of Loud . When it was released as a single , it returned to the singles chart at number 27 on January 30 , 2011 . The song peaked at number one on February 13 , 2011 , for five non @-@ consecutive weeks . It has since been certified four times platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association , denoting shipments of over 280 @,@ 000 copies of the single . The song debuted on the New Zealand Singles Chart at number six on February 7 , 2011 . It peaked at number two the following week for two consecutive weeks , and returned to its peak position again in its fifth week on the chart . " S & M " was subsequently certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of New Zealand , denoting sales of over 15 @,@ 000 copies .

In the US , the song debuted at number 53 on the Billboard Hot 100 on December 4 , 2010 . The issue of Billboard published on April 30 , 2011 reported that the album version of " S & M " and its official remix featuring Spears had sold a combined total of 293 @,@ 000 downloads in the previous week ; it replaced Katy Perry 's " E.T. " on the Hot 100 . " S & M " became Rihanna 's tenth US number @-@ one single on the chart , tying her with Janet Jackson in fourth place for female soloists who have topped that chart ; with only four years , eleven months and two weeks between her first and tenth number one on the chart , Rihanna achieved the milestone faster than any other solo artist . It became Spears ' fifth number @-@ one single on the Hot 100 . " S & M " became Rihanna 's eighth number @-@ one song on the Pop Songs chart and she became the artist with the most number one songs in the chart 's nineteen @-@ year history . The song was number one on the Dance Club Songs chart , and number 33 on the Hot Latin Songs chart . It debuted at number 80 on the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs in the February 26 , 2011 issue of Billboard , and peaked at number 59 . " S & M " peaked at number 24 on the Adult Pop Songs chart , and at number 14 on the Latin Pop Songs chart . The song has been certified triple platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) , and has sold 3 @,@ 837 @,@ 000 digital copies in the US as of June 2015 . " S & M " ranked at number 15 on Billboard 's " Best of 2011 ? Pop Songs " chart , and number two on its " Best of 2011 ? Dance / Club Songs " chart . In Canada , the song peaked at number one for the week of April 21 , 2011 .

= = Music video = =

= = Background and synopsis = =

The director Melina Matsoukas filmed the music video for " S & M " in Los Angeles on January 15 and 16 , 2011 . Matsoukas told Billboard that the video was inspired by Rihanna 's " sadomasochist relationship with the press ... it isn 't just about a bunch of whips and chains . " On January 27 , 2011 , a behind @-@ the @-@ scenes clip was posted on Rihanna 's YouTube channel , and the full music video premiered on Vevo on February 1 , 2011 .

As the video opens , Rihanna is dragged into a press conference , where she is covered with plastic wrap and taped to a wall . Microphones and gagged reporters surround her . In an outdoor scene , she wears a cream @-@ colored latex dress and leads a gagged Perez Hilton around by a dog leash . Rihanna is then shown seated and surrounded by CCTV surveillance cameras ; her chair begins to rotate , and she stands and begins to whip reporters , who are taped to the wall of the room . She then rolls on the floor , her hands and feet bound with rope . As the bridge of the

song approaches , Rihanna wears a white latex bikini and rabbit ears , while images of headlines are projected against her body and the wall behind her . After the chorus , she appears in a newsroom . Reporters take photographs of her while she sprawls across a desk wearing a pink latex dress . Scenes of Rihanna and others in bondage gear are interspersed with images of the singer wearing a feather boa and a tube top with " censored " printed across it . The video then alternates between previous scenes and images in which Rihanna eats bananas , strawberries and cream , and jewel @-@ covered ice cream . In the final scene , she lies on a newsroom desk , with a smiley face emblem over one eye and a Rolling Stones tongue logo over her mouth .

= = = Reception and ban = = =

The music video was generally well received . A journalist for The Huffington Post wrote , " Rihanna is perfectly good at being bad ? and this video proves it " , while a reviewer for OK ! called the video " red @-@ hot , kinky and totally tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek " . Willa Paskin of New York similarly described it as a " goofy " take on the S & M @-@ themed music videos typical of Madonna and Lady Gaga , while Matthew Perpetua of Rolling Stone described the video as a " visual onslaught of candy @-@ colored kinkiness " that viewers would enjoy despite its bright colors and sexually suggestive activities . Brad Wete of Entertainment Weekly stated that Rihanna delivered the risqué video he was expecting based on the song 's lyrical content , and Jason Lipshutz of Billboard praised the video 's " exquisite set pieces that offer a twisted take on hardcore sexuality " .

The video was immediately banned in eleven countries due to its overtly sexual content . It was " flagged for content " by users on YouTube , which restricts access to its users under the age of 18 . Rihanna responded to the news via Twitter , writing , " They watched ' Umbrella ' ... I was full nude " . An unrestricted version of the video was later uploaded to Rihanna 's official website . Melina Matsoukas responded to the news in an interview with MTV News , stating : " When I go out to make something , I kind of go out with the intention to get it banned ? [ well ] not to get it banned ... but to make something provocative ... it 's making an effect and people are having a dialogue about it , so , to me , that 's successful . "

= = = Copyright infringement lawsuits = = =

The video was involved in further controversy when photographer David LaChapelle sued Rihanna , Island Def Jam and related parties for copyright infringement . LaChapelle alleged that the video infringed upon eight of his photographs published between 1997 and 2010 in GQ , i @-@ D , Vogue Italia and elsewhere . The lawsuit , which claimed unspecified damages , alleged that the video was " directly derived " from LaChapelle 's pictures , copying their " composition , total concept , feel , tone , mood , theme , colors , props , settings , decors , wardrobe and lighting " . The lawsuit included claims of trade dress infringement under the Lanham Act , unfair competition under New York state law and unjust enrichment , all of which were later dismissed . Judge Shira A. Scheindlin of New York 's Southern District Court denied a motion to dismiss the copyright violation allegations , noting similarities between the works :

Both works feature : hot @-@ pink and white striped walls ; two single @-@ hung windows in the middle of the back wall ; windows with glossy hot @-@ pink casings and interior framework , with opaque panes exhibiting a half @-@ vector pattern of stripes against a yellow background ; a solid hot @-@ pink ceiling ; hot @-@ pink baseboards ; a hot @-@ pink couch under the windows ; women wearing frizzy red wigs ; a woman posed on top of a piece of furniture ; black tape wrapped around a man ; and a generally frantic mood ... [ Both works are ] well @-@ lit and intensely saturated , with all of the details in sharp focus and almost no shadows .

In August 2011 , a judge agreed that the " ' pink room scene ' , which shows Rihanna dominating a man in front of pink and white striped walls , was very similar to LaChapelle 's " Striped Face " photograph ; the judge pinpointed a scene where Rihanna is seen against a blue background , wearing pink latex and placing a sweet on her tongue . " Rihanna and LaChapelle settled the case out of court for an undisclosed sum . After the case , LaChapelle said the lawsuit was " not personal

, it 's strictly business " , and that " musicians commonly pay to sample music or use someone 's beats and there should be no difference when sampling an artist 's visuals . " In June 2011 , German photographer Philipp Paulus sued Rihanna and her record labels , alleging further copyright violations with regard to a scene in the music video where Rihanna wears an expansive dress and is taped to the wall with a plastic sheet in front of her . According to Paulus , Rihanna and Matsoukas appropriated the image from his photographic series Paperworld .

= = Live performances and covers = =

Rihanna first performed " S & M " at the BRIT Awards on February 15 , 2011 , as part of a medley which incorporated two of her previous singles from Loud , " Only Girl ( In the World ) " and " What 's My Name ? " . Rihanna had planned to perform " S & M " only , to coincide with its release as a single in the United Kingdom , but she was instructed by the BRIT Awards corporation to " tone down the sexual references in the song 's lyrics " . The singer was reported to be angered at being requested to change her act and that she was asked to consider performing a different song instead . She changed the arrangement because the BRIT Awards corporation wanted to avoid complaints similar to those received following the finale of the seventh series of The X Factor , on December 11 , 2010 . Rihanna was criticized for wearing a provocative outfit and for performing a suggestive dance routine on The X Factor , branded as " disgusting " , before the watershed , a system in the United Kingdom which does not allow adult content to be broadcast before 9 pm .

Rihanna opened the Billboard Music Awards with a performance of the " S & M " remix with Spears on May 22 , 2011 , at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas . Rihanna and Spears wore bondage @-@ style bodysuits ; Rihanna 's outfit was white , and she wore PVC thigh @-@ high boots . Spears wore a black outfit , a mask and rabbit ears ; both singers wore handcuffs . Rihanna began the performance seated and provocatively opened her legs as she simulated whipping sounds . The singers closed the performance with pole dancing , a pillow fight and a kiss on the cheek . Billboard magazine declared the performance as one of the 15 Awesome Performances at the Billboard Music Awards . Rihanna performed " S & M " on May 27 , 2011 , on NBC 's Today show 's " Summer Concert Series " , along with " Only Girl ( in the World ) " , " What 's My Name ? " and " California King Bed " . She gave an interview about the album and about her controversial performance at the Billboard Music Awards with Spears . When Rihanna was asked if she was surprised at the controversial reaction the performance prompted , she responded :

It was cool . Nothing popped out . We didn 't make out . I mean , I didn 't really hear [ that it was controversial ] , but I went up to Twitter to see what my fans thought about it and they were really enjoyed seeing [ me and Britney Spears ] up there together , so I mean , there will be some people who will think that that was too sexy but you 're always gonna find that , you know . People will always talk whether you 're doing bad or good . You just have to do you . "

The song was included on the set list of the Loud Tour , which began with the stage decorated as a stylized S & M set . The singer performed Prince 's " Darling Nikki " with three semi @-@ nude female dancers whom she spanked , groped and pretended to smack with a cane . " Darling Nikki " then transitioned into " S & M " and she took off her white tuxedo , revealing a white bondage corset and handcuffs . " S & M " was featured on the set list of Spears ' Femme Fatale Tour ( 2011 ) , as part of a medley with " ... Baby One More Time " . Rihanna performed " S & M " at Radio 1 's Hackney Weekend on May 24 , 2012 , as the third song on the set list . The song was included on most of Rihanna 's 777 Tour in November 2012 ; a seven @-@ date and seven @-@ day @-@ long promotional tour in support of the release of her seventh studio album , Unapologetic .

In 2011 , " S & M " was featured at the beginning of the seventeenth episode of the American police procedural drama TV series , Hawaii Five @-@ 0 . Lee Latchford @-@ Evans of the British group Steps covered the song as part of a medley with Maroon 5 and Christina Aguilera 's song " Moves like Jagger " in his solo section of The Ultimate Tour ( 2012 ) . In the 2012 musical comedy film Pitch Perfect , " S & M " was sung a cappella by Ester Dean , Alexis Knapp , Anna Kendrick , Rebel Wilson , Anna Camp and Brittany Snow . The ensemble 's performance of the song appears on the film 's soundtrack as part of a medley , " Riff Off " . " Riff Off " was released as a single in 2012 and

reached number 86 on the US Billboard Hot 100 chart . The soundtrack also became the number one album on the US Top Soundtracks .

= = Formats and track listings = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits adapted from the liner notes of Loud , Def Jam Recordings , SRP Records .

Management

ASCAP / BMI

Stargate and Miles Walker both appear on behalf of 45th & 3rd Music LLC

Stargate 's management : Tim Blacksmith and Danny D.

Sandy Vee appears on behalf of Empire Artist Management

Kuk Harrell appears on behalf of Suga Wuga Music , Inc .

Recording locations

Music recording ? Roc the Mic Studios ( New York ) ; Westlake Recording Studios ( Los Angeles ) ;

The Bunker Studios ( Paris )

Mixing ? The Bunker Studios ( Paris ) ; The Ninja Beat Club ( Atlanta )

Personnel

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Radio and release history = =