

= Ghosttown (Madonna song) =

" Ghosttown " is a song recorded by American singer Madonna for her thirteenth studio album , Rebel Heart (2015) . It was released to radio stations on March 13 , 2015 , as the album 's second single . The song was written by Madonna , Jason Evigan , Evan Bogart , and Sean Douglas , and produced by Madonna , Billboard and Evigan . Madonna had listened to Douglas 's previous works and had requested studio time with him . Together with the other songwriters , they wrote " Ghosttown " in three days . A pop ballad , the song was inspired by the imagery of a destructed city after armageddon , and how the survivors carry on with their lives , with love being the only thing they can hold onto . Composed as an uplifting track , " Ghosttown " features instrumentation from organ and drums , with minor vocoder effects on Madonna 's vocals .

" Ghosttown " was released to iTunes Store as part of the album 's pre @-@ order in December 2014 , in response to hackers leaking songs from Rebel Heart . The song received positive response from critics , who commended Madonna 's vocal delivery , the lyrics , Billboard 's production work , as well as compared it to the singer 's early ballads . In the United States , the song became Madonna 's 36th entry on the Adult Contemporary chart , as well as her 45th number @-@ one song on the Hot Dance Club Songs chart , surpassing country singer George Strait as the artist with most number @-@ one songs on an active Billboard chart . Internationally , " Ghosttown " reached the top twenty position in Hungary and Italy , and the digital charts of Finland and Sweden , and was certified platinum by the Federazione Industria Musicale Italiana (FIMI) .

Madonna performed the song during her promotional schedules across Europe ? Le Grand Journal in France , Che tempo che fa in Italy and The Jonathan Ross Show in the United Kingdom . She also performed it at the 2nd iHeartRadio Music Awards , where she was joined by singer Taylor Swift who played guitar . An accompanying music video for " Ghosttown " was directed by Jonas Åkerlund , and starred actor Terrence Howard . The main theme behind the video was " an apocalyptic situation mimicking the end of the world " , showing the singer and Howard as sole survivors in a destroyed city .

= = Background and release = =

" Ghosttown " was written by Madonna , Jason Evigan , Evan Bogart , and Sean Douglas . The song was composed in three days , after Madonna had personally requested some studio time with them . Madonna liked Jason Derulo 's 2014 single " Talk Dirty " which was co @-@ written by Evigan and Douglas , and hence she decided to collaborate with them . Douglas recalled that they ended up having a " great session " , saying " I was incredibly nervous for obvious reasons , but she showed up , was super personable and was ready to work . I basically checked it off my life bucket list . " Of their writing session , Madonna explained :

We all get into a room together . They start playing their chords and then we just start thinking about ... When I write with people , we always try to come up with a theme . What do we want to write about ? So this one is about the city after armageddon . The burnt out city , the crumbling buildings , the smoke that 's still lingering after the fire . You know what I mean ? There 's only a few people left . How do we pick up the pieces and go on from here ? Kind of dramatic . But not entirely impossible at this stage of the game ... And we 'll all be in our version of a ' Ghosttown ' or in a version of a ' Ghosttown ' , and at the end of the day , all we 're going to have left is each other . So that 's really what that song is about .

While discussing the song 's theme with French radio Europe 1 , Madonna spoke about the intolerance going around the world , especially in France whom she believed to have lost its ability to accept people of all race and color . Adding that the level of intolerance and antisemitism was increasing all @-@ throughout Europe , Madonna said that " Ghosttown " ' s apocalyptic theme was a foreshadow of the destruction of humanity , should the intolerance continue . " The way we behave , to treat one another the way we 're treating one another , to maintain this level of intolerance and discriminatory prejudice ... hateful behavior towards other human beings who are different than you are , " Madonna concluded .

On December 17 , 2014 , a total of 13 songs from the recording sessions were leaked . An aggravated Madonna took to Instagram and clarified that the songs were demo versions from earlier recordings . Madonna told Billboard that after the leak , she and her team tried to trace it back to the source . Ultimately they decided to release the finished songs . On December 20 , 2014 , the album became available for pre @-@ order on iTunes Store . When ordered , six tracks were automatically downloaded , including " Ghosttown " . Madonna added that she " would prefer [her] fans to hear completed versions of some of the songs instead of the incomplete tracks that are circulating . " During Madonna 's appearance on Italian television show Che tempo che fa , " Ghosttown " was confirmed as the second single from Rebel Heart and was sent to Italian radio on March 13 , 2015 . A week later it was added to Australian radio , while in the United Kingdom , it would be released on April 20 , 2015 .

= = Composition and remixes = =

Thematically , introspection was also listed as one of the foundational themes prevalent in Rebel Heart , with genuine statements of careerist and personal reflections of Madonna and her " obsessive self @-@ regard " . " Ghosttown " was one of the songs carrying on the subtle messages while talking about unity and religious consciousness . Madonna reverses the concept of " loss of love " with her romantic idealization , according to Matthew Harden from Samesame.com.au , as the lyrics go " When it all falls down , when it all falls down . We 'll be two souls in a ' Ghosttown ' " . Jim Farber from New York Daily News said that the song brings out " the warmest elements of [Madonna 's] voice " and " at times , her alto [range] sounds like Karen Carpenter 's , while the melody has the enveloping calm of hits like ' Live to Tell ' " .

The song 's composition is " uplifting and euphoric " in nature , far @-@ reaching with a number of melodic effects generated by electronic music . A cinematic visualization with the track is accomplished by different chord progressions , making the whole song sound compact . " Ghosttown " begins with sounds of single organ chords and a dusty drum beat . Instead of being a straight @-@ up pop ballad , the composition sounds a little " edgy " , due to the usage of synth percussion and vocoder effects . Chris Rosa from VH1 stated that the song " features tight production and an ear @-@ crashing chorus that is pure pop bliss " , while Elysa Gardner from USA Today described the song as a mixture of " disarmingly earnest sweetness with a stark , chilly arrangement " . The chorus appears after 40 seconds in the song , with a distortion filled pause , a thumping beat and a repetitive chord progression . " Ghosttown " is set in the time signature of common time with a moderate tempo of 79 beats per minute . It is composed in the key of D minor , with Madonna 's vocals spanning from F3 to B ? 4 . The song has a basic sequence of Dm ? F ? C ? Gm during the verses and B ? ? F ? C ? Dm during the chorus as its chord progression . Demacio " Demo " Castellon engineered and mixed the track , while Ron Taylor did additional Pro Tools editing of Madonna 's vocals and Evigan provided background vocals on the song .

On March 31 , 2015 , Billboard premiered a remix of the song by Dutch DJ Don Diablo , who changed the ballad into an EDM track . Another set of remixes were released later as a Remix EP . Two of the remixes were released on Madonna 's Tidal streaming account , including one by DJ RedTop as well as Armand Van Helden , Offer Nissim and Roger Sanchez . According to Idolator , " RedTop completely deconstructs ' Ghosttown ' and turns it into something you might hear in a post @-@ apocalyptic piano bar . It 's sad and depressing yet defiantly groovy . " Another remix , by Paul Andrews , gave emphasis on Madonna 's vocals while adding piano and orchestra in the production . Andrews explained that the music video of " Ghosttown " was how he had imagined it , " two people in a dark place with destruction all around them , but they have each other " . Hence he wanted the verse to represent the reality of the situation and the chorus would represent their view of the world because of their love . The non @-@ dance remix was approved by Madonna and was another exclusive release to her Tidal account .

= = Critical response = =

Hugh McIntyre from Forbes considered " Ghosttown " as a favorite from the album . Dean Piper from The Daily Telegraph considered the song as Madonna 's best chance at achieving a radio hit from the album , comparing the composition to the singer 's previous studio album , Ray of Light (1998) . This view was shared by Gregory Ellwood of HitFix who considered it to be Madonna 's " most commercially friendly ballad " of the 2010s , while Jon Lisi from PopMatters called it " arguably the most haunting love song of [Madonna 's] career . The Dallas Morning News ' Hunter Hauk complimented Madonna 's " natural " vocal delivery in spite of the vocal effects added , also considering it to be a probable radio hit for Madonna . Daryl Deino from The Inquisitr also praised Madonna 's vocals in " Ghosttown " , along with " Devil Pray " and " Living for Love " . Bernard Zuel from The Sydney Morning Herald found Madonna to be reliving her older ballads like " Live to Tell " , and found the electronic arrangements to be complimenting her vocals . Amy Pettifer from The Quietus observed that the chorus could have been sung by any other singer , but Madonna , " despite being a weaker singer , licks it in the emotional truth stakes , particularly on this more melancholy end of the spectrum . Singing with a tremulous tonality , her voice hangs in uncluttered space , the lyrics positioning her as the dark @-@ glowing , guiding light . A brilliant , desperate and rousing anthem . " Along with comparing Madonna 's vocals in Ghosttown to that of Karen Carpenter , Farber also observed that it was her most " rich sounding " voice since her Evita soundtrack , comparable to " Live to Tell " and also " Crazy for You " . Digital Spy 's Lewis Corner rated it four out of five stars , noting that Madonna sounded " significantly more subdued and reflective compared to her handbag bangers of recent years , but by doing so it makes the biggest possible impact . "

Bradley Stern from MuuMuse felt that since " Ghosttown " was a previous unheard track not present among the leaks , it was the most surprising . With the ample presence of melodies , Stern reminisced that one of the major complaints about Madonna 's past few studio albums was a lack of memorable lyrics , which was dissipated with " Ghosttown " . Quoting a part of the lyrics ? " When the world gets cold I 'll be your cover / Let 's just hold onto each other . " ? Stern added that the song " is a gorgeously earnest , us @-@ against @-@ the @-@ world anthem tailored for two souls wandering alone in this mad , mad world . " Giving the song a rating of two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half out of five stars , Hardeep Phull from New York Post described it as musically and emotionally " hectic " , but found it to be tender and simple while being a " big synth @-@ ballad of solidarity " . Writing for i @-@ D , Nick Levine felt that " Ghosttown " was enhanced as a song by the " glorious stealth bomb of a chorus " . Jed Gottlieb from Boston Herald commended Billboard 's production techniques , and the blend of EDM and lyrical introspection , while focusing on the " catchy " chorus . Jon Pareles from The New York Times found the song to be a mixture of " affection and post @-@ apocalyptic gloom " , adding that " it begs for a dystopian @-@ romance video " . Michael Jose Gonzalez from Danish music magazine , Gaffa , praised Madonna 's decision to give emphasis on her singing , with " trouble embossed and melodic " tracks like " Ghosttown " .

For a writer from Q , " Ghosttown " displayed a " wonderful finality " , while striking a tentative note . Zel McCarthy from Vice relegated the song to being an " album filler " but believed that it displayed Madonna 's " vocal chops and rarely @-@ deployed emotional sincerity " . Sal Cinquemani from Slant Magazine had initially considered it as the least memorable song among the six tracks released for pre @-@ order , however in another review for the album he explained , " A decade of disco @-@ Madonna makes it easy to forget that she 's a skilled balladeer , and the post @-@ apocalyptic ' Ghosttown ' takes a generic , contemporary @-@ pop template (think ' Halo ') and stamps it with her singular style a la 1994 's Babyface @-@ penned ' Take a Bow ' . " Saeed Saeed of The National described the song as a " streamlined power ballad " , and complimented Madonna 's pop music instincts . Rolling Stone ranked " Ghosttown " at number 16 on its year @-@ end list to find the 50 best songs of 2015 . It was also number one on their list of 10 Best Songs of 2015 through the reader 's poll .

= = Chart performance = =

Following the release of the song as a pre @-@ order , " Ghosttown " charted in a number of nations . In France , the song debuted at number 70 on the French SNEP Singles Chart , but fell

down to number 105 the next week . Following the album 's release , the song again entered the chart at number 60 . After the release of the physical CD single , " Ghosttown " reached a new peak of number 34 , while topping the SNEP Physical Singles Chart . It debuted and peaked at number 41 in Spain , staying there for two weeks . The song debuted within the top 40 in Switzerland at number 39 , but was present on the chart for one week . " Ghosttown " charted outside the top 100 on the UK Singles Chart at number 117 , and debuted at number 86 on the Scottish Singles Chart . In Italy , " Ghosttown " reached a peak of number 20 on the Italian FIMI Singles Chart spending 19 weeks in the top 100 , while reaching a peak of number 34 on the German Media Control Charts .

In the United States , " Ghosttown " was promoted to the adult contemporary radio formats by regular radio plays on iHeartMedia owned stations . It debuted at number 21 on the Billboard Adult Contemporary chart making it her 36th entry , starting from her 1984 single " Borderline " . Madonna ranks fourth on the list of artists with the most entries on the chart , preceded by Elton John (43) , Celine Dion (41) and Rod Stewart (40) . " Ghosttown " was Madonna 's first entry on the chart since her 2006 single , " Jump " . According to Billboard , the song also bubbled under the main Adult Pop Songs chart , aided by iHeart radio play . For the week ending April 25 , 2015 , " Ghosttown " debuted at number 41 on the Hot Dance Club Songs chart . The following four weeks it was the greatest gainer in position , reaching to a peak of number one .

On the week ending May 30 , 2015 , " Ghosttown " reached the top of the chart , becoming Madonna 's 45th number one there . She became the artist with the most number one singles ever on a Billboard chart , breaking her tie with country singer George Strait who earned 44 number ones on the Hot Country Singles chart . She pulled further ahead of runners up Beyonce and Rihanna , who had 22 number one songs each at that time . Along with the Dance Club Songs record , " Ghosttown " debuted at number 38 on the Adult Pop Songs chart , becoming the singer 's 19th entry on the list .

= = Music video = =

= = = Development = = =

Madonna confirmed on The Howard Stern Show that she would be filming a music video for the song in Los Angeles . Directed by Jonas Åkerlund , who had previously helmed Madonna 's music videos for " Ray of Light " , " Music " , " American Life " , " Jump " and " Celebration " , the music video also starred actor Terrence Howard . The main theme behind the video was " an apocalyptic situation mimicking the end of the world " , as described by Kim Peiffer from InStyle . The director came up with the concept of a dystopian future and shot it at an old steel mill . Madonna 's look in the video was styled by B. Åkerlund , wife of Jonas , who blended contemporary fashion trends like military bandleader Victorian and gave it her signature characteristics . She created a leather greatcoat with a billowing cape , from designer label Chrome Hearts , considering the rock n roll silhouette of the video .

Laurie Lynn Stark , co owner of Chrome Hearts spoke about working with Madonna on the video , with whom they had previously collaborated on photoshoots . Chrome Hearts were given a week 's notice to work with Åkerlund and after a few telephone exchanges , the group met Åkerlund at their factory . The latter told them about her inspiration and concepts for the designs , and Stark 's team put together the leather pieces and jacket structures , and finalized on buttons and cross patches . The task was easy for them , since both Åkerlund and Chrome Hearts had the same vision of the design in their mind , " so the challenge was how to bring it to life in the most dramatic and beautiful way . " The whole costume took about a week and a total of 30 people to finish it , to achieve the " Apocalyptic meets Rock & Roll with a bit of a ship wrecked mood " vibe that Åkerlund had wanted .

Rest of the ensemble included leather , metallic combinations , green silk vest from A.F. Vandevorst , and cotton clothing from Greg Lauren . The lace shorts Madonna wore was vintage , and Åkerlund

burnt up the singer 's Agent Provocateur bra and applied dirt on it for giving special effects . The whole inspiration for Åkerlund behind the look was Jonas , as well as the couple 's interest in rock @-@ n @-@ roll . Madonna approved the design , saying that " It was magical ... It perfectly represented the vibe that we wanted to bring to the video . " She also asked for a golf club and pocket knife to make the look more edgy . With Swedish broadcasting channel Sveriges Television , Åkerlund explained that for the opening shot , where Madonna is shown laying on the bed , she wanted boots which looked like leg braces . She contacted a designer in New York who said that he developed such pieces for fetish fashion . Åkerlund wanted him to provide the designs for arms also .

= = = Release and synopsis = = =

Following the completion of the shooting , Madonna posted blurry images from the video set , and on April 3 , 2015 , she announced that the video would be released the next week . She then uploaded a 16 @-@ second preview of the video on her Tidal streaming account . The clip showed Madonna in a black , leather outfit , running through a bleak , destroyed area , the scene interspersed with religious symbols like an immaculate heart as well as animal carcasses . The release date was initially confirmed as April 7 , 2015 , on live video broadcasting app , Meerkat , at 10 am PST , but was rescheduled to the next day . Stuart Dredge from The Guardian felt that since " [Madonna] is now one of the 16 co @-@ owners of streaming music service Tidal , which is planning to use similarly @-@ exclusive video premieres to promote itself , " the release of the " Ghosttown " music video on Meerkat was perplexing .

The video starts with an announcement on television that nuclear activities has destroyed cities like London , Paris , New York City , and Los Angeles . It then cuts to a room where Madonna lies in her bed watching the news about the nuclear explosion . As the song starts , a visibly distressed Madonna walks to her dressing table . She sits down and kisses a framed photograph of her mother , while looking at herself . She drapes a cape around her , picks up a rod and a hat , and goes out of her house as the chorus of " Ghosttown " starts . Madonna is seen in what appears to be a post @-@ apocalyptic destroyed city , where there are no signs of life and posters of the Rebel Heart album are shown burning . She looks around and walks carefully among the destruction , while twirling around the cape .

Outside , Madonna rummages debris , tries to make a phone @-@ call from a payphone , gets frustrated , and starts smashing objects in front of her with the rod . Her actions catches the attention of a man , played by Howard . He picks up his sniper rifle to shoot at the object of disturbance , but seeing Madonna through the lens , runs after her . They meet each other at a destroyed building where both of them notice each other and circle around with weapons in their hand . They come close and instead of attacking they throw away the weapons , embrace each other and engage in a dance @-@ routine . After they complete their dance , and the song ends , the couple notice a little boy watching them from the destroyed building . The video ends with the couple leaving the city with the little boy hand @-@ in @-@ hand together with a large dog , and a panorama of the destruction .

= = = Reception and analysis = = =

Jason Lipshutz from Billboard described the video as a " fitting soundtrack " to the choreographed dance between Madonna and Howard , and complimented the last scene . Eliana Dockterman from Time believed that since Howard had been acting and dancing on Empire , he was signed for the video . Brett Mallec from E ! shared this view but added that the duos " dancing skills aren 't half bad " . Louis Virtel from HitFix made 10 observations about the video , but concluded that there should have been more dance sequences to liven up the visuals , and hence could not live up to other " all @-@ time great " Madonna releases . Kory Grow from Rolling Stone complimented the visual , saying that the " better part of the video is a mostly harrowing scene for the pop star " and compared it to the TV series , The Last Man on Earth . James Elliot from Complex found the video to be "

captivating " and keeping one " surprised " in spite of feeling it to be long .

The video was reviewed by four critics from Idolator website . Robbie Daw from the website gave it 9 out of 10 saying that " this is actually Madge ? s best music video since ' Hung Up ' , not to mention her greatest single choice since that time period . " They complimented her onscreen Stevie Nicks like look , and described her as " a gorgeous vampire pirate witchy @-@ wench " . However , Mike Wass from Idolator negative critiqued the video , calling it a " ham @-@ fisted embarrassment complete with lame special effects , an unnecessary celebrity appearance and the most awkward dance scene of all time . " Sal Cinquemani from Slant Magazine called the video " campy " , while describing it as a " cautionary tale " comparable with the singer 's cancelled video for 2003 single , " American Life " . He criticized the overall execution of the clip , saying that " In another director 's hands (like , say , M 's friend and frequent collaborator Steven Klein) , ' Ghosttown ' might have been more than just ridiculous , glorified ruin porn , but at least there are no zombies . "

= = Live performances = =

On February 26 , 2015 , Madonna appeared on The Jonathan Ross Show in England , which aired on March 14 . She performed an edited version of " Living for Love " , as well as " Ghosttown " for the first time . She wore a black Marc Jacobs dress and boots while performing the songs . On March 1 , Madonna was a guest on Italian TV show , Che tempo che fa (aired on March 8) . While talking with host Fabio Fazio , she performed " Devil Pray " and " Ghosttown " . A writer for Yahoo ! noticed that both performances were warmly received by the audience , while Lionel Nicaise from MCM appreciated that Madonna put more emphasis on the melodies and her vocals during the performance , rather than costumes and stage props . A day later , Madonna appeared on France 's Le Grand Journal show . She performed an edited version of " Living for Love " and " Ghosttown " . Nicaise described the performance as " an intimate interpretation of the already known ballad " . Writing for Idolator , Bradley Stern described it as a " deeply emotional performance " , where Madonna stood against a piano and sang the song . He added that " While [Madonna] is at her best man @-@ handling Minotaurs , flipping mid @-@ air and dry @-@ humping boomboxes , it 's refreshing to see Balladonna [ballad Madonna] in action for a change . And for a first performance of the song , she sounded great , especially once it took off with that final glorious chorus . " In the giant screens located on either side of the platform , burning cities of images were broadcast , as well as those of the World Trade Center collapses during the attack of September 11 , 2001 . The next performance happened at The Ellen DeGeneres Show in the United States , where Madonna sang " Ghosttown " wearing a black leather dress . She knelt down at one point during the song , and arose to sing the final chorus . Stern gave a positive feedback in MuuMuse , saying that " Madonna delivered yet another stirring performance of the post @-@ apocalyptic tune . In fact , it was likely her best to date , from the outfit choice to the raw , emotional vocal delivery . "

Madonna performed an acoustic version of " Ghosttown " at the 2nd iHeartRadio Music Awards on March 29 , 2015 . She was accompanied by singer Taylor Swift onstage , who played guitar . Elizabeth Vanmetre from New York Daily News noted that it was a " subdued " performance for Madonna , who only walked towards the front of the stage near the end of the song . Mikael Wood from Los Angeles Times called it an " appealingly breezy version of the song " , while Cathy Applefeld Olson from Billboard declared it as the " award show 's best performance " , describing the duo as " kindred spirits " . Matthew Jacobs from The Huffington Post called it " an intimate , light @-@ some @-@ candles @-@ and @-@ sway ballad [that] turned into an electrifying meeting of the souls " . For Daniel D 'Addario from Time , the performance was " the very best sort of collaboration " , adding that Swift seemed excited to be on stage with Madonna . Ellen DeGeneres uploaded a parody video of the performance on her website . The video showed DeGeneres added by computer graphics beside Madonna and Swift , playing violin . She accidentally rips out Madonna 's hair with her violin , and at the end Madonna smashes the instrument by taking it from DeGeneres , and moves away with Swift .

" Ghosttown " had been initially absent from the 2015 ? 16 Rebel Heart Tour . However , on the September 19 , 2015 , stop at New York City 's Barclays Center , Madonna announced that she

would perform the song , but it was unrehearsed . " That is the truth . So , if I make mistakes , will you forgive me ? " the singer added . She then sang an acoustic version of the song . According to Robbie Daw from Idolator , " Madonna 's fans went nuts over the performance of the ballad , and the singer was so touched that she began reaching into the crowd " . Slant Magazine 's Sal Cinquemani was complimentary of the performance , calling it a " stirring , if pitchy , rendition of [the] shoulda @-@ been @-@ a @-@ sleeper @-@ hit ... which brought seemingly genuine tears to [Madonna 's] eyes , a development that seemed to surprise even her " .

= = Track listings and formats = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Management

Webo Girl Publishing , Inc . (ASCAP) / BMG Platinum Songs o / b / o itself and Bad Robot (BMI)
Warner @-@ Tamerlane Publishing Corp. and East Pond Publishing (BMI) / Seven Summits
Music o / b / o itself and Casbah Kid (BMI)

Personnel

Madonna ? vocals , songwriter , producer

Billboard ? producer

Evan Bogart ? songwriter

Sean Douglas ? songwriter

Jason Evigan ? songwriter , producer , background vocals

Demacio " Demo " Castellon ? engineer , mixer

Ron Taylor ? additional Pro Tools editing

Personnel adapted from Madonna official website .

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =