

= Joan of Arc ( Madonna song ) =

" Joan of Arc " is a song recorded by American singer and songwriter Madonna from her thirteenth studio album Rebel Heart ( 2015 ) . It was written by Madonna , Toby Gad , Maureen McDonald and Larry Griffin Jr . , with production being done by Madonna , Gad , AFSHeeN and Josh Cumbee . The song 's demo was leaked onto the internet on December 17 , 2014 , with twelve other tracks from the album . Its final version was released on February 9 , 2015 with two other tracks on the iTunes store . " Joan of Arc " is the eighth track on Rebel Heart and has similarity to the demo version , but with a lift in its tempo during the chorus . It is a guitar @-@ led pop and electro @-@ folk ballad , with drums and guitars being added as the song 's instrumentation .

Lyrically , the song uses the metaphor of Joan of Arc to explain that even strong people have fragile hearts and can break down , showing that the air of self @-@ confidence that someone can carry through an entire life may be just a shield for insecurities . The lyrical content present on the song was compared to her compositions during her previous albums , Like a Prayer ( 1989 ) and Ray of Light ( 1998 ) , especially " Drowned World / Substitute for Love " from the latter . The song received positive reviews from most music critics , who commended her raw vocals , the revelatory lyrics that matched with the album 's thematic and noted it for being a highlight on the record . It charted in some European territories , peaking inside the top @-@ twenty in Hungary and the top @-@ forty in Spain and Sweden . Madonna performed the track in an acoustic version on The Ellen DeGeneres Show , where the performance received acclaim from critics , who noted an improvement on her vocals .

= = Background and release = =

During the recording process of her thirteenth studio album , Madonna enlisted several collaborators , with MoZella , Symbolyc One and Toby Gad being announced as new collaborators on the album in April 2014 . Madonna posted a photograph of the trio working with her in a recording studio on her Instagram account . She said on the photograph , " Having an Iconic Moment in the studio with Toby @-@ Mozilla and S1 . My throat hurts from singing , laughing and crying . " Gad worked with Madonna on fourteen songs , twelve appeared on the album 's multiple tracklists , with one being " Joan of Arc " . According to Gad , " The first week she was quite intimidating . It was like a test phase . You have to criticize , but you can 't really offend . But she also likes honest , harsh critics to say things as they are . It worked out really well and she got sweeter and sweeter . " In December 2014 , thirteen demos of tracks for the album , including " Joan of Arc " , were leaked to the Internet . The song was described as a " gentle ballad " . To avoid further leaks , Madonna released six completed tracks with the pre @-@ order for the album on the iTunes Store on December 20 , 2014 , as an " early Christmas gift " . On February 9 , 2015 , the singer released three other finished tracks , including the final version of " Joan of Arc " , as well as the album 's track list .

= = Composition and lyrics = =

" Joan of Arc " was written by Madonna , Toby Gad , MoZella and Symbolyc One ( S1 ) , with production being done by Madonna , Gad , AFSHeeN and Josh Cumbee . Gad was also responsible for programming , additional backing vocals and the song 's instruments , which were also played by AFSHeeN , Cumbee , Stephen Kozmeniuk , Dan Warner ( guitar ) and Lee Levin . The track was engineered and mixed by Demacio " Demo " Castellon with Gad and Angie Teo . " Joan of Arc " is a guitar @-@ led pop and electro @-@ folk ballad , which starts acoustic , similar to its demo version , but having a " new beat that lifts the BPMs considerably " in the chorus , with the added drums and guitars " turning [ it ] into a mid @-@ paced radio @-@ friendly pop [ song ] , " but preserving the " string @-@ laden bridge and acoustic denouement . " Madonna 's vocals were considered " hushed , vibrato @-@ tinged " , and " the rawest that [ her ] voice has sounded since ' Ray of Light ' during the opening lines .

Lyrically , the confessional song talks plainly and plaintively about the detachment and loneliness that Madonna feels in the face of the press , with the singer lamenting : " Each time they write a hateful word / dragging my soul into the dirt / I wanna die . " John Marrs of Gay Times compared the lyrical content of the song to Madonna 's " Drowned World / Substitute For Love " ( 1998 ) explaining that the lyrics are essentially autobiographical as well as talks about how her outspokenness had led to the media trying to " hurt her " . It also talks about how although Madonna is tough at heart , she still feels the " negativity " of the media . The chorus , which features skittering drums and strings , has Madonna simply saying : " I don 't wanna talk about it right now / even hearts made out of steel can break down . " In an interview for The New York Times , Madonna explained the lyrics that she did not have the conviction of Joan of Arc , and is still hurt by any negative words . She further elaborated for a Rolling Stone interview :

I 've always been drawn to her story . More than anything , drawn to her commitment to what she believed in . In the face of death , she did not back down . And that is a theme that resonates with me . And women need female role models like that . There 's not a lot . I mean , she was burned at the stake after leading her country to victory , after defeating the English . I mean , the idea that instead of celebrating her , they called her a heretic because she was dressed like a boy , and how could this person , this one girl , be so victorious and so clever to have the strategy and knowledge to wage , and win , a war ? There must be something wrong with her . OK , she 's a witch . Now we have to destroy her . And she didn 't back down , and I admire that .

= = Critical reception = =

The song received generally favorable reviews from music critics . Joey Lynch of Billboard compared the song 's demo to the studio versions , claiming that " The studio version of ' Joan of Arc ' is a massive improvement on the illegally leaked demo that preceded news of the album itself . [ ... ] Nowhere is this more apparent than on ' Joan of Arc , ' a solid album track that sounds 10 times better than the leaked version . " While reviewing the three tracks released prior to the album , Sam C. Mac of Slant Magazine called it " arguably the standout of the whole over @-@ blown affair , " noting that the song " sounded like a highlight even in its more acoustic demo form , but the album version is a full @-@ on stunner ... The song sounds a bit like a Cardigans leftover circa ' Long Gone Before Daylight ' . It 's the strongest ( anti- ) ballad of Madonna 's last few albums , and a strong argument for artists responding to the denigration of their art through the more considered medium of the art itself , rather than snap public statements . [ ... ] More than any of the previously released songs , ' Joan of Arc ' also establishes one of the foundational themes of Rebel Heart , albeit one not always evident when wading through the poorly sequenced album . " Adding to the previous review , Annie Zaleski of The A.V. Club praised the juxtapositions in the album 's lyrical content , which according to her , " make some of her most vulnerable , engaging work in years ? in particular ' Joan of Arc ' . "

Ben Kelly of Attitude called it " a fresh sounding pop guitar tune treading new territory for her , and which could carry serious currency as a single , " while Nick Levine of Time Out labeled it " a sublime electro @-@ folk ballad . " Furthermore , Randall Roberts of Los Angeles Times considered it " the kind [ of song ] that can lift spirits to emotional heights . " Reviewing Rebel Heart for Now , journalist Kevin Ritchie named " Joan of Arc " as one of " the most ambitious and interesting [ song ] lyrically . " Amy Pettifer of The Quietus pointed out that " It could be a Taylor Swift song and that 's a compliment . " She also analysed that the Joan of Arc metaphor is " a bit of a stretch " , but it 's " the sweetest and catchiest song on the album thus far . " Music critic Alexis Petridis wrote in The Guardian that the song is one of the " indispensable moments " on the album , " on which the singer genuinely seems to be revealing her personal feelings and frailties " , saying that it is " cut from the same emotional cloth as Like a Prayer 's ' Promise to Try ' or ' Ray of Light ' ' s ' Drowned World / Substitute for Love ' . " John Marrs of Gay Times agreed with the ' Like a Prayer ' -style influence , noting that " [ v ] ocally and lyrically she could easily be channeling Eva Peron , so don 't cry for her too much . "

Digital Spy 's Lewis Corner reflected on the song 's lyrics that " [ Madonna ] is still very much a

sensitive soul despite a hardened public persona . [ The singer ] acknowledging her mortality , for some reason , feels wholly more intriguing than suggestive rhetoric that belongs with her work back in the ' 90s . " Jamieson Cox of Time and Lauren Murphy of The Irish Times agreed that the song is one of the album 's highlights . Brennan Carley of Spin thought that the song " revels convincingly in its vulnerability " where as Lindsay Zoladz of New York cited " Joan of Arc " as one of the " most affecting songs " on the album for grappling with the feeling of being defeated and fatigued directly . Bradley Stern of MuuMuse was largely positive , declaring that the song " is possibly Madonna 's best ballad since ' Miles Away ' ? or really since the Music or Ray of Light era . " On the other hand , Consequence of Sound 's Sasha Geffen had mixed feelings about the song , calling it a " lukewarm love [ track that ] couples easy , inoffensive melodies with historical Christian imagery . " Further criticism came from Saeed Saeed of The National about the " anaemic production " , while The New Zealand Herald 's Lydia Jenkin called it awfully pedestrian " .

= = Chart performance = =

After " Joan of Arc " was released with " Iconic " and " Hold Tight " on February 5 , 2015 , the song managed to reach number twenty on the Hungarian charts , while in Spain and Sweden the song peaked inside the top @-@ forty , reaching numbers twenty @-@ seven and thirty @-@ eight , respectively . In France , nine songs from Rebel Heart managed to enter the SNEP charts , with " Joan of Arc " being the second highest charting non @-@ single from the album , managing to peak at number seventy @-@ six , and peaking higher than the single " Bitch I 'm Madonna " ( which reached number 90 ) .

= = Live performances = =

Madonna performed " Joan of Arc " in an acoustic version for the first time during her week on The Ellen DeGeneres Show on March 18 , 2015 . Madonna was dressed in a sequined heart blouse , with the performed track being " slightly slower than the studio version , while parts of the song [ had a minimal production ] " . Mike Wass of Idolator praised the performance , calling it " a little too good to be true ? but it 's nice to see Madonna showing her softer side " . Digital Journal reviewer Markos Papadatos wrote that it was " an outstanding vocal performance " , where Madonna " showcased tremendous control over her voice , and allows the lyrics to speak for themselves . Her delivery is emotional , vulnerable yet delicate . " Writing for The Inquisitr , Daryl Deino praised her vocal performance , saying that she " showed the world once again just what her voice is made of " , calling the version " beautiful " . Furthermore , Bradley Stern of MuuMuse also applauded the performance , calling " [ r ] eally great . Super vulnerable , super emotional ... and that chilly guitar finish was a wonderful surprise " . Madonna also added the song to the set list of her Tears of a Clown free concert in Australia ? an intimate show where the singer combined a mix of acoustic music , comedy and storytelling . It was considered a " gorgeous ballad " by Cameron Adams of News.com.au website .

= = Credits and personnel = =

#### Management

Webo Girl Publishing , Inc . ( ASCAP ) / Atlas Music Publishing and Gadfly Songs ( ASCAP ) / EMI April Music , Inc. and Mo Zella Mo Music ( ASCAP ) / WB Music Corp.  
Roc Nation Music and Vohndee 's Soul Music Publishing WB Music Corp. ( ASCAP ) .

#### Personnel

Management and personnel adapted from Madonna 's official website .

= = Charts = =