

= Alejandro (song) =

" Alejandro " is a song by American recording artist Lady Gaga . It was released as the third single from her third extended play (EP) and second major release , The Fame Monster (2009) . Co-written and produced by herself and RedOne , the song inspired by her " Fear of Men Monster " , the lyrics portray Gaga bidding farewell to her lovers . Musically , it is a mid tempo synthpop song .

Contemporary critics predominantly gave " Alejandro " positive reviews and noted that it takes influence from the pop acts ABBA , Ace of Base and Madonna . The song charted in the United Kingdom and Hungary due to digital sales following the album 's release . Upon release , " Alejandro " charted again in the United Kingdom as well as in Australia , Canada , New Zealand , Sweden , and the United States while topping the Finnish , Polish , Russian , Bulgarian , and Romanian charts . " Alejandro " became Gaga 's seventh successive single to reach the top ten of the US Billboard Hot 100 .

The accompanying music video was directed by fashion photographer Steven Klein and inspired by Gaga 's love for her gay friends and admiration of gay love . Within the video , Gaga dances with a group of soldiers in a cabaret , interspersed with scenes of Gaga as a nun swallowing a rosary and near naked men holding machine guns . The music video was controversial and received mixed reviews . Critics complimented its idea and dark nature while the Catholic League criticized Gaga for alleged blasphemy , despite Klein dismissing the idea and claiming that the scene in question (the swallowing of Rosary beads) was Gaga 's " desire to take in the Holy " . Gaga performed the song on the ninth season of American Idol and has performed it on all dates of The Monster Ball Tour . The song was also included on her 2012 ? 13 tour The Born This Way Ball , as well as on her 2014 tour , ArtRave : The Artpop Ball .

= = Background = =

" Alejandro " is written by Lady Gaga and RedOne , while the latter produced the song . It was recorded at FC Walvisch Studios in Amsterdam . Originally , " Dance in the Dark " was planned to be released as the third single from The Fame Monster , as a preference of Gaga 's record label . The singer 's own choice , " Alejandro " , initially saw poor reception in terms of radio play , thereby was not seen as a viable choice for a single . A quarrel then arose between Gaga and her label where " Alejandro " was ultimately chosen to be released . Through her account on Twitter , the singer remarked on the decision , " Alejandro is on the radio . Fuck it sounds so good , we did it little monsters . " The single was officially sent to radio on April 20 , 2010 in the United States . In an interview with Fuse TV , Gaga said that the inspiration behind " Alejandro " was her " Fear of Men Monster " .

= = Composition = =

Billboard described " Alejandro " as a synthpop song with a " stomping Euro pop beat " . The song is influenced by ABBA and Ace of Base . The Ace of Base influences are prominent in the beats of the song , the vocals , and the melody . The words are slurred in her mouth while consisting of an uplifting melody .

The song opens with the main melody from the Hungarian piece " Csárdás " by Italian composer Vittorio Monti played on violin , as a distressed Gaga (speaking in a Spanish accent) states : " I know that we are young , and I know that you may love me / But I just can 't be with you like this anymore , Alejandro . " The track then changes to a stomping Europop beat . Gaga bids her ex-lovers farewell with a bitter hearted pre-chorus where she sings : " You know that I love you , boy / Hot like Mexico , rejoice ! / At this point I 've got to choose / Nothing to lose . " By the end of the song , the three protagonists ? Alejandro , Fernando , and Roberto ? are bid farewell by Gaga .

According to the sheet music published at Musicnotes.com by Sony / ATV Music Publishing , the

song is set in the time signature of common time , with a moderate tempo of 99 beats per minute . It is composed in the key of B minor with Gaga 's vocal range spanning from F ³ to G⁵ . The song has a basic sequence of Bm [?] D [?] F [?] m as its chord progression . The lyrics talk about Gaga defending herself against a group of Latin men and has a number of ABBA allusions , including a reference to their 1976 song " Fernando " , which Gaga cited as one of her influences .

= = Critical reception = =

Chris Ryan from MTV described the song as a " lush paean to a love that 's ' hot like Mexico " . Evan Sawdey from PopMatters said that Gaga 's vocals sounded like those of Shakira in the song 's chorus . Ben Patashnik from NME called the song light @-@ hearted . Michael Hubbard of MusicOMH complimented the song as " brilliantly catchy , deceptively simple and wonderfully melancholy , " while Sarah Hajibagheri from The Times dismissed it for being a " painful Latino warble [and] a would @-@ be Eurovision reject . " The Boston Globe 's James Reed also gave a negative review of the song , writing that it is " a tepid dance track in which she trills the song 's title over and over again as if she had nothing better to say . " The song won Best Pop Dance Track at the Annual International Dance Music Awards , the major event held during the Winter Music Conference 2011 .

Comparisons with Swedish pop music groups ABBA and Ace of Base 's work were constant in reviews . Paul Lester from BBC felt that " [Alejandro] moves at an Ace of Base pace . " Lindsey Fortier from Billboard compared it to Ace of Base 's " Don 't Turn Around " and ABBA 's " Fernando " , adding that : " By the song 's end , Alejandro , Fernando and Roberto aren 't the only ones sent packing ? the listener is dancing out right behind them " . Sal Cinquemani from Slant Magazine also made an Ace of Base connection calling the song a homage to them . Stephen Thomas Erlewine from Allmusic denoted the song as an " updated ABBA revision " . Mikael Wood of Los Angeles Times called it bubbly and also went to compare with ABBA 's style . Jon Dolan from Rolling Stone called it a " loving ABBA spoof " . Scott Plagenhoef of Pitchfork Media noted that although " Alejandro " is an ABBA morph , " it comes off very modern , in part because U.S. pop and hip @-@ hop is currently drawing heavily from Europop , hi @-@ NRG , and dance music . " Brian R. Fitzgerald from The Wall Street Journal compared the song with Madonna 's 1987 single " Who 's That Girl " . Robert Copsey of Digital Spy gave the song five out of five stars and compared it to Madonna 's song " La Isla Bonita " and Ace Of Base songs , but felt that Gaga added " her own twist to hers " . He also praised the song 's melodies describing them as " deceptively catchy " and the lyrics as " wistful " .

= = Chart performance = =

In the United States , " Alejandro " debuted at number 72 on the Billboard Hot 100 for the issue dated April 17 , 2010 . It reached number five on the chart , becoming Gaga 's seventh consecutive top ten hit in the United States . Gaga became the second female artist to have her first seven singles reach top @-@ ten in the United States , since R & B singer Monica did so in 1995 ? 99 . The song also debuted on the Mainstream Top 40 chart at number 35 , and the Hot Digital Songs chart at number 71 , after selling 24 @,@ 000 paid digital downloads according to Nielsen Soundscan . " Alejandro " peaked at number four on the Mainstream Top 40 chart , becoming the first single by her not to reach the number one position there . It also debuted on the Hot Dance Club Songs chart at 40 and reached the top on the issue dated July 7 , 2010 . The song has sold 2 @,@ 570 @,@ 000 paid digital downloads in the United States as of April 2016 , making Gaga the only artist in digital history to amass seven consecutive 2 million sellers as a lead act . In Canada , " Alejandro " debuted at number 78 on the Canadian Hot 100 issue dated April 4 , 2010 , and moved to number 50 the next week . The song reached a peak of number four , on the issue dated May 8 , 2010 .

On April 5 , 2010 , " Alejandro " debuted at number 49 in Australia on the official ARIA Singles Chart , and moved to number 28 the next week . It ultimately peaked at number two , thus becoming

Gaga 's seventh top five hit in the country . " Alejandro " was certified platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) for shipment of 70 @,@ 000 copies of the single . The song debuted at number 35 on the New Zealand Top 40 on April 19 , 2010 . It has peaked at number 11 .

With the release of The Fame Monster , " Alejandro " charted on the UK Singles Chart at number 75 , on November 29 , 2009 , due to digital sales . On the May 16 , 2010 , chart , the song re @-@ entered at number 95 and ultimately peaked at number seven . According to the Official Charts Company , " Alejandro " has sold a total of 436 @,@ 000 copies as of February 2014 , and was certified gold by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) . They also revealed it as the 37th best @-@ selling vinyl single in the UK for the 2010s decade . On the Mahasz issue dated December 6 , 2009 , the song debuted at number five on the Hungarian Singles Chart . Across Europe , the song reached the top five in Austria , the Ultratop charts of Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia) , Czech Republic , Denmark , France , Germany , Hungary , Ireland , Italy , Netherlands , Norway , Slovakia , Sweden and Switzerland , while topping the charts in Finland , Poland , Bulgaria , Romania and Russia .

= = Music video = =

= = = Development and release = = =

In January 2010 , it was reported that Gaga was holding casting calls for the music video of " Alejandro " and was eager for David Walliams to appear in the video alongside his wife Lara Stone . On March 23 , 2010 , Women 's Wear Daily reported that photographer Steven Klein would direct the music video , which Gaga confirmed herself . While touring Australia with The Monster Ball Tour , Gaga was interviewed by Australian radio station , Melbourne 's Nova 100 , where she talked about the music video . She said ,

I 'm so excited about the ' Alejandro ' video , [...] Actually , we 're shooting it very soon and I don 't want to say who the director is yet because it 's going to give a lot away . [...] Are you absolutely mad ? I would never , ever tell you [about the concept of the video] ! I would be more likely to lie through my teeth to you [regarding] what the video 's about so that you could all be surprised . But I will tell you it 's not the sequel to the ' Telephone ' video .

After confirming that Klein was directing her video , Gaga explained that she " doesn 't know what [the video is] going to look like until it 's finished " , and commented that " [Steven Klein is] a very good friend of mine and I love him so much , [...] I have so much respect for him . And we 've been excited to collaborate and have a fashion photographer tell us a story , the story of my music through his lens and this idea of fashion and lifestyle . " Gaga explained that Klein understood her " I am what I wear " lifestyle , making him a suitable director for the video . She added , " It 's all about where I 'm from and love of theater and love of music and love of the lie in art , and Steven really knows and understands that , [....] So we 're making a beautiful video , and I 'm so excited . " In May 2010 , Gaga told The Times about the concept of the video : " [It 's about the] purity of my friendships with my gay friends , and how I 've been unable to find that with a straight man in my life . It 's a celebration and an admiration of gay love ? it confesses my envy of the courage and bravery they require to be together . In the video I 'm pining for the love of my gay friends ? but they just don 't want me to be with them . "

A snippet of the video was shown on Larry King Live on June 1 , 2010 . The clip was from the portion of the video in black @-@ and @-@ white , where Gaga and her dancers perform variations on a sharp military march throughout . Kara Warner of MTV said that it seemed reminiscent of Madonna 's " Vogue " video and Christina Aguilera 's " Not Myself Tonight " , but stated that in " Alejandro " , Gaga 's style was more cutting , masculine and militant in contrast to Madonna 's . Because of the video 's military theme , comparisons were also made to Janet Jackson 's " Rhythm Nation " . On the program , Gaga said to King that the video has a " homoerotic military theme " [...] " It is a celebration of my love and appreciation for the gay community , my admiration of their bravery , their love for one another and their courage in their relationships . " The video premiered

on Gaga 's official website and her YouTube / Vevo account on June 8 , 2010 , at noon EDT (June 8 , 2010 , 16 : 00 UTC) .

= = = Synopsis = = =

A portion of the video is dedicated to the Broadway musical Cabaret . The video begins with soldiers in black leather uniforms in a cabaret with a close @-@ up of a soldier passed out in female fishnet stockings and heels as another lone soldier stares into the distance . The scene then cuts to male dancers performing elaborate choreography while marching forward with a Star of David . As the intro of the song begins , Gaga is shown leading a funeral procession , carrying the Sacred Heart on a pillow . When the lyrics begin , she sits on a throne wearing an elaborate headpiece and binocular @-@ like eyepieces , with a smoking pipe in her hand , watching her dancers perform a rigorous routine in the snow . Gaga is then seen as the character Sally Bowles from Cabaret , dancing and simulating sex acts with three men on a stage with twin beds surrounded by spotlights , all wearing nothing but underwear , intercut with shots of Gaga lying on a larger bed dressed in a red latex nun outfit . She subsequently appears dressed in a white hooded robe , reminiscent of Joan of Arc , with her dancers , interspersed with a shot of her as the nun , consuming a set of rosary beads . After this , Gaga and her dancers are shown in a sequence in black @-@ and @-@ white in their military uniforms performing a tribute dedicated to the late choreographer Bob Fosse , who won an Academy Award for his direction of the film version of Cabaret . Gaga is seen in a blonde bob and a similar outfit to one of Liza Minnelli 's performance costumes . The video moves to a scene of her wearing a bra equipped with AR @-@ 15 rifle barrels and her dancers performing another dance routine . She is then shown in the empty club , scenes of war breaking out flash by , and the lone soldier appears again . Going back to the Joan of Arc scene , she struggles with her dancers and disrobes . The video ends with her dressed as the nun , the film burning away from her face outwards . Klein explained that the video was , " about a woman 's desire to resurrect a dead love and who can not face the brutality of her present situation . The pain of living without your true love . "

= = = Reception = = =

James Montgomery from MTV commented that " Gaga has created a world that , while oppressive , also looks great . " In a separate piece Montgomery added that " ... she may have finally reached the point in her career where not even she can top herself . " Rolling Stone 's Daniel Kreps called the video a " cinematic epic . " Brad Wete of Entertainment Weekly , liked the video ; however , he had no idea what was going on : " I can ? t wait to hear Lady Gaga explain her latest video , ? Alejandro . ? Mostly because after watching it (twice !) , I have absolutely no clue what ? s going on beyond the obvious . " Anthony Benigno from Daily News felt that " the shock songstress ' new music video [...] is chock full of bed @-@ ridden S & M imagery that makes it look like the softcore answer to The Matrix . Randall Roberts from Los Angeles Times said " the clip reinforces the notion that no one understands the convergence of image and music right now better than Gaga . " Jed Gottlieb from the Boston Herald said that " The plot [of the video] is hard to decipher , but it ? s clearly not a story that ends happily ever after . " Jen Dose from National Post commented " Gaga ? s new vid for ' Alejandro ' certainly brings the crazy we ? ve all come to expect from her . It ? s like an 8 + minute homage to Madonna ? with some gay Nazis thrown in for good measure " . Amy Odell of New York said the video 's outfits were not as " intense " as those of " Bad Romance " or " Telephone . " Nate Jones of Time Magazine disliked the song , but felt the video " looks fantastic ... the self @-@ conscious ballsiness of Gaga and director Steven Klein works here . " Jennifer Cady from E ! liked the video , but did not think it was as good as Gaga 's previous work . Julie Moulton from Daily Mail said " [After the video] , no @-@ one could accuse Lady Gaga of being the shy and retiring type . "

The video was also heavily compared to works by 1980s pop artists like Madonna and Janet Jackson . Critic Monica Herrera viewed the video as a hybrid of Madonna 's " Like a Prayer " and

Janet Jackson 's " Rhythm Nation " . MTV 's Kyle Anderson found references to Madonna 's 1996 film *Evita* and the music videos for her songs " Like a Prayer " , " Human Nature " and " Vogue . " Rolling Stone compared the black @-@ and @-@ white cinematography of the video to that of " Vogue , " and noticed some " not so subtle " hints toward " Like a Prayer . " The magazine believed that the " Alejandro " was so similar to Madonna 's work because director Steven Klein had closely worked with Madonna prior to shooting " Alejandro . " Devon Thomas from CBS News said the " Madonna @-@ isms run high in the clip . " He noted Gaga 's short , cropped hair and black blazer " set against the stark , post @-@ industrialist mood of the [" Alejandro "] clip " was similar to " Express Yourself " and the machine @-@ gun bra in the video was similar to the cone bra Madonna sported in " Vogue . " He also compared the video to Madonna 's early *Blond Ambition* World Tour era by saying that " [this video] is a visual love letter to [Madonna] " . New York said the video " reeked " of Madonna . James Montgomery of MTV News defended Gaga against the Madonna comparisons , saying , " Just to say , ' Oh , ' cause it 's in black and white and she has a bowl haircut at one point , it 's Madonna , ' that 's sort of selling their vision short . "

= = = Religious iconography = = =

" Alejandro " created a media uproar after the release of the video because of its use of religious imagery . One of the most discussed scenes in the video was when Gaga , dressed in a latex nun outfit , swallowed rosary beads . The Catholic League criticized the video for its use of religious imagery , accusing Gaga of " playing a Madonna copy @-@ cat " . Monica Herrera said of the mayhem : " [Alejandro] courts religious controversy in much the same way that Madonna 's ' Like a Prayer ' video once did , intermingling Catholic imagery like rosary beads and nun 's robes with sexual cues . " In an interview with MTV , Klein explained that the religious symbolism was not meant to denote anything negative , but to represent Gaga 's battle between the darker and lighter forces . Thus at the end of the film , she is portrayed again in her nun 's habit . Klein added that the significance behind her mouth and eyes disappearing was " because she is withdrawing her senses from the world of evil and going inward towards prayer and contemplation . " He added that the scene where Gaga devours the rosary beads was her act of theophagy , the desire to consume the body of God , the rosary being symbolic of the Holy .

Many critics agreed that the religious imagery was a calculated move by Gaga to create controversy . Simon Voxick @-@ Levinson from *Entertainment Weekly* felt that the move was calculated , saying , " Gaga wants to offend people . She 's a provocateur . Gaga would probably be disappointed if no one was offended by her latest video . She 's doing that stuff for a reason . " He did not think that the risks were very original or as exciting as the ones in " Telephone . " " The risks that she was taking [...] were easier targets [...] It 's a little bit been there , done that , " he said . New York Times 's Jon Caramanica thought the controversy was Gaga 's attempt to take the " Queen of Pop " throne . He said , " " I 'm sure she 'd say she loves Madonna ... but I also think she 's saying , ' This [Queen of Pop title] is mine . ' And also , like , ' I 'm murdering you with my own style . I 've learned this . I know how to do this ... And look how flawlessly I do it . ' " He did feel , however , that the religious imagery was obvious and lazy : " Even the worst provocation is going to succeed . She got what she wanted . " Singer Katy Perry took to her Twitter account and wrote , " Using blasphemy as entertainment is as cheap as a comedian telling fart jokes . " The Huffington Post ascertained that while Gaga had not been mentioned directly by name that it was definitely a slam by Perry towards Lady Gaga . In an interview on NRJ Radio 's *Le 6 / 9* , Perry said that the tweet was not solely about Gaga , stating that it was based on her personal views of religion at that time .

= = Live performances = =

Gaga performed " Alejandro " on her 2009 ? 11 The Monster Ball Tour . It was the fourth song of the set list on the North American leg of the tour . However , on the European and British legs of the tour the song was performed towards the end of the show . The live performance saw her wearing a

silver bodysuit and then being carried by her crotch by one of her male dancers and lowered onto another male dancer , engaging in a threesome with them . During the performance at San Diego , California , Gaga incorporated the city 's name in the song , later commenting " I am so lucky that San Diego rhymes with ' Fernando ' and ' Alejandro ' . " Ted Shaw of Windsor Star commented that " Songs like ' Alejandro ' , ' Teeth ' and ' Monster ' shoved the sex act in your face . " T 'Cha Dunlevy from The Gazette said that " the song followed in fast order , with not quite enough to set [it] apart . It was one choreographed dance number after the next . " Jeremy Adams from Rolling Stone commented that the performance was " [one] of several moments [...] that gave parents in the audience consternation . " Jim Harrington from San Jose Mercury News compared Gaga 's performance of the song with that of an erotic dancer .

On April 20 , 2010 , Gaga performed the song at the MAC AIDS Fund Pan @-@ Asia Viva Glam launch in Tokyo where she wore a doily lace dress . She entered the stage in a procession inspired by a Japanese wedding , and as the lights dimmed , she sat at her piano on the rotating stage and belted out " Speechless " , which was followed by the performance of " Alejandro " , where she was picked up by one of her dancers , who appeared to be covered in talcum powder . Gaga taped a medley of " Bad Romance " and " Alejandro " for the ninth season of American Idol on April 28 , 2010 . Her performance aired on the show 's May 5 , 2010 episode . The performance started with Gaga playing the piano for a slowed @-@ down snippet of " Bad Romance " . She was dressed in a revealing @-@ but @-@ veiled black outfit , wielding a cape and was surrounded by shirtless dancers . Halfway through the performance , she shed her cape and began writhing on the floor . Over in one corner of the stage , a statue of the Virgin Mary had flames pouring out of the top of it , as Gaga sang the chorus . Fog filled the stage , as Gaga and her dancers performed an energetic dance routine . Luchina Fisher from ABC News called it a " thinly @-@ veiled performance dripping with sex and violins " and " Gaga doing her best Madonna impression . " On July 9 , 2010 , the song was performed on The Today Show , where she sang it on a stage , outside the studio . In May 2011 , Gaga performed the song during Radio 1 's Big Weekend in Carlisle , Cumbria . The song was also included on her 2012 Born This Way Ball Tour . The performance included her lounging on a couch made of meat and wearing her gun bra with half naked men dancing around her .

= = Track listing and formats = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Lady Gaga ? vocals , songwriter , co @-@ producer , vocal arrangement , background vocals
RedOne ? songwriter , producer , vocal editing , vocal arrangement , background vocals , audio engineering , instrumentation , programming , recording at FC Walvisch , Amsterdam and Sonic Vista Studios , Ibiza , Spain on July 24th 2009
Eelco Bakker ? audio engineering
Johnny Severin ? vocal editing
Robert Orton ? audio mixing at Sarm Studios , London , England
Gene Grimaldi ? audio mastering at Oasis Mastering , Burbank , California
Credits adapted from The Fame Monster album liner notes .

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =