

= Iconic (song) =

" Iconic " is a song recorded by American singer and songwriter Madonna for her thirteenth studio album Rebel Heart (2015) . It was written by Madonna , Toby Gad , Maureen McDonald , Larry Griffin Jr . , Chancelor Bennett , Dacoury Natche and Michael Tucker . " Iconic " was produced by Madonna , Gad , AFSHeeN and Josh Cumbee , while DJ Dahi and Tucher served as additional producers . It features American rapper Chance the Rapper and a spoken intro by American professional boxer Mike Tyson . The song 's demo was leaked onto the internet on December 17 , 2014 , alongside twelve other tracks from the album , with " Iconic " also being rumored as the album 's title . Its final version was released on February 9 , 2015 , with " Hold Tight " and " Joan of Arc " , on the iTunes store .

A trap @-@ influenced EDM song , " Iconic " features in its instrumentation " ice @-@ cold " synths , marching drums and " booming " bass , as well as machinic stabs and electronic gears . Lyrically , the song encourages people to take control of their life , to pursue their dreams and to find their own greatness . The song received generally favorable reviews from critics , who praised the song 's " weird " beat and odd collaboration , recognizing its catchiness . Although , some criticized Tyson 's addition and were confused with the song 's message . It charted in some European territories , peaking inside the top @-@ forty in Finland , Hungary and Spain . Madonna performed the track on her Rebel Heart Tour (2015 ? 16) . During the performance , she is inside a medieval @-@ looking cage in a kimono @-@ like robe , with her dancers being dressed as gladiators .

= = Background and release = =

During the recording process of Rebel Heart , Madonna enlisted several collaborators , including MoZella , Symbolyc One and Toby Gad . 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 " Iconic " . 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 . " For the track , she initially asked American rapper Jay Z to be featured on with verses about icons , however he called American rapper Chance the Rapper and said that it would be better if somebody that was a new person and that he thought that could be a new icon got on the record . Chance and Madonna had met before through American recording artist Frank Ocean in a concert and became friends , prompting the singer to accept Jay Z 's suggestion .

Madonna also enlisted American professional boxer Mike Tyson to give a speech that would be used on the track . According to the singer , " I was thinking : who is in my eyes super iconic , who do I look up to , who is alive today that 's been through what I feel like I 've been through , that 's been through a lot , survived , has stories to tell , has evolved as human being [...] is a survivor , his name came to mind right away . " She also revealed that she was moved and impressed after seen his HBO @-@ documentary " Mike Tyson : Undisputed Truth " , directed by Spike Lee and contacted him . Tyson revealed that he ad @-@ libbed his part of the song in one take and was inspired by Benito Mussolini , who Tyson admitted that was seen as arrogant , but he tried to come from a positive perspective and be uplifting . In an interview for Rolling Stone he explained : " I didn 't know what the hell I was going there for . I 'm just there having a good time and hanging out with Madonna . She has her producer there and I go into the studio and I didn 't know if she wanted me to talk or rap . I just go in there and start talking . I 'm talking about my life and things that I have endured . I 'm saying some really crazy stuff . It was really intense . "

In December 2014 , thirteen unfinished demos of tracks for the album , including " Iconic " , were leaked to the Internet . The leaked material included artwork suggesting the album was to be titled Iconic as well . The leaked version didn 't feature either Chance the Rapper or Mike Tyson . In the same day , Madonna expressed her dissatisfaction with the leaked material , claiming it was an

artistic rape and a form of terrorism . 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 January 22 , 2015 , an updated version of the previously @-@ leaked demo version surfaced online , with Chance and Tyson . On February 9 , 2015 , the singer released three other finished tracks , including the final version of " Iconic " , as well as the album 's track list .

= = Composition and lyrics = =

" Iconic " was written by Madonna , Toby Gad , Maureen McDonald , Larry Griffin Jr . , Chancelor Bennett , Dacoury Natche and Michael Tucker . It was produced by Madonna , Gad , AFSHeeN and Josh Cumbee , while DJ Dahi and Tucker served as additional producers . It features Chance the Rapper and Mike Tyson . Gad , AFSHeen and Cumbee were also responsible for programming and the song 's instruments , with Gad also providing background vocals . The track was engineered and mixed by Demacio " Demo " Castellon with Gad and Angie Teo . It is an EDM song with trap influences , that starts with a " crowd cheering " and " rapturous applause " as Tyson opens the song with " a boastful spoken word segment " . Later , the verses build up , with the hook having " a stomping rhythm to be sung ' en masse ' , with a high euphoric melody like a precocious , pre @-@ recession club classic , " as The Quietus ' Amy Pettifer described . As she added , " the sonically sparse verse breaks down " with the song featuring " machinic stabs " and " grinding electronic gears . " Its pre @-@ chorus " drops into stabs of ice @-@ cold synths , " with other instrumentation consisting in " marching drums and booming bass . " Its " weird " beat was described by Sam C. Mac of Slant Magazine as " Kanye and Jay @-@ Z 's ' H ? A ? M ' arm @-@ wrestling Skrillex . "

Lyrically , " Iconic " talks about taking control of your life and letting your inner fire burn and encourages listeners to pursue their dreams . During the song , she urges the listeners to " making [their] voices heard before someone does it for [them] " with her voice " echoing like the announcer in the ring . " In another part , during the motivational encouragement , she informs that " there ? s only two letters difference between ' I Can 't ' and ' Icon ' , " while also inspiring the listeners to find their own greatness , singing : " Just shine your light like a beautiful star / Show the world who you are . " Tyson opening speech talks about how he ? s ? the best the world ? s ever seen ' and that he " worked hard and sweated [his] tears . " He later proclames : " I 'm never falling again and if I did , I 'll come back . " Chance , on the other hand , raps about idolatry .

= = Critical reception = =

" Iconic " received favorable reviews from most music critics . Randall Roberts of Los Angeles Times noted that the song is driving by " focus " , which puts it " into that sweet spot between club frenzy and revelatory lyricism , the kind that can lift spirits to emotional heights . " Neil McCormick of The Daily Telegraph described it as a song that " reflect [s] a contemporary trend for fast , furious and funny mash ups of conflicting ideas , constantly teetering on the edge of collapse but pulling out another beat or hook to keep things moving . " In a similar mode , Kyler Anderson of Entertainment Weekly confessed that he thought the song would be his " most @-@ skipped track , " but admitted that he " kind of admire its barely @-@ conscious chaos . " James Grebey of Spin dismissed Tyson 's inclusion , however he praised the song for having a statement that is the album 's lynchpin and that " [w] ith its robotic , authoritarian droning , ' Iconic ' conveys the point that ? love her or hate her ? Madonna is an icon , and you ? re not getting rid of her anytime soon . " John Marrs of Gay Times gave the track four out of five stars , claiming that " the finished product is wholly different from the demo and much more gutsy , getting better with every play . " Lewis Corner of Digital Spy defined it as " a club @-@ ready dash of trap @-@ pop " and selected the song as one of the " tracks to download " . Nick Levine of Time Out agreed , writing that " the sassy stuff is excellent , especially the catchy , trap @-@ tinged ' Iconic ' . "

Sam C. Mac of Slant Magazine noted that the song has the album ? s " toughest , weirdest beat , not to mention a show @-@ stopping Chance the Rapper verse and a pretty disarming message

from the singer herself . " He was unsure if Madonna meant to " embrace her iconic status or fight her way out from under its oppressive expectations " during the track , but praised the discontent and uncommon message for making the album her " most committed work since 2003 's underrated ' American Life ' . " Bradley Stern of MuuMuse was positive , saying that the result is " a confidence @-@ boosting compliment to a grueling gym workout . " He continued : " The ominous beat drops are certainly more ? on @-@ trend ? than , say , ' Hold Tight , ' but the song still feels (mostly) fresh and strange , as opposed to the late @-@ to @-@ the @-@ party dubstep / EDM excursion on ' MDNA ' . [...] It ? s a thrilling , weird and semi @-@ embarrassing @-@ yet @-@ ultimately @-@ empowering centerpiece of Rebel Heart that feels as bold as a song called ' Iconic ' by Madonna should . " Joe Lynch of Billboard called the collaboration " just about as odd as you 'd expect , " but labeled it " a fairly overwrought affair . Chance 's verse is fire , but the intense , busy production ultimately adds up to very little . " Michelle Geslani of Consequence of Sound pointed out that " as odd as the circumstances might be , the track surprisingly gels together far more smoothly than one would expect . " Ben Kelly of Attitude named it " her own ? bow down bitches ? moment . " while Ludovic Hunter @-@ Tilney of Financial Times said that the song is " wonderfully unhinged . "

In a mixed analysis , Amy Pettifer of The Quietus called it " a Ted @-@ talk of well @-@ worn , motivational encouragement cloaked in a club anthem . " Saaed Saaed of The National called the album 's " mini slump , " while Jonh Murphy of musicOMH noted that the song " falls rather flat . " Annie Zaleski of The A.V. Club was confused with the song 's message , saying that it " can ? t decide if it wants to skewer fame or encourage people to embrace it . " Lydia Jenkins wrote for New Zealand Herald that the song " could definitely be accused of trying to emulate the success of Katy Perry 's ' Dark Horse . " Lauren Murphy of The Irish Times dismissed Tyson 's appearance , declaring that his spoken word turn on ' Iconic ' is tokenistic . " Sasha Geffen of Consequence of Sound criticized the song 's " lazy rhymes " , which according to herself , lumps into " an awkward hybrid of EDM and hip @-@ hop featuring one of hip @-@ hop ? s finest [that] sounds out of place here amid the bass drops and robot vocals . "

= = Live performance = =

" Iconic " was chosen to be the opening song from the Rebel Heart Tour (2015 ? 16) . It begins with a video featuring Madonna in a glamorous dress cavorting with bare @-@ bodied males juxtaposed with Mike Tyson talking inside of a cage . Tyson commented about the shooting , saying : " Riveting is not [the word] . It 's just intense ... I 'm in a cage . I 'm a hostage . I 'm chained . I 'm naked . I look like a savage . When I [shot] it , it didn 't seem that intense . But then you watch it and go , ' Whoa ' . It was like [something out of] National Geographic . I need to be tamed , man . " Madonna performed wearing an " ornate kimono @-@ like robe with wide sequin @-@ lined sleeves " inside a medieval @-@ looking cage surrounded by religious iconography that she later breaks out of as she sings the first lines , while guards dressed similar to Wicked Witch of the West 's castle marched onstage . During the performance , she also hung upside down on a cross .

The performance was received with a positive response from critics . Jordan Zivitz of Montreal Gazette called the performance " insanely theatrical , Broadway @-@ worthy . " Melissa Maerz wrote for Entertainment Weekly that " As visually spectacular as it was narratively [sic] heavy @-@ handed , it felt like a callback to her last tour , ' MDNA ' , which featured a dark charade that found Madonna wielding a gun on stage . But when the song ended with video footage of the gladiators knocking over a saintly @-@ looking Madonna statue , the tone changed . Madonna has built a career by playing with what we hold sacred , whether it ? s crucifixes or underground dance crazes . Now the only sacred thing she 's tearing down is Madonna herself . "

= = 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) / / Chancelor Bennett (BMI) c / o Davis , Shapiro , Lewitt , Grabel , Leven , Granderson & Blake / Sony / ATV Sonata and Dahi Productions (SESAC) / Michael Tucker Music (ASCAP) c / o Kobalt Songs Music Publishing , These Are Songs of Pulse (ASCAP) and OWSLA Trax (ASCAP) c / o Kobalt Songs Music Publishing .

Personnel

Management and personnel adapted from Madonna 's official website .

= = Charts = =