

For God and the Gays – A Completely Serious Walk through the Discography of Lady Gaga Part 1 – The Fame (Monster)

Before I start, I must confess I am a MASSIVE fan of Mother Monster, Lady Gaga. Having said that, I am not above using cynicism and sarcasm to poke fun at her discography for cheap laughs, so that's what this series of articles will be. I'll go through every song of every non-Jazz (soz Tony Bennett) and non-movie soundtrack (soz middle-aged, straight, white, suburban women) album that the Goddess that is Miss Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta has gifted to the world and give them a totally serious and critically invaluable description. So, let's begin...

The Album(s?)

Okay, let's get this out the way, calling The Fame and The Fame Monster two different albums is a straight up LIE. The Fame Monster added 8 new songs to The Fame's 15, and originally WAS meant as a deluxe edition of The Fame. Now that that's said, I'll contradict myself because this is my article not yours. The songs added by the Fame Monster ARE thematically and tonally completely different. The Fame is about the highs of Fame- think money, boys, cars etc. The Fame Monster deals with the lows – alcoholism, not being there for your potentially dying dad, and *Te&H*. For the purpose of this article, I will separate them, but just to clarify, they are absolutely just the same album, one's just longer because Gaga forgot to add them the first time or something like that. Anyway, let's get on with it, starting with The Fame Monster because it's shorter.

Tracklist 1- The Fame Monster

Track 1- Bad Romance

Oh look, it's the rah rah song! Yeah yeah, I know you've all heard this song. Hell, even James Corden has heard this song, and all he listens to is his own voice and the sad sad crying of every hospitality worker he ever comes across. This is one of three Gaga songs your mum will know; one of the others is from A Star Is Born (sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-loooow) and the other we'll come to. This song explores Gaga fancying her best friend which, as we all know, never works, hence it's a ROMANCE that's BAD, genius! Haters will say the writing is uninspiring, repetitive, basic, blah blah ooh la la. But don't you just wanna do the dance and scream 'I DON'T WANNA BE FRIENDS!' at that person you know is bad for you but who you just absolutely want to get with? Gaga gives you permission to go get him sis! Just don't blame her when it all comes crashing down and you've lost a good friend and the ability to love and trust ever again...

Best Lyric: "I want your everything as long as it's free" Gotta love a budget queen.

Track 2- Alejandro

Okay, the elephant in the room. No, I have NO IDEA what accent Gaga is going for here. Spanish? Maybe. Italian? Perhaps. Iconic? Absolutely! This song is as Europop as Europop gets. A few short examples- the intro is a violin solo adaption of Vittorio Monti's "Csárdás", look it up. It features strong synth beats, typical of a Euro club song. It features the name 'Fernando' - which of course, was invented by ABBA in their 1976 song 'Fernando'. And, of course, the music video is just HIGH camp. All of it adds up to create a song that wouldn't feel out of place at Eurovision. There is literally nothing that can convince me that this song doesn't have the ability to revive even the deadest house party. Of course, all the camp Europop hides the dark secret (it's The Fame Monster, duh) that this is a song about not only breaking up with boyfriends, but being scared of romantic relationships with men, it's like a dark, Latin, synthesised Taylor Swift song, except this song actually deserves awards.

Best Lyric: "She's got both hands" That's handy to know!

Track 3- Monster

Ah, the titular Monster! If you were expecting a convoluted way of the 'Monster' being fame itself and its devastating effects on pop artists, you'd be wrong. It's about being in love with a bad boy, in the same way, but also a completely different way to what Bad Romance was. See, Bad Romance is about being in love with your friend even though you know that relationship would be bad for you, Monster is about being in love with a bad boy even though you know that relationship is bad for you. See? Completely different, duh. And guess what, this bad boy also maybe sleeps with your best friends, what fun!

Best Lyric: "He ate my heart and then he ate my brain" So... you went on a date with Dahmer?

Track 4- Speechless

In this song, Gaga monologues for 4 ½ minutes about how speechless she is, is that gaslighting? The song is about how, while she was on her first world tour (supporting the Pussycat Dolls, iconic) her dad's heart condition got significantly worse, but he refused to get surgery. On top of this, her being away had severely affected his mood and he'd turned to drinking and calling her saying that he was going to let his life take its course- I promise it gets more cheery. Anyway, she writes this song essentially begging him to get his heart surgery by saying if he needed her too she'd quit music, through the medium of music because, again, she's definitely gaslighting here. It worked though, and Mr Germanotta is happy and safe, and we have this song, winners all around. The song itself is actually quite beautiful, and does really well in capturing Gaga's intense love of her dad, and her desperation to save him, it's hard to make fun of this one really so I'll move on.

Best Lyric: "I'll never talk again" Me when I lie.

Track 5- Dance in the Dark

English GCSE recap here, if a poet or artist talks about dancing, 99% of the time, they're on about the horizontal tango. Dance in the Dark is no exception. In true Fame Monster style, Gaga takes a really catchy and danceable tune and slaps a load of dark undertones on it. This time it's that the protagonist of the song won't do the deed unless the lights are off, because of insecurities about how she looks or acts while she partakes in two person push-ups. This song is less about curing those insecurities and more about saying that other people have them too, but in the kind and supportive way, not the belittling and dismissive way. Or, if you want, it's about a trappy vampire with a mentally abusive boyfriend who can only dance at night because he's blind in the dark and she's not because, y'know, vampire and all that jazz.

Best Lyric: "Diana you're still in our hearts" Gaga is definitely in those 'Ar Di' Facebook Groups.

Track 6- Telephone (feat. Beyoncé)

This song should be the anthem of every hospitality and retail worker, because it's about not being able to get away from your boss' calls and texts, even when you're out having fun. In this absolute banger of a song, Gaga pretends she has no signal and fakes static and voice clipping which, in reality, would probably get you sacked. In doing this, she is obviously showing her support for the 'Right to Disconnect' human rights campaign, which honestly is a slay. I hope in future she does a song called "Picket-Line", in which she declares her love of unions, maybe it'll even feature Mick Lynch doing a semi-rap verse about rail strikes, one can dream.

Best Lyric: "Stop telephonin' me!" We've all felt like this at least once. #relatable

Track 7- So Happy I Could Die

Honestly, this song is just out and out about substance abuse. However, I think the biggest red flag in this song is that she is "In the club with a bottle of red wine." In which club is it acceptable to have a bottle of red wine? The country club? This really grates on me and to be honest ruins the whole song for me. It's ridiculous and unrealistic, as opposed to other Gaga songs, which are always totally within the realm of normal societal reality. That is all I have to say about this one, it's still a bop though.

Best Lyric: "Be your best friend, yeah I'll love you forever" Awhhhh thanks Gaga!

Track 8- Teeth

The last, and most terrifying, of Gaga's 'Monster' tracks. In it, I can only assume Gaga has decided to become to dentistry what Sweeney Todd was to barbering. She repeatedly demands to see people's teeth, for some unknown purpose. She also invites people to bite her, presumably to test the strength of their teeth. On a related note, Gaga wore a

grill of teeth one time, and although the designer says they were fake teeth, after listening to this song, I was never sure that that was completely true...

Best Lyric: The 51 times she says “Teeth”, that’s once every 4.3 seconds!

Tracklist 2 - The Fame

Track 1- Just Dance

I want to do a little experiment with you. First, go out ALL night and drink HEAVILY. In the morning, when your head is banging and you’re absolutely hanging, go to your computer and set a timer on your phone for 10 minutes. Now the challenge is to write a song so good in those 10 minutes that, 14 years later, it is one of the best-ever selling singles, and is credited with launching you into pop superstardom. You’d be forgiven for thinking that that’s impossible, but, no, that’s exactly what Gaga did in 2008 with this song. The song itself is about dancing through being scarily drunk, something most of us can relate to. I am personally of the opinion that if you come across a person that doesn’t sing “doo doo doo doo!” after hearing the words “Just Dance”, you should run (quickly) away, because they’re obviously a psychopath with no emotions. This song was so groundbreaking that I could write a whole other article just about it and its story. But that would be boring, so I won’t.

Best Lyric: “Can’t find my drink or man” I’m glad she put them in order of importance.

Track 2- Lovegame

One of my absolute favourite Gaga interview moments is when a rather silly reporter asks “What is a disco stick?” and Gaga, taking NO prisoners, plainly says “a penis.” And to be honest that sums this song up, it’s disco and dongo. The song is quite literally just Gaga telling some guy that she’s on a mission to take a ride on his disco stick. If that isn’t female empowerment then I quite honestly don’t know what is. Move over Simone de Beauvoir, Gaga’s got feminism now!

Best Lyric: “You’ve indicated your interest” What? Is she taking appointments? Is this an automated message?

Track 3- Paparazzi

In 2009 Gaga performed this live at the VMA awards and if you haven’t watched it and memorised the harmonies she sings, we can’t be friends. Seriously, that performance was and remains iconic, and reflects on the main themes of this song; how fame can harm and even kill those it propels to superstardom. Of course, this dark messaging, in classic Gaga style, is hidden behind layer upon layer of snappy, poppy synth beats, so swings and roundabouts I suppose. Smile on the outside, even if on the inside you feel like external pressures to act and be a certain way are eventually going to leave you seriously damaged or worse. Hurray for repression!

Best Lyric: “My lashes are dry” Don’t let James Charles see you like that, sister!

Track 4- Poker Face

I made a promise earlier that we’d come to the other Gaga song your mum will know, and this is it. What your mum probably doesn’t know is that this song is actually about Gaga fantasising about playing a LoveGame with women while actually taking a ride on a man’s disco stick - we’ll see if that gets through the censors. So the church can calm down about the sin of gambling in this song and instead focus on Gaga’s bisex- no actually please can we keep the church on gambling?

Best Lyric: “Check this hand ‘cause I’m marvelous” Gaga was going to go into hand modelling if the whole pop star thing didn’t work out.

Track 5- Eh, Eh (Nothing Else I Can Say)

Eh. Eh.

Best Lyric: “Nothing else I can say” Ditto.

Track 6- Beautiful, Dirty, Rich

This is a gorgeous mess of a song. Don’t get me wrong, I love love love this song, but it is genuinely chaos. And, to be honest, that fits the theme of a teenager just going mental with Daddy’s credit card on a night out. It is wild, messy, beautiful, dirty, rich. Oh and the music video looks like a high school drama club was told to direct it, it’s so bootleg it’s hilarious, give it a watch.

Best Lyric: “But we got no money” Man, this cost of living crisis really is a bummer...

Track 7- The Fame

This song, to my huge surprise, is about fame. However, instead of highlighting its damaging effects as she has in a few previous songs, Gaga decides to criticise the lifestyle that comes from the cult of fame. And, actually, I think this song is more poignant now in our age of social media and non-stop reality TV than it was at the time of its release. Maybe it is a shame that everyone seems to live for fame and exposure nowadays, but, hey, if it produces bangers like this, then I’m not complaining.

Best Lyric: “Fame!” I’m gonna live forever!

Track 8- Money Honey

This song portrays a daily battle that we all, as totally normal human girl and boybosses, must face. That is to say, the battle between having astonishing levels of wealth and

playing an astonishing number of LoveGames (that innuendo is doing some HEAVY lifting this article.) It's simply a fact of life that at least once in your life you'll have to pass on a trip to the Caribbean to be someone's paramour. So raise your champagne flutes to the sky on your yacht with your hot partner, because this song's for you.

Best Lyric: "My knees get weak" Uh oh, Adele's about to set fire to some rain.

Track 9- Starstruck

So help me God, I refuse to use the LoveGame innuendo again... This song is about sex, and quite graphically once you get past the metaphors. That's about as much as I can say in a student newspaper really.

Best Lyric: "Gaga in the room" Well, you'd hope so on a Gaga album, wouldn't you?

Track 10- Boys Boys Boys

In this song, Gaga takes feminism, slaps it across the face, plonks an apron on it, shoves it into the kitchen, and tells it to make a goddamn sandwich because daddy's hungry. Seriously, this song doesn't objectify men, so it's not a caricature of how the pop industry writes songs that focus on men lusting after women. It simply reduces women to denim and hairspray wearing boy hungry party animals. If you identify as that, cool, but I think this song is somewhat problematic in its generalisation of women, which is strange, because Gaga is one of those apparently.

Best Lyric: "Don't forget my lipstick, I left it in your ashtray" I'm both intrigued and concerned about how and why you'd leave your lipstick in an ashtray.

Track 11- Paper Gangsta

This song is a massive middle finger to Def Jam (a music label), who dropped Gaga before she had released any music because she would not conform to their demands. Basically she is proclaiming that she will, under no circumstances, be driven more by money than by creativity and authenticity to herself. And, you've got to admit, you'd feel really embarrassed if you were the label that dropped her and then she dropped a diss track about you in one of the best selling albums of all time...

Best Lyric: "Sometimes I felt so Def in the Jam" Not even hiding her hatred is girlboss energy.

Track 12- Brown Eyes

If ever you need a new breakup song to bawl your eyes out to, here you are. This song has it all for you: a heavy and slow beat (like your broken heart), crescendos to scream/sing as you cry, and a part where you can beg him to get back with you, yay!

Best Lyric: “What went wrong” Preferably slurred through drunken tears at 3AM with nothing but your leftover kebab and multiple dating apps to fill the hole in your soul.

Track 13- I Like It Rough

Gaga has not been secretive about traumatic events that have shaped her relationships with others. In this case, she is questioning herself about whether she likes it rough because she genuinely does, or because it is a coping mechanism to deal with what she has had to endure in the past. She compares loving herself to chewing on pearls and straightening curls. The former metaphor shows that she may seem hard but is soft and easy to damage. The latter shows that she believes all love for her is temporary and will eventually come apart. Like with many songs on this album, Gaga manages to mask this dark and painful messaging behind a thick wall of electro-pop and glamour. She will, to the outside world, put on the façade of a happy pop star, but those who care enough to listen to what she says will find incredibly difficult situations and calls for help. Now, doesn't that make you want to go dance and have fun?

Best Lyric: “I'm shiny and I know it” The big crab in Moana is based on Gaga.

Track 14- Summerboy

This is what I imagine “Summer Nights” from Grease would have sounded like if Sandy was from the 80s and had Danny's personality. Basically, this song is about summer flings, and the subsequent ending of those flings. Unlike Sandy, Gaga is not monogamous, and talks about checking out other guys from behind her sunglasses, which is a power move. Also unlike Sandy, Gaga has no qualms talking about taking her clothes off for guys. This song is an ode to young love affairs, and the memories made during the summer holidays, and has less problematic symbolism and characters than *Grease*, so it's an all round winner.

Best Lyric: “You'll just be my summer boyfriend” Yes Gaga, lay down the law!

Track 15- Disco Heaven

Gaga finishes the album off with a song that can't help but make you want to dance. The song itself is about going to a club with your friend and having the time of your life, with no problems at all, just unadulterated disco heaven. It's all very Disney really, all the troubles we've faced throughout the album are swept away by the power of FrieNdShlp. But, to be fair, with the rollercoaster of emotions, hidden dark meanings and undertones from the rest of the album, it is quite nice it ends on this cliché. I'd rather that than have “Boys Boys Boys” be the last huzzah of this album, so there's that.

Best Lyric: “We got that disco, D-I-S-C-O” Could you use it in a sentence please? I didn’t catch the spelling.

Final Thoughts

This album is like a Negroni Sblagliato with Prosecco in it. That is to say, stunning. There’s a reason The Fame (Monster) is often regarded as a bible of modern pop, it manages to cover serious topics that real people relate to but in a catchy danceable way. People feel seen, but not judged. In fact, seen is probably the wrong word, this album made people feel *heard* and *understood*. A lot of pop songs focus on love and on happy things or they focus on the bad and the upsetting. What I think the songs within The Fame (Monster) managed to do is capture the reality of life in that emotions are messy and can’t really be clearly defined. You can often feel happy and sad about something at the same time, and the songs express that. It’s a chaotic mix of oftentimes chaotic songs but by God aren’t a lot of them catchy as hell? So put your paws up, because it's Born This Way next, baby!

Album Covers of The Fame and The Fame Monster

The Fame Monster



The Fame



TFM (Alternative Cover)



