

## MDNA FOREVER

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UNED

*Showgirl*, cantautora, directora de cine, autora de libros, Madonna en el nuevo milenio no para. El marido Guy Ritchie la dirige en *Swept Away*<sup>1</sup>, *remake* de la película de 1974 de Lina Wertmüller *Travolti da un insolito destino nell'azzurro mare d'agosto*. La actriz interpreta el mismo papel que Mariangela Melato con Adriano Giannini, cuyo padre, Giancarlo, también se metió en la piel del mismo personaje. La película fue rodada en Cerdeña durante el verano del 2002. En octubre del mismo año Madonna publica *Die Another Day*, tema portante de la banda sonora de la homónima película de Lee Tamahori que anticipa la salida de su noveno álbum grabado en estudio. En este film Madonna recita un breve *cammeo*, el role de una monitora de esgrima. En abril del 2003 sale *American Life*<sup>2</sup>, disco con sonoridades electrónico-acústicas y con textos de naturaleza política y espiritual. Según Stephen Thomas Erlewine (2012):

American Life is an album performed by a vocalist who has abandoned the U.S. for the U.K. and co-produced by a French techno mastermind, recorded during a time of strife in America, and released just after the country completed a war. Given that context and given that the vocalist is arguably the biggest star in the world, the title can't help but carry some import, carry the weight of social commentary. And it follows through on that promise, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, but either way, American Life winds up as the first Madonna record with ambitions as serious as a textbook. It plays as somberly as either Like a Prayer or Ray of Light, just as it delves into an insular darkness as deep as Erotica while retaining the club savviness of the brilliant, multi-colored Music. This is an odd mixture, particularly when it's infused with a searching, dissatisfied undercurrent and a musical sensibility that is at once desperate and adventurous, pitched halfway between singer/songwriterisms and skimming of current club culture. It's pulled tight between these two extremes, particularly because the intimate guitar-based songs (and there are a lot of them, almost all beginning with just her and a guitar) are all personal meditations, with the dance songs usually functioning as vehicles for social commentary. Even if the sparer ballads are introspective, they're treated as soundscapes by producer Mirwais, giving them an unsettling eerie quality that is mirrored by the general hollowness of the club songs. While there are some interesting sounds on these tracks, they sound bleak and hermetically sealed, separate from what's happening either in the mainstream or in the underground. Perhaps that's because she's aligned herself with such flash-in-the-pan trends as electroclash, a hipster movement that's more theoretical than musical, whose ill effects can be heard on the roundly panned James Bond theme "Die Another Day," featured toward

1) Un film di Guy Ritchie. Con Madonna, Adriano Giannini, Jeanne Tripplehorn, Bruce Greenwood, Elizabeth Banks. Commedia, durata 93 min.- Gran Bretagna 2002 (Ritchie, 2002). Amber (Madonna) si reca in vacanza nel Mediterraneo col marito Anthony e alcuni amici intimi. Arrivati in Grecia decidono di noleggiare una barca e di assoldare alcuni marinai del luogo per traghettare fino in Italia. Per la ricca e viziosa Amber però, i confort offerti non sono all'altezza delle aspettative e così finisce per sfogare la sua frustrazione su Giuseppe (Adriano Giannini), un pescatore italiano. Una sera, però, Amber e Giuseppe restano in balia delle correnti e lì, in mezzo al mare, i rapporti di forza si ribaltano. Remake di un film di Lina Wertmuller, datato 1974. Più che un remake, un tentativo di clonazione cinematografica; Giannini jr replica l'indimenticabile padre con qualche ora di palestra in più e molto charme in meno. Madonna e la Melato, invece, due gemelle che più diverse non si può. "Travolti dal destino" avrebbe potuto trasformare la popstar in una attrice autoironica e matura. Ma il peso di essere "diva" incombe e il compito di Guy Ritchie era difficile. Madonna; troppo glamour per renderla credibile come "sciura", troppo "star" per farsi sottomettere, seppur obbligata dalla sceneggiatura, da un attore semi-esordiente italiano, sconosciuto alle platee internazionali. A questa gravità, gli spettatori italiani aggiungono un altro "peso": il ricordo della pellicola della Wertmuller in cui Giannini e la Melato furono sì, "travolti dal destino", ma anche da un cinema che aveva radici profonde nella satira di costume (Parigi, 2012).

2) 1. American Life – 4:58 (Madonna, Mirwais Ahmadzaï – Madonna, Ahmadzaï). 2. Hollywood – 4:24 (Madonna, Ahmadzaï – Madonna, Ahmadzaï). 3. I'm So Stupid – 4:09 (Madonna, Ahmadzaï – Madonna, Ahmadzaï, Mark "Spike" Stent\*). 4. Love Profusion – 3:38 (Madonna, Ahmadzaï – Madonna, Ahmadzaï). 5. Nobody Knows Me – 4:39 (Madonna, Ahmadzaï – Madonna, Ahmadzaï). 6. Nothing Fails – 4:49 (Madonna, Guy Sigsworth, Jem Griffiths – Madonna, Ahmadzaï, Stent\*). 7. Intervention – 4:54 (Madonna, Ahmadzaï – Madonna, Ahmadzaï). 8. X-Static Process – 3:50 (Madonna, Stuart Price – Madonna, Ahmadzaï). 9. Mother and Father – 4:33 (Madonna, Ahmadzaï – Madonna, Ahmadzaï). 10. Die Another Day – 4:38 (Madonna, Ahmadzaï – Madonna, Ahmadzaï). 11. Easy Ride – 5:05 (Madonna, Monte Pittman – Madonna, Ahmadzaï). (Madonna, 2003a).

the end of American Life. Then again, it could also be that this is the first time that Madonna has elected to rap -- frequently and frenetically -- on a record, something that logistically would fit with Mirwais' dense, house-heavy productions, but sound embarrassingly awkward coming out of her mouth. But that insular feel also comes from the smaller-scale, confessional songs, particularly because Mirwais doesn't give them depth and the songs themselves are imbalanced, never quite having a notable hook in the music or words. Even so, there's a lot that's *interesting* about American Life -- the half-hearted stabs at politics fall aside, and there are things bubbling in the production that are quite infectious, while the stretch from "Nobody Knows Me" to "X-Static Process" in the middle of the record can be quite moving. But, overall, American Life is better for what it promises than what it delivers, and it's better in theory than practice.

*American Life*, publicado por *Maverick Records* y distribuido por *Warner Bros Records* ha sido producido enteramente por Madonna y Mirwais Ahmadzai, el mismo productor de *Music*. Considerado un *concept album*, con temas recurrentes sobre el "sueño americano" y sobre el "materialismo" y compuesto esencialmente por pop, electrónica, rock y música dance-pop, los críticos han notado influencias de música acústica en canciones como *X-Static Process* e *Intervention*. Mirwais es un gran músico y un gran guitarrista: es genial. Su influencia sobre la artista ha sido muy grande. Madonna, hablando de la grabación de la *title track*, afirma que el productor Mirwais la había animado a un rap espontáneo y que la secuencia de rap presentada en la *title track* cita los objetos materiales que le gustaban a ella misma. Se desatan mil polémicas ligadas al video *American Life* ambientado en un desfile de moda surreal cuyos modelos desfilan con uniformes militares y se muestran escenas violentas de guerras, explosiones y muertos. Publicado en el mismo momento en el que salen las primeras expediciones contra Irak, los republicanos interpretan el video como anti-americano y la administración Bush consigue retirarlo del mercado. Rikky Rooksby, autor de *Madonna - The Complete Guide to Her Music*, ha declarado que un tema recurrente de la producción discográfica de la cantante ha sido el texto seco y sencillo. Madonna expresa su contrariedad a través de palabras e imágenes duras. El mensaje que la *popstar* había intentado lanzar es un mensaje universal contra cualquier tipo de estrago en el mundo, y, sobre todo, es una invitación a la paz.

Do I have to change my name?  
Will it get me far?  
Should I lose some weight?  
Am I gonna be a star?  
I tried to be a boy, I tried to be a girl  
I tried to be a mess, I tried to be the best  
I guess I did it wrong, that's why I wrote this song  
This type of modern life - is it for me?  
This type of modern life - is it for free?  
So I went into a bar looking for sympathy  
I little company - I tried to find a friend  
It's more easily said it's always been the same  
This type of modern life - is not for me?  
This type of modern life - is not for free?  
American life  
I live the American dream  
You are the best thing I've seen  
You are not just a dream  
I tried to stay ahead, I tried to stay on top  
I tried to play the part, but somehow I forgot  
Just what I did it for and why I wanted more  
This type of modern life - is it for me?

This type of modern life - is it for free?  
Do I have to change my name?  
Will it get me far?  
Should I lose some weight?  
Am I gonna be a star?  
American life  
I live the American dream  
You are the best thing I've seen  
You are not just a dream  
I tried to be a boy, I tried to be a girl  
I tried to be a mess, I tried to be the best  
I tried to find a friend, I need to stay ahead  
I tried to stay on top  
Fuck it  
Yeah, fuck it  
I'm drinking a soy latte  
I got a double shote (shot)  
It goes right through my body  
And you know I'm satisfied  
I drive my mini cooper  
And I'm feeling super-doooper  
Yo they tell me I'm a tropper  
And you know I'm satisfied  
I do yoga and pilates  
And the room is full of hotties  
So I'm checking out the bodies  
And you know I'm satisfied  
I'm digging the isotopies  
This metaphysics shit is dope  
And if all this can give me hope  
You know I'm satisfied  
I got a lawyer and a manager  
An agent and a chef  
Three nannies, an assistant  
And a driver and a jet  
A trainer and a butler  
And a bodyguard or five  
A gardener and a stylist  
Do you think I'm satisfied  
I'd like to express my extreme point of view  
I'm not a Christian and I'm not a jew  
I'm just living out the American dream  
And I just realized that nothing  
Is what it seems  
Do I have to change my name?  
Am I gonna be a star?  
Do I have to change my name?  
Am I gonna be a star?  
Do I have to change my name?  
Fuck it.....  
(Madonna, 2003a).

La portada del álbum retrae a Madonna en versión *Che Guevara*. Además de *Die Another Day* y *American Life*, se publican otros tres *single*: *Hollywood*, *Nothing Fails* y *Love Profusion*. En *Hollywood* Madonna habla de la vanidad del éxito y critica el mundo de Hollywood; la artista con Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera y Missy Elliott presenta un *medley* de *Like a Virgin* y *Hollywood* en los *MTV Video Music Awards*, durante la performance Madonna se besa en la boca con Spears y Aguilera. Algunos meses después la señora Ciccone colabora nuevamente con Spears, con la que brava el top ten *Me against the Music*, que será incluido en el álbum de la joven artista *In The Zone*. *Nothing Fails* es una intensa balada acompañada por un coro gospel y *Love Profusion* cuenta con un video dirigido por el director Luc Besson. Cabe señalar otros dos éxitos: *X-Static Process* donde cuenta su relación con Jesús Cristo y *Mother and Father* donde vuelve a su dolor para la muerte de la madre y al resentimiento hacia el padre que no le reservó todo el afecto que ella necesitaba.

En noviembre sale el EP *Remixed & Revisited*<sup>3</sup>, que contiene algunos *remix* extraídos del álbum *American Life* y un inédito. El EP contiene la versión *Headcleanr Rock Mix* de *Love Profusion* y el *medley live* de *Like a Virgin/Hollywood* de los *MTV Video Music Awards*. El texto *Into the Hollywood Groove* realizado por los *Passengerz*, mezclando la célebre *Into The Groove* y *Hollywood*. El único inédito es *Your Honesty*. En 2004 parte el *Re-Invention Tour* con 56 fechas en todo el mundo que, según *Billboard Magazine*, confirman la longevidad de la popularidad de Madonna. El *tour* nace de la idea concebida por Madonna y su *team* de visitar los más importantes momentos de su carrera musical. Según Stephen Thomas Erlewine (2012):

American Life was the rare stumble in Madonna's career, an album that garnered neither sales nor critical acclaim and failed to generate a hit single. Disarmed by its lack of success, Madonna scrambled to revive the success, first appearing in a Gap commercial with Missy Elliott, then causing a commotion at the 2003 MTV Video Music Awards by French kissing Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera as a prelude to a performance of her failed single "Hollywood," which did more for Britney than Madge, and then finally offering *Remixed & Revisited* for the 2003 holiday season. This contained four remixes of songs from *American Life*, the VMA performance of "Like a Virgin/Hollywood" with Britney, X-tina, and Missy, the Gap ad "Into the Groove"/"Hollywood" fusion "Into the Hollywood Groove," and finally and inexplicably, the *Bedtime Stories* outtake "Your Honesty." Even if the beats are a little dated, this latter track is the best song here, since it has both a strong hook and a strong sense of fun, something that was entirely missing from the somber *American Life*. It's missing from *Remixed & Revisited* too, since no amount of rejiggering can bring these moribund songs to life, particularly when the approaches of the remixers are as subtle as a jackhammer, whether it's on the metallic-flaked "American Life" by *Headcleanr* or the '90s-retro Nevins mix of "Nothing Fails." On all these mixes, Madonna sounds as if she's out of step with the music of 2003, and that's also true on the weird VMA performance, where she's overshadowed by Britney sounding *exactly* like early Madonna and Christina sounding *exactly* like Cher, before all of them are streamrollered by the rampaging Missy Elliott on the "Hollywood" segment of the medley. And matching the iconic "Like a Virgin" with the anemic "Hollywood" not only does the newer song no favors, it points out how lacking the *American Life* material is -- a situation that is only amplified by its inclusion on this EP, where "Like a Virgin" and the *Bedtime Stories* leftover both prove that the newer material is substandard. Madonna will likely bounce back from this bad year, but no matter what she does, she can't salvage *American Life*.

Siempre en 2003 Madonna publica *The English Roses*, primer volumen de una colección de libros de cuentos para niños cuyas rentas están destinadas a la asociación *Spirituality for Kids*. Participa también a un

3) Nothing Fails (Nevins Mix) – 3:40. 2. Love Profusion (Headcleanr Rock Mix) – 3:16. 3. Nobody Knows Me (Mount Sims Old School Mix) – 4:44. 4. American Life (Headcleanr Rock Mix) – 4:01. 5. Like a Virgin/Hollywood Medley - 2003 MTV VMA Performance – 5:34. 6. Into the Hollywood Groove (The Passengerz Mix) feat. Missy Elliott – 3:42. 7. Your Honesty – 4:07 (Madonna, 2003b).

episodio de la quinta serie de la serie *Will & Grace*, titulado *Dolls and Dolls*, dirigido por James Burrows, en el que interpreta el papel de Liz, coinquilina de Karen. Después del tsunami en Asia, Madonna aparece en un especial de la NBC interpretando *Imagine* de John Lennon. En julio de 2005 participa en Londres en el concierto benéfico organizado por Bob Geldof, el *Live 8*, continuación ideal del *Live Aid* de 1985, siguiendo tres grandes éxitos: *Like a Prayer*, *Ray of Light* y *Music*.

En noviembre de 2005 Madonna publica *Confessions on a Dance Floor*<sup>4</sup>, su décimo álbum en estudio, co-producido por Madonna, Stuart Price, Mirwais Ahmadzai e Bloodshy & Avant. *Confessions on a Dance Floor* caracteriza el regreso de Madonna a la dance y al género de sus comienzos. Según *Billboard*, es el álbum con más números “Uno” de la historia y según Stephen Thomas Erlewine (2012):

Given the cold shoulder Madonna's 2003 album *American Life* received by critics and audiences alike -- it may have gone platinum, but apart from the Bond theme “Die Another Day,” released in advance of the album, it generated no new Top Ten singles (in fact, its title track barely cracked the Top 40) -- it's hard not to read its 2005 follow-up, *Confessions on a Dance Floor*, as a back-to-basics move of sorts: after a stumble, she's returning to her roots, namely the discos and clubs where she launched her career in the early '80s. It's not just that she's returning to dance music -- in a way, she's been making hardcore dance albums ever since 1998's *Ray of Light*, her first full-on flirtation with electronica -- but that she's revamping and updating disco on *Confessions* instead of pursuing a bolder direction. While it's true to a certain extent that contemporary dance music is still recycling and reinventing these songs -- besides, anything '80s is in vogue in 2005 -- coming from Madonna, it sounds like a retreat, an inadvertent apology that she's no longer on the cutting edge, or at least an admission that she's inching ever closer to 50. And no matter how she may disguise it beneath glistening layers of synths, or by sequencing the album as a nonstop party, *Confessions on a Dance Floor* is the first album where Madonna seems like a veteran musician. Not only is there a sense of conscious craft to the album, in how the sounds and the songs segue together, but in how it explicitly references the past -- both her own and club music in the larger sense -- the music seems disassociated from the present; Madonna is reworking familiar territory, not pushing forward, in a manner not dissimilar to how her former opening act the Beastie Boys returned to old-school rap on their defiantly old-fashioned 2004 album *To the 5 Boroughs*.

But where the Beasties are buoyed by their camaraderie, Madonna has always been a stubborn individual, working well with collaborators but always, without question, existing on her own terms, and this obstinate nature is calcifying slightly into isolation on *Confessions*. There's no emotional hook in the music, either in its icy surface or in the lyrics, and the hard-headed intention to deliver a hardcore dance album means that this feels cold and calculated, never warm or infectious. Of course, Madonna has always been calculated in her career, often to great effect, and this calculation does pay some dividends here. Taken on a purely sonic level, *Confessions on a Dance Floor* does its job: with the assistance of co-producer Stuart Price (Bloodshy & Avant produce two tracks, Mirwais produces one, while another was originally produced by Anders Bagge and Peer Astrom), she not only maintains the mood, but keeps the music moving nicely, never letting one track linger any longer than necessary. This is shimmering music falling just short of sexy, yet it's alluring enough on the surface to make for a perfect soundtrack for pitch-black nights. That's what the album was designed to do, and it works well on that level. It works well as a whole, but as a collection of individual tracks it falls apart, since there is a distinct lack of melodic or lyrical hooks. But

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4) 1. Hung Up (Madonna, Price, Andersson, Ulvaeus) – 5:36. 2. Get Together (Madonna, Bagge, Åström, Price) - 5:30. 3. Sorry (Madonna, Price) - 4:43. 4. Future Lovers (Madonna, Ahmadzai) - 4:51. 5. I Love New York (Madonna, Price) - 4:11. 6. Let It Will Be (Madonna, Ahmadzai, Price) - 4:18. 7. Forbidden Love (Madonna, Price) - 4:22. 8. Jump (Madonna, Henry, Price) – 3:46. 9. How High (Madonna, Karlsson, Winnberg, Jonback) – 4:40. 10. Isaac (Madonna, Price) – 6:03. 11. Push (Madonna, Price) – 3:57. 12. Like It or Not (Madonna, Karlsson, Winnberg, Jonback) – 4:31. Nella versione speciale a tiratura limitata è disponibile anche il brano *Fighting Spirit* - 03:32 (Madonna, 2005).

Confessions wasn't intended to be pop music -- as the title makes clear, it was made for the dance clubs or, in other words, Madonna's core audience, who will surely be pleased by this sleek slice of style. But the fact that she's making music just for her core audience, not for the mass audience that she's had for 20 years, is yet another indication that Madge is slyly, slowly settling into her new status as a veteran (or perhaps as a survivor), and while she succeeds rather handsomely on those modest terms, it's more than a little odd to hear Madonna scaling back her ambition and settling for less rather than hungering for more.

Del álbum hay dos versiones, una *mixed* y otra *unmixed* de los que se han sacado cuatro *single*: *Hung Up*, *Sorry*, *Get Together* y *Jump*. El primer *single* *Hung Up*, publicado en octubre, anticipa el álbum. Con este *single* la cantautora italo-americana logra conquistar las atenciones de la crítica y obtiene dos *Guinness World Records*. *Sorry* es un up-tempo años ochenta-noventa, y es como una continuación del precedente *Hung Up*. *Get Together*, al contrario de los dos precedentes, es menosailable y *Jump* ha sido incluido en la banda sonora de la película *The Devil Wears Prada* de David Frankel, junto con *Vogue*. En agosto de 2006 sale *I'm Going to Tell You a Secret*<sup>5</sup> compuesto por un CD *live* que contiene algunas canciones grabadas durante el *Re-Invention Tour* del 2004 y un DVD con un documental que cuenta las intrigas de la tournée. El disco, que se abre con la canción *The Beast Within* (*b-side* del *single* *Justify My Love* en el que Madonna lee algunos pasos de la Apocalipsis), contiene también un *remix* de *Hollywood*, la cover de *Imagine* de John Lennon, la canción *Lament* de la banda sonora del film *Evita*, *Mother and Father* con versos de *Intervention* del álbum *American Life* y una versión rock inédita de *I Love New York* del álbum *Confessions on a Dance Floor*. Según Stephen Thomas Erlewine (2012):

Released just as her worldwide Confessions tour was hitting the States in the summer of 2006, *I'm Going to Tell You a Secret* is a CD/DVD package that isn't so much a souvenir of the tour but as a way to advertise it. The DVD contains a lengthy -- over two hours! which is longer than *Truth or Dare!* -- look at the tour, including its rehearsal plus some performance footage, while the CD offers a 14-track sampler of the set list, heavy on songs from *Music*, *American Life*, and *Confessions on a Dance Floor*. With the notable exception of "Vogue," the oldies on this CD have been given a makeover, so "Into the Groove" and especially "Holiday" feel like they could fit the Eurotrash, campy retro-disco feel of *Confessions*, while "Like a Prayer" is now a chilled-out come-down tune. Good, logical reworkings one and all, and they help give the disc a cohesive feel even if the live performance, like the album it's hawking, is kind of humorless. That said, as Madonna's first live CD, *I'm Going to Tell You a Secret* is strong and entertaining, and even if the excessive minutiae on the accompanying DVD means only hardcore fans will sit through its two hours, it's also quite well done. Which means *I'm Going to Tell You a Secret* serves its purpose well: it will convince anybody who is on the fence about going out to see the 2006 tour to go ahead and buy those expensive tickets already (although years from now, this combination of promotion and retrospective will probably seem odder than it already does).

Madonna apoya en África un proyecto humanitario para la construcción de un orfanato y sigue con la campaña de prevención del SIDA. Junto al marido Guy Ritchie adopta un niño, David, natural del Malawi nacido el 24 septiembre 2005. La adopción del niño ha generado muchas polémicas por unas presuntas violaciones de las leyes en temas de adopciones. En el programa de Oprah Winfrey, en directo,

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5) 1. *The Beast Within* (Lenny Kravitz/Madonna - parole tratte dalla Bibbia). 2. *Vogue* (Madonna/Shep Pettibone). 3. *Nobody Knows Me* (Madonna/Mirwais Ahmadzaï). 4. *American Life* (Madonna/Mirwais Ahmadzaï). 5. *Hollywood* (remix interlude) (Madonna/Mirwais Ahmadzaï). 6. *Die Another Day* (Madonna/Mirwais Ahmadzaï). 7. *Lament* (Tim Rice/Andrew Lloyd Webber). 8. *Like a Prayer* (Madonna/Patrick Leonard). 9. *Mother and Father* (Madonna/Mirwais Ahmadzaï). 10. *Imagine* (John Lennon). 11. *Susan MacLeod/Into the Groove* (Donald MacLeod/Madonna/Stephen Bray/Mirwais Ahmadzaï). 12. *Music* (Madonna/Mirwais Ahmadzaï). 13. *Holiday* (Curtis Hudson/Lisa Stevens). 14. *I Love New York* (Rock Version) (Madonna/Stuart Price) (Madonna, 2006).

Madonna explica la situación y se defiende de todas acusaciones infundadas. En octubre de 2008 se anuncia oficialmente el divorcio entre la cantante y el marido y director Guy Ritchie.

Durante el verano del 2006 Madonna parte con su *Confessions Tour*, con la canción *I Love New York* realiza el videoclip promocional. Nuevo escándalo por la elección de la artista que durante el *tour* se hace crucificar. La gira es *sold out*. En enero de 2007 publica el doble (cd y DVD) *The Confessions Tour*<sup>6</sup> que contiene el concierto entero dirigido por Jonas Åkerlund. Para promover el disco sólo por la radio se han emitido *Future Lovers/I Feel Love* y *Music Inferno*. Según Stephen Thomas Erlewine (2012):

Like I'm Going to Tell You a Secret before it, The Confessions Tour is a CD/DVD souvenir set documenting a new millennium Madonna concert -- this time, a London show at Wembley supporting her 2005 neo-disco album, Confessions on a Dance Floor. Unlike Secret, whose centerpiece was a lengthy documentary, this is a straight-up live album with the DVD capturing a full 21-song set and the CD culling 13 highlights from the set, a whopping eight of them from Confessions ("Sorry" and "Sorry [Remix]" counted separately since they are, after all, indexed separately here). Even if the newer songs don't sound radically different from their album incarnations -- they're either delivered straight or puffed out like extended 12" remixes -- the handful of oldies that do show up here are given disco makeovers: "Like a Virgin" pulses with electro keyboards; "Lucky Star" eventually gives away to the ABBA sample that drives "Hung Up." This helps give the CD on The Confessions Tour a sonic cohesion that's about as stylized and chilly as its accompanying album -- the unity means it holds together, yet that icy reserve means it's not all that much fun to hear, even if the reinterpretations of the 20-year-old hits are interesting. The DVD doesn't feel as cold thanks entirely to the pizzazz of the visuals and the determined efficiency of the show, but even so, this is primarily of interest to the diehards who don't mind purchasing another live CD/DVD set just a year after the first.

El CD contiene trece canciones del tour, entre ellas, las más representativas del álbum *Confessions on a Dance Floor* con *Future Lovers* que al final se transforma en la histórica *I Feel Love* de Donna Summer y con *Sorry* en una nueva versión remix. Encontramos la canción *Erotica* en una versión inédita de su demo original titulada *You Thrill Me*. El hit *Music* está presente en la versión *Music Inferno mixed* con el célebre *Disco Inferno*, citación de la banda sonora de *La febbre del sabato sera*.

Siempre más empeñada en lo social, participa en 2007 en el concierto evento organizado por Al Gore en el nuevo estadio de Wembley de Londres a favor de la defensa del medio ambiente. Presenta *Hey you* co-producida por Madonna y Pharrell Williams, descargables solo vía web en la página *Live Earth*, una nueva versión de *La isla bonita* con los Gogol Bordello, *Ray Of Light* y *Hung Up*.

Madonna dirige su primera película, *Filth and Wisdom*<sup>7</sup>, presentada en febrero del 2008 en el Festival de Berlín. Escribe la historia de *Filth and Wisdom* y decide ocupar el lugar detrás de la cámara, su *sogno nel*

6) CD. 1. Future Lovers/I Feel Love. 2. Like a Virgin. 3. Jump. 4. Confessions (Interlude). 5. Isaac. 6. Sorry. 7. Sorry Remix (Interlude). 8. I Love New York. 9. Let It Will Be. 10. Music Inferno. 11. Erotica. 12. Lucky Star. 13. Hung Up. Per gli utenti di iTunes sono scaricabili anche i brani: Get Together y Ray of Light. DVD. 1. Future Lovers/I Feel Love. 2. Get Together. 3. Like a Virgin. 4. Jump. 5. Confessions (Interlude/Dancers). 6. Live to Tell. 7. Forbidden Love. 8. Isaac. 9. Sorry. 10. Like It or Not. 11. Sorry (Remix - Interlude). 12. I Love New York. 13. Ray of Light. 14. Let It Will Be. 15. Drowned World/Substitute for Love. 16. Paradise (Not for Me). 17. Music Inferno. 18. Erotica/You Thrill Me. 19. La isla bonita. 20. Lucky Star. 21. Hung Up. (Madonna, 2007a).

7) Un film di Madonna. Con Eugene Hutz, Holly Weston, Vicky McClure, Richard E. Grant, Inder Manocha. Commedia, durata 80 min.- Gran Bretagna 2007 (Madonna, 2007b). Sorprendente esordio alla regia della popstar Madonna (che l'ha anche scritto con Dan Cadan). In Panorama del Festival di Berlino 2008 ebbe un successo delirante di pubblico e fu accolto da critici perplessi. Aveva ragione il pubblico. Ha fatto bene la Sacher di Nanni Moretti a distribuirlo. Non è un film "da festival" e nemmeno commerciale: basso costo, attori ignoti, indipendente, irriverente, trasgressivo. E fedele al titolo (originale): sporcizia e saggezza. Fa ridere spesso, ma è anche ironico, spudorato, tenero, malinconico. Lascia molto spazio a Hutz/AK, cantante ucraino di nascita e anglofono di mestiere, capo dei Gogol Bordello, band punk-gitana, fornitore di molta musica in un film che tra i suoi meriti vanta la brevità. Hutz campa a Londra, soddisfacendo il masochismo di insospettabili benestanti borghesi con un cinismo solo apparente. Doppiato da M. Cutrera, fa il mattatore, esibendosi in monologhi di saggezza popolare che cominciano con "nel mio paese si dice...". Ha molti amici tra cui due graziose coinquiline. Spensierato e complesso, è un film diverso (Morandini, 2012).

*cassette* desde mucho tempo. Es una comedia que cuenta la historia de tres personas que intentan entrar en el mundo del espectáculo. James Christopher de *The Times* de Londres ve una gran potencialidad en la neo-directora.

En marzo del 2008 se lanza en todo el mundo *4 Minutes*, presentado *in duetto* con Justin Timberlake y con la colaboración de Timbaland, es el primer single que precede la salida del álbum *Hard Candy*<sup>8</sup>. Este nuevo trabajo con sonoridad R&B y urban hip-pop cuenta con la importante participación de Timberlake, que ha co-escrito cinco canciones, y en cuatro de ellas canta junto a Madonna. Una nueva mutación para la popstar Madonna que trabajará con productores como Timbaland, Justin Timberlake, Pharrell Williams y Danja, con la colaboración de Swizz Beatz, Sean Garrett, Akon y Kanye West. Por primera vez después de decenios de vanguardia y de modas anticipadas, Madonna, para su álbum, se pone en manos de productores que ya están afirmados. *Hard Candy* es el decimoprimer álbum realizado en estudio. Según Stephen Thomas Erlewine (2012):

All through her career, it has been impossible to divorce Madonna's music from her image, as they feed off each other to the point where it's hard to tell which came first, the concept or the songs. Glancing at the aggressively ugly cover to *Hard Candy* -- its blistering pinks and assaultive leather suggesting cheap bottom-barrel porno -- it's hard not to wish that this is the one time Madge broke from tradition, offering music that wasn't quite as garish as her graphics. That is not the case. *Hard Candy* is all brutal hard edges and blaring primary colors, a relentlessly mercenary collection of cold beats and chilly innuendo. Sex has always been a driving force for Madonna, but she's never been as ruthlessly pornographic as she is here, not even when she cut *Erotica* as a companion to her softcore coffee-table book *Sex* back in 1992. For all of its carnality, *Erotica* was coy, belonging to the classic burlesque teasing tradition, but *Hard Candy* is utterly modern, a steely sex album for the age of Cialis. This new millennium is also an era when Top 40 has pretty much ceased to exist and a pop artist as sharp as Madonna knows this, so she has abandoned the idea of a big crossover hit -- the kind that *Erotica* courted with such gorgeous, shimmering adult contemporary ballads as "Rain" and "Bad Girl" -- and pitches *Hard Candy* directly toward her core audience of club-conscious, fashion-forward trendsetters.

This is a smart play, as this is the audience that has always consisted of Madonna loyalists, and it's also is a savvy way to negotiate the explosion of niches in 2008, but there are problems in her execution. Madonna relies on the Neptunes and the pair of Timbaland and Justin Timberlake for most of her modern makeover -- a good idea in theory as they are some of the biggest hitmakers of the decade, but the productions they've constructed here sound a couple years old at best and at worst feel like they're dressing Madonna in Nelly Furtado's promiscuous hand-me-downs. Sometimes this can result in reasonably appealing grooves -- "Candy Shop" captures Pharrell Williams' flair for slim, sleek grooves, "Dance 2night" conjures Timberlake's *Off the Wall* obsession nicely, and the icy heartbreak of "Miles Away" is a worthy successor to "What Goes Around Comes Around" -- but this also points out the album's main flaw: the track comes before the song. Madonna's greatness has always hinged on how she channeled dance trends into pop songs, placing equal emphasis on sound and melody, which provided a neat way to sneak underground club trends into the mainstream. Here, she cedes melodic hooks to rhythmic hooks -- witness the clanging,

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8) 1. Candy Shop (feat. Pharrell Williams) – 4:16 (P.Williams, Madonna). 2. 4 Minutes (feat. Justin Timberlake & Timbaland) – 4:04 (Madonna, T.Mosley, J.Timberlake, N.Hills). 3. Give It 2 Me (feat. Pharrell Williams) – 4:47 (P.Williams, Madonna). 4. Heartbeat – 4:04 (P.Williams, Madonna). 5. Miles Away – 4:49 (Madonna, T.Mosley, J.Timberlake, N.Hills). 6. She's Not Me – 6:05 (P.Williams, Madonna). 7. Incredible – 6:20 (P.Williams, Madonna). 8. Beat Goes On (feat. Kanye West & Pharrel Williams) – 4:27 (P.Williams, Madonna, K.West). 9. Dance 2night (feat. Justin Timberlake) – 5:03 (Madonna, T.Mosley, J.Timberlake, H.Lane). 10. Spanish Lesson – 3:38 (P.Williams, Madonna). 11. Devil Wouldn't Recognize You (feat. Justin Timberlake) – 5:08 (Madonna, T.Mosley, J.Timberlake, H.Lane, J.Henry). 12. Voices (feat. Justin Timberlake) – 3:39 (Madonna, T.Mosley, J.Timberlake, N.Hills, H.Lane). iTunes Store Deluxe Edition. 13. 4 Minutes (Bob Sinclar Space Funk Edit) – 3:00. 14. 4 Minutes (Junkie XL Remix Edit) – 4:00. 15. Give It to Me (Paul Oakenfold Edit) – 4:59 \*Nella versione iTunes Store Deluxe di alcuni Paesi (Nord America, Australia, Germania, Francia, Grecia, Italia, Austria, Portogallo e Svizzera) la prima traccia è nell'edizione Peter Saves New York Edit (Madonna, 2008).



cluttered “4 Minutes,” where she’s drowned out by Timbaland’s farting four-note synth -- which might not have been so bad if the tracks were fresher and if the whole enterprise didn’t feel quite so joylessly mechanical. Madonna doesn’t even sound desperate to sit atop current trends; rather, she’s following them because she’s *expected* to do so. There’s a palpable sense of disinterest here, as if she just handed the reins over to Pharrell and Timba-Lake, trusting them to polish up this piece of stale candy. Maybe she’s not into the music; maybe she’s just running out this last album for Warner before she moves onto the greener pastures of Live Nation -- either way, *Hard Candy* is a rare thing: a lifeless Madonna album.

En la portada del disco Madonna aparece sentada con las piernas abiertas, con encima un *corsetto nero* estilo *vintage* firmado por Dolce & Gabbana, botas de piel negras ceñidas y altas, y las manos con vendajes similares a los que utilizan los púgiles. Entorno a la cintura lleva un enorme cinturón dorado con la “M” de Madonna que confirma el halago al mundo del boxeo con las inscripciones “Give it to me” y “M-dolla” (diminutivo de *dollar*). Como fondo de la imagen hay unos caramelos rosas y blancos. El tema de los caramelos acompaña a todas las fotos del *booklet*. Después de *4 Minutes*, llegan *Give It 2 Me* con el *rapper* Pharrell Williams y *Miles Away* con videos inéditos de la nueva gira, todos éxitos mundiales. Para la *star* un nuevo *tour* mundial y un nuevo *live Sticky & Sweet*. Según Stephen Thomas Erlewine (2012):

Hard Candy may not have been Madonna’s biggest hit, but it -- like so many of her albums -- was supported by a major international tour. Madonna dubbed it *Sticky & Sweet* -- a none-too-subtle allusion to *Hard Candy*’s title -- which is also the name of this 2010 DVD/CD set capturing her stop at River Plate Stadium in Buenos Aires in 2008. Since so much of the tour depended on overblown spectacle, *Sticky & Sweet Tour* is better experienced as a video instead of a CD -- particularly because the audio portion is half the length of the video, and the songs included here tend to be medleys, not individual songs -- but even as a video this doesn’t rank among the best Madonna live albums, as there’s too much precision and not enough inspiration in the whole show.

Para celebrar la tercera década de éxitos se publica en septiembre del 2009 el tercer *greatest hits* de la cantante, *Celebration*<sup>9</sup>. El disco contiene dos inéditos: la *title track Celebration*, y *Revolver*. En la versión digital *download* hay un tercer inédito *It’s So Cool*. El *artwork* ha sido creado por el *street pop artist* Mr. Brainwash. *Celebration* está disponible también como *Video Collection*. En una investigación efectuada entre el 2000 y el 2009 Madonna resulta ser la celebridad más escuchada en el Reino Unido, sus canciones han sido las más retransmitidas por la radio, más que las de los Beatles, Robbie Williams y los Take That. Según Stephen Thomas Erlewine (2012):

Madonna’s run at the top of the charts lasted so long, longer than almost any other star, it’s almost impossible to squeeze all the hits onto one collection. And so it is that *Celebration*, a double-disc, 36-track set that also has a companion single-disc condensation, misses a few songs, hits as gorgeous as “Rain” and as goofily camp as “Hanky Panky,” but truth be told, they’re not greatly missed on this parade of pop genius that’s hampered only slightly by its non-chronological order. Out of order, it does emphasize Madonna’s consistency, and the bigger problem with the collection is that it mixes up album mixes, single edits, Q-Sound mixes pulled from *The Immaculate Collection*, and a couple of stray odd edits and mixes. This is a mess, but not quite enough to dilute what is one of

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9) 1. Hung Up. 2. Music. 3. Vogue (The Immaculate Collection Version). 4. Minutes (featuring Justin Timberlake e Timbaland). 5. Holiday. 6. Everybody (Single Edit). 7. Like a Virgin (The Immaculate Collection Version). 8. Into the Groove. 9. Like a Prayer. 10. Ray of Light (Radio Edit). 11. Sorry (Single Edit). 12. Express Yourself (Video Version Edit). 13. Open Your Heart (The Immaculate Collection Version). 14. Borderline. 15. Secret (Edit). 16. Erotica (Edit). 17. Justify My Love (The Immaculate Collection Version). 18. Revolver. Dress You Up (Radio Edit). 1. Dress You Up (Radio Edit). 2. Material Girl. 3. La isla bonita. 4. Papa Don’t Preach. 5. Lucky Star (Radio Edit). 6. Burning Up. 7. Crazy for You (The Immaculate Collection Version). 8. Who’s That Girl. 9. Frozen. 10. Miles Away (Radio Edit). 11. Take a Bow. 12. Live to Tell. 13. Beautiful Stranger. 14. Hollywood. 15. Die Another Day. 16. Don’t Tell Me. 17. Cherish (The Immaculate Collection Version). 18. Celebration. (Madonna, 2009)

the greatest bodies of work in modern pop -- even in this mixed-up confusion, these singles are a joy to hear.

Madonna vuelve a dirigir una nueva película *W. E. - Edward e Wallis*<sup>10</sup>, interpretada por Andrea Riseborough, James D'Arcy y Abbie Cornish, en la que narra la historia de amor atormentada entre Wallis Simpson y el rey Eduardo VIII. La señora Ciccone es capaz de exaltar la interpretación sublime de la historia de Wallis Simpson, considerada en patria una amante atormentada y en Inglaterra una trepa. Es una película que va más allá de la simple biografía o el cuento blando de una historia de amor. Madonna recibe el *Golden Globe* por *Masterpiece*, coproducida con William Orbit, como mejor canción original. La canción anticipa su último trabajo musical. *MDNA*<sup>11</sup> es el decimosegundo álbum en estudio de la cantautora italo-americana Madonna, publicado en marzo de 2012. El álbum se estrena en la primera posición de la *Billboard 200*. Según Stephen Thomas Erlewine (2012):

Most pop stars reach a point where they accept the slow march of time, but not Madonna. Time is Madonna's enemy -- an enemy to be battled or, better still, one to be ignored. She soldiers on, turning tougher, harder, colder with each passing album, winding up with a record as flinty as MDNA, the 2012 record that is her first release since departing Warner for Interscope. That's hardly the only notable shift in Madonna's life since the 2008 release of *Hard Candy*. Since then, she has divorced film director Guy Ritchie and has seen her '80s persona co-opted and perverted by Lady Gaga, events so cataclysmic she can't help but address them on MDNA. Madonna hits the divorce dead-on, muttering about "pre-nups" when she's not fiercely boasting of shooting her lover in the head, and she's not exactly shy about reasserting her dominion over dance and pop, going so far as to draft Nicki Minaj and M.I.A. as maid servants paying their respect to the queen. Whatever part of MDNA that isn't devoted to divorce is dedicated to proving that Madonna remains the preeminent pop star, working harder than anybody to stay just on the edge of the vanguard. All

10) Un film di Madonna. Con Abbie Cornish, Andrea Riseborough, James D'Arcy, Oscar Isaac, James Fox. Commedia rosa, durata 118 min.- Gran Bretagna 2011 (Madonna, 2011). Manhattan, 1998. La giovane Wally Winthrop, intrappolata in un matrimonio pubblicamente invidiabile ma personalmente umiliante, frequenta quotidianamente l'esposizione dei cimeli del duca e della duchessa di Windsor nei locali di Sotheby's e si lascia ossessionare dalla storia di re Edward, che negli anni Trenta abdicò alla guida dell'impero inglese per amore di Wallis Simpson, americana senza doti né dote, due volte divorziata. Mescolando i propri sogni ad occhi aperti con la lettura della vera corrispondenza di Wallis Simpson, la giovane immagina i retroscena di quella che è stata definita la più grande storia d'amore del ventesimo secolo e il sacrificio che ha imposto, anche o soprattutto a Wallis. Americana "esiliata" alla corte d'Inghilterra, Madonna s'identifica senza farne mistero in questa storia tra leggenda e verità, privacy e "pubblicità", prigionia e libertà. In questa sovrapposizione e nella conseguente riduzione della storia contemporanea a mero filtro, si assommano la genuinità e l'errore dell'approccio della regista alla materia, che per l'opera seconda rinuncia al contratto ludico e fresco insito in *Sacro e Profano* e scrive il suo primo lento. Nonostante Abbie Cornish incarni credibilmente il mix di romanticismo e tristezza del personaggio di Wally e regga dei primi piani molto intensi, i suoi sforzi si scontrano contro un personaggio che è puramente funzionale, spia interna dell'autrice, donna-schermo senza profondità e senza una storia "tutta per sé". Le sue inquadrature davanti alla vetrina dei gioielli, che più *Colazione da Tiffany* non si potrebbe, e gli abitini elegantemente neri della giovane Wally (che fanno da contraltare immaturo e trattenuto a quelli sì davvero moderni di Elsa Schiaparelli indossati da Mrs. Simpson), così come le scelte musicali, soffrono della stessa malattia: sono oggetti di bellezza senza profondità o autenticità, pezzi da museo, immagini senza movimento, imitazioni (come il collier esposto nella teca), prove di cinema. Madonna mette in mostra i propri gusti e le proprie passioni ma, specie nella seconda parte del film, s'invischia in un dialogo con se stessa che esclude lo spettatore critico e dà luogo non a caso a quei dialoghi tra le due Wally(s) che non sono sempre facili da perdonare (Cappi, 2012).

11) 1. *Girl Gone Wild* – 3:42 (Madonna, Jenson Vaughan, Alle Benassi, Benny Benassi). 2. *Gang Bang* – 5:26 (Madonna, William Orbit, Priscilla Hamilton, Keith Harris, Mika, Don Juan Demo Casanova, Stephen Kozmeniuk) – Non presente nella versione censurata del disco. 3. *I'm Addicted* – 4:32 (Madonna, Alle Benassi, Benny Benassi). 4. *Turn Up the Radio* – 3:46 (Madonna, Martin Solveig, Michael Tordjman, Jade Williams). 5. *Give Me All Your Luvin'* – 3:22 (Madonna, Martin Solveig, Nicki Minaj, M.I.A., Michael Tordjman) – (feat. Nicki Minaj). 6. *Some Girls* – 3:56 (Madonna, William Orbit, Klas Åhlund). 7. *Superstar* – 3:55 (Madonna, Indiigo). 8. *I Don't Give A* (feat. Nicki Minaj) – 4:19 (Madonna, Martin Solveig, Nicki Minaj, Julien Jabre). 9. *I'm a Sinner* – 4:54 (Madonna, William Orbit, Baptiste). 10. *Love Spent* – 3:46 (Madonna, William Orbit, Baptiste, Priscilla Hamilton, Elaine Whyte, Ryan Buendia, Michael McHenry). 11. *Masterpiece* – 3:58 (Madonna, Julie Frost, Jimmy Harry) 12. *Falling Free* – 5:12 (Madonna, Laurie Mayer, William Orbit, Joe Henry). 13. *Beautiful Killer* – 3:49 (Madonna, Martin Solveig, Michael Tordjman). 14. *I Fucked Up* – 3:29 (Madonna, Martin Solveig, Julien Jabre) – Non presente nella versione censurata del disco. 15. *B-Day Song* – 3:34 (Madonna, M.I.A., Martin Solveig) – (feat. M.I.A.). 16. *Best Friend* – 3:20 (Madonna, Martin Solveig, Nicki Minaj, Maya Arulpragasam, Michael Tordjman). 17. *Give Me All Your Luvin'* – 4:02 – (feat. Nicki Minaj e LMFAO) (Madonna, 2012).

this exertion leads to an excessively lean album: there's not an ounce of fat on MDNA, it's all overly defined muscle, every element working with designated purpose. Such steely precision means there's no warmth on MDNA, not even when Madonna directly confesses emotions she's previously avoided, but the cool calculations here are preferable to the electronic mess of *Hard Candy*, not least because there's a focus that flows all the way down to the pop hooks, which are as strong and hard as those on *Confessions on a Dance Floor* even if they're not quite so prominent as they were on that 2005 retro-masterwork. MDNA does echo the Euro-disco vibe of *Confessions* -- "Love Spent" consciously reworks the ABBA-sampling "Hung Up" -- yet as a whole it feels chillier, possibly due to that defensive undercurrent that pervades the album. Even if she's only measuring it in terms of pretenders to her throne, Madonna is aware of time passing yet she's compelled to fight it, to stay on top, to not slow down, to not waste a second of life, to keep working because the meaning of life is work, not pleasure. Naturally, all that labor can pay off, whether it's through the malevolent pulse of "Gang Bang" or the clever "Beautiful Stranger" rewrite "I'm a Sinner," but, ironically for all of Madonna's exhausting exertion elsewhere, these are the songs that benefit from her finely honed skills as a pop craftsman, illustrating that no matter how she combats it, she can't escape her age and may indeed be better off just embracing it.

El título *MDNA* es una abreviación de su nombre, como ha explicado el productor Martin Solveig. No hay ninguna intención de promocionar droga, por la semejanza con el nombre de la droga MDMA (éxtasis). Aquí se promociona sólo una droga inocua y excitante: la música. El segundo single es *Girl Gone Wild*, canción producida por la misma cantante y los primos Benny Benassi y Alle Benassi. Siguen *Give me All Your Luvin'*, *Girl Gone Wild* y *Turn Up the Radio*. El 31 de mayo de 2012, en Tel Aviv, comienza su nuevo *tour* mundial *MDNA Tour*. *Ma non finisce qui... to be continued...*

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