

## Song of the Week: Hollywood - Marina and the Diamonds

Wednesday, 24 February 2010 01:00 -

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By **Stephanie King**

The first time I heard this song I thought it was one of the ugliest rackets I'd heard in a long time. It sounded like *Love Music Angel Baby*-era [Gwen Stefani](#) stripped of its haute-couture edge and replaced with the sales rack at New Look.

Nevertheless it infected my brain with its tenacious catchiness. I cracked my knuckles, bared my teeth and joyfully prepared to rip it apart. Naturally I was compelled to listen to it repeatedly so as to work out precisely why I detested it. I've done that, and I'm sorry to say I actually quite like this now. Oh, for shame.

What can I say? Its synthetic Wurlitzer keyboards, its jarring stabbed piano chords and plinky-ponky verses just got to me. Those Disneyfied nursery rhythms and deeply shallow lyrics (with a message! \*yawn\*) are insidiously memorable, and the sing-along chorus sounds like the spawn of an evil pop svengali with a pied piper's knack for brainwashing "the kids".

Marina's voice is sticky, divisive Marmite. Her droney purr, half-hearted attempts at droppin' her vowels and oh-verrr eee-nun-ceee-8-ting ev-er-ree sill-aa-bol (while remaining mysteriously indecipherable) leads me to suspect that she cannot sing.

In fact, it's fortuitous that *Hollywood* has a character comparing her to Shakira and Catherine Zeta Jones. She looks every inch the earthy [Marietta](#), but her shrieks, warbles and disco wobbles stray dangerously close to [She Wolf](#)

territory. At least Marina doesn't attempt any dodgy breakdancing in the video, so let's be grateful for small mercies, eh?

Actually Marina has much going in her favour. She is eminently likeable, beautiful and glamorous, the video for *Hollywood* is a gorgeous nightmare and she seems to have generated an unfathomable amount of goodwill and support from music journos and listeners alike. Oh yeah, and her other stuff is actually quite good. \*Rant starts\*

*While we're on the subject, I'd appreciate it if we could please stop pretending that any semi-interesting female singer is even vaguely comparable to the goddess that is*

[Kate Bush](#)

. C'mon folks, Marina isn't even as good as

[Florence](#)

, and even she's a side-order of low-fat Kate Bush minus the originality.

\*Rant ends\*

Deep breath.

Hollywood is 2010's answer to Beyonce's [Single Ladies](#) - embarrassing lyrics and tacky songwriting mask fascinating, intelligent production.

*Hollywood's*

opening booming drums are shudderingly good, and the chorus' tinny, echoey backing only reinforces the shallow magnetism of hollow Tinseltown. It's a perfect match of sound and sentiment. And, despite my best efforts to undermine Marina's "unusual" phrasing, I can't pretend I don't go gooey when she yells

*OH MY GOD!*

So what am I left with? The greasy residue of shame and a crush on Marina Lambrini Diamandis. Someone better hurry up and release something obscure and difficult so I can show my face around here next week.