

Song Title **RICH GIRL (Gwen Stefani version)**

Rating: **NO**

REVIEWERS' NOTE

This song is inadmissible due to clear [cultural appropriation](#). Gwen Stefani has been a serial and unapologetic offender throughout her career, targeting a number of marginalized communities – African American, Chola, East Indian. This song is an especially egregious example where the target community is the [Harajuku](#) area of Tokyo, internationally known as a center of Japanese youth culture and fashion, specifically "[Harajuku Girls](#)."

Stefani built her 2004 debut solo album, *Love. Angel. Music. Baby.*, around a "Harajuku aesthetic." This in and of itself may not have been an issue, but for the way she went about it. She hired 4 young Japanese and Japanese-American women, calling them her "Harajuku Girls" and naming them Love, Angel, Music, and Baby (L.A.M.B.), and even referred to them as her "imaginary friends." She not only used them as backup dancers in her videos, but also paraded them around as her entourage in public appearances, silently voguing behind her during interviews, and reportedly contractually obligated them to not speak or speak only in Japanese in public.

Comedian [Margaret Cho describes](#) Stefani's Harajuku Girls as a [minstrel show](#) that reinforces ethnic stereotypes of Asian women as weak and submissive. Writer [Mihi Ahn notes](#): "Stefani has taken Tokyo hipsters, sucked them dry of all their street cred, and turned them into China dolls," little more than ethnic accessories and props.

The lyrics in *Rich Girl* exemplify the objectification, tokenization, and fetishization that makes this song so problematic (referring to "getting" these young women and dressing and naming them as if they were dolls or pets):

I'd get me four Harajuku girls to (uh huh)
Inspire me and they'd come to my rescue
I'd dress them wicked, I'd give them names (yeah)
Love, angel, music, baby

... ..

From the hoods of Japan

... ..

See Stefani and her L.A.M.B.,* I rock the fetish

*L.A.M.B. refers to the names she gave the 4 young Japanese women

Additional References:

[Gwen Stefani hits back at Harajuku Girls cultural appropriation claims](#)

[Gwen Stefani's History of Cultural Appropriation – Femestella](#)

[Harajuku Girls - Wikipedia](#)

["R-E-S-P-E-C-T . . . Find Out What It Means to Me": Appropriating vs. Appreciating Cultures](#)

[Culture Appropriation Resources | Project Humanities](#)

[When Does Appreciation Become Appropriation \(video\)](#)

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What year was this song written? 2004

Who wrote the lyrics?

Andre Young / Chantal Kreviazuk / Eve Jeffers / Gwen Stefani / Jerry Bock / Kara Dioguardi / Mark Batson / Mike Elizondo / Sheldon Harnick

What did your research tell you about the lyricist?

Since there are so many arrangers and lyricists involved I will add information about Gwen Stefani and links to the other:

Gwen Renée Stefani (born October 3, 1969) is an American singer, rapper, songwriter, fashion designer and actress. She is a co-founder, lead vocalist, and the primary songwriter of the band No Doubt, but has since 2004 pursued a solo career. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwen_Stefani

Dr Dre (Andre Young) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr._Dre

Chantal Kreviazuk https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chantal_Kreviazuk

Eve Jeffers [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eve_\(rapper\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eve_(rapper))

Jerry Brock https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry_Bock

Kara Dioguardi https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kara_DioGuardi

Mark Batson https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Batson

Mike Elizondo https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Elizondo

Sheldon Harnick https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheldon_Harnick

What other material has been written by this lyricist?

"What You Waiting For?"

"Hollaback Girl"

"Cool"

"Luxurious"

"Crash"

"The Sweet Escape"

Who is the composer of this song?

Andre Young / Chantal Kreviazuk / Eve Jeffers / Gwen Stefani / Jerry Bock / Kara Dioguardi / Mark Batson / Mike Elizondo / Sheldon Harnick

Please provide a link to the original song lyrics.

[Gwen Stefani – Rich Girl Lyrics](#) (these are different from the [Louchie Lou & Michie One lyrics](#))

Read the lyrics as a poem or a story. Who and what is this song about, as originally intended by the composer and earlier performers?

It's about a girl who dreams of getting rich and how she thinks her life will be like then, but at the same time she knows that money isn't everything and can't replace love.

What did you learn about the history OF THE SONG?

"**Rich Girl**" is a song by American singer and songwriter [Gwen Stefani](#) from her debut solo studio album, *Love. Angel. Music. Baby.* (2004). Produced by Dr. Dre, the track features American rapper [Eve](#), and is a remake of Louchie Lou & Michie One's 1993 song of the same name, which is in turn an adaptation of the *Fiddler on the Roof* song "If I Were a Rich Man". Stefani says the song discusses her dreams of fame and riches from the perspective of "when she was just an Orange County girl."

The last song to be included on the album, "Rich Girl" was released as the album's second single in late 2004 to mixed reviews from music critics. It was a commercial success, reaching the top 10 on most of the charts it entered. In the United States, "Rich Girl" was certified gold, and it received a nomination for Best Rap/Sung Collaboration at the 48th Annual Grammy Awards.

Share a link to the earliest performance of this song that you can find.

[Gwen Stefani - Rich Girl \(Official Music Video\) ft. Eve](#)

[RICH GIRL - LOUCHIE LOU & MICHIE ONE \(ORIGINAL VERSION\) \(1993\) \[MUSIC ORIGINAL\]](#)

Look up the original sheet music to this song. Does any illustration or other characteristic of the sheet music reflect an inappropriate theme? No

Please explain why the illustrations in the sheet music ARE or ARE NOT problematic. No illustrations.

Did this song, originally or subsequently, demean a marginalized racial/ethnic group (a group considered at a social disadvantage) through idiomatic expressions, metaphors, jargon, or message? And/or does the song present a sanitized/idyllic or false narrative regarding the American South and the life of the enslaved or newly freed OR of other marginalized racial/ethnic groups and their history? Yes

Please explain your reasoning for the answer above and indicate if your group feels the song should not be performed by Sweet Adelines. (If you answered NO, enter n/a, unless you wish to explain your answer.)

See Reviewers' Note at the top of this document.

Additional Questions to Consider (do not pertain to Admissibility)

The remaining questions pertain to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion issues other than those of race. As such, **THESE QUESTIONS DO NOT AFFECT A SONG'S ADMISSIBILITY**. They are provided to encourage your group to consider factors that may affect members of your audience and/or your performers with regard to religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, and more. ***Please refer to the Music Choices section of [Chapter Choices to Address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) (in the [Chorus Toolkit](#)) for details and strategies related to these factors.***

Could the message/lyrics of the song, original or subsequent, limit any singer or audience member's ability to engage, related to the following? A YES answer does not imply that the song is demeaning or exclusionary. [Please see instructions here.](#)

Age: N/A

Disability: N/A

Gender: N/A

Religion: N/A

Sexual Orientation: N/A

Visible Physical Difference: N/A

Other? N/A

Because this song is inadmissible, this section of the SAT document is not applicable.