



## Madonna feat. Justin Timberlake: 4 Minutes

I like the sound of Madonna's latest self-reinvention featuring Justin Timberlake, '4 Minutes'. I love the heavy marching bassline, and the offbeat throughout keeps edging the song forward towards its climactic 4th minute. It's already reached number one in the charts and is annoyingly catchy enough to be one of the theme tunes to the early summer.

But having heard the song a few times, and watching the video on youtube, I'm slightly uneasy about the message that I'm being bombarded with. And I mean bombarded. The drive of the song is relentless, as its title phrase suggests 'we've only got 4 minutes to save the world' - otherwise meaning that we're going to cram in everything we can to these four minutes and watch your head meltdown in overload.

Whilst the video makes it pretty clear that the whole countdown is intended to be a flirting ritual between Madonna and JT, I think the overwhelming feeling that comes through the lyrics isn't simply about partners getting together. I think there's a bit of a presentation of life's pressures and stresses in there too:

*Well don't waste time / just give  
me a sign  
If you want it / ya already got it  
/ if you thought it / it better be  
what you want  
But if I die tonight / at least I*

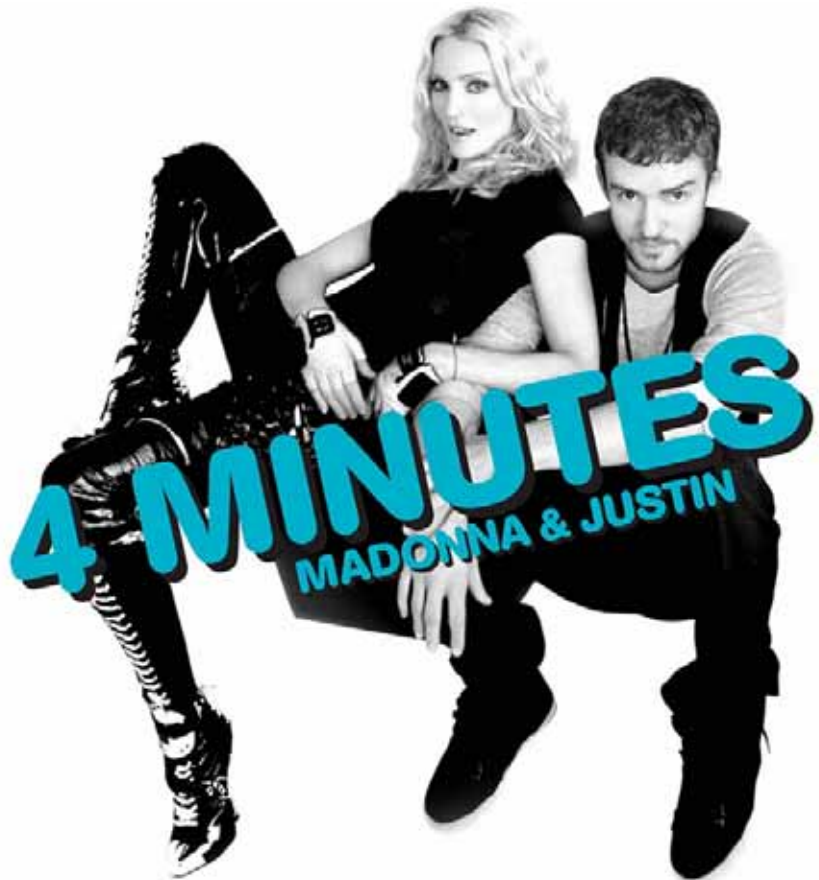
*can say I did what I wanted to do  
/ tell me how 'bout you?*

I feel like I'm being pressurized through a steamroller of a song, being forced to make the right decision, here and now, before the opportunity is lost.

And life sometimes feels like that, as we're constantly questioned over the choices we make and the decisions that we commit to, and the implications

of those choices. It might not be anything earth shattering, but even down to what clothes I'll wear today, and what subject I'll study for GCSEs or whatever - all the pressure of decision-making gets tiring.

I guess it all got me pondering because elsewhere this week, I was reading some thoughts written by a guy called Jurgen Moltmann, where he was talking about a 'poor infinity' of endless immediate living. What I think he



meant by that was that if we're constantly backed into a corner, forced to make choices based only on what we feel right now ('if you feel it / it must be real just / say the word...'), it becomes a poor version of what life is about. To truly appreciate the joy of freedom of choice, we must be able to reflect on our past and look to the future, as well as looking at this present moment.

Put simply, rather than giving up playing the piano just because you dislike practicing your grade 4 scales today, you could look back at the pride of passing your

grade 3 after all that hard work, and consider your future hopes to be able to play anything that Linkin Park release at parties to impress all your mates. The truth of the matter is you don't just have 4 minutes to save the world or make your choices count - you have a lifetime.

Particularly at the moment, we're thinking of the Holy Spirit at the time of Pentecost. If you're worried about a decision you have to make, or feel pressured to do something that you're not sure about, ask the Holy Spirit for peace and help in decision-making.

*It might help to think that the Holy Spirit is like the 'memory' of God, reminding us of where we've come from. The Holy Spirit is like the 'prompting' of God, helping us in this present moment. And the Holy Spirit is like the 'promise' of God for the future - a future that will take far more than 4 minutes to unfold all its potential!*