

First Last

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Girl on Fire

Singing competitions have captured my attention for the last several years. The hit show, *The Voice* has been running for over five years and has easily proven to be one of the best singing competitions. The song, “Girl on Fire” originally sung by Alicia Keys was covered by a female contestant named Koryn Hawthorne. When Alicia Keys performs the song, she sings with conviction. However, when Koryn Hawthorne performed the song, she sang the exact song, except she sang with emotion. I chose Koryn Hawthorne’s version “Girl on Fire” because I not only enjoy the lyrics, but I bonded with the way it made me feel.

By comparing a woman to a fire shows that a woman is strong, powerful, and majestic. In the song, “Girl on Fire” Alicia Keys writes, “Looks like a girl, but she’s a flame” tells the listener that a girl is more than her appearance. When a person sees a flame, they think of fire. When a person sees a fire, they know to be cautious around the flame because it can change at any given moment. Yet, when a person sees a girl, unfortunately that is all that they see. Women have fought tirelessly to be seen by their peers. From being able to own property, to voting, and to be seen as an equal to a man. Keys continues to tell the listener that, “You can try but you’ll never forget her name” meaning that no matter how hard a person tries to push a woman, she will not falter. “Everyone stands as she goes by/ Cause they can see the flame that’s in her eyes”, (Keys, Alicia) shows that when a woman is on a path, she cannot be stopped. People have no choice but to stop and watch as she blazes past them. This song speaks in volumes because it

is important for all women to remember that they are more than their outer self. Being compared to a fire shows that women can set trails and be at the forefront of whatever they chose to be apart of. There were times in my life when I felt invisible and alone. At times I could be in a room filled with people and feel small and out of place. I was not able to break away from those preconceptions until I realized that I mattered. Once I realized that I was strong, powerful, and majestic I decided that I wanted to be seen for who I was and for my accomplishments.

When my song was played for my peers, I received a variety of responses. Many students seemed shocked to listened to a cover of song, instead of the popular Alicia Keys version. As an individual who sings daily, the reason I listen to songs are because of the way songs are sung. One classmate pointed out that I could have chosen the song because I liked the performer. Some thought that I was a male and that I was attracted to the girl singing the song. Others pinned me as emotional, confident, and independent. My peers even thought that I enjoyed opera music. It was surprising at how accurate most of the assumptions were true with why I chose this song. I am confident, emotional, and independent. I love opera, and I do have a connection with the contestant. I did meet Koryn Hawthorne's brother and I this specific performance live. I did not fit into any specific stereotype. The response from my peers was refreshing because I was not stereotyped as just girl.

If this song were used in a secondary form of communication, it would be based on the McQuail Model of Communication: interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is simply communication with another person. When I play this song for a friend, I typically get an eye roll from them. But when I play this song for my best friend, she gets lost in song. There is also a difference in responses when I play the song for people who know how to sing, versus when I play it for people who do not know how to sing. The people who do not know how to

sing think that the song was fine when Alicia Keys sang it. And sometimes they do not even finish the whole song. Whereas when I play the song for people who are vocalists, they analyze the way the song is sung. Typically, the song is played on repeat to fully live in the song. I am often judged on the song because people have like different genres of music. When I play an R&B song to a person who loves alternative rock, the reactions are not the same as mine. They tune the song out entirely. It depends on who I play the song for, the outcome of how they will feel about it.

Music is a powerful source of creativity. “Girl on Fire” is my walk-up song because it tells a story of a girl who demands to be seen. The song is sung with conviction and emotion, two very real qualities that I feel everyone to should possess. If you do not believe in yourself then no one else will. This exercise has taught me that when you put thoughts and words into a mass communication setting, the feedback is going to vary across every channel, because people are interpreting information differently. Since this happens so quickly, you cannot take it back. Once it is out in the world, it cannot be undone, so one should be careful of the messages they are projecting to the world.