

= Clocks (song) =

" Clocks " is a song by British alternative rock band Coldplay . It was written and composed , as a collaboration between all the members of the band , for their second album , A Rush of Blood to the Head . Built around a piano riff , the song features cryptic lyrics of contrast and urgency themes . Several remixes of the track exist and its riff has been widely sampled .

" Clocks " debuted to critical and commercial success , with critics mainly commenting on the song 's piano melody . It was released in the United Kingdom as the third single from A Rush of Blood to the Head , where it reached number nine in the UK Singles Chart . It was released in the United States as the album 's second single , it reached number 29 on the Billboard Hot 100 and number 9 on Billboard 's Modern Rock Tracks chart . It won the Grammy Award for Record of the Year .

= = Background and writing = =

" Clocks " was written and composed during the late stages of production of Coldplay 's second album , A Rush of Blood to the Head . A riff popped into Chris Martin 's mind late one night in Liverpool when he came in to the studio , where he then developed it on piano . According to Martin , " Clocks " was inspired by the English rock band Muse . Martin presented the riff to the band 's guitarist , Jonny Buckland , who then added a layer of guitar chords to the basic track : " He picked up his guitar [a sure sign that he likes a song] and played these brilliant chords ... It was like a chemical reaction process . " (The syncopated piano arpeggio that gives the song its signature sound also bears a similarity to a syncopated arpeggio that is repeated several times in Alex De Grassi 's 1981 instrumental " Clockwork . ")

Before writing and composing " Clocks , " the band had already written 10 songs for the album . But as they thought it was too late for the song 's inclusion in the album , since A Rush Of Blood To The Head was nearing completion , they recorded a demo and saved it with other unfinished tracks , labeling it " Songs for # 3 ; " the band projected these tracks for what would be their third album .

By June 2002 , Coldplay were ready to present the album to their record label Parlophone . However , Martin felt it was " rubbish ; " they were so far from being completely satisfied with the album that both the band and Parlophone delayed the release . After a headlining tour , Coldplay went on working " Songs for # 3 . " Phil Harvey , a friend of Martin and the band 's manager , heard it and egged him on to rework " Clocks " immediately . With lyrics that speak of urgency , Harvey pointed out that its meaning would contradict Martin 's idea of stashing the track . Thus persuaded by Harvey , Martin then further developed " Clocks , " while other band members supplemented their ideas based on the main piano track , adding bass and drums . Coldplay recorded the song very quickly , since they were running after the postponed schedule of A Rush of Blood to the Head , which was released two months later .

= = Composition = =

" Clocks " has a repeating piano melody , and features a minimalist soundscape of drums and bass guitar . Martin applied an ostinato , with emphasis that imitates a three against two polyrhythm , as well as a descending scale on the piano chord progression , which switches from major to minor chords . The music of " Clocks " is also provided using synthesizers and a sparse string arrangement .

The themes of the lyrics include contrast , contradictions and urgency . According to Jon Wiederhorn of MTV News , " Martin seems to address the helplessness of being in a dysfunctional relationship he doesn 't necessarily want to escape . " The lyrics are cryptic ; the ending lines of the second verse emphasize contradicting emotion : " Come out upon my seas / Cursed missed opportunities / Am I a part of the cure / Or am I part of the disease ? " The song 's title also " metaphorically alludes " to its lyrics , " pushing one to wonder about the world 's obsession with time while connecting it to the theory : make the best of it when we ? re here , present and alive . "

The song is in the key of E flat Mixolydian , with a main chord progression of E ? - B ? m - Fm .

= = Personnel = =

Chris Martin ? lead vocals , piano , synthesizer
Jonny Buckland ? electric guitar
Guy Berryman ? bass guitar
Will Champion ? drums , backing vocals

= = Release and music video = =

Coldplay released " Clocks " in Europe on 24 March 2003 as the album 's third single . The single was issued with two B @-@ sides : " Animals , " which was one of the band 's favourite songs performed on tour but was not included in the album , and " Crests of Waves . " The single 's cover , created by Sølve Sundsbø as with the album 's and its other singles , is a portrayal of Chris Martin . Across the United States , while preparing " The Scientist " as the album 's second release , Coldplay 's US label felt the song failed to " provide enough of a blood rush for American listeners ; " instead , they released " Clocks " as the second single in the US .

A music video was filmed in support of the song . It was directed by British film maker Dominic Leung , and shot at Docklands ' ExCeL Building in London . It features the band performing the song , with a laser show , in front of a staged audience , mostly local college students . Stage effects and blue @-@ red light transitions give the video a surreal feel , while a stoic crowd make up the audience .

= = Reception = =

The song received acclaim from music critics . Rob Sheffield , in his review of the album for Rolling Stone magazine , said : that " [guitarist] Buckland shines in excellent psychedelic rockers such as ... ' Clocks . ' " David Cheal of The Daily Telegraph said that " Clocks " features a " hypnotic piano riff , a pounding , almost frantic rhythm , and a contagious tune , all building to a gorgeously serene climax with Martin 's floaty voice singing . " Scott Floman , music critic for Goldmine magazine , described the song as " a stunningly pretty piano rocker , absolutely perfect and is simply one of the finest songs of the decade . "

" Clocks " won the Record of the Year at the 2004 Grammy Awards . It was nominated for Best Single at the 2003 Q Awards . " Clocks " was ranked at number 68 on Pitchfork 's Top 100 Singles of 2000 @-@ 04 . It was ranked at number 155 on Pitchfork Media 's 500 Greatest Songs of the 2000s list . In October 2011 , NME placed it at number 148 on its list " 150 Best Tracks of the Past 15 Years " . In February 2013 the song was voted by listeners of BBC Radio 6 Music as the greatest song released during the 10 years the station had been broadcasting .

The single was successful in radio throughout 2003 and appeared on several singles charts worldwide . In the United Kingdom , the song peaked at number nine and in the United States rose to number 29 . It also reached number seven in Canada and number 28 in Australia .

= = = The piano riff and its parallels = = =

" Clocks " has been regarded as one of the finest achievements of Coldplay ; the song 's piano progression remains the band 's signature creation . According to The New York Times , the opening piano arpeggios of " Clocks " have been widely sampled . Also , many of the songs in X & Y feature influences from " Clocks . " Brian Cohen of Billboard magazine noted that " Clocks " served as a " launching pad " for songs featured in X & Y , " several of which echo that track either in structure or feel . " " Speed of Sound , " the first single from Coldplay 's third album , X & Y , is similar to " Clocks , " in that the two songs have the same descending chord progression . According to The New York Times , American singer Jordin Sparks 's 2008 single " No Air " " breathes life into the overfamiliar piano line " from " Clocks . " The song " Should I Go " by American singer Brandy

Norwood , from her album *Afrodisiac* , samples the piano riff of " Clocks , " as does Mexican singer Alejandro Fernández 's 2007 single " Te Voy A Perder . " In 2009 , French DJ David Guetta , featuring Kelly Rowland , released the song " When Love Takes Over , " which has a piano introduction like " Clocks . " A riff similar to " Clocks " was also used for the 2009 song " Shining Down " by Chicagoan hip hop artist Lupe Fiasco and featuring Matthew Santos . An analogous riff can also be heard in the DJ Cahill Remix of the Agnes song I Need You Now . Rolling Stone ranked it # 490 of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time in 2010 .

= = Usage in media = =

Throughout 2003 , " Clocks " was featured in various commercials , movies and television programs : from the BBC using a sample to advertise Freeview TV , WWE promos featuring the return of American professional wrestler Kurt Angle , HBO , the 2002 Irish drama film *In America* , and an episode of the American medical drama television series *ER* . The song was played in its entirety during the ending credits for the 2003 film *Confidence* and was also featured on the TV shows *The Sopranos* , *Third Watch* , *Hindsight* , and *Family Guy* . In late 2003 , the song was used in a trailer for the movie *Peter Pan* . This song was also used in the 2006 Disney film , *The Wild* and the 2014 *Blue Skies* film , *Rio 2* .

= = Reworked version and remixes = =

A number of versions and remixes of " Clocks " exist .

Norwegian duo Röyksopp made a remixed version of the song , pressed on 1000 , limited @-@ edition 12 " vinyl records , 100 of which were made available through the band 's official website . The version placed fifth in the Triple J Hottest 100 , 2003 (the original version of the song placed 69th the previous year) .

In 2004 , R & B singer Brandy , together with producer Timbaland , sampled " Clocks " for her song " Should I Go " on her fourth studio album *Afrodisiac* .

A remixed cover of the song is included on the soundtrack of the 2007 video game *Dance Dance Revolution : Hottest Party* for the Wii console .

The song , albeit with altered lyrics , appears in the Two and a Half Men episode " Twanging Your Magic Clanger . "

Live versions appeared on Coldplay 's live albums *Live 2003* , *LeftRightLeftRightLeft* (2009) , and *Live 2012* .

A version of the song in the style of Buena Vista Social Club appears on the 2006 *Rhythms del Mundo* album .

A further version based on the 2006 *Rhythms Del Mundo* version was released as part of the 2010 album *Revival* . It features " Lele " of Los Van Van .

= = Track listings = =

Official remixes

" Clocks " (Royksopp Trembling Heart Mix)

" Clocks " (Fedde le Grand Remix)

" Clocks " (Deep Dish Mix)

" Clocks " (Gabriel & Dresden ' I Gotta Thank You ' Mix)

" Clocks " (Tom Middleton 's Cosmos Mix)

" Clocks " (Judge Jules Remix)

" Clocks " (David X Mix)

= = Charts and certifications = =