

= Lola (song) =

" Lola " is a song written by Ray Davies and performed by English rock band the Kinks on their album *Lola Versus Powerman and the Moneygoround , Part One* . The song details a romantic encounter between a young man and a possible transvestite , whom he meets in a club in Soho , London . In the song , the narrator describes his confusion towards a person named Lola who " walked like a woman and talked like a man " . Although Ray Davies claims that the incident was inspired by a true encounter experienced by the band 's manager , alternate explanations for the song have been given by drummer Mick Avory .

The song was released in the United Kingdom on 12 June 1970 , while in the United States it was released on 28 June 1970 . Commercially , the single reached number two on the UK Singles Chart and number nine on the Billboard Hot 100 . Due to its controversial subject matter and use of the brand name Coca @-@ Cola , the single received backlash and even bans in Britain and Australia . The British version of the song uses the phrase " cherry cola " while the US version uses the name " Coca @-@ Cola . " The track has since become one of The Kinks ' most iconic and popular songs , later being ranked number 422 on " Rolling Stone 's 500 Greatest Songs of All Time " as well as number 473 on the " NME 's 500 Greatest Songs Of All Time " list .

Since its release , " Lola " has appeared on multiple compilation and live albums . In 1980 , a live version of the song from the album *One for the Road* was released as a single in America and some European countries , becoming a minor hit . Other versions include live renditions from 1972 's *Everybody 's in Show @-@ Biz* and 1996 's *To the Bone* . The " Lola " character also made an appearance in the lyrics of the band 's 1981 song , " Destroyer " .

= = Background = =

Ray Davies has claimed that he was inspired to write " Lola " after Kinks manager Robert Wace spent a night in Paris dancing with a transgender woman . Davies said of the incident , " In his apartment , Robert had been dancing with this black woman , and he said , ' I 'm really onto a thing here . ' And it was okay until we left at six in the morning and then I said , ' Have you seen the stubble ? ' He said ' Yeah , ' but he was too pissed [intoxicated] to care , I think . "

Drummer Mick Avory has offered an alternate explanation for the song 's lyrics , claiming that " Lola " was partially inspired by Avory 's frequenting of transgender bars in west London . Avory said , " We used to know this character called Michael McGrath . He used to hound the group a bit , because being called The Kinks did attract these sorts of people . He used to come down to Top of the Pops , and he was publicist for John Stephen 's shop in Carnaby Street . He used to have this place in Earl 's Court , and he used to invite me to all these drag queen acts and transsexual pubs . They were like secret clubs . And that 's where Ray [Davies] got the idea for ' Lola . ' When he was invited too , he wrote it while I was getting drunk . "

Despite claims that the song was written about a supposed date between Ray Davies and trans woman actress Candy Darling , Davies has since claimed this rumour to be false , saying that the two only went out to dinner together and that he had known the whole time of Darling 's gender identity .

In his autobiography , Dave Davies said that he came up with the music for what would become " Lola " , noting that brother Ray added the lyrics after hearing it . In a 1990 interview , Dave Davies claimed that " Lola " was written in a similar fashion to ' You Really Got Me ' in that the two worked on Ray 's basic skeleton of the song , saying that the song was more of a collaborative effort than many believed .

= = Writing and recording = =

Written in April 1970 , " Lola " was cited by Ray Davies as the first song he wrote following a break he took to act in the 1970 Play for Today film *The Long Distance Piano Player* . Davies said that he had initially struggled with writing an opening that would sell the song , but the rest of the song "

came naturally . "

Initial recordings of the song began in April 1970 , but , as the band 's bassist John Dalton remembered , recording for " Lola " took particularly long , stretching into the next month . During April , four to five versions were attempted , utilizing different keys as well as varying beginnings and styles . In May , new piano parts were added to the backing track by John Gosling , the band 's new piano player that had just been auditioned . Vocals were also added at this time . The song was then mixed during that month . Mick Avory remembered the recording sessions for the song positively , saying that it " was fun , as it was the Baptist 's [John Gosling 's] first recording with us . "

The guitar opening on the song was produced as a result of combining the sound of a Martin guitar and a vintage Dobro resonating guitar . Ray Davies cited this blend of guitar sounds for the song 's unique guitar sound .

= = Release and controversy = =

Despite the chart success " Lola " would achieve , its fellow Lola vs. Powerman track " Powerman " was initially considered to be the first single from the album . However , " Lola " , which Ray Davies later claimed was an attempt to write a hit , was eventually decided on as the debut single release .

" Lola " was released as a single in 1970 . In the UK , the B @-@ side to the single was the Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society outtake " Berkeley Mews " while the Dave Davies @-@ penned " Mindless Child of Motherhood " was used in the US . It became an unexpected chart smash for the Kinks , reaching number two in Britain and number nine in the United States . The single also saw success worldwide , reaching the top of the charts in Ireland , New Zealand , and South Africa , as well as the top 5 in Germany , Austria , Belgium , and Switzerland . The success of the single had important ramifications for the band 's career at a critical time , allowing them to negotiate a new contract with RCA Records , construct their own London Studio , and assume more creative and managerial control . In a 1970 interview , Dave Davies claimed that , if " Lola " had been a failure , the band would have " gone on making records for another year or so and then drifted apart . "

Although the track was a major hit for the band , Dave Davies did not enjoy the success of " Lola " , saying , " In fact , when ' Lola ' was a hit , it made me feel a bit uncomfortable . Because it was taking us out of a different sort of comfort zone , where we 'd been getting into the work , and the writing and the musicality was more thought about . It did have that smell of : ' Oh blimey , not that again . ' I found it a bit odd , that period . And then it got odder and weirder . " Mick Avory said that he " enjoyed the success " the band had with " Lola " and its follow @-@ up , " Apeman . "

= = = Censorship = = =

Originally , " Lola " received backlash for its controversial lyrics . Talks of censorship began to arise , with some radio stations fading the track out before Lola 's biological sex was revealed . On 18 November 1970 , the song was even banned in Australia because of " controversial subject matter . " In a then @-@ current Record Mirror article entitled " Sex Change Record : Kink Speaks " , Ray Davies refused to tell Lola 's biological sex , saying , " It really doesn 't matter what sex Lola is , I think she 's alright . "

Despite its subject matter , the BBC banned the track for a different reason . The original song recorded in stereo had the word " Coca @-@ Cola " in the lyrics , but because of BBC Radio 's policy against product placement , Ray Davies was forced to make a round @-@ trip flight from New York to London and back ? interrupting the band 's American tour ? to change those words to the generic " cherry cola " for the single release .

= = Reception and legacy = =

" Lola " received positive reviews from critics . Upon the single 's release , the NME praised the

song as " an engaging and sparkling piece with a gay Latin flavour and a catchy hook chorus . " Billboard said of the song at the time of its US release , " Currently a top ten British chart winner , this infectious rhythm item has all the ingredients to put the Kinks right back up the Hot 100 here with solid impact . " Rolling Stone critic Paul Gambaccini called the song as " brilliant and a smash . " Music critic Robert Christgau , despite his mixed opinion on the Lola vs. Powerman album , praised the single as " astounding . " Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic lauded the song for " its crisp , muscular sound , pitched halfway between acoustic folk and hard rock . " Ultimate Classic Rock ranked " Lola " as The Kinks ' third best song , saying " the great guitar riff that feeds the song is one of Dave 's all @-@ time greatest . " Paste Magazine listed the track as the band 's fourth best song .

The song was also well @-@ liked by the band . Mick Avory , who noted the song as one of the songs he was most proud to be associated with , said " I always liked ' Lola ' , I liked the subject . It 's not like anything else . I liked it for that . We 'd always take a different path . " In a 1983 interview , Ray Davies said , " I 'm just very pleased I recorded it and more pleased I wrote it . " The band revisited the " Lola " character in the lyrics of their 1981 song , " Destroyer " , a minor chart hit in America .

Satirical artist " Weird Al " Yankovic created a parody of the song called " Yoda " , featuring lyrics about the Star Wars character of the same name , on his 1985 album Dare to Be Stupid .

= = Live versions = =

Since its release , " Lola " became a mainstay in The Kinks ' live repertoire , appearing in the majority of the band 's subsequent set @-@ lists until the group 's break @-@ up . In 1972 , a live performance of the song recorded at Carnegie Hall in New York City appeared on the live half of the band 's 1972 album , Everybody 's in Show @-@ Biz , a double @-@ LP which contained half new studio compositions and half live versions of previously released songs .

A live version of " Lola " , recorded on 23 September 1979 in Providence , Rhode Island , was released as a single in the US in July 1980 to promote the live album One for the Road . The B @-@ side was the live version of " Celluloid Heroes " . The single was a moderate success , reaching number 81 on the Billboard Hot 100 . It was also released in some countries in Europe (although not the UK) in April 1981 . It topped the charts in both the Netherlands , matching the number one peak of the original version , and in Belgium , where it exceeded the original 's peak of three . It also charted in Australia , peaking at number 69 and spending 22 weeks on the charts . Although not released as a stand @-@ alone single in the UK , it was included on a bonus single (backed with a live version of " David Watts " from the same album) with initial copies of " Better Things " in June 1981 . This live rendition , along with the live versions of " Celluloid Heroes " and " You Really Got Me " from the same album , also appeared on the 1986 compilation album Come Dancing with The Kinks : The Best of the Kinks 1977 ? 1986 .

Although it did not appear on the original 1994 version , another live version of " Lola " was included on the 1996 US double @-@ album release of To the Bone , the band 's final release of new material before their dissolution .

= = Personnel = =

1970 studio version

Ray Davies ? vocals , acoustic guitar

Dave Davies ? electric guitar , backing vocals

Mick Avory ? drums

John Dalton ? bass

John Gosling ? piano

Ken Jones ? maracas

1980 live version

Ray Davies ? vocals , acoustic guitar

Dave Davies ? electric guitar , backing vocals

Mick Avory ? drums

Jim Rodford ? bass , backing vocals

Ian Gibbons ? keyboards

= = Chart performance = =