

= How Will I Know =

" How Will I Know " is a song recorded by American recording artist Whitney Houston for her debut album , titled Whitney Houston , which was released in February 1985 . It was released by Arista Records in November that year , as the album 's third single . Composed by George Merrill and Shannon Rubicam , the song was originally intended for Janet Jackson , but she passed on it . Houston then recorded the song with altered lyrics and production from Narada Michael Walden . The lyrics speak about the protagonist trying to discern if a boy she likes will ever like her back .

" How Will I Know " received mainly positive reviews . The song became Houston 's second number one single on the United States Billboard Hot 100 . It spent two weeks atop the chart and also became Houston 's first chart topper on the Canadian RPM Singles Chart . Success was worldwide : it reached the top 10 in Sweden , Ireland , Norway , and the United Kingdom , and the top 20 in the Netherlands , New Zealand , and Switzerland .

The song 's music video features scenes of Houston dancing in a setting of video screens and colored partitions . The music video gave Houston exposure to the teens and MTV . It also received nominations at the 1986 MTV Video Music Awards in the categories of Best Female Video and Best New Artist in a Video , winning the former category . The song was performed on many of her tours including Greatest Love Tour (1986) and her Nothing but Love World Tour (2009 ? 10) . " How Will I Know " is also featured as a remix on Houston 's compilation album , Whitney : The Greatest Hits (2000) , whereas the original version is featured on The Ultimate Collection (2007) and I Will Always Love You : The Best of Whitney Houston (2012 ; remastered) .

= = Background and recording = =

Originally , songwriters George Merrill and Shannon Rubicam had written the song 's demo for Janet Jackson , employed by A & M Records executive , John McClain . However , after hearing the song , Jackson 's management passed on the song , feeling it was too weak in comparison to her other material . In an interview with Fred Bronson , Merrill expressed his feelings after learning of Jackson 's decision . " We were pretty upset because we thought it was perfect for her at the time . We had written it with her completely in mind . " During this period , Brenda Andrews , at Almo @-@ Irving Music , Merrill and Rubicam 's publisher , played the song for Gerry Griffith , the director for R & B music at A & M and Arista Records . Griffith , who was compiling material for Houston 's debut at the time , felt the song perfectly matched her sound . He soon contacted Andrews and the song 's two writers and implored that they should relinquish the song to him for Houston 's debut album . Griffith described his discovery of the song , and what he and Clive Davis thought of it :

" We had a lot of R & B @-@ based tunes , we had a few ballads , but we didn 't have a pop crossover song . So when I heard ' How Will I Know , ' I said this is absolutely perfect . I played it for Clive [and] he fell in love with it . I wasn 't very familiar with her family background , I didn 't realize that even at that time there was a pretty big industry buzz about her future . "

After getting permission to use the song from Merrill , Griffith quickly turned to Narada Michael Walden , who was producing Aretha Franklin 's " I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me) " , for her album Who 's Zoomin ' Who ? , at the time . After getting in touch with Walden , Griffith frantically implored him to produce the song , describing how important the song would be for Houston 's future album . After hearing the song 's demo , Walden agreed to fly down to San Rafael , California to arrange it . He was not much impressed with the demo and requested permission to change some of the song 's lyrics and chord progression . Flustered by his request , Merrill and Rubicam denied him the right to their song . After a lot of back @-@ and @-@ forth with Griffith , they compromised and allowed Walden to de @-@ construct the song and change the key and tempo . After completing the song , Houston came into the studio to record her vocals . Originally , Cissy Houston , the singer 's mother , was intended to perform the song 's background vocals . Houston had wanted to introduce her mother 's vocals on the track , insisting on their inclusion . However , after hearing the finished result , Davis felt Houston 's voice itself fit the song 's arrangement , and implored her to sing the backup section on her own . While reluctant at first , Houston agreed and re

@-@ recorded the background vocals to the praise of both Griffith and Davis . Griffith explained :

" I asked Whitney to sing the background session . She was reluctant because she wanted to enjoy hearing her mother sing . I said , ' No , get out there and sing , ' so she did . The background sounded incredible ... Clive Davis heard the mix and immediately gave it a 10 , which is outrageous for him , because he doesn 't like anything ! "

The tenor saxophone is played by Premik Russell Tubbs .

= = Composition = =

" How Will I Know " is composed in an " 80 's dance beat . " Rolling Stone described the song as a " perky synth @-@ funk " . According to Kyle Anderson of MTV , the song found Houston hitting an " incredible groove . " It is written in the key of G flat major . The beat is set the time signature of common time and moves at a fast tempo of 120 beats per minute . The song also has the sequence of G ? -B ? m7 @-@ G ? / C ? -D ? -E ? m @-@ D ? as its chord progression . Houston 's vocals in the song span from the note of E ? 4 to the high note of G ? 5 . Lyrically , the song speaks about the protagonist trying to discern if a boy she likes will ever like her back . She is also hesitant , because her friends tell her " love can be deceiving " , and she is shy that she cannot phone him . Later , she feels that it might be a dream , but realizes that " there 's no mistaking " , and what she feels is really love .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

The song mainly garnered positive reviews from critics , with some noting it as a standout on the album . Don Shewey of Rolling Stone commented " Although it 's awfully reminiscent of the Pointer Sisters ' ' He 's So Shy ' , ' How Will I Know ' is still irresistibly danceable . " Stephen Thomas Erlewine of Allmusic wrote " ... what really impresses some 20 @-@ plus years on are the lighter tracks , particularly the breakthrough single ' How Will I Know ' . " While listing Houston 's top five songs of the 1980s , Steve Peake of About.com gave the song a positive review , writing , " Houston 's boppy , peppy numbers tend to suffer from a particularly dated sound compared to her ballads , but this song still works remarkably well because of its lush melody throughout the verse , bridge and chorus . " " [t] his track helps Houston prove that she knows how to interpret , with great skill , tunes that display solid craftsmanship , " he added . While reviewing the Deluxe Anniversary Edition of the album , Mikael Wood of Entertainment Weekly commented on the A capella version of the song noting , " a cappella mix of ' How Will I Know ' [that] displays the singer 's precision long before the advent of Auto @-@ Tune . " While reviewing The Ultimate Collection , Nick Levine of Digital Spy added , " Houston 's floor @-@ fillers have aged a little more gracefully , although their clunky , thudding drum sounds are as unmistakably eighties as Joan Collins ' Dynasty wardrobe . " The song was voted number twelve in VH1 's List of Greatest Songs of the 1980s .

= = = Chart performance = = =

" How Will I Know " was released by Arista Records in November 1985 as the third single from Houston 's self @-@ titled debut . It debuted at number 60 on the US Billboard Hot 100 , on the December 7 , 1985 issue . Nine weeks later , it peaked at number one on the issue dated February 15 , 1986 , becoming Houston 's second number one single in the US . It displaced Dionne Warwick 's " That 's What Friends Are For " , and was displaced by " Kyrie " by Mr. Mister . It stayed on the peak for two weeks . The song also debuted on the Billboard Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop songs at number 60 and later peaked at number one , a peak it maintained for one week . On the issue dated January 25 , 1986 , " How Will I Know " entered the Hot Dance Club Play charts at number 30 and later peaked at number three on the February 22 , 1986 issue . It also peaked at number one on the

Adult Contemporary charts . Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) certified the single Gold on December 6 , 1995 , for shipments of 500 @, @ 000 copies or more . It ranked number six on the Billboard Year @-@ End charts . In Canada , the song debuted at number 80 on the RPM Singles chart on the issue dated December 14 , 1985 . It later peaked at number one on the week dated March 1 , 1986 , becoming Houston 's first number one single in Canada . It was later certified Gold by Canadian Recording Industry Association on May 1 , 1986 , for shipments of 200 @, @ 000 copies or more .

The song performed well in other countries . In United Kingdom , the song debuted at number 36 , on the week dated January 25 , 1986 , and later peaked at a position of number five . It was also certified Silver by British Phonographic Industry (BPI) . According to MTV UK and Ireland , the single has sold about 280 @, @ 000 copies in the United Kingdom . In New Zealand , the song debuted at number 35 on the Singles chart and later peaked at number 19 . In Austria , the song reached a peak position of number 28 , while reaching a peak of number 12 in the Netherlands . The song also reached number two in Norway and Sweden , while charting at number 11 in Switzerland . According to Allmusic , " How Will I Know " has sold about 1 @. @ 5 million copies worldwide .

In Australia , " How Will I Know " was released as the first single from the album , in mid 1985 . It spent a solitary week in the Kent Music Report top 100 chart at number 97 in July 1985 , before re @-@ entering the chart in February 1986 , eventually peaking at number two .

= = Music video = =

The music video for " How Will I Know " , directed by Brian Grant , was filmed prior to the release of the single and album . Unlike her previous music videos , Houston was given the opportunity to move beyond the staged performance settings to demonstrate elementary dance moves . The video is set against a strikingly designed , vividly colored setting of video screens and partitions . Houston 's hair is dyed a honey color , and is held up by a dazzling colored bow . She is also seen accented by a tight , sleeveless gray dress made of metal mesh , reaching almost to her knees , accessorized with matching arm @-@ bracelets . Houston is also seen interacting with animated dancers , in black outfits and wearing French @-@ style makeup . The video also has a scene of splattering of paint and it 's dripping down the screen . Houston 's label @-@ mate and family friend , Aretha Franklin , also makes a cameo on the music video . In 2011 , Kyle Anderson of MTV wrote that the video was " eye @-@ opening to watch her cut loose in a fun environment , " since her previous songs were ballads .

The music video received heavy rotation in music channels like MTV and gave Houston exposure to a wider audience , something which at one time , African @-@ Americans had found difficult to achieve . Also , the video was nominated for two awards at the 1986 MTV Video Music Awards , in the categories of Best New Artist in a Video and Best Female Video , winning the latter .

= = Live performances = =

Houston performed the song throughout the entire run of her Greatest Love Tour (1986) , Moment of Truth World Tour (1987 ? 1988) , Feels So Right Japan Tour (1990) , I 'm Your Baby Tonight World Tour (1991) , The Bodyguard World Tour (1993 ? 1994) , and My Love Is Your Love World Tour (1999) . She also recently performed the song on her Nothing but Love World Tour (2009 ? 2010) . Apart from the concert tour performances , Houston has performed the song on various other occasions like the Third MTV Video Music Awards (1986) , where she sang " How Will I Know " and " Greatest Love of All " , Thirteenth Annual American Music Awards (1986) , and 1987 BRIT Awards . The latter performance is included in the 2014 CD / DVD release , Whitney Houston Live : Her Greatest Performances . On May 15 , 1987 , during her European promotion for then @-@ new album , Whitney , Houston sang the song at the Montreux Golden Rose Rock Festival : IM & MC Gala with two other 1986 released songs , " I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me) " and " Where Do Broken Hearts Go . " She appeared on The Mike Douglas Show , taped in

Philadelphia , and performed " How Will I Know " . On her Moment of Truth World Tour , she participated in the Nelson Mandela 70th Birthday Tribute Concert and performed the song with other seven songs . She also performed the song on " Welcome Home Heroes " , a concert dedicated to the US troops , their families , and military and government dignitaries in honor of those returning from the Gulf War , which aired on HBO on March 31 , 1991 . The concert was taped and later released as a VHS on May 14 , 1991 . She also performed the song on The Concert for a New South Africa , three concerts to honor President Nelson Mandela , in 1994 . Houston later performed the song on the closing ceremonies of the 1994 World Cup along with five of her other songs . In 2000 , she performed the song on Arista 's 25th Anniversary , along with " I Wanna Dance With Somebody (Who Loves Me) " .

= = Cover versions = =

The song has been covered by various other artists . Hit the Lights covered the song for the extended iTunes release of their 2008 album , Skip School Start Fights . New Zealand Idol contestant Camillia Temple , covered the song for the " top three " night of the show 's first season . Apart from the covers , the first stanza of the song was sampled in LMC vs. U2 's dance song , " Take Me to the Clouds Above " . The song was covered by Amber Riley , Naya Rivera , Chris Colfer , and Lea Michele on Glee for their tribute episode to Houston in the third season . The song was also covered by British singer Sam Smith put during an appearance on Sirius XM on June 21 , 2014 . His version was later included on the Drowning Shadow 's edition of In the Lonely Hour . The British musical comedy film Walking on Sunshine covered the song . Titled as " The One " , the Dutch DJ @-@ duo W & W released a progressive @-@ house @-@ version of this track in 2015 .

= = Track listing = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

= = Charts and certifications = =