

= Islands ( The xx song ) =

" Islands " is a song recorded by English indie pop band The xx for their self @-@ titled debut studio album . Written by band @-@ members Jamie Smith , Oliver Sim , Romy Madley Croft and then @-@ member Baria Qureshi , " Islands " is a dark and simple indie pop track . It also contains influences from house music and features instrumentation from guitars and synthesizers . Croft and Sim , who provided vocals in the track , sing about themes related to loyalty and love . " Islands " was released on 26 October 2009 as the third single from the album by Young Turks in 7 @-@ inch single and digital download formats . In March 2010 , the song was re @-@ released as a 12 @-@ inch single .

Upon its release , " Islands " received critical acclaim from music critics , many of whom praised Croft and Sim 's vocal delivery . It was ranked at number 28 by music publication NME on their list of " 150 Best Tracks of the Past 15 Years " . The song became the band 's highest peaking single in the United Kingdom after it reached number 34 on the UK Singles Chart . It also peaked at number three on the UK Indie Chart . An accompanying music video for " Islands " was directed by Saam Farahmand , and consists of numerous tracking shots that show six dancers performing a dance routine around the members of the band . Every different shot features a slight change in the expression , gestures , and movement of the dancers and band @-@ members . Critics complimented the concept of the video , and felt it was representative of The xx 's musical style . The band performed the song live at the iTunes Festival in 2010 and it was also included on the setlist of their 2010 and 2013 tour .

A cover version of " Islands " was recorded by Colombian singer @-@ songwriter Shakira for inclusion in her ninth studio album Sale el Sol ( 2010 ) . The cover followed a very similar instrumentation to the original version , but featured a faster tempo and more house elements . Shakira performed the cover live at the 2010 Glastonbury Festival in Pilton , Somerset .

= = Background and composition = =

" Islands " was written by The xx band @-@ members Jamie Smith , Oliver Sim , Romy Madley Croft and then @-@ member Baria Qureshi , for the English indie pop band 's self @-@ titled debut album ( 2009 ) . According to the sheet music published at Musicnotes.com by Universal Music Publishing Group , the song is composed in the key of C # minor and has a metronome of 123 beats per minute . Sim and Croft provide vocals in the track , and their range spans from G # 3 to E4 . Similar to the band 's usual style of production , " Islands " is dark and " nocturnal " in nature and follows a " simple , effective " beat . It features instrumentation from guitars which " twirl like dance floor partners in the background " and synthesizers that " play like a musical shadow " . According to BBC Music 's Lou Thomas , the song features house rhythms and a melody similar to that of Tom Petty 's 1989 song " I Won 't Back Down " . Lyrically , " Islands " is a " psycho @-@ geographical love song " and contains themes of loyalty , which are heard in lines like " I am yours now , so I don 't ever have to leave " . The duo 's vocals were described as " girl @-@ boy " , with Croft 's vocal delivery taking on a " pleasant soft @-@ pop vibe " . Sim momentarily interrupts the verses with " four short thumbings " . A " typically heartfelt and bed @-@ cuddly " refrain " I am yours now " is repeated throughout the song , and UK @-@ based online publication Muso 's Guide regarded it as " the closest thing The xx has produced to a hook " .

The song was released as the third single from xx on 26 October 2009 by Young Turks in 7 @-@ inch single and digital download formats . A minimalistic and " sexy " track named " Do You Mind ? " was included as the B @-@ side to " Islands " , and is composed of " untypically brash drums " . On 15 March 2010 , Young Turks released a 12 @-@ inch single version " Islands " , which contained various remixes of the song .

= = Reception = =

== Critical response ==

The song received critical acclaim . Lou Thomas from BBC Music said there is a " sense of quiet triumph " in what he felt was a musical reference to " I Won 't Back Down " by Tom Petty in the song 's melody , " despite the incongruity " . The Muso 's Guide review of " Islands " approved of the song 's release as a single and complimented Croft and Sim 's vocal delivery , saying they " provide a superb introduction to what the band is all about " . They particularly appreciated its " I am yours now " refrain , naming it " a typically heartfelt and bed @-@ cuddly line that makes The xx the perfect alternative lovers band " . Emily Mackay from NME called the song " gorgeous " and felt it was " the perfect soundtrack for wandering aimlessly along rainy London streets " . Andrew Gaerig from Pitchfork Media chose " Islands " as one of the highlights from the album and complimented Croft 's vocals and Sim 's involvement . In 2011 , NME ranked " Islands " at number 28 on their list of " 150 Best Tracks of the Past 15 Years " , naming it the band 's " finest moment thus far " .

== Chart performance ==

In the United Kingdom , " Islands " reached number 34 on the singles chart and is The xx 's highest @-@ peaking single in the region to date . Its total stay inside the top 40 of the chart lasted for eight weeks . " Islands " was more successful on the UK Indie chart and peaked at number three . The song also peaked at number 16 on Ultratop chart of the Dutch @-@ speaking Flanders region of Belgium , and stayed on the chart for a total of two weeks .

== Music video ==

== Development and synopsis ==

The accompanying music video for " Islands " was directed by Saam Farahmand , who had previously worked with artists like Simian Mobile Disco and Klaxons . It premiered on MTV on 21 April 2010 . Composed of a series of tracking shots , the video shows Croft , Sim , and Smith " listlessly " sitting on a couch with six dancers performing a choreographed dance routine behind them . The dancers carry out the same routine with every next tracking shot , but a slight change in their expressions , gestures , and movement takes place . Similarly , the band @-@ members repeatedly change their positions and facial expressions " with differing fervour " . Near to the end of the video , the pattern begins modifying and " the comfortable habits get broken up / break up " as the dancers and band @-@ members leave one by one . The backdrop , which consists of several small " X " letters , also catches fire .

== Reception ==

The video received positive reviews from critics . Katie Hasty from HitFix praised the choreography , calling it " eye @-@ popping " , and labelled the video as " classy , contained , and borderline claustrophobic " . She complimented Farahmand for directing a risky concept and commented that the tracking shots were like " an inhale and exhale with each new take " . Furthermore , she felt that the video was representative of The xx 's sound , calling it " morose and hypnotic , just like the band , the aural equivalent of a mumblecore movie " , and opined that the end of the video showed how " love goes " . Chris Ryan from MTV also found the video similar to the band 's musical style , and commented that the slight changes in its pattern " suggest unrest under the surface -- much like the band 's pristine , subtly menacing sound " . He also noted that while " it 's often hard to imagine what visuals would go well " with The xx 's songs , the music video for " Islands " " trumps anything we could have ever imagined " .

== Live performances and usage in media ==

On 2 October 2009 , The xx performed " Islands " live on British music television show Later ... with Jools Holland , along with " Night Time " . The song was included on the setlist of their 2010 tour , and was also performed at the iTunes Festival held at The Roundhouse in London in the same year ; the band later released a digital EP of their performance . " Islands " was also included on the setlist of the band 's 2013 tour , and a more rock @-@ oriented version of the song was performed . " Islands " was played during the closing monologue of the fourteenth episode of the sixth season of American television medical drama Grey 's Anatomy , entitled " Valentine 's Day Massacre " . It was also a part of the soundtrack of the tenth episode of the second season of comedy @-@ drama television series Parenthood , entitled " Happy Thanksgiving " .

= = Formats and track listing = =

= = Charts = =

= = Shakira cover = =

Colombian singer @-@ songwriter Shakira recorded a cover version of " Islands " for inclusion in her ninth studio album Sale el Sol , which was released on October 19 , 2010 . Although there was initial speculation that the cover would be entitled " Explore " , it appeared on the final tracklist of the album using its original name . In comparison to the original version , Shakira 's cover of " Islands " follows a largely similar and " fairly faithful " instrumentation , but features a faster tempo , " hopeful @-@ sounding " vocals , and " pseudo @-@ house " elements . Prior to Shakira recording the cover of " Islands " , Croft had briefly met her at the London BBC Studios ; the former talked about her meeting , saying " We were sitting on a wall outside the BBC and she came up and her bodyguards parted and it was little Shakira , and she says , " Hi ! " And I was like , Wow ! I found out recently that she ? s a big fan of The Cure and stuff " .

Shakira 's cover of " Islands " drew generally favourable reception from critics . Stephen Thomas Erlewine from AllMusic felt it was a highlight on the album , and commented that Shakira " finds warmth within the art pop of The xx , whose " Islands " is a shimmering peak here " . Mikael Wood from Entertainment Weekly appreciated the cover , and opined that " [ Shakira ] discovers the beating heart inside that band 's subdued electro @-@ goth jam " . Becky Bain from Idolator called Shakira 's version of " Islands " " sunnier than the original " and regarded it as " brilliantly subdued " , complimenting the singer 's overall reworking of the original track . In 2011 , Stereogum included the cover on their list of " The 10 Best xx Covers " . Shakira 's cover of " Islands " appeared on the US Billboard Latin Digital Songs chart , peaking at number 39 for one week .

In June 2010 , Shakira performed the cover live at the Glastonbury Festival in Pilton , Somerset . Alex Needham from The Guardian called the performance " a slinky cover " that " is a nod to the indie kids " . Maria Schurr from PopMatters felt the performance was " less intimate than the original " , but " managed to amplify the tremendous pop sensibilities embedded beneath Romy Madley Croft " s and Oliver Sim 's hushed coos " . She concluded by saying that " as great as The xx are , it ? s probably safe to say that Shakira can cut a rug better " .