

= Shivers ( song ) =

" Shivers " is a song by the Australian post @-@ punk band the Boys Next Door , who would later become the Birthday Party . It is the tenth and final track from the band 's debut studio album Door , Door , released in 1979 on Mushroom Records . It was released as the album 's only single in May 1979 , backed with the B @-@ side " Dive Position " .

Written by guitarist Rowland S Howard at age 16 , " Shivers " is a post @-@ punk and new wave ballad featuring ironic lyrics regarding teenage relationships and suicide . Originally intended as humorous by Howard , he felt later it had been misinterpreted due to frontman Nick Cave 's vocal delivery on the Boys Next Door version . Despite later distancing himself from the song , " Shivers " remained Howard 's most requested song during his lifetime and was met with critical acclaim . It has since been cited as one of the most popular cult hits in Australian music .

Several versions of " Shivers " have been released ? including demo and solo recordings by Howard ? and it has been covered by a variety of artists , including Marie Hoy , Laura Jane Grace , the Screaming Jets , Courtney Barnett and Divine Fits .

= = Origin and recording = =

In 1976 , at age 16 and as a member of the Melbourne punk rock band Young Charlatans , Howard wrote " Shivers " . Discussing the song 's origins , Howard said that " Shivers " was " intended as an ironic comment on the way that I felt that people I knew were making hysterical things out of what were essentially high school crushes " . He further explained that the emotional responses of people he knew who were in relationships seemed " incredibly insincere and blown out of proportion " and inspired the cynical lyrics of the song .

Howard composed " Shivers " on an Ibanez Gibson Firebird copy , an electric guitar on which he performed on the first known recording of the song . Recorded as part of a series of demos for the Young Charlatans in 1978 , it featured Howard on vocals and guitar , Ollie Olsen on guitar , Janine Hall on bass and Jeff Wegener on drums .

During sessions for Door , Door at Richmond Recorders in Melbourne in January 1979 , the Boys Next Door recorded " Shivers " . Engineer Tony Cohen suggested that Howard perform the vocals for the track , arguing that his voice was best fitted for his own songs . However , the band 's regular vocalist , Nick Cave , insisted on singing on the recording . Howard said later that as a result of Cave 's vocals , " Shivers " was " interpreted completely differently and now the song , to most peoples ' minds , is something completely different from what I intended it to be " . In hindsight , Cave noted that Howard 's vocals should have been recorded , as Cave was " never able to do that song justice " .

= = Music and lyrics = =

" Shivers " is a post @-@ punk ballad featuring new wave elements , with a length of four minutes and thirty @-@ seven seconds . It is set in common time ( 44 ) and has a slow tempo of 60 beats per minute . The song is composed in the key of A major and on the Boys Next Door version , Nick Cave 's vocal range spans one octave from D4 to E5 .

Howard wrote intentionally cynical lyrics to " Shivers " regarding relationships and suicide . According to Kelsey Munro of the Sydney Morning Herald , the song " exhibits Howard 's enduring gallows humour in its wry treatment of the overwrought protagonist " . The first lyrics " I 've been contemplating suicide / but it really doesn 't suit my style " have been also branded by the Sydney Morning Herald 's Jake Wilson as " famous opening lines " and typical of Howard 's " wry , guarded romanticism " .

According to members of the Boys Next Door , Howard 's songwriting was " more precious and stolid " than Cave 's or guitarist ? keyboardist Mick Harvey 's attempts , with " Shivers " and his other songs generally being centred " around a bassline " . The final version of " Shivers " featured on Door , Door reflected this , and included only a two @-@ chord progression and four musical

instruments : guitar , bass , piano and violin .

= = Release and reception = =

" Shivers " was originally released by the Young Charlatans as part of a Fast Forward cassette compilation , which was issued in April 1981 after the band 's dissolution . It was rereleased on CD on the various artists compilation album Inner City Sound : Australian Punk & Post @-@ Punk ( 2006 ) . The Boys Next Door version was released as Door , Door 's only single in May 1979 on Mushroom Records . It was issued as a 7 @-@ inch single , backed with " Dive Position " . The single soon went out of print , and a second pressing was issued later the same year . The band changed their name to the Birthday Party after relocating to London , England in 1980 and all of their recordings of " Shivers " are credited to the Boys Next Door .

" Shivers " received critical acclaim and became a major underground success in Australia , bringing more national attention to the band . Nick Cave cited it in hindsight as the main reason for the Boys Next Door 's eminence . In a retrospective review for AllMusic , critic Will Lerner wrote that " it 's impressive how , even at this early stage , Nick Cave was a confident and unique singer , perfectly aware of the strengths and limitations of his voice ? he knows how to come across in a scary and theatrical manner that perfectly complements the music . Nowhere is this more apparent than on ? ' Shivers ' , an unashamedly melodramatic example of post @-@ adolescent anguish " . " Shivers " , along with other songs Howard composed , were " crucial to guiding the band in the darker , wilder direction " that defined the Birthday Party 's music , according to Dan Lawrence of Stereogum . The song has since been considered an Australian classic and labelled by ABC Television as " possibly Australia 's most enduring cult hit " .

A music video for " Shivers " was directed by Paul Goldman in 1979 . It is featured on Pleasure Heads Must Burn ( 1984 ) , a video album released by the Birthday Party .

= = Live performances = =

" Shivers " was first performed at Young Charlatans concerts in the late 1970s , of which there were only 13 during the band 's career . In 1978 , prior to the recording of Door , Door , the Boys Next Door performed " Shivers " with Howard on vocals and Cave on guitar . After the song 's release , and changing their name to the Birthday Party , the band performed " Shivers " with their standard line @-@ up of Cave on vocals , Howard and Mick Harvey on guitar , Tracy Pew on bass and Phill Calvert on drums . Cave commented that he " used to dread ' Shivers ' coming up in the set " due to the fact " it required a certain amount of efficiency [ and ] certain amount of talent to sing " because it was one of the band 's only melodic songs .

During Howard 's solo concerts from 1983 to 1999 , " Shivers " was the song most requested by audience members . However , by the time of his final tour in 2009 ? the year he died ? he had stopped receiving requests for it . In an October 2009 interview , Howard commented on his relationship with the song , and its position in his setlists , stating : " I have just tried , perhaps finally successfully , to divorce myself from the song . It 's impossible for me to recreate what I was trying to do when I wrote that song so whilst I can see that people have an attachment to it , I don 't . I feel like , when I did use to do it in shows , I was doing a cover of some song that had been around forever . That 's how it felt . And I guess that is a strange way to feel about a song you wrote , so yeah , I am happy to not have to do it these days " .

= = Cover versions = =

Since its original release , " Shivers " has been covered by several artists . A live version recorded in Melbourne in 1982 by the Big Bang Combo was issued on volume 13 of the cassette magazine Fast Forward in October of that year . Musician and actress Marie Hoy performed the song in the 1986 independent film Dogs in Space ; it appeared on the film 's supporting soundtrack released in February 1987 on Chase Records . In 1992 pub rock band the Screaming Jets featured a cover

version of " Shivers " on their second studio album , Tear of Thought . It was subsequently released as a single in February 1993 and spent 15 weeks on the Australian Singles Chart , peaking at number 19 in its fourth week . In 1996 Nick Cave performed guest vocals with Israeli singer @-@ songwriter Inbal Perlmutter on a version of " Shivers " released by her band Ha @-@ Mechashefot ( The Witches ) on their covers album , Undercover . Against Me ! frontwoman Laura Jane Grace performed " Shivers " on her 2013 acoustic mini @-@ tour .

= = Track listing = =

Australia 7 @-@ inch single ( Mushroom Records , K7492 )

" Shivers " ( Howard ) ? 4 : 37

" Dive Position " ( Cave ) ? 2 : 42

= = Personnel = =

All personnel credits adapted from Door , Door 's album notes .

The Boys Next Door

Phill Calvert ? drums

Nick Cave ? vocals

Mick Harvey ? guitar , keyboards

Rowland S Howard ? guitar

Tracy Pew ? bass

Additional musicians

Henry Vyhna ? violin

Technical personnel

The Boys Next Door ? production

Tony Cohen ? engineering

Andrew Duffield ? electronics