

= Speed of Sound (song) =

" Speed of Sound " is a song by British alternative rock band Coldplay . It was written by all members of the band for their third studio album , X & Y (2005) . Built around a piano riff , the song builds into a huge , synthesiser @-@ heavy chorus . It was released by Parlophone Records as the lead single from the album . " Speed of Sound " was released in the US on 18 April 2005 , and then made its radio premiere on BBC Radio 1 with Lamacq on the day of the release on 19 April . The single was pressed with two B @-@ sides : " Things I Don 't Understand " and " Proof " . The song premiered in the UK on 23 May .

Coldplay vocalist Chris Martin admitted that the song was developed after the band had listened to English art rock singer Kate Bush . The song 's drum beat is similar to Bush 's 1985 song " Running Up That Hill " . Upon the song 's release , it charted in the UK Singles Chart in the number two position . In the United States , it debuted at number eight on the Billboard Hot 100 , their first top ten hit in the country , and their most successful song until " Viva la Vida " reached number one in 2008 .

" Speed of Sound " was recognised Song of the Year by the American Society of Composers , Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) and it was nominated twice at the 48th Grammy Awards . The song won a Brit Award in the category for Best British Single in 2006 . The track 's music video was nominated for four MTV Video Music Awards . " Speed of Sound " was also the billionth song downloaded from the iTunes Store .

= = Background = =

In an interview , Coldplay vocalist Chris Martin revealed that the song was written in mid @-@ 2004 and was inspired by Martin 's daughter , Apple , and English alternative rock singer Kate Bush : " That 's a song where we were listening to a lot of Kate Bush last summer , and we wanted a song which had a lot of tom @-@ toms in it . I just had my daughter up also , and was kind of feeling in a sense of awe and wonderment , so the song is kind of a Kate Bush song about miracles . " The drumbeat of the song was inspired by Bush 's 1985 song " Running Up that Hill " . In a separate interview , bassist Guy Berryman , in discussion of " Speed of Sound " , said : " We were listening to a Kate Bush song called ' Running Up that Hill ' and we were really trying to recreate the drums on that song for this song , and the chords . Some bands are reluctant to admit that they take things from other artists and bands that they listen to and we 're shameless in that respect , we don 't mind telling . "

The band 's opinion towards the song , however , has soured . Martin has said that he dislikes " Speed of Sound " , saying in a 2011 interview , " We never got it right . " During an interview with Howard Stern , Martin said that his dislike of " Speed of Sound " stems from the song having " a shit recording . " Due to this , Martin is reluctant to perform the song live , citing his feelings towards the song , noting that " an audience can pick up real fast if you ? re not convinced by something . "

= = Composition = =

" Speed of Sound " is a piano @-@ based song . The song benefits from an insistently ornate keyboard riff and a busy but less @-@ hummable chorus , in which the song builds into a huge drum beat and a synthesiser @-@ heavy chorus , which also includes an upbeat tempo . The song is written in the key of A Mixolydian .

The lyrics in the song are cryptic ; the ending lines of the third verse emphasise in belief and faith : " If you could see it then you 'd understand / ah , when you see it then you 'll understand , " and " Some things you have to believe / others are puzzles puzzling me . " The fourth line in the second verse alludes to discovering your place in the world : " How long am I gonna stand / with my head stuck under the sand . "

In his review of X & Y , Bill White of the Seattle Post @-@ Intelligencer newspaper noted that the " slowing ... creative juices " evident in " Speed of Sound " compare to " melodies from both Jeff

Buckley (' Last Goodbye ') and Keane (' Everybody 's Changing ') " .

= = Critical reception = =

The song was met with a polarised response from critics upon its release . PopMatters felt that the song " comes close to sounding too safe , almost like the band is on autopilot . " MusicOMH commented that " Speed Of Sound , the lead single , has ' Clocks ' -like drumming contrasts with synth sequences that remind more of Enya than rock music " and criticised it for sounding " familiar and far older than it is . " Pitchfork Media likewise criticised the song 's " uncanny resemblance to ' Clocks ' " and continued " Certainly , it rarely hurts to stick with what works , but this is not just a near @-@ exact replica of its successful predecessor ; it 's also a less memorable song riding a piano hook that has so deeply infiltrated the pop @-@ culture landscape that I 've become numb to it . " The reviewer did , however , comment that " the track 's vocal melody outperforms the one from ' Clocks ' by a hair . "

The Village Voice felt that the song was " unusually accomplished , fresh , and emotional . " Paste Magazine praised the song , saying that it " reveals the hand [Coldplay are] playing : a piano riff as memorable as the one in ' Clocks , ' ringing guitars , martial drums , orchestral pomp and , in the center , Chris Martin 's keening vocal , so vulnerable and yet forceful enough to stand out from the mass of sonic detail . " The New York Times , contrariwise , dinged X & Y for " trying to carry beauty of ' Clocks ' across an entire album ? not least in its first single , ' Speed of Sound , ' which isn 't the only song on the album to borrow the ' Clocks ' drumbeat . " Rolling Stone magazine gave a mixed review , calling it " an appealing but not thrilling song " and noted " ... it sounds a bit like ... " Clocks " but without the swagger . "

= = Chart performance = =

" Speed of Sound " was beaten to the number one spot on the UK Singles Chart by the novelty song " Axel F " by the Crazy Frog , instead peaking at number two for a week , although it did stay in the Top 75 for sixteen non @-@ consecutive weeks . However , it became Coldplay 's first UK download number one .

It also became Coldplay 's first and (at that point) biggest single to chart in the top 10 of the Billboard Hot 100 , debuting as well as peaking at number eight , making it the band 's most successful single until " Viva la Vida " reached number one in 2008 . The single marked the first time a British band entered directly in the top 10 of the Billboard Hot 100 chart since " Say You 'll Be There " by the Spice Girls . The song was also the billionth song downloaded from Apple , Inc . ' s iTunes Store . A ringtone was available from Cingular Wireless , which had a song clip from " Speed of Sound " available a week before it was heard on radio . The song was also included in " Weird Al " Yankovic 's polka medley " Polkarama ! " from his 2006 album Straight Outta Lynwood .

= = Accolades = =

" Speed of Sound " was nominated for two Grammy Awards in the categories of Best Rock Song and Best Rock Performance By a Duo or Group With Vocals at the 2006 Grammy Awards . The song won an MTV Europe Music Award in the category for Best Song . In December 2005 , " Speed of Sound " appeared at number nine on Q magazine 's " 100 Greatest Tracks of the Year " . In 2006 , the song won a Brit Award for Best British Single . That same year , American Society of Composers , Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) named the track Song of the Year .

= = Music video = =

The video promo for " Speed of Sound " was shot on a Los Angeles sound stage on 22 and 23 April 2005 . Shooting took place on large sets backed by large Light @-@ emitting diode (LED) displays developed by Element Labs . The performance @-@ based video was directed by Mark Romanek .

The video features the band performing in front of a curved ellipse wall that consists of 640 Element Labs ' VersaTubes placed on 6 " centres .

The on @-@ set animations were programmed and performed live during the shoot . Romanek wanted the song 's stem " split out " and to have the drums , bass , guitar , and vocals on separate tracks , which were then animated , and the lights were synthesised to each of the tracks . In the end , Romanek and Michael Keeling , the lighting designer , opted to use Chris Martin 's vocal track to animate " because it had such dynamics . Roughly 75 % of the video is driven by voice @-@ activated animation " , said Keeling .

The video opens in pitch @-@ black , followed by a light framing Martin as he reaches skyward out of the shadows . The scene then shifts to the band , as they play the song . When Martin spread his hands , the two @-@ story @-@ high LED lights erupt in a colour of rainbow hues . The LED background changes colours as the band continues . The video concludes its ending with the band lined up , one @-@ by @-@ one , and the LED set displaying a white light background .

The video debuted on 23 May 2005 and proved successful on video @-@ chart programs . It debuted on 11 June 2005 on Fuse 's No. 1 Countdown Rock , at number six , and retired on 5 August at number seven of the countdown . It also reached number sixteen in MuchMusic 's Countdown a month after its debut . At the 2005 MTV Video Music Awards , the video was nominated for four nominations in the categories of Video of the Year , Best Special Effects , Best Editing , and Best Cinematography . The video was the ranked at number 10 on VH1 's Top 40 of 2005 .

= = Personnel = =

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

= = Track listing = =

UK CD CDR6664 , 7 " R6664 , 12 " 12R6664 , 10 " 10R6664
Australia CD 872 9862 released 23 May 2005 by Capitol Records
Japan CD TOCP @-@ 40179 released 11 May 2005 by Toshiba @-@ EMI

= = Charts = =