

= West End Girls =

" West End Girls " is a song by British pop duo Pet Shop Boys . Written by Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe , the song was released twice as a single . The song is influenced by hip hop music , with lyrics concerned with class and the pressures of inner @-@ city life which were inspired partly by T. S. Eliot 's poem The Waste Land . It was generally well received by contemporary music critics and has been frequently cited as a highlight in the duo 's career .

The first version of the song was produced by Bobby Orlando and was released on Columbia Records ' Bobcat Records imprint in April 1984 , becoming a club hit in the United States and some European countries . After the duo signed with EMI , the song was re @-@ recorded with producer Stephen Hague for their first studio album , Please . In October 1985 , the new version was released , reaching number one in the United Kingdom and the United States in 1986 .

In 1987 , the song won Best Single at the Brit Awards , and Best International Hit at the Ivor Novello Awards . In 2005 , 20 years after its release , the song was awarded Song of The Decade between the years 1985 and 1994 by the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters . In 2015 the song was voted by the British public as the nation 's 12th favourite 1980s number one in a poll for ITV .

The song was performed by Pet Shop Boys at the 2012 Summer Olympics closing ceremony and was included as part of the soundtrack of the 2013 game Grand Theft Auto V on the Non @-@ Stop @-@ Pop radio station .

= = Background = =

= = = Recording and production = = =

In 1983 , Neil Tennant met producer Bobby Orlando , while on an assignment in New York interviewing Sting for Smash Hits . After listening to some demos , Orlando offered to produce for the duo .

In 1983 ? 84 , the duo recorded eleven songs with Orlando , at Unique Studios in New York , " West End Girls " , " Opportunities (Let 's Make Lots of Money) " , " One More Chance " , " I Want A Lover " , " A Man Could Get Arrested " , " I Get Excited " , " Two Divided by Zero " , " Rent " , " It 's A Sin " , " Pet Shop Boys " , and " Later Tonight " . Orlando played most of the instruments on " West End Girls " , including the jazz riff at the end . Lowe played one chord and the bassline . It included a drum part lifted from Michael Jackson 's " Billie Jean " , and an arrangement involving what Tennant called " Barry White chords " . Orlando was thrilled by the song 's production ; his idea was to make a rap record in a British accent .

In April 1984 , " West End Girls " was released , becoming a club hit in Los Angeles and San Francisco , and a minor dance hit in Belgium , and France , but was only available in the United Kingdom as a 12 " import . In March 1985 , after long negotiations , Pet Shop Boys cut their contractual ties with Orlando , and hired manager Tom Watkins , who signed them with EMI . They re @-@ recorded " West End Girls " with producer Stephen Hague , and re @-@ released the song in late 1985 , topping the charts in both the UK and the U.S.

In an interview on BBC4 's Synth Britannia programme (Video on YouTube at 1h 21m 19s) , Neil Tennant explains the role of the then new sampling technology on the track and how every single sound came from the newly introduced E @-@ mu Emulator keyboard .

= = = Music and lyrics = = =

" West End Girls " is a synthpop song influenced by hip hop music . The song 's socially conscious streak , as well as the propulsive bass line , derives from Grandmaster Flash 's protest rap song " The Message " . Lowe and Hague created a " snaky , obsessive rhythm punch " for the music , replacing the song 's previously sparse beats and minimal keyboard lines .

Tennant started to write the song when he was staying at his cousin 's house in Nottingham while

watching a gangster film . Just when he was going to sleep he came up with the lines : " Sometimes you 're better off dead , there 's a gun in your hand and it 's pointing at your head " . The lyrics were inspired by T.S. Eliot 's poem *The Waste Land* , particularly in the use of different narrative voices and arcane references . The song 's lyrics are largely concerned with class , inner @-@ city pressure . Tennant later said that some listeners had assumed the song referred to prostitutes , but was actually , " about rough boys getting a bit of posh . "

The lyric " From Lake Geneva to the Finland Station " refers to the train route taken by Vladimir Lenin when he was smuggled by the Germans to Russia during World War I , a pivotal event in the Russian Revolution . Indeed , it is highly likely the lyric was inspired by the book *To the Finland Station* by Edmund Wilson , a very famous work on the history of revolutionary thought and Socialism that Tennant would have at least heard of , if not read , as a student . The Bobby Orlando @-@ produced version of the single included another line , " All your stopping , stalling and starting , / Who do you think you are , Joe Stalin ? " which was removed for the 1985 version .

= = Critical reception = =

" West End Girls " has been generally well received by music critics . Stephen Thomas Erlewine from Allmusic in a review of the album *Please* called the song " hypnotic " , adding that " it 's not only a classic dance single , it 's a classic pop single " . In a review for the group 's second studio album *Actually* , Rob Hoerburger from *Rolling Stone* magazine commented that " West End Girls " was " as catchy as anything on the radio in 1986 " , praising " its enticing bass line and foreboding synth riffs " , but felt that it was almost " nullified by peevish spoken asides and the cryptic posturing of the duo 's lyrics " . In a review of the live album *Concrete* , Michael Hubbard from musicOMH said that " West End Girls " was one of the songs that " round out a collection that never feels too long or superfluous " , adding that it " goes some way to installing Tennant and Lowe as national treasures " .

Nitsuh Abebe from Pitchfork Media , in a review of their compilation album *PopArt : Pet Shop Boys - The Hits* commented that in the song " we meet Tennant not as a singer , but as a speaker " , adding that " he mumbles the verses to us not like a star , but like a stranger in a raincoat , slinking alongside you and pointing out the sights " .

In 1987 , " West End Girls " won for Best Single at The BRIT Awards , and for Best International Hit at the Ivor Novello Awards . In 2005 , the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters gave to West End Girls the Ivor Novello Award for Song of The Decade between the years 1985 and 1994 .

= = Music video = =

The video was directed by Andy Morahan and Eric Watson , and consists of shots of the duo around London . At the beginning of the video , noises from the city can be heard , a camera passes Lowe on the street , and focus on two vintage dolls in a shop window . Then appears a sequence of quick cuts with shots of the city 's different sub @-@ cultures , the video freezes and cuts to Tennant and Lowe , who walk through an empty Wentworth Street in Petticoat Lane Market . They stand in front of a red garage door , Tennant is in front dressed with a long coat , white shirt and dark necktie , directly addressing the camera , with Lowe standing behind him with a blank expression . Lowe is filmed in double @-@ exposure and appears almost ghostlike . In other shots , Tennant walks imperiously while Lowe follows behind , as if one were a master and the other an apprentice .

Then the video shows various shots at Waterloo station , as the chorus starts . In slow motion , the camera pans across the WHSmith shop on the station concourse as the duo walk past . It cuts to a brief shot of a No. 42 red double @-@ decker bus , showing the destination as Aldgate , also advertising the stage @-@ show *Evita* , then black and white shots of the Tower Bridge , Westminster and the Westminster Palace Clock Tower from the sky . The duo poses on the South Bank of the River Thames in a pastiche of a postcard image , with the Houses of Parliament as a background .

The camera shows shots of young women , and passes through arcades and cinemas in Leicester Square . The camera now passes South Africa House showing protestors in the Non @-@ Stop Picket , an anti @-@ apartheid vigil . The video cuts to a closeup of Tennant singing the chorus , with a purple neon sign passing across his face . At the end the camera passes again through Leicester Square , where people queue to see Fletch and Desperately Seeking Susan . The video was nominated for Best New Artist in a Video at the 1986 MTV Video Music Awards , but lost to a @-@ ha 's Take On Me .

= = Chart performance = =

" West End Girls " was first released in April 1984 through writer and producer Bobby Orlando 's label . The song was a club hit in the United States , and in some European countries , such as Belgium , where it debuted at number 24 on the VRT Top 30 chart on 28 July 1984 , peaking at 17 four weeks later . In Canada , " West End Girls " first entered the RPM singles chart in April 1985 , reaching a peak position of 81 in June 1985 .

Having signed with EMI , the group released their first major label single " Opportunities (Let 's Make Lots of Money) " in mid @-@ 1985 , but it failed to attract attention . The Pet Shop Boys then decided to re @-@ record " West End Girls " , and issue this new version as a single . Producer Stephen Hague helmed the new , re @-@ recorded version of " West End Girls " .

The re @-@ recorded version of " West End Girls " was released in the United Kingdom in October 1985 , debuting on the UK Singles Chart at number 80 , and within eight weeks of its release it had reached the top of the chart . It maintained the number one position for two weeks and received a gold certification by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) in January 1986 . Across Europe , " West End Girls " also topped the singles chart in Norway , as well as peaking in the top three in Belgium , Germany , Ireland , the Netherlands , Sweden , and Switzerland .

In Canada , where the original recording of " West End Girls " had already been a minor hit in 1985 , the re @-@ recorded version was issued as a single in early 1986 . The re @-@ recorded song entered the chart in March 1986 , peaking at number one for one week on 17 May 1986 . In the United States , West End Girls debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 at number 71 , reaching the number one position on 10 May 1986 , and remained on the chart for 20 weeks . The song also peaked at number one on Billboard 's Hot Dance Music / Club Play chart for two weeks .

= = Formats and track listings = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Neil Tennant ? vocals , lyrics
Chris Lowe ? keyboards , artwork design
Helena Springs ? additional vocals
Bobby Orlando ? producer , (1984 release)
Stephen Hague ? producer (1985 release)
Steve Jerome ? engineer ? 1984 release
David Jacob ? engineer
Frank Roszak ? remixing
Eric Watson ? photography

= = Charts and certifications = =

= = = Chart positions = = =

=== Year @-@ end charts ===

=== Certifications ===

== East 17 version ==

In 1993 East 17 covered " West End Girls " for their album Walthamstow , with limited chart success .

=== Track listings ===

7 "

. West End Girls (Faces on Posters Mix)

. West End Girls (Kicking in Chairs)

=== Charts ===