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Skip to content

[Advanced search](#)

How Can I Be Sure

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10 posts • Page **1** of **1**

How Can I Be Sure (#p99439)

by **allherfaces** » Thu Jul 12, 2012 3:57 pm

Ran across this looking up something for my dissertation.

Interview with one of the Rascals, Felix Cavaliere, who wrote the song.

Thought it might be of interest to some.

Q - Where'd you come up with the lyrics to the song "How Can I Be Sure"? I'm talking about: "How's the weather, whether or not we're together, Touch me but don't let me down. Maybe I'm just hanging around, with my head up, upside down."

A - That's very difficult to answer. There's nowhere you can describe where those thoughts come from. First of all, you need a situation where you need to rhyme. Second of all, you need to get a story across. Again I wrote that with my partner Eddie (Brigati). I think what we were trying to do is, rhyme weather and together with something. The whole tone of the thing...I was engaged to a woman at the time, a young girl. All the songs that were written at that time were written about that relationship; all of the joy that was experienced through that relationship. And at that time the relationship was starting to become a little question mark as to whether I was doing the right thing or not. Ultimately I ended up not marrying her and not being involved with her. That was kind of the signal, the warning sign, that song, that the relationship was over with..."How Can I Be Sure". Even though it really doesn't have a negative connotation, it really does, in that, that was it. So, these things happen. They pass through your life.

Q - Nobody writes lyrics like that. It's very strange.

A - Well, it is. If you met my partner you'd know why. He's a pretty strange guy. (laughs) It just has to do with thought sequences, thought patterns that go through your mind. What I usually did was write the title of the song, and the melody of the song. Then I sat down with him and kind of played it and sung it for him. Whatever kind of musical vibrations it set off in his mind, he tried to put a word to that. It's kind of like bouncing a ball against a wall. You know, sometimes it bounces up. Sometimes it bounces down. Wherever it goes, you use whatever creativity you have to express that. It's a very interesting process. That's what came out.

Q - So, you wrote what part in "How Can I Be Sure"?

A - I wrote basically like the choruses, the main theme to the song. Actually I understand Eddie's brother also collaborated on that. Whatever was going through their brain at that time, triggered those words. There's no way to describe how those things happen. That's what makes it so much fun writing.

Whole interview is here:

[http://www.classicbands.com/FelixCavali ... rview.html](http://www.classicbands.com/FelixCavali...rview.html) (<http://www.classicbands.com/FelixCavaliereInterview.html>)

Top

Re: How Can I Be Sure (#p99442)

by **Sara** » Thu Jul 12, 2012 4:12 pm

Thanks for sharing this Nancy, I love 'How Can I be Sure', and I think it has great lyrics. To me it's about someone's absolute love for another person and their world all fitting into place 😊

Sara x

Top

Re: How Can I Be Sure (#p99452)

by **boztiggs** » Thu Jul 12, 2012 7:08 pm

its one of my important songs, the first one that really did it for me, its all about insecurity and damaged trust and fear. Hello me!!!

Neil 🍷

Top

Re: How Can I Be Sure (#p99477)

by **Sue** » Fri Jul 13, 2012 11:32 am

I love this song. Interesting interview - thanks Nancy.



Sue xx

Top

Re: How Can I Be Sure (#p99486)

by **jeffery** » Fri Jul 13, 2012 2:10 pm

How can I be sure - where I stand with you ?

From my experience one can never be sure (in a world that's constantly changing).

Thanx Nancy,
I love those song writing tidbits.

Top

Re: How Can I Be Sure (#p99519)

by **Carole R.** » Sat Jul 14, 2012 9:15 am

I think that the singer is perfectly sure how he/ she feels, but has real doubts about how the other person feels.

That's my 'take' on this song. 😊

Thanks Nancy, I always like to read the story behind a song. 😊

Carole R xx

Top

Re: How Can I Be Sure (#p99525)by **Cas19** » Sat Jul 14, 2012 1:03 pm

I found this interesting too Nancy. I think the singer is sometimes unsure of the feelings that the other person has for her. Its a great song no matter what the lyrics mean.

Casx

Top

Re: How Can I Be Sure (#p100176)by **SweMaria** » Tue Jul 24, 2012 6:01 pm

Thanks for posting this Nancy! It's always interesting to read about the songwriter's thoughts. I love this song!

Top

Re: How Can I Be Sure (#p100179)by **daydreamer** » Tue Jul 24, 2012 7:00 pm

I missed this originally. Thanks for posting Nancy, it's interesting to read the writers thoughts behind the lyrics. I've never really questioned them, to me it's always been a song about someone who is losing touch with the one he/she loved. But with a little bit of psychobabble thrown in 😊

Top

Re: How Can I Be Sure (#p100183)by **mnmcv1** » Tue Jul 24, 2012 11:12 pm

i missed it too! Thanks for putting it up, Nancy. 🙌 😊

Agree with Carole regarding the psychobabble. One of the things that made me love this song when the Rascals did it is, for a song so pensive, it does have some flighty lyrics (a "touch of whimsy"- isnt that the saying?). And the arrangement, that whole French vibe. I think it's one of the more unique songs in American pop history.

Dusty added so much to it, her own unique touch. When she sings "maybe I'm just hangin' around..." - all the way to the "wonderful, baby, as yooooooooou..." It can't be any more perfect. It's just a little slice of heaven. 🍷

Top

Display posts from previous:

Post a reply

10 posts • Page **1** of **1**

Return to You Set My Dreams To Music

Jump to:

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