

#12/1: FORTY DAYS (Version 1: 1960)
#12/2: FORTY DAYS (Version 2: 1962)
(Chuck Berry)



American Tour-January to February 1960:
Cliff with The Shadows singing one of the three uptempo songs in their set,
Forty Days, Dynamite or Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On.

This was another of Cliff's personal favourite rockers that featured regularly in his early live act during 1960 and 1961. Two versions of this Chuck Berry hit were recorded for the Luxembourg shows, both markedly different, not only in The Shadows' style and interpretation of the song, but especially in Cliff's vocal. Sadly the earlier, faster and more exciting 1960 recording of *Forty Days* is of dire quality. We can only hope that a better copy turns up.

There is real power and a cutting edge in Cliff's voice, which gives a valuable insight into how he would have performed this track on stage in the early days. His handling of the chorus line is notably different – and better – with Cliff exercising the upper limits of his vocal range and power to great effect. The later, 1962, rendition is still good but the wild 'soar away' voice had been tethered and in came a more restrained and polished vocal performance. The Shadows' sound had significantly changed by this time as well of course. The quality of the 1962 performance is excellent and was one of three good quality tracks from 1962 that was officially released on the *Rock 'n' Roll Years* CD Box Set back in 1997. The other two featured songs were *Rosalie* and *Got A Funny Feeling*.

Cliff first sang *Forty Days* in late 1959, and when he began his month-long American tour in January 1960 he used it as the opening number. With just five songs in his short set Cliff set out to impress with his dynamism. Maintaining the frenetic beat, he would then burst into *Dynamite* (replacing *My Babe* which he performed in the early days of the tour.)

Cliff finally cut *Forty Days* at the Abbey Road Studios on 4 July 1961; by comparison with these tracks, it appears a rather restrained offering. It was released officially on the *21 Today* album in November 1961.

Another take of the song was featured on BBC Radio's 'Saturday Club' on 14 October 1961. He was occasionally using the song in his live act as late as 1964, and when he and The Shadows appeared on German television in May 1964 singing five numbers, he opened with this song.

MC: a jaunty rather than gritty performance on *21 Today* certainly. Did I read somewhere that The Beatles modelled their stellar *I Saw Her Standing There* on this track? True, the Harrison solo bears some similarities to Hank's, but really! — RL Mark 2 has a bit more zip than the studio version, with (as expected) a quite different, if unexceptional, solo from HM, and some robust vocal accompaniment. No even tolerably clear example of Mark 1 (1960, or earlier??) seems to have survived, but it was evidently an altogether more animated affair.