

#32/1: MY BABE (1960 version)
#32/2: MY BABE (1961 version)
(Willie Dixon)



The 1960 take of this composition is probably one of the best performances Cliff and The Shadows ever did for the 'Me And My Shadows' shows. The exciting tight arrangement and raw energy that exudes from the track make it superior by far to the officially released version on the live *Cliff* album of February 1959. The second Luxembourg version recorded later in 1961 is still good, but the raw edges have been replaced by a performance more polished and smooth in delivery.

My Babe was one of the earliest rockers Cliff ever sang and he featured it in his act from the very beginning. Originally a hit for Ricky Nelson, Cliff performed it with The Drifters on BBC Radio's 'Saturday Club' on 27 December 1958, and it is also likely that he sang it live on the 'Oh Boy!' ABC television show sometime between October and December 1958 – which was the time in the series nine-month run when he appeared almost every week.

As mentioned elsewhere, Cliff included it in the set for his first live album *Cliff* recorded before a screaming audience at Abbey Road on 9 and 10 February 1959, but he was suffering from laryngitis at the time. Cliff and The Shadows also performed it when they embarked on their month long American tour in January 1960, but it was replaced early on by *Dynamite*, which proved a favourite with the American audiences over there.

This 1960 Luxembourg version is one of the first batch of songs Cliff and The Shadows recorded at their London studios during May, June and July 1960. This and *Blue Suede Shoes*, *Don't Bug Me Baby*, *Forty Days*, *I Gotta Know*, *Mean Woman Blues*, *I'm Gonna Get You*, *Kansas City*, *Sick And Tired*, *Hang Up My Rock 'n' Roll Shoes* and *Twenty Flight Rock* make up the cream of the surviving 'Me And My Shadows' collection. All these tracks share the same exciting arrangements and Hank's superlative guitar sound. If the original transcription discs are ever found with perfect audio quality they would make a stunning CD release.

MC: all this said, PR now thinks, and I would agree, that the style of the first of these versions places it in 1959 rather than 1960. It is certainly a dynamic performance whenever it was recorded. The second version is bland, more of a cabaret turn.