

## "Shut Up and Dance" Research Notes

Thesis: Sometimes the best way to communicate is without words and with other people.

*Radio.com*

Related Questions: WALK THE MOON, 'Shut Up and Dance'

October 22, 2014 11:10 AM

By *Scott T. Sterling*

I'm not going to get into my personal life, but...we don't consider ourselves to be these slick, mysterious rock stars. We're a bunch of dorks, and this is like the dork rock anthem

We were inspired by these loveable songs from the '80s like "Hit Me with Your Best Shot" (Pat Benatar) and "Jessie's Girl" (Rick Springfield), real heart-on-your-sleeve kind of anthems. I really relate to that. There's this girl that I like, and a couple of nights before I was messing with the song she came out with us. She was wearing a backless dress and her old sneakers, and I was super into it. Gears started turning.

WALK THE MOON, historically, has grown and changed and reacted all in response to our fans and the community around us. That's how the whole vibe was born. It's just really important to us to keep that tradition. So moving into this next stage for us, we wanted to have something that was created by the fans. It was amazing how they responded.

★ But the song is about shutting up and dancing all at once. movement (emotion) > words

*Billboard.com*

Indie Rockers Walk the Moon: 'People of Our Generation Are Scared to Express Themselves'

By Harley Brown | March 17, 2015 4:04 PM EDT

The lyrical references in "Shut Up and Dance" are very specific. Were they inspired by a particular person or memory?

Nicholas Petricca: We were in Los Angeles, trying to write songs, and I was stuck. For a breather I went out with my girlfriend to the Echo; they have this awesome party where they play Motown and funk. We were at the bar, and it was taking forever to get a drink. I was frustrated because there was great music playing and I wanted to be out there. She was like, "Shut up and dance with me!"

The song is from your 2014 album, *Talking Is Hard*. What does that title mean?

People of our generation are scared to express ourselves. We're stuck on our phones communicating with people on the other side of the world, but find it hard to hold a conversation with people across the table. It's about getting out of your head.

emotion

↳ expression about the body, not the mind

music about emotion

need for others for growth

to be "moved" (physically & emotionally)

talking/whining prevents living

Idolator.com

WALK THE MOON On Rising Hit "Shut Up + Dance," Sophomore LP "TALKING IS HARD" & Magic Cards: Idolator Interview

By: Mike Wass / December 11, 2014

"Shut Up + Dance" is more pop than your previous singles. Was that a conscious decision?

Nicholas Petricca: We did want to write a song with a story that was easy to follow. It's based on a true story, so it is relatable and I think everyone has been in the position before where they just want to get out their heads. They're stuck in a vicious cycle, and some event or some song has been able to drag them out of it, and bring them into the moment.

↳ experience = shared  
↳ music a way  
to connect  
w/others

Why are you guys so interested in the '80s?

Nicholas Petricca: I think the '80s and some of the '90s was a time when weird was celebrated. You had people in the forefront of pop culture like **David Bowie** who was the king of weird. The fashion was really over the top, and those extremes (which were not necessarily cool in the **James Dean** sense of cool) were considered acceptable or hip. So we really respond to that weirdness.

Americansongwriter.com

Inside "Shut Up and Dance," WALK THE MOON's Number One Hit by Rob LeDonne 3/5/15

Take me through the origin of "Shut Up and Dance." I want to know **everything about it.**

Well, (bandmember) Eli Maiman and I were working on something that's now the verse. And it had this great feeling that we couldn't stop playing over and over. We didn't have a chorus and we didn't have a subject or a lyric. So over the next weekend, I went to this awesome party they have at The Echo in Echo Park, Los Angeles, called Funky Soul Saturday. The story of "Shut Up and Dance" is based on a true story of hanging out there with my friends... this girl actually told me to shut up and dance with her. We took it back to the studio and it spun out very quickly after that.

When she said that, did you know at the time that was going to be a lyric in a potential song? Or was it later when you realized that?

No, it was later. At the time, I was in my head and not with it. She's one of my best friends and pulled me out into the moment, and that really became the subject of the song. Encouraging people to let go of whatever it is that's bothering you and get into your body and out of your head. Coming home and working on the song I thought, this is it. This is totally it.

The first line is great, "Don't you dare look back." It's such a bold first line. It's like, whoa. This song is going to be abrasive.

It's like, whatever you're doing- fuck that. Listen to this song. When it comes to writing the lyrics, it's usually just me emoting in a cave, trying to channel the spirits of rock and roll onto the paper. After I had that main bit in the chorus, I started picturing myself in high school because that's what it really reminded me of. Being this incredibly uncomfortable, awkward adolescent dude, so it sort of became this anthem for the dork who is 100 percent me. The band had been listening to songs like "Jessie's Girl" and "Just What I Needed" and "Hit Me With Your Best Shot"- these super quirky rock anthems. They're simple and beautiful and in-your-face rock songs, and that's the vibe we were looking for.

↳  
"stuck in your head"

Feelings  
≠  
words

Can't really  
understand  
if you're too  
busy in  
stuck in  
your head