

Last Train to Clarksville

(The Monkees)

{Intro}

do do do do

Do do do do do do do do do do do do do

do do do do

{verse}

Take the last train to Clarksville

And I'll meet you at the station

You can be here by four thirty

Cause I made your reservation

Don't be slow

Oh, no, no, no

Oh, no, no, no

Take the last train to Clarksville

Now I must hang up the phone

I can't hear you in this noisy railroad
station all alone

I'm feeling low

Oh no, no, no

Oh no, no, no

Cause I'm leaving in the morning

And I must see you again

We'll have one more night together

Till the morning brings my train and

I must go

Oh no, no, no

Oh no, no, no

And I don't know if I'm ever coming
home

Ohhh

Ahhhhhhh

And I don't know if I'm ever coming
home

Take the last train to Clarksville

I'll be waiting at the station

We'll have time for coffee-flavored
kisses

And a bit of conversation, oh

Oh no, no, no

Oh no, no, no

Take the last train to Clarksville

And I'll meet you at the station

You can be here by four thirty

Cause I made your reservation

Don't be slow

Oh, no, no, no

Oh, no, no, no

And I don't know if I'm ever coming
home

{bridge}

Do do do do do do do do do do do do

Take the last train to Clarksville

(repeat and fade)

"Last Train to Clarksville" was the debut single by The Monkees. It was released August 16, 1966 and later included on the group's 1966 self-titled album, which was released on October 10, 1966. The song, written by Tommy Boyce and Bobby Hart, was recorded at RCA Victor Studio B in Hollywood on July 25, 1966 and was already on the Boss Hit Bounds on 17 August 1966. The song topped the Billboard Hot 100 on November 5, 1966. Lead vocals were performed by The Monkees' drummer Micky Dolenz. "Last Train to Clarksville" was featured in seven episodes of the band's television series, the most for any Monkees song.

The song, written by the songwriting duo Tommy Boyce and Bobby Hart, has been compared to The Beatles' "Paperback Writer", particularly the "jangly" guitar sound, the chord structure, and the vocal harmonies. The Beatles song had been number one in the US charts three months earlier.

The lyrics tell of a man phoning the woman he loves, urging her to meet him at a train station in Clarksville before he must leave, possibly forever. There was no explicit reference to war in the song but its last line, "And I don't know if I'm ever coming home", was an indirect reference about a soldier leaving for the Vietnam War.

It has often been presumed that the song refers to Clarksville, Tennessee, which is near Fort Campbell, Kentucky, the home of the 101st Airborne Division, which was then serving in Vietnam. However, according to songwriter Bobby Hart, that was not the case. Instead, according to Hart, "We were just looking for a name that sounded good. There's a little town in northern Arizona I used to go through in the summer on the way to Oak Creek Canyon called Clarkdale. We were throwing out names, and when we got to Clarkdale, we thought Clarksville sounded even better. We didn't know it at the time, [but] there is an Army base near the town of Clarksville, Tennessee — which would have fit the bill fine for the storyline. We couldn't be too direct with The Monkees. We couldn't really make a protest song out of it — we kind of snuck it in".

Although "Clarksville" is in the song title, the video accompanying the song on the Monkees' TV show showed a sign pointing to "Clarkesville".

Hart got the idea for the lyrics when he turned on the radio and heard the end of The Beatles' "Paperback Writer". He thought Paul McCartney was singing "Take the last train", and decided to use the line when he found out McCartney was actually singing "Paperback Writer". Hart knew that The Monkees TV series was being pitched as a music/comedy series in the spirit of The Beatles movie *A Hard Day's Night*, so he was hoping that by emulating The Beatles, this song might lead to a successful single, which it did. To help ensure that, he decided to include a distinctive guitar riff and wrote in the "Oh No-No-No, Oh No-No-No" lyrics as a response to The Beatles' famous "Yeah Yeah Yeah".

Although LA's "Wrecking Crew" provided the instrumental backing for many of the early Monkees' songs, Boyce and Hart's band Candy Store Prophets did the session work for this song. The lead guitar part was written and played by Hollywood session musician Louie Shelton who would eventually become a mainstay on Monkees recordings.