

Paul Simon

Detailed Features of your 3 songs- set works on “Graceland”

The 8 mark question would ask you to comment on three or four elements of music. Only comment on the elements that the question asks you to.

Harmony (including tonality)

Melody (including word setting)

Texture

Rhythm (including tempo and metre)

Instrumentation

Structure

Style

Music Technology

Task:- Highlight your analysis in different colours for each section. “Diamonds” has been done for you as an example.

Graceland

Long Instrumental Introduction Bars 1- 20

- tonic chord (E/I). Bars 1 - 4 repeated.
- Fretless bass guitar opens with a slide/glissando onto the tonic pedal note (E) which is held/sustained for two bars.
- The pedal note is played an octave lower in bars 3 and 4.
- Acoustic guitar & electric guitar play tonic chord in second inversion in a repeated rhythmic pattern.
- Drum kit: bass drum on all four crotchet beats, snare drum and hi-hat on off-beats.
- An open hi-hat is added in the repeat of bars 1 – 4 on the half beat of beat 2 in bars 1 and 3.
- Shaker plays continuous semiquavers.
- Claves play on off-beats of beats 3 and 4 and are joined by tambourine and wood block in bars 1 and 3.
- Sampled hand claps are added in the repeat of bars 1 – 4.
- Bars 9 - 20 tonic chord moves briefly to chord A/IV and the harmony is extended to include chords B/V & C#m/VI.
- Introduction ends with perfect cadence (B/V to E/I).
- Bass plays an ostinato on the root of each chord, leaping up and down the octave.
- African pedal steel guitar plays an off-beat syncopated triadic melodic pattern (falling/descending then rising/ascending) from bar 13.

Verse 1 Bars 21-28

- Verse 1 is a shortened verse being only a second half of a full verse.
- Paul Simon's lead vocals have a limited range using pentatonic scale (E, F#, G#, B & C#) and are entirely syllabic.
- Two 2-bar vocal phrases both starting with an anacrusis.
- Pedal steel guitar plays 2-bar off-beat triadic melodic pattern (from the introduction) after the vocal phrases (call & response). Chords E/I, A/IV, C#m/VI & B/V - each chord is played for 2 bars (slow harmonic pace but doesn't feel slow due to the tempo).

Chorus 1 Bars 20- 44

- Four 4-bar vocal phrases in pattern A-B-C-B.
- The chorus is mainly syllabic.
- The title hook 'Graceland' features a falling third (G# to E) & is in three of the phrases here (A, B and repeat of B).
- Phrase A has a small range of only three notes: E, F# & G#.
- The melodic movement is therefore mainly stepwise with some leaps of a third.
- Phrase B has a wider range, opening with E (octave above E in phrase A).
- The melodic movement starts triadic, includes more leaps (sixth on lyrics ...-lies and we...) and ends with the title hook.
- Phrase C starts on the dominant note (B) and includes repeated notes.
- The return of phrase B opens with an off-beat octave leap.
- The electric guitar and bass guitar play a rising syncopated arpeggio fill in octaves after each vocal phrase.

Verse 2 Bars 45- 64

- The first full verse opens with a 2-bar instrumental introduction where the guitar plays repeated chords.
- Pedal steel guitar triadic melodic pattern is played with the vocal phrases rather than in between the vocal phrases.
- Paul Simon's lead vocal line includes triplet quavers and a dotted rhythm in opening phrase.
- Bongos play a fill at the end of the first half of the verse, just before the lyrics "and she said losing...".
- The lead vocals emphasise the word "losing" by holding the first syllable on for three beats. Contrasting with a mostly continuously moving (mainly quaver) vocal line.
- The lead vocal line is mostly stepwise with the phrase "Ev'rybody sees you're blown apart" descending from tonic note E down an octave.
- In the second half of the verse (bar 57/1'54") backing vocals sing "ooh" in 2-part harmony. These are sung as a variety of two bar sustained notes and stepwise crotchets.

Chorus 2 Bars 65- 80

- Repeat of chorus 1 with altered lyrics in places resulting in altered rhythms.
- Multi-tracking has allowed Paul Simon to sing a harmony line with his lead vocals.

Verse 3 Bars 81- 100

- The first vocal phrase is extended and as a result, the second vocal phrase is displaced to allow a gap between these phrases (filled by pedal steel guitar).

- The phrase “Oh, so this is what she means” (3’00) is half-spoken/sung to aid the story telling.
- The verse ends with the lead vocals singing “Ooh” in harmony with the backing vocals

Chorus 3 Bars 111- 116

- Repeat of previous choruses, again with altered lyrics.
- Some phrases are altered rhythmically and melodically.
- Lead vocals are once again harmonised.

Outro Bars 117- end

- Opens with verses 2 and 3 material (guitar chords).
- “Ooh” in 2-part harmony over verse 2 harmony.
- Percussion & low pitched vocal sample on beats 2 and 4 in the first 10 bars of the outro.
- Leads into chorus, vocals sing first part of the chorus (Graceland) and ends with instrumental to fade out.

Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes

Song is in two contrasting sections.

Section 1- South African A cappella

Section 2- Western Folk/ Rock

Section 1 (Generally South African A cappella)

- Stylistically, this section is completely different to the second section section (South African A cappella).

Bars 1-8:- A cappella introduction (South African male A cappella group (Ladysmith Black Mambazo)

- Group 1 call:- E major triad “Awa awa” in 3 part harmony
- Group 2 response:- 4 part harmony in E major but with passing notes inbetween
- Phrase start off beat (syncopation).

Bars 9- 16:- A cappella intro with lead vocals

- A cappella introduction is repeated (change to last phrase which now acts as an accompaniment).
- Centred around tonic chord (E major) with narrow pitch range (E and G#). The second degree of the scale F# used as passing note or as an appoggiatura.

Bars 17- 32:- A cappella title hook section

- PS opens the first two phrases with “ta na na” and this phrase is harmonised by one part of the A cappella group. The other 3 parts of the A cappella group sing the phrase in an antiphonal exchange.
- All parts sing the second part of the exchange “she got diamonds on the soles of her shoes” in 5 part harmony (PS’s line is doubled an octave lower).

Section 2

Bars 33- 42:- Instrumental introduction

- Electric guitar solo in new unrelated key, F major (open spread followed by descending passage).
- Stylistically, this section is completely different to the first section (folk/ rock).
- The melody descends from an F (2 above middle C) down two octaves to F below middle C.
- This opening passage is syncopated and the pulse becomes clearer with the addition of percussion instruments.
- The electric guitar plays a two bar groove which repeats for the rest of the introduction. The groove is simple and is largely based on F (I), Bb (IV) and C (V)- primary chords in F.
- The fretless bass plays a 2 bar groove which is mainly on the root of the chords. It is a very active part with leaps of an octave, a 7th and a 10th.
- The drum kit plays a short fill in the first 2 bar groove, after which the bass plays on the beat. Snare and high hat all play on off beats (syncopation). The hi hat is varied with an open and closed position. The bongos play fast rhythmic patterns that include dotted rhythms, semiquavers, syncopation. The shaker plays continuous semiquavers.

Verse 1

Bars 33-43

- Tonic triad of F outlined at the start of each section.
- “People say she’s crazy”, the opening note is C above middle C.
- Melodic movement is initially triadic and then mainly conjunct.
- First section ends with the descending phrase “Diamonds on the soles of her shoes”, ending on the tonic note F (above middle C).
- In the second phrase, opening note is F (2 above middle C) and starts slightly earlier, on the last beat of the first section. The ending phrase “diamonds” is sung as a flowing melisma to contrast the mainly syllabic delivery. The final words of the title are omitted.
- In the third phrase, the opening note is the same as the first section but with an octave leap. PS sings “oo” in falsetto. The final phrase of the third section is the same as the final phrase of the last section.
- The guitar, bass and percussion patterns from the instrumental introduction continue throughout the verse.
- An acoustic guitar joins in at the start of the second section.

Bridge

Bars 67- 68

- All instrumental parts continue as in the verse. There is a short descending “talking drum” sound here.

Instrumental section

Bars 69- 76

- **Staccato** homophonic **syncopated chords** played by the horn section (alto sax, trumpet and tenor sax). These have been recorded twice and panned on each channel, but the left channel recording has a modified rhythm to give it an extra punch. As with other tracks, lots of delay and reverb are added to enrich the texture.
- **Structured in 2 bar phrases, primary chords (F, Bb, C) but F moves to Bb slightly sooner.**
- **The bass groove has slightly changed to accommodate the chords and still includes an octave leap.**
- The electric guitar groove from the verse has stopped and now plays in between the horn chords, as does the electric guitar.
- The drum kit now includes a floor tom and a bell ride. Shakers and bongos continue as before.

Verse 2 intro

Bars 77- 84

- Instrumentation from verse 1 with **falsetto vocals (woo)** ending with a lovely fluid, improvised fretless bass solo.

Verse 2

Bars 85- 108

- **Repeat of verse 1 but with variations in melody and rhythm** due to the change in lyrics. **The third section (last 8 bars) is the same as verse 1 but PS extends the words “diamonds” as a melisma. This overlaps into the bridge section.**

Bridge

Bars 109- 110

- **Repeat of bridge (with overlapping vocals).**

Instrumental section

Bars 111-118

- Repeat of instrumental section

Verse 3 intro

Bars 119- 124

- Slightly shorter than the introduction to verse 2. The horn section play three descending chords after PS sings “woo”.

Verse 3

Bars 125- 130

- Shortened verse with only 6 bars of second section.

Outro

Bars 131- end

- Long outro that repeats the 2 bar phrase “ta na na na na” with PS harmonised by the A cappella group from Section 1 of the song.
- The instrumentation from the verse continues.
- After 24 bars, all instruments stop playing, leaving the vocals and the bongos. The bongos play improvised rhythms whilst the vocals continue to repeat the phrase.
- The song ends with a slow fade out.

“You Can Call Me Al”

Introduction Bars 1-8

- The synthesised brass, synthesised guitar and electric guitar play a two bar homophonic riff.
- The riff is based on chords F/I, C/V and Bb/IV and it is the main theme from the chorus.
- The riff starts on beat 2 with chord F, the top note of the chord descends by step to chord C on beat 3.
- The top note of this chord then descends by step to chord Bb on the half beat of beat 4.
- The second bar of the riff is almost identical as the first bar but ascends on the final chord to F.
- Prominent bass and drum kit enter in bar 3 on the second playing of the riff.
- Slap bass and drum kit play their own repetitive groove.
- The drum groove consists of a very simple four beat pattern with the bass drum on beats 1, 2 and 3 and the snare on the fourth beat.
- The hi-hat plays continuous quavers with open hi-hat on some of the off-beats.
- The drums play a fill (includes toms) in the last bar leading into verse 1.

Verse 1 Bars 9- 24

- The verse consists of two eight bar sections. In the first section Paul Simon’s lead vocals are fast paced and highly conversational. He sings them quite freely in relation to rhythm.
- The vocal melody is almost entirely syllabic and the opening phrase is syncopated.
- The range of the vocal melody is small with only notes F, G, A, Bb and C.
- Melodic movement is mostly stepwise/conjunct.
- The synthesised brass have stopped playing and the guitar continues to play a riff which is now in 2-part rather than in 3-part harmony.
- The bass continues the same groove from the introduction.

- The drum kit groove has changed very slightly –the bass drum plays on all 4 beats with no snare on beat 4.
- The hi-hat plays rapid semiquavers in the 4th (& 8th bar).
- A 4 bar chord pattern is repeated and includes chords F/I, C/V and Gm/II.
- The second section introduces backing vocals and the fretless bass guitar.
- The backing vocals sing “mm” on chord F/I in 3-part harmony in alternate bars.
- The voices slide up to the note on “mm”.
- The fretless bass doubles the lower note of the chord and also slides up to the note with the backing vocals. This is incorporated into a fairly high pitched fretless bass line.
- The addition of both these parts, fills the texture out. Paul Simon’s lead vocals are less rapid in the second section but still fairly fast.
- The drums play a fill (includes toms) in the last bar leading into chorus 1.

Chorus 1 Bars 25- 32

- The chorus consists of 2 4-bar phrases.
- Paul Simon’s lead vocals are doubled an octave lower on opening phrase “If you’ll be my bodyguard” and “I can call you Betty” by another voice.
- The synthesised brass and synthesised guitar join the electric guitar to play the punchy 2-bar homophonic riff from the introduction.
- Backing vocals sing “shoo doo doo doo” doubling the lower note of the homophonic riff an octave higher.
- The higher pitched fretless bass guitar part from the second half of the verse has stopped playing.
- The chord progression includes F/I, Bb/IV and C/V. The drums play a fill (includes toms) in the last bar leading into verse 2.

Verse 3 Bars 33- 48

- Repeat of verse 1 but with significant variations in melody and rhythm.

Chorus 2 Bars 49- 56

- Repeat of chorus 1 but the ending is higher than in chorus 1.

Instrumental Verse Bars 27- 72

- 2 8-bar sections with a penny whistle solo.
- In the first 8-bar section, each 2 bar phrase starts on the second quaver of the bar (off beat) on high C (2 octaves above middle C).
- The melody is developed in the second section with each phrase starting on A, 2 notes lower than in the first section.
- Rhythmically the solo is more folk-based with fast rhythms including semiquavers, a sextuplet and grace notes.

Middle 8 Bars 73- 80

- Based on the introduction with additional horns playing the 2-bar homophonic riff.

Verse 3 Bars 81- 92

- Repeat of verse 1 but with significant variations in melody and rhythm due to different lyrics.

Chorus 3 Bars 97- 104

- Repeat of chorus 2

Verse 4 Bars 105- 120

- First half of the verse is sung to “na na...” and the second half is without lead vocals.

Instrumental Break Bars 121- 122

- Fretless bass solo without accompaniment. The solo consists of fast paced semiquavers and covers a wide range in just 2 bars.
- The brief motif was in fact more or less a single bar of music, the first based on a largely descending semiquaver pattern. The second part was in fact studio engineered by Halee. He simply copied it in reverse to kind of create a musical palindrome.

Outro Bars 123- end

- 8 bar introduction followed by the chorus.
- Paul Simon sings only the opening phrase of each 4-bar phrase “If you’ll be my bodyguard” and “I can call you Betty”.
- This is followed each time with 3 bars of falsetto “oohs”. The 8 bar chorus is repeated with a fade out.

Paul Simon 8 mark questions from past papers from AQA

1. Explain how Paul Simon has used harmony, melody, texture and/or structure in ‘Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes’

(8 marks)

2. Explain how Paul Simon has used harmony, rhythm, sonority (timbre) and/or structure to create the song ‘You Can Call Me Al’

(8 marks)

3. Explain how Paul Simon uses rhythm/tempo/metre, melody, harmony and/or instrumentation to reflect the lyrics and meaning behind the track “Graceland”

(8 marks)