

KEY

3 Grade 5 Grade 8 Grade



RHYTHM, METRE and TEMPO

There are **lots of tempo changes throughout the song** and they are important to the structure (see the structure section).
The song **slows down** at the end.
There is frequent **syncopation** throughout.

The intro starts in **3/2 time**, then changes to **2/2**. When verse 1 starts it then goes into **4/4 time**. At bar 115 ("I hope you're happy") it goes back to **2/2 time**.
There are several **rallentandos** or "**ralls**" (when the tempo slows down), particularly at the end of sections. There is a rall at the end of the whole piece.
Dotted rhythms are used throughout, like the word "gra-vi-ty" in the chorus. There are also triplets.

Rhythms in the vocal part are mostly **crotchets and quavers**, but there are some longer notes at the end of phrases.
Rests break up phrases, and phrases often start with a rest.

TEXTURE

The main texture is **homophonic** (melody and accompaniment)

The intro has a **sparse texture** with chord stabs in the orchestra and **some monophonic bars**

Elphaba and Glinda **usually sing separately** but sometimes sing together in **unison** ("there's no fight we cannot win") or in **harmony** (thirds) ("I hope you're happy my friend")

The outro is **polyphonic**, with Elphaba, Glinda and the chorus all singing different musical ideas at the same time.

There is an **ostinato accompaniment** at bar 88

Sometimes the orchestra play **homophonic chordal textures**, like at bar 132

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is a song from the Musical "**Wicked**" which uses characters and ideas from "**The Wizard of Oz**"

It was written and first performed in **2003**

Music theatre uses **songs, spoken dialogue, acting and dance** in a popular style.

The piece is written by **Stephen Schwartz**, an **American composer and lyricist** who also worked on Disney musicals such as Enchanted and The Hunchback of Notre Dame

'Defying Gravity' is the **finale song** for the first act, when Elphaba discovers that the Wizard of Oz is not the heroic figure she had originally believed him to be. Realising this, Elphaba vows to do everything in her power to fight the Wizard and his sinister plans. She sings of how she wants to **live without limits**, going against the rules that others have set for her.

TONALITY

The piece is mainly in **D major**

At the start the **tonality is ambiguous**. It uses **unrelated chord sequences and chromatic movement**.

During the **intro** the piece **modulates** briefly to B major at bar 20, F major at bar 22, and finally gets to the **tonic D major** at the start of the verse.

The "unlimited" section is in **G major**, then it goes back to **D major** when it returns to the chorus.

The following andante section ("well, are you coming?") returns to the **chromatic melody** of the intro.

It returns to **D major for the final verse** ("so if you care to find me")

The final **maestoso** section is in **B minor**, before finishing on a **D major chord**

STRUCTURE and TEMPO

There is a **verse chorus** form, but within that structure there are multiple sections defined by changes in tempo and mood

Bars 1- 19 - Free tempo (like a recitative)

Bars 20-33 - Andante ("you can still be with the wizard")

Bars 34-48 - Andante - verse 1 ("something has changed..")

Bars 49-87 - Allegro - Chorus, verse 2, chorus 2

Bars 88-102 - Moderato - A contrasting section in G major ("unlimited")

Bars 103-110 - Allegro - Chorus, back in D major.

Bars 111-128 Andante - Similar to the intro

Bars 129-161 Allegro - Verse 3 and chorus 3. The climax of the song! Full orchestra and loud dynamics.

Bars 162 - 177 - Andante to Maestoso - Outro - build up to finale.



DEFYING GRAVITY FROM "WICKED"

INSTRUMENTS/SONORITY

'Defying Gravity' is a **duet** for the characters Elphaba and Glinda.

The two vocal parts use a **big range** (fairly high and fairly low!) Originally they were performed by Idina Menzel (from Frozen) and Kristin Chenoweth (from Glee, American Gods, Rio)

The two singers either **speak, sing**, or perform their lines **half sung half spoken**.

The song uses a **big orchestra** plus **3 keyboards, drum kit** and **electric guitars** to create a modern sound

The vocal parts cover a **range of just under 2 octaves**.

The large orchestra includes a woodwind section which features additional **piccolo, bass clarinet and cor anglais**. The string section includes a **harp**. The wide range of percussion instruments includes a **drum kit, tubular bells and timpani**.

Synthesizers and glockenspiels are used for high pitched "magical" sounds, such as in the final chorus (also with "magical" sounding tubular bells)

The brass plays **homophonic chordal music**, like a **fanfare**

The drum kit adds rhythmic momentum with a **repeated hi hat** in the first chorus.

There is a **cymbal roll** moving into the chorus which adds excitement.

The strings sometimes use **tremolo** to add tension (eg the start of verse 1)

MELODY

The word setting is **syllabic** throughout

The melody has a **wide range** (fairly high and low!)

The melody starts with **stepwise movement** (conjunct)

The verse and chorus combine stepwise movement and **big leaps** (disjunct)

The **syllabic word setting** and **natural speech-like rhythms** make the words clearly understandable

There is vocalisation at the very end of the song ("**aah**")

Leaps often feature a **rising perfect fifth** (e.g. bar 34 "has changed").

There are some exceptionally large leaps such as a **compound perfect fifth** (13 whole notes!- e.g. bars 140 "told me lately everyone deserves.."). These big leaps could be described as **angular**.

Often the melody is **legato** ("you can still be with the wizard")

Bars 6 and 7 show an **ascending sequence** ("hurt your cause forever, I hope you think you're clever")

HARMONY

The intro uses chords that are **unrelated**

Most chords are in **simple root position**

There is some use of **dissonance** (eg bar 30 ("I don't want it, no"))

At the end there is a **pedal note** (bar 168)