

Area of Study 2
Vocal Music Music

Queen
"Killer Queen"




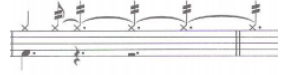
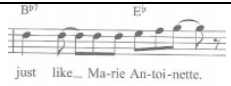






What do we need to know in order to answer the exam questions?

- ✓ The background to **Queen** and the song
- ✓ How music **technology** and **effects** are used
- ✓ Key musical elements within the piece.

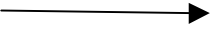
CONTEXT/ STYLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Killer Queen was released in 1974 and was one of Queen's first mainstream songs. • Inspired by comic musical theatre style from the 1880's Vaudeville which heightens the sense of theatre in their songs.
STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on verse/chorus structure but unlike most rock songs it has an adventurous structure. • Although it seems to have a fairly straightforward structure there are unbalanced phrases of 4, 5 and 3 bar phrases in Verse 1 and 2. • Clear contrasts between sections
MELODY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queen are famous for their anthemic melodies (we will rock you) • Bar 6 is the first time we have heard one of the main themes <i>Just like Marie Antoinette</i> which is developed in the next phrase <i>A built in a remedy</i>. It is syncopated but with a different emphasis.
HARMONY/ TONALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The harmony makes it more like a song from a musical (rock songs are built on 12 bar blues) • Opens in E flat major (unusual key for a rock song as it is a hard key for the guitar) • Frequent modulations which use harmonic sequences. Perfect cadences (V-I) are used frequently to aid this. • The piece opens with a C Major chord which provides tonal ambiguity. • Chord inversions provide scalic movement in the bass line and there are extended chords.
INSTRUMENTS / VOCALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocals, Piano, 'jangle' piano (a honky-tonk piano which sounds a little out of tune), electric guitar, bass guitar (a warm sound produced by fender precision), drum kit and percussion. • The vocals recorded did not use auto tune so required a high level of intonation. • The backing vocals move in parallel. As parts cross over a swooping effect is created. • The backing vocals provide harmonic support almost like a synth. • Gospel inspired parallel harmonies in the backing vocals. • The jangle and piano create a hybrid timbre when played together. • Vocals are mostly syllabic and often staccato, contrasting backing vocals are mostly legato. • Guitar techniques include string-bends, slides, vibrato and pull offs. There is no strumming.
RHYTHM/ METRE/ TEMPO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time signature = 12/8 (although it could be seen as 4/4 with swung quavers) • The main rhythmic motif is syncopated and can be found at bar 47-50. Here it alternates between groups of instruments which gives an antiphonal effect. • Tempo is crotchet = 112
TECHNOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No synthesizers are used. Effects were created the 'old fashioned way' using instruments. • Complex multi-tracked guitar and vocal parts which create a very distinctive sound. • Panning is used to create an antiphonal effect. • Distortion is used throughout giving it a sustained sound. • There is reverb throughout on most tracks which creates a sense of space. • Microphones were positioned when recording the guitars to create different timbres.
TEXTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overdubbing is used to layer up the vocal and guitar parts. This gives a thicker texture as parts are layered on each other. • The chorus features Mercury singing four parts separately to create a 4-part choir. • The drum kit is used more like it is in jazz rather than rock adding to the texture with fills etc. • Opening is homophonic and builds gradually. • During the second phrase of the second verse we start to hear polyphonic texture.

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← Features & examples

VOCAL TIMBRES	Bar 70-73 sound like saxophone section in big band	
GUITAR	Bar 55-61 guitar solo. This is overdubbed to create a 3 part harmonised melody.	
	The melody of bar 6 is developed in bars 44-46 of the guitar solo	
DRUM TECHNIQUES	Cymbal and snare rolls at the beginning of verse 2	
RHYTHM	<i>Just like Marie Antoinette</i> uses syncopation	
	The main rhythmic motif is syncopated and can be found at bar 47-50	
TECHNOLOGY	Panning vocals bar 42-43	
	Panning vocals bar 67-68	
	panning guitar bar 55-61	
	Flanger creates word painting effect on <i>laser beam</i> bar 17	
	Wah wah bar 62	

Intro	Bars 1-2
Verse 1	Bars 2-14
Chorus 1	Bars 15-22
Instrumental	Bars 23-26
Verse 2	Bars 27-38
Chorus 2	Bars 39-43
Guitar solo part 1	Bars 44-51
Guitar solo part 2	Bars 52-61
Verse 3	Bars 62-69
Chorus 3	Bars 70-78
outro	Bars 79- end



STRUCTURE