

Queen: Background to *A Night at the Opera* and Musical Notes

By the late 1960s some artists began to think of an LP record or Album as a format in itself and produced **Concept Albums** where all the songs have some linking idea. The Beatles were innovators with 'Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band', where they perform in character (and 'introduce' each 'act' or track). Later groups, such as Genesis and Pink Floyd went further merging (or physically joining) songs to produce classical symphonic forms (see Progressive Rock below). Given that the earliest progressive songs and albums appeared in 1968/9, it is hardly surprising that Queen's earliest albums are progressive.

In the 1970's studio processing (and the LP or EP) generated more possibilities to add to the concept album. **Progressive Rock** came out of the linked tracks of the Concept Album, and started in the late sixties (a year or so after Multi-track recording started). **Art Rock** was very similar, but with a more experimental approach to subject and sometimes techniques used. Progressive Rock tracks were typically long and complicated with classical (or story-related) structures, which inherited the Concept album format very well.

Many songs were over five minutes long (some up to 30 minutes), and use folk ballad (story) format, unusual time signatures (7 or 9 beat), additional instruments like flute & strings, operatic voices and monophonic synthesizers, extensive vocal or instrumental effects, classical, folk & rock styles, and studio processing. Some tracks could not be performed live with the technology then available. Some tracks were short, and are only Progressive rock due to the group performing (Art rock tracks are often shorter anyway). Generally this style had decreased in significance by 1983, when the surviving bands concentrated on making shorter tracks (around three minutes) which could be played in the charts (and therefore made more money). It has continued since, but in smaller numbers and fewer groups overlap.

Probably the most famous Progressive Rock track ever was *Bohemian Rhapsody*. It is progressive in that it has an unusual structure, is long (5m55s), and uses operatic textures to illustrate the story. It has no chorus - in that a pop chorus is a repeated section of music with repeated lyrics, usually expressing emotion - like the classical or folk 'refrain'. The section "*I see a little silhouette of a man...*" is a chorus in the operatic sense, of being a 'choir' or group, and unique in pop or rock for that reason.

Progressive Rock: Key bands and tracks to listen to: Genesis *Suppers Ready*. Queen *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Pink Floyd: *Atom Heart Mother*. Rush: *Xanadu*. Yes: *Awaken*. Also Focus, and more recently. Cardiacs, Spock's Beard and Dream Theatre

Soft Machine are considered more Art Rock than Progressive (like some Beatles tracks)

Glam Rock also developed in the early 70's. There was perceived to be a shortage of proper Rock music due to the late 60's move towards more acoustic, social concern music, and a number of different rock genres (progressive and heavy metal) were initiated around the turn of the decade as a result. Glam Rock arose from this perception and particularly the lack of short cheerful rock numbers for the radio. It looked for material and found examples of it from '50's music, seeing not only at the music but initially dress and lyric subject as well.

The '50's influence in the music shows in the tight rhythm ensemble of bass guitar, guitar and drums. Sometimes these use the shuffle rhythm from Rhythm and Blues or Rock 'n' Roll (10CC *Rubber Bullets*, and Abba *Waterloo* for example) or other 'ostinati' or 'riffs' (repeated patterns of notes). The tracks are usually short (2 to 3 minutes being common) and suitable for chart shows or 'air' time, were guitar based and often had trivial or teenager-based lyrics or Scat singing like many 50's tracks for example Showaddywaddy *I wonder*). The '50's stage image changed with the addition of: Platform shoes (from '50's crepe-soled shoes), 'glitter band' clothes, heavy make up, star-shaped guitars, and lots of silver paint.

Then of course there was multi-track recording (which had not been present in the 1950's. The music often used Verse/Chorus structures, simple harmonies, studio effect processing and overdubbing, synthesizers, and sometimes guitar distortion. While some of the Glam Rock bands adopted a 'You got what you saw' approach (for example Slade), others used some form of extended orchestration or session musicians or backing track (some of Abba's numbers do this) and some tracks were never performed live (as with progressive rock).

Although the 1950's established the Rock band (in terms of instrumentation), the 1970's established the use of the instruments more as we know them. The format of Lead and Rhythm guitar in a rock band owes more to the '70's, as does the virtuoso use of the lead guitar. The development of recording in the 1970's did more to establish the use of the electric bass guitar as a 'heavy' instrument with deeper bass frequencies than before (extended further in the next decade), and more suitable recording equipment for the range of instruments. 1950's Rock and Roll, of course sometimes used a string bass and saxophone, and some notable piano parts. While the '60's used the rock organ and pianos as the standard keyboard, the '70's also established the electronic keyboards and synthesizers.

Some artists like Rush and Queen performed Progressive Rock (with a Glam Rock image) and Glam Rock. Stage presence was important, and rock concerts took place in stadiums not dance halls, using a variety of visual effects. Several artists started off in Glam Rock and moved on (eg Elton John). Alvin Stardust started performing in the '50s as Shane Fenton and became a Glam Rocker. Most Rock Music since then uses '60s/'70s influence. Some artists were highly demonstrative on and off stage, often due to LSD or alcohol. There were many 'Rock deaths' such as Jimmy Hendrix, Jim Morrison, Keith Moon, Marc Bolan.

In the mid-70s, artists began to make films to accompany songs, using film techniques to create further visual effects. 'Bohemian Rhapsody' by Queen is now regarded as the first song to have **Pop Video** (the Beatles' films were more for cinema, and not always specific to one song). As most people found out about the music chart from 'top of the Pops', videos were useful when a song was in the chart for weeks, and a group couldn't perform every week in person (eg 'Bohemian Rhapsody' in 1975-6). Before this, Top of the Pops used dance groups such as 'Pan's People' and 'Legs and Co.' to dance to music. Video took off in the early '80s with MTV and influenced the rise of New Romanticism. Live dance performance has come back again, but in the '90's and 00's it has become the singers who usually dance.

Top of the Pops has (since the '70s) had a guaranteed proportion of Recorded Music that Artists mime to. This started with the use of studio effects on the Music (as it was not easy to add these to 'live' performances), and it keeps the BBC engineers happy, as it guarantees them work. It also has the side benefit that an error in the studio can be corrected on a Multi-track recording, whilst an error in front of the millions of a TV audience cannot be. Many "icons" of Pop Music originally expected to perform live and resented the miming, while those who were not so well known appreciated the opportunity more.

It is possible to tell on repetitions of early TV shows which artists mime (guitars without leads for example, or a band that stops playing during the fade-out and looks embarrassed). Now that videos are often used, the appearance of the artist is unnecessary.

Glam Rock Listening: Slade, Sweet, Gary Glitter, Bay City Rollers, Roy Wood, Roxy Music, Queen, Wizard, David Bowie, Elton John, Mud, 10CC, Showaddywaddy

Queen: The Band

Queen formed in 1970-71 from two members of the group "Smile" (Brian May and Roger Taylor) with two newcomers: Freddie Mercury and John Deacon. The name 'Queen' was Freddie Mercury's suggestion. In 1973 they signed a recording contract for EMI and released their first album, *Queen*. The album was quite well received, but it was not a 'Landmark' album. 1973 saw a UK tour, and in 1974 the group released *Queen II* as well as headlining their first UK tour. The early albums contain some progressive elements of complex instrumental passages, complex lyrics and virtuosity. Queen made their first US tour supporting "Mott the Hoople" and began to be noticed for stage performances. In November the album *Sheer Heart Attack* moved further from progressive rock to more tune-dominated, accessible tracks suitable for broadcast. This would be the case with all groups in the future, although progressive aspects are still seen in *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *The Prophet's Song* on *A Night at the Opera*.

In 1975, the band did another world tour using costume, light and effects as well as the music. They also released *A Night at the Opera* and of course the single *Bohemian Rhapsody*. At the time *A Night at the Opera*, was the most expensive album ever produced. Like its predecessor, it featured diverse musical styles and experimented more with the capabilities of stereo sound. The album was very successful in the UK (to put it mildly), and went triple platinum in the US. In 2003, it was no. 230 on *Rolling Stone Magazine's* list of the 500 greatest albums. The album title comes from the Marx Brothers film.

The album also featured the hit single *Bohemian Rhapsody*. At 5' 55" it was far longer than most other tracks played on the radio but somehow it overcame this and is now regarded as a 'classic' number one (which it was for nine weeks), and is Britain's third-best-selling single of all time; it also reached number nine in the United States and has been voted, several times, the greatest song of all time. The success of *A Night at the Opera* too, was stunning, giving the band their first platinum album. The band decided to make a video to go with the single and the result is generally thought of as the first proper music video. The video, directed by Bruce Gowers, was shot in one evening for a budget of around £5000 and is one of the cheapest ever made (paradoxically, considering the album cost).

Although other bands (including The Beatles) had made short promotional films or videos of songs prior to this, generally those were made for specific showings or programs (such as the Beatles' videos for *Hey Jude* and *Revolution* which were specifically made to be aired on television show. *Bohemian Rhapsody* was the first musical video offered free of charge, to any program, network or station which would air it. The second single from the album, *You're My Best Friend*, which is the second song ever composed by John Deacon, and his first single, peaked at sixteen in the United States, and went on to become a worldwide Top Ten hit.

The Album and Music

Track Listing:

1. Death on Two Legs (Dedicated to...)
2. Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon
3. I'm in Love with my Car
4. You're My Best Friend
5. '39
6. Sweet Lady
7. Seaside Rendezvous
8. The Prophet's Song
9. Love of My Life
10. Good Company
11. Bohemian Rhapsody
12. God Save the Queen

The album:

Much as *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, this album is presented as 'an evening's entertainment'. *Sergeant Pepper's* was presented in a Music Hall format where the Beatles in the guise of the Lonely Hearts Club band 'compéred' or presented songs to an audience on the theme of loneliness (or pictures of peoples lives). In *A Night at the Opera* Queen surround the expectation of a performance night (partly from Freddie Mercury's own classical piano training) with the trappings of it (such as playing *God Save the Queen*). Given the range of styles here, the idea of a Music Hall is perhaps more relevant.

Within that, the presentation of a selection of musical numbers on different themes fits the Music Hall idea better, perhaps than the Operatic idea (where all numbers would be part of the same story), This is certainly the case for the first few numbers. In the latter half *Bohemian Rhapsody* has an operatic structure all of its own (see below). *The Prophet's Song*, too, uses an operatic chorus (choir) in an operatic function (see notes) and *Love of My Life* is essentially an aria. The album uses the Concept Album format although there are some inconsistencies in the direction.

There are unusual structures throughout the album. Where songs use a verse chorus structure, some choruses are short enough to be indistinguishable from the verse (*You're my best friend*), or the verses are only a short part of the song (*Sweet Lady*). Often, the repetition of a section is accompanied by change in lyrics (*Death on Two Legs*) or music (*You're My Best Friend*). Sometimes the ends of tracks are long (*Sweet Lady*) or use extra material (the cadence at the end of *I'm in love with my car*) which is reminiscent of *Sergeant Pepper's* album, as is the change of repeated sections.

There are a range of styles in the album as well. *The Prophet's Song*, *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *Love of My Life* can all be seen to have operatic connections, others are Music Hall (see notes), Skiffle or Country and Western, Rock, Heavy (and Glam and Progressive) Rock and even with Metal influence in at least one number. Many of them include Queen's recognizable vocal harmonisation timbres. The pitch of voice (often falsetto) and the nature of the triads they use, giving the band as recognizable a sound as the instrumentation.

In addition to the vocal textures or timbres, Queen have an individual approach to harmonies which can be seen in many of these tracks, and which defines their individual 'sound'. There are often sudden shifts in chords and unusual chord progressions which can be seen (for example) in *'Death on Two Legs'* and *'39* despite the different nature of these two tracks. Further study on the tracks in this album might include looking at the chord sequences on printed song sheets or looking at the music on the web.

Unusually, the piano (or electric piano) is the only major keyboard instrument in a decade which concentrated in trying to establish the electronic keyboard or synthesizer as the standard band instrument, but the tracks also use a Harp, and Koto (Japanese harp with movable bridges which dictate the pitch of the strings) - the latter in *The Prophet's Song*.

Structural analyses for the pieces in this album differ depending on who did them. This is not a definitive guide more an attempt to explain how standard terms can be used to refer to this album, and further study is recommended to see how other analyses define structures and sections, and how they explain the terms used to define the sections.

Structure and Track analysis:

1. Death on Two Legs (Dedicated to...)

Structure: Introduction Instrumental Verse 1 ("You suck my blood..") Verse 2: key change ("Misguided") Chorus ("Death on 2 legs") Chorus 2 nd part ("Killjoy") Link Chorus 2 nd part (different words) Instrumental Verse 3 ("Talk like..") Verse 4: again key change ("Dog..") Chorus ("Death on Two Legs") Chorus 2 nd part ("Insane..") Sudden Stop	Analysis: The introduction (arpeggiated piano only) leads into a more aggressive bass (and siren section) where the guitar enters before suddenly changing back to piano only where the 4/4 time signature is complicated slightly by rhythms. The instrumentation and dynamics then grow again before the vocals enter. Essentially the structure is intro, ABAB where A is one or two verse sections, and B is one or two chorus sections. The style and instrumentation are clearly rock. The style is clearly Heavy Rock, perhaps even with Metal influence in places. Death on two legs was written by Freddie Mercury about their ex manager Norman Sheffield. The lyrics reflect the bands negative view of him. Sheffield later attempted to sue the band for defamation of character which failed.
--	---

2. Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon

Structure: Piano Intro (Eb key) Vocal Verse (also Eb), with 'quartet' Second section drops to D Major ("Bicycling on every....") Instrumental or Outro	Analysis: The verse is stylized as per old style Music Hall solo song performed on Radio, with effect to the voice with backing group as a barbershop quartet. The piano intro is (almost) in the style of a children's song. The second section which drops from Eb to D Major and this key change was done deliberately to make the transition between 'Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon' and 'I'm in Love with my Car' (which is in D) sound more natural and flowing. The key change to D is followed by an A Major rock instrumental which acts as an outro. The change of key by a semitone is similar to the Reprise of Sergeant Peppers (The entire track is only 1m 07s long. The tempo ranges from around 128 bpm through rubato to almost half that. In order to give the song a gramophone playback style the microphone used for recording was placed in a tin bucket making the sound hollower. During recording the band ran out of tracks to record on. This is why the guitar is recorded on the same track as the vocals.
--	---

3. I'm in Love with my Car

Structure:

Introduction

A: Verse 1 ("The nachine..")

A: Verse 2 ("All I hear..")

B: Bridge or Middle 8 ("Told my..")

A: Verse 3 ("When I'm holding..")

A: Coda (Vocal: "I'm in love.." and Instrumental)

Analysis: Although the lyrics are written on the sleeves as 5 different sections, the first two use the same chord sequence (of four chords throughout), and it is not till 'Told my girl.....' (after the sound effect of a car (or motor bike?) that the chord sequence changes, and there is a strong guitar and bass riff that changes the nature of the music. This new section would usually be a chorus, but doesn't repeat.

The music then returns to that of the first section(s) and stays with that till the end. The music to 'I'm in love with my car' is a title hook (i.e. a Hook that the title music is set to: EGBAGB). The tempo is around 140 quaver bpm. Time signature 6/8 rather than 3/4 beat emphasis (2nd beat of two different drum). As with many tracks (eg Beatles) faster tempo on 3 and 6 beat pieces. The guitars fade out, but then there is a clearly stated 3 chord sequence (at the pitch of a IV, V, I perfect cadence).

I'm in love with my car was written by Roger Taylor (drummer) about one of their roadies obsession with his Triumph TR4. The song was released on the B-Side of their single Bohemian Rhapsody. This decision caused friction within the band as it gave Taylor the same royalty rights as Mercury got for the main single.

4. You're My Best Friend

<p>Structure</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Chorus ("Ooh you make me live...")</p> <p>Verse 1 ("You're the best friend.. ")</p> <p>Chorus ("Ooh.. ")</p> <p>Chorus ("Ooh.. ")</p> <p>Verse 2 ("You're the first one.. ")</p> <p>Chorus</p> <p>Outro</p>	<p>Analysis: It is possible to look at the structure of this piece in two ways. It either starts with the chorus (which changes each time it is stated) with two verses in the piece, or it starts with the verse (which would change each time) and there are two choruses (each of which are different). The title (and title hook) often uses words of the chorus, but "Ooh you're my best friend" suggests a refrain (which Pop tends to use as a chorus. Take your pick! Essentially this piece consists of 6 stanzas of words an intro and outro. The instrumentation uses the lead guitar less (it mainly plays melodic riffs over the chords rather than full melodies). The accompaniment uses quite a lot of 'comping' (straight crotchet chords), and there is a 2 bar link (using octaves) between some sections.</p> <p>The final section is extended by 'statements' from chorus and verse, (then guitar 'licks') into the outro. The piece was John Deacon's first top 10 single. He composed it while learning to play the piano and in the video he is seen playing a grand piano, the only time he is seen without his bass.</p>
--	---

5. '39

<p>Structure:</p> <p>Introduction (2 parts)</p> <p>Verse 1 ("In the year of 39")</p> <p>2 stanzas on album sleeve</p> <p>Chorus ("Don't you hear my call")</p> <p>Instrumental (and choir)</p> <p>Verse 2 ("In the year of 39")</p> <p>Chorus ("Don't you..")</p> <p>Chorus (Don't you..")</p> <p>pause</p> <p>Instrumental outro</p>	<p>Analysis: The piece has rhythms, tempo, and instrumental sound of acoustic folk/American country and Western or Skiffle. The track also contains effects which move it away from straight 'pastiche'. The solo vocals are reminiscent of various artists, the rhythm perhaps the Vipers and the backing vocals have a sense of the Eagles. The regular emphasis of the beat/bass and the quaver motifs on guitar and bass give it this feeling. The subject (of course) is the folk ballad (dating back to before pop made the ballad a 'love song'). The vocals and instrumentation are atypical of Queen in terms of timbre, texture, and order of triads. Part of the instrumental is also a 'vocal'.</p>
--	--

(5. Continued)	'39 was written by Brian May and appeared on the B-Side of 'You're my Best Friend'. '39 is commonly mistaken for being a song about the second world war. It is however about space explorers who leave on a year long trip but upon return realize a hundred years have passed (hence the 'space' effects). It is the bands 39 th song released if viewed in chronological order.
----------------	---

6. Sweet Lady

<p>Structure: Introduction (Guitars) And "You're like" or similar. Verse: ("You call me up") initially quiet voices. Chorus ("Sweet Lady") Verse 2 ("You say, You call me up") Chorus ("And you say, Sweet Lady") Link (as per intro) Chorus: key change and extra words Link/Instrumental (short 'breaks') Fade Out</p>	<p>Analysis: Rock guitars from the start (one or two slight intonation problems in intro). Glam Rock in style (doubling of guitar tracks, vocals further back than might be expected, chorusing and harmonization of vocals). Vocals are short and motivic (short repeated chord sequences). Fairly 'heavy' rich guitar textures. Complex riffs in some choruses.</p> <p>There is a slightly unusual structure in that there are only two short verses, and the last choruses and instrumentals occupy more than half of the entire length of the song. The instruments appear (as with other tracks) to make a statement or reaction to the text of the track. Roger Taylor remembers this song as the hardest drumming he ever recorded. There are also several off pitch notes sung by Freddie Mercury which are covered up by harmonies and overdubbing.</p>
---	---

7. Seaside Rendezvous

<p>Structure: Broadly ABA</p> <p>Introduction A Verse ("Seaside") B ("I Love You") C ("You're so Romantic") C Repeated (Scat only) includes B?</p>	<p>Analysis: 1920's style song including Piano intro, rhythm (no swing), and standard major scale. The use of the backing singers (again bordering on operatic) is less relevant. The switch between different voices, use of noises ('Mouth Music' or 'Scat'), 'breaks' on instruments and sounds is perhaps 'retro 20's' rather than genuine (in terms of range of sounds), but the overall effect is that of the cinema or Music Hall (Ivor Novello and Cole Porter spring to mind).</p>
--	--

<p>(7. Continued) C ("I feel like Dancing") Key change</p> <p>A Verse B ("I'll be your valentine") Outro</p>	<p>The mood of the piece is correct, and subject of the lyrics (which hint at being 'risqué'). The structure is unusual in that there are three basic sequences, but the whole mood unifies all sections so they all pretty much one. The recording includes 'Tap Dancing' effects (tap sounds). 'Comping'-style accompaniment.</p>
---	---

8. The Prophet's Song

<p>Structure: Broadly ABA</p> <p>In detail:</p> <p>Brief Introduction</p> <p>Section A: 5 sections (on the album sleeves structured ABAABA extended C (Where A is "People of the earth", B "I dreamed" and "He told" and C is "Flee for your life").</p> <p>Section B: A capella section described in the analysis. Loosely the motifs are: A "people can you hear me" B "and now I know" C "The earth was shading" (death all around) B (in inversion) B ("Oooh") D Listen to the wise man E La, la F Come here G ("Aaah") and D briefly</p> <p>Section A Instrumental (using chord sequences from the first section)</p>	<p>Analysis: Starts with the sound of rushing wind and quasi-oriental plucked pentatonic arpeggios possibly to set the scene (on Koto). The track is progressive in length, changes of instrumentation and texture, sudden changes of dynamics and instrumental emphasis of words and syllables, even on off or weak beats. The use of pauses in the intro could be considered progressive.</p> <p>It is not progressive in the consistent and emphasized 4 beat in the A section (and hinted at in the B section) giving the story more of a rhythmic rote learning feel. It uses the same (rock) instrumentation throughout the first and last sections, (although the middle section is "a capella" and the rhythm and harmony entirely vocal).</p> <p>The broad structure is ABA. Section A is a succession of stanzas, starting with the sentence "All the people of the earth" or similar. A ends with two slightly different 'stanzas' ("Two by two" then "Flea for your life"). The middle (B) section has been said to use a structured canon, but the impression is of a succession of motifs using imitations structured around ascending and dissonant triads. Some progressions are expected, some are sudden shifts, and some bare 4ths or 5ths.</p> <p>B also uses call and response phrases (descending scales and chords set to 'La'). As a section it is unusual even for Progressive Rock. It combines elements of minimalism, and the motivic contrast and juxtaposition used by composers like Tavener and Stravinsky. Motifs used in the B section come from or develop motifs used</p>
--	--

<p>(8. Continued) Link to 3 stanzas: B "God Give you grace" A "Oh oh the children of the earth" B "But still I fear" Instrumental link to Outro (similar to intro)</p> <p>NB Different resources use different structures for this piece. It is worth studying further by looking at different analyses and seeing how sections are justified in each of them.</p> <p>Two separate sources define the middle section of the piece as a properly structured 'Canon'</p>	<p>in the A section. This like the succession of statements in the A Section (and the ABA structure) is similar to Debussy's "Prelude a l'après-midi d'un Faune"</p> <p>Essentially section B is an operatic chorus, in that it is a meditation or emotional reaction to the events of the story by a choir. It is not a pop chorus or refrain (as a repeated section of music), and it only relates to the external sections in this verbal reaction to their text</p> <p>(and the use of motifs mentioned). This operatic influence relates the piece to Bohemian Rhapsody (as does having a section dominated by vocal harmonies), and helps to justify the title of the album.</p> <p>The key of the middle section <u>appears</u> to be the minor subdominant from the first A section. Both A to B and B back to A use the same held chord prior to the change. This appears to be a suspended 4th chord using the tonic of the two outside sections. The second A section returns us to the tonic of the first section.</p> <p>'The Prophets Song' was written by Brian May after a dream he once had after recovering from an illness. The dream was about the Great Flood (Noah's Ark) which is reflected in the lyrics. The use of history of myth as a subject is also seen in <i>Xanadu</i> by Rush, and <i>Earl of Mar</i> by Genesis. There is an element of 'this happened' and 'beware' that is also seen in Folk tales.</p> <p>Once again, there is a progressive use of instrumentation as punctuation here. The instruments play 'while time passes' or as emotional reaction to the text as in <i>Sweet Lady</i> (although not progressive).</p>
--	---

9. Love of My Life

Structure:

Introduction

A: Verse 1 ("Love of my Life")

A: Verse 2 ("Love of my life")
with additional harmonization

Instrumental Link

B: Middle 8 or Bridge or Episode
("You will remember")

Instrumental Link (using intro
material with guitar then band and
B material: emotional statement)

A: ("Back, Back")

Analysis: The piano introduction (again) is similar to a classical song or lied or even a study. Use of harp and guitar perhaps slightly inconsistent (although perhaps like *Sergeant Pepper's* the harp is seen as the link to classical song). The vocal line wavers between classical song and 'ballad'. No swing rhythms, but the bass guitar intrudes in the first section. Again, use is made of the whole group as a harmonized backing group. Essentially this is an aria.

The overall feeling is of Musical or Musical Theatre until the electric guitar comes in at 1m48s. Even then, the guitar acts in the way a classical instrument would do in an aria, punctuating the phrases (or reacting to the voice) as a Flute or Oboe would do. The piano is more chordal than would be in a classical aria, and more emotional, but the rhythms remain outside the world of pop music in the main. Slightly unusual decorated final cadence II, iv, I.

Again, the structure of the piece is ABA, with a middle section that is not technically a chorus (in any sense). In pop terms this is either a Middle 8 or Bridge (the only suitable terms). As with other pieces on the album, the last section uses material slightly differently rather than being merely a re-statement.

'Love of my Life' was written by Freddie Mercury and is one of his most covered songs. It was such an audience favorite that when performed Mercury would often stop singing and let the audience continue. This was done again by when performed by Queen + Paul Rogers. Rogers would sing very few of the lyrics and almost the whole song would be sung by the audience.

10. Good Company

<p>Structure:</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Verse 1 "Take Good Care" Chorus "Oo Hoo" (from sleeve)</p> <p>Verse 2 "Singing my crew" Chorus "Oo Hoo"</p> <p>Middle 8 or Bridge or Episode with Key change: ("Now marriage...")</p> <p>Verse 3 "I Flourished..." Instrumental chords replace the chorus and then "I hardly noticed.." (as repetition)</p> <p>Rubato section or Cadenza "All through the years"</p> <p>Verse 4 "Now I'm Old" Instrumental link to Outro (intro material)</p>	<p>Analysis: Again a 'period' song of the '20's. It uses a 'picked' (Aloha) ukelele and lyrics that are similar to those of Formby (who was the inspiration for the song apparently), although the delivery of them is more in the style of the crooners. Again, a story format for the piece (in the humourous vein of a 'moral tale'), but also relating to love. The piece uses 'emotional' rubato (it slows for pause or reflection or sympathy).</p> <p>As with other pieces, the 'chorus' is brief enough to be either part of the verse or disregarded. Essentially, it is a short section at the end of the verse where the words are repeated and with a different chord sequence. Again, there is an unrepeated middle section which could answer to a variety of names. Again, there is a 'comping' style suitable for the period, and it makes the piece similar in style to <i>When I'm 64</i>.</p> <p>Some of the instrumentation is unusual. The jazz guitars imitate Hawaiian Guitars and the instrumental backing of a 'Pit band'. At one point they imitate a trombone, and at others they imitate the improvisation of a New Orleans style band over given chords. Some of the chord sequences are suitable for a 1920's Jazz band and the piece aims to cover a range of period elements.</p> <p>'Good Company' was written and sung by Brian May. The song is a narrative tale told by an old man looking back on his life. During the song he keeps reflecting on his fathers words "Take care of those you call your own and keep good company".</p>
---	--

11. Bohemian Rhapsody:

<p>Structure:</p> <p>Intro or Recitative or Prologue - leading to (or becoming) verse 1 (using some different chords than verses 2 and 3 - and with no drums or rhythm).</p> <p>Verse 2 or Aria (full instrumentation) ("Mama...")</p> <p>Verse 3 or Aria (variation on v1) ("Too Late")</p> <p>'Chorus' or Middle 8 or Bridge (chorus of voices) ("I See a little..")</p> <p>Final section or Aria (more rock orientated than the others). ("So you think")</p> <p>into ("Nothing really matters") from verse.</p> <p>Outro (very brief)</p>	<p>Analysis:</p> <p>The piece has an operatic structure. Verse 1 is a recitative (usually a story or statement of text, but here more of a meditation, much as a pop chorus would normally be), Verse 2 and 3 are Arias (normally a statement of more detail from the recitative, but here stating the story - as per a 'pop' verse). The chorus is an operatic chorus (literally a choir) which states the emotion or feeling about the story. The final verse is not really a verse (it reflects on the story), and musically is different to the others (although returning to the original music at the end).</p> <p>The textures range from 'pop' song (simple piano-accompanied fairly pulse-less song), through more full instrumental song (voice piano, guitar, bass and drums), to full rock band texture, and of course operatic chorus of voices (with instrumental accompaniment). The operatic voice texture is, something that is akin to other progressive rock tracks as well as opera.</p> <p>Bohemian Rhapsody was written by Freddie Mercury. The piece was written using the piano and written down by Mercury on a phone book. Parts of the song were played live many times by the band but the only time the song has ever truly been played live with a full operatic chorus was at the Queens Golden Jubilee in 2002 (after Mercury died).</p> <p>When released as a single in 1975 it stayed at Number 1 for nine weeks and reached Number 1 again in 1991 after Mercury died. It is the only song ever to reach both Number 1 and Christmas number 1 with the same version. When first released the band was told that 5"55 was too long for a hit (as is said in the intro).</p>
--	--

12. God Save the Queen

This is a restatement of the original on rock instrumentation (but no vocals). The first five bars are a quiet introduction (with snare drum as traditional). In bar six with the run up to the second line, the dynamics change from *piano* to *forte* and the first improvisational element appears with the guitar scale (which uses triplet motifs on the scale). In the second part of the sequence (?D⁷ chords?) the guitar does a descant harmony and the cadence is elaborated by two double suspensions before a final salute on the timpani. The whole effect places the album in a traditional Victorian or Edwardian context where the salute to the monarch draws in the audience emotionally.

Verse 2 is missing from the piece (possibly as few people know it). Brian May was inspired to perform this piece after hearing Jimi Hendrix's version of 'The Star Spangled Banner'. The piece uses a lot of layering and at one point reaches 30 layers. He stated that when recording the piece he tried to get the guitar to sound as close to a violin as possible. The song was then used as an outro piece by Queen at every concert.

Contributions to recording notes are gratefully acknowledged from Nick Shepherd.