

PERFORMANCE 2

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Doubling the bass line in octaves is a common approach for big pop ballads as well as power rock music: it gives the bottom end of the mix extra reinforcement.

Ex. 1.4 Octave bass combined with single note phrasing.



A variation of example 1.3 (above), employing octave doubling in combination with single notes gives the doubled section more power and helps the rhythm of that section to stand out dynamically.

Non-Standard Song Forms

In Keyboard Performance 1, we studied common popular music song forms. Today's chart is somewhat unusual in that it does not have the typical verse, chorus and bridge structure we normally find in pop songs. Instead, there are four distinct parts:

- A) A four bar "hook" line or introduction
- B) An eight-bar verse
- C) A two-bar tag
- D) A two-bar "breakdown"

In addition, there's a solo over the verse pattern, shared between keyboard and guitar (letters D and E).

The song begins with a four-bar bass intro riff:

Ex. 1.5

KEYBD (Wurli EP)

Wurli, bass & gtr

D m

This catchy riff forms one of two strong hooks that make the song enjoyable and memorable. A hook is a phrase that repeats often enough in a song so as to be easy for the audience to sing back and remember.

The verse section of this song is eight bars long, containing the 1, V and 1V chords in a progression similar to a blues:

Ex. 1.6

A

D5

Gtr+keybd:

A5

G5

Following the second and third verses is a section really too short to be considered a chorus. Rather, it's something we might call a *tag*: a short passage, which has the effect of "finishing up" the phrase that comes before it. A tag can be an interlude within the song form that separates a chorus from a re-hash of the verse, or a repeated section at the very end of the song. In classical music, we might call letter A the *antecedent* phrase and letter B the *consequent* phrase; however, these terms are not generally used in pop/rock terminology.

Ex. 1.7

B

Bm

A5

G

A5

GTR:

D.C. (NO REPEAT)

After this tag section, we return the intro, second verse (letter A again) and tag (letter B). Letter D consists of a keyboard solo over the first four bars of the verse, with the guitar taking over at letter E.

Ex. 1.8

C (LIKE TOP)

Dm

D WURLI SOLO

E (GTR SOLO)

A

The guitar solo simply hangs on the V chord for four bars before dissolving into the breakdown at letter F.
 Ex. 1.9

F WURLI

Dm G/D Dm

You can think of the song as being a sort of modified blues form, similar to the “bluesy rock” style popularized by Ray Charles (see Keyboard Performance 1, Unit 10). When you add the verse section and the tag, it comes out to ten bars.

Ex. 1.10

A D5

Gtr+keybd:

A5 G5

B Bm A5 G A5

GTR:

D.C.
(NO REPEAT)

The extra two bars of letter C combined with letters A-B equal the same number of bars as a traditional blues form (12).

Ex. 1.11

C (LIKE TOP)

Dm

Chapter 2: Chart Talk-Down

The Lowered Seventh Scale Degree

The chart begins with a keyboard bass riff (or “hook”) played in tandem with the bass player. In Unit 10 of Keyboard Performance 1, we studied the lowered seventh scale degree and its role in the blues/rock sound. We can find the same emphasis on the lowered seventh in the opening hook of this week’s chart, as it is the “landing” note of the phrase:

Ex. 1.12

KEYBD (Wurli EP)

Wurli, bass & gtr

D m

At letter A, the first verse begins. The pattern as indicated could be played with either hand, but is more characteristic of left-hand playing. The movement of an open fifth interval to a sixth and back is characteristic of blues/rock guitar playing. To get a feel for this, listen to how the guitar plays it.

In the last two bars, there is a break, allowing for a kick drum solo:

Ex. 1.13

A

D5

Gtr+keybd:

When we hit the repeat sign, it’s back to the top of the tune and through letter A again. This time, we continue on to letter B. Note the fifth voicings at letter B (also known as power chords).

Ex. 1.14

B

B m

A5

G

A5

GTR:

D.C.
(NO REPEAT)

Power Chords: Rock at Its Simplest

A *power chord* is essentially just a two-note structure containing a root and a fifth. For instance, a C power chord is simply the two notes C and G played together. Power chords offer a strong foundational sound while simultaneously being ambiguous in their tonality: they are neither major nor minor in quality, as they contain no third, and thus can be used to evoke a more open sound that is often characteristic of modern rock music. When heavy riffing is required (a la rock or funk music) power chords suit the situation well. Sometimes the composer requires a feeling of strong rhythm and groove and will ask for these chords to underlay the harmony of the song's progression, either supporting more fleshed-out chords voiced above, or acting as the sole harmony for the section.

At the end of letter B, the D.C. (da Capo) directs us back to the top of the chart again, to play through letters A and B again, this time with no repeat:

Ex. 1.15

B

GTR: B m A 5 G A 5

D.C.
(NO REPEAT)

There is no mention of a coda, so we proceed on to a repeat of the intro at letter C, and then the keyboard solo (letter D), which is written out. This solo is over the A minor chord, similar to the verse at letter A. Learning one hand at a time for this section will probably prove easier than trying to play both at once.

Ex. 1.16

D WURLI SOLO

When we reach the V chord at letter E, the guitar takes over the solo and the keyboard just holds down whole note chords (loosely referred to as “goose eggs” or “footballs” in musicians’ lingo!). We expect to hear it drop to the 1V chord or G for the last two bars, as it does in the verses, but this song is full of surprises and this does not happen:

Ex. 1.17

E (GTR SOLO)

A

