Defying Gravity

From *Wicked* (2003)

Tonality/Harmony

- Ambiguous tonality in the intro
- Chromatic harmony at the start
- Unrelated chord progressions
- Use of the augmented chord in intro
- Tonic key D major
- Dialogue section is bitonal – Gmajor/C major
- Vocal harmony in 3rds
- Bare 5th chords accompany the chorus
- Modulation before final bridge
- Polytonal chords at the very end

Instrumentation

- Vocals (Elphaba and Glinda)
- Orchestral – electric guitars, bass guitar, keyboards/synths, tubular bells, additional percussion, glockenspiel, drum kit.
- Guitar – Overdrive/distortion/Ebow, clean
- Drum kit – cymbal rolls, drum fills, extensive use of cymbals
- Violins – tremolando
- Frequent changes in instrumentation

Dynamics

- Intro uses loud/accented stab chords
- Loud chorus sections
- Dynamics vary according to the section
- Dialogue sections are quiet
- Crescendo's used to build excitement/build to a climax

Context

- From Wicked (based on the Wizard of OZ)
- Final Song of Act 1
- 2003 – Stephen Swartz (American)
- Song reference to 'Somewhere Over a Rainbow'
- Song from a musical
- Duet with chorus

Melody

- Melody is dominated with intervals of the 4th and 5th (verse)
- Syllabic
- Verse is angular, some conjunct movement
- Somewhere Over the Rainbow is quoted
- Spoken sections (dialogue)
- Vocal harmony (3rds)
- Some vocalisation
- Recycles melody from previous sections
- Bar 71 – 6 note melody (hexatonic)
- Leitmotif

Structure

- Intro
- Verse – chorus dominated structure
- Some linking sections
- Bridge sections
- Dialogue sections
- Intro is reprised in the middle of the song
- Coda
- Extended musical structure

Texture

- Homophonic texture (melody and accompaniment)
- Melody dominated homophony
- Changing textures
- Coda section – chorus (ensemble) sing in unison, but with harmony.

Tempo/Metre/Rhythm

- Intro is colla voce – pulse/metre is unclear
- Metre changes in the intro
- 2/2 is the predominant metre (verse and chorus)
- Metre change to 4/4 in the dialogue section
- A tempo from Verse 1
- Chorus is fast (allegro)
- Changes of metre and tempo according to the sections
- Frequent use of rallentando
- Metrical shifting in the chorus – ostinato
- Some use of triplets to create cross rhythms
- Syncopated rhythms in accompaniment and melody