

Section 1

Analysis/Appraisal -Somewhere Only We Know

I decided to use this piece for my appraisal for a number of reasons. This piece was released in 2004 by a band called Keane; it was the first single by this band, and the single that made them famous. This song is typical for Keane. It has block chords to create a pulsing beat. This seems to be a trademark for Keane's music.

The pianist uses mainly block chords, to create the feeling that the song is pulsing, and I decided I could do this easily with my left hand, so my right hand could be free to play the melody line. This was difficult at first, as the block chords are very spaced out, and repetitive. I had not played anything like this with my left hand before.

I also felt I could put feeling into this, improvising; adding crescendo's and diminuendo's to create feeling in the piece. In the chorus of the recorded version, mood is created with the addition of the bass guitar and drums, I tried to compensate by making certain parts of the piece Forte, to show that the piece had turned angrier. There is a fairly difficult section in this piece, after the chorus, it is a quick chord sequence. The actual chords are quite close, and don't take a lot of effort stretching, although the different chords are only semitones apart, so it is very fiddly trying to get all the notes correct. This sounds impressive on the recorded version, and allows the listener to prepare for the next verse

If I were to re-record this piece, I would try to find a way of incorporating the bass line with block chords of the left hand, to give a fuller sound. All in all I am happy with my performance.

Section 2

The 3 pieces I chose to analyse were - Can't Stop Now, Imagine, and Somewhere Only We Know. Can't Stop Now and Somewhere Only We Know were released on the album 'Hopes And Fears' in 2004 by Keane, although Can't Stop Now has yet to be released as a single. These are rock songs, although the band set-up is different to the usual guitar-heavy rock band. The band consists of a drummer, singer, bass player and pianist. Imagine was written by John Lennon, and would be played by a similar setup to Keane.

Can't Stop Now starts with a short, heavy drum introduction, which is followed by the main piano riff. This is made up of a mixture of broken chords and passing notes, all pedalled, to create a medium tempo, and cheerful mood. The first verse follows straight after. The piano bass line is very simple, all 8ve notes, and repeated chords throughout. This is fairly similar to Somewhere Only We Know, and follows the style that Keane employ.

In Contrast to this, Imagine is a soft slow piece and is led by piano. This means all the different moods that are shown in the piece, are created by piano. The beginning is a basic C major chord that is spread so that the E and G are separate from the C. This interlinks with the Fmajor chord, which works in the same fashion.

This ostinato continues until the first chorus, where the pedalled notes increase in velocity, and the drumbeat kicks in. In the second verse, it is a repeat of the first verse, with soft, slow pedalled notes to create the sombre mood. The second verse repeats itself, the same as the first. The bass of the chorus is all 8ve notes, descending down.

The chorus of both *Can't Stop Now* and *Somewhere Only We Know* keep the same structures, although they both become more complex: in *Somewhere Only We Know*, the block chords become far wider, using the whole octave, to give a sense of depth to the song. The chorus of *Can't Stop Now* is complex, as the chords are very fiddly as they are quick and close together, and are difficult to play.

In the endtro of *Can't Stop Now*, the piano line becomes very complex, darting up and down the piano. This is accomplished by taking the notes of the key signature, and playing them at a very fast pace in different octaves moving up and down the piano. This is unusual for Keane, as the music usually slows right down for a calm ending, much like *Somewhere Only We Know*, where a final spread chord is used to signal the end. This is similar to *Imagine*, which ends in the same way. This is a slower ending helps create the mood for the song.

Around halfway through *Can't Stop Now*, the section that begins "the motion keeps my heart running" suits the style of piano as the chords and notes are spaced and timed evenly (unlike the rest of the song,) so as to create the style that it is moving. The key of this song is Fmajor, although it varies with the addition of Eb.

Similarly, in *Imagine*, after the second chorus, the piano becomes more complex, with the start of "you may say im a dreamer," this, along with the introduction of strings, creates a feeling of sadness. This section modulates from C major to Gmajor. After this, the verse and chorus repeat, although the pedalled notes are heavier, giving the impression that the sombre mood has lifted, like a "new dawn." *Somewhere Only*

We Know also has a bridge section after the second chorus. The piano continues with its beating piano chords, although they become more spaced out, using a whole octave, to create depth.

Section 3

On the day, I feel my performance went well. I made sure I allowed myself plenty of time to practice, to warm up, and try to iron out any small mistakes.

I felt I played the song well, with a good use of dynamics, and I feel that although I may have slipped on a few notes, overall I feel it was a success. The 1 section I feel could have been improved was inbetween the first chorus and the second verse. This section is very difficult to play, as there is a quick change of chords, all of which being very close together. I may have slipped on a few of these notes, although I think played this ok.

Composition Brief

Pieces Studied: Imagine, Can't Stop Now, Somewhere Only We Know

Style: Modern Piano

My brief is to compose a piece of music in the style of modern piano. The difference between traditional, classical piano, and modern piano, is that whereas classical piano is written to be played exactly how it is written, with no room for improvisation, modern piano has a lot of "grey area" where it is meant for the player to play how he/she wants to play it. Other artists that use this style of piano include Embrace, Muse, Oasis and Coldplay.

In 'Somewhere Only We Know', mostly block chords are used. I feel this will create the wrong type of mood for the idea I have in mind, although I may experiment, just to make sure.

I like the way 'Cant stop Now' is able to create a sense that the piece is speeding up, without changing the tempo. This is accomplished by using more chords in a bar, or shorter notes, so as to fit more in. I will try to incorporate this idea into my composition. Also this piece uses spread chords, which I may also find useful. Also, the section "the motion keeps my heart running," which is a very pulsing, evenly spaced section, is in complete contrast with the rest of the piece. I would like to develop this idea for my composition.

In 'Imagine,' pedalled notes are used to create feeling, I feel this would be vital in my piece, as it is hard to create mood without the sustain pedal. Also the descending 8ve notes are

used in this piece, I find this interesting, and will try to experiment with this to be used in my composition.

All three pieces have repeating ostinatos, with a different section at the end. This seems to be a main feature in modern piano, and will be the structure I will use in my composition.