Elvis Costello 1977-1978:

A Shift in Functional Roles in the Rock Ensemble

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Abstract

Between 1977 and 1978, British rock musician Elvis Costello released his first two albums. The first album, *My Aim Is True*, was recorded with a studio backing band, and drew obvious influence from guitar-guided rockabilly and early rock and roll. The second album, *This Year's Model*, was performed by Costello's newly permanent backing band the Attractions, and placed a much greater emphasis on the rhythm section, pulling from a larger pool of influences including punk, new wave, reggae, and R&B. This thesis explores the shift in functional roles in Costello's backing bands from his first to his second album.

The analytical tools I use are derived from popular-music scholar Allan F. Moore's model of functional layers, as presented in his book *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song* (2012). Moore outlines four types of layers that contribute to the standard texture of a recorded rock song: the explicit beat layer (traditionally played by the drum kit), functional bass layer (bass), melodic layer (vocals, lead guitar, etc.), and harmonic filler layer (rhythm guitar, keyboard, etc.). Additionally, I consider the effect of recording techniques on the texture, using Moore and Ruth Dockwray's "sound-box" model of mapping sounds in stereophonic recording space (Dockwray & Moore 2010; Moore & Dockwray, 2010).

To further illustrate the textural contrast between the functional roles of the two backing bands, I compare several songs which have been recorded by both backing bands. A version of "Living in Paradise" was recorded during the *My Aim Is True* studio sessions; the song was later recorded by the Attractions for *This Year's Model*. Additionally, I will analyze live performances of the Attractions playing songs from the first album and consider the ways in which they have been reworked to their ensemble's strengths.

Lastly, I examine "Watching the Detectives," a single released between the two albums and performed by a different set of musicians. This song serves as a link between the albums and indicates a move away from the prescribed functional roles of the rock band to more fluid roles, interweaving multiple functional layers into the notes played by one instrument.

This thesis adds to the academic discourse of popular music analysis in two ways. This original research is the first in-depth music analytical examination of these albums by a musician who is well-known in popular culture but largely overlooked in music scholarship, and music-analytical scholarship in particular. It also contributes to the theoretical discourse on popular music by examining the ways in which traditional analytical parameters such as harmony,

melody, rhythm, form, and phrase structure inform and interact with two parameters that have not received much analytical attention, textural roles and recording techniques.

Abrégé

Entre 1977 et 1978, le musicien de rock britannique Elvis Costello a fait paraître ses deux premiers albums. Le premier album, *My Aim Is True*, fut enregistré avec des musiciens de studio et est marqué par des sons de guitare « rockabilly » et « rock and roll ». Le deuxième album, *This Year's Model*, fut réalisé ave un groupe permanent de musiciens—les Attractions—et met beaucoup plus l'accent sur la section rythmique, s'inspirant d'un plus grand nombre d'influences incluant le punk, le new wave, le reggae et le R&B. Cette thèse explorera l'évolution des rôles fonctionnels des différents groupes de Costello durant ces deux années.

Les outils d'analyse utilisés sont inspirés du spécialiste de la musique populaire Allan F. Moore et de ses recherches concernant les couches fonctionnelles, tel que présentées dans son livre *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Popular Song* (2012). Moore décrit quatre types de couches qui contribuent à la texture normale d'une chanson rock: la couche de rythmique explicite (traditionnellement joué par la batterie), la couche de basse fonctionnelle (basse), la couche de mélodie (chant, guitare solo, etc.) et la couche de remplissage harmonique (rythme de guitare, clavier, etc.). De plus, l'effet des techniques d'enregistrement sur la texture sera examiné, basant mes observations sur le modèle « sound-box » développé par Moore et Dockwray et sur son impact sur l'espace d'enregistrement stéréophonique. (Dockwray & Moore 2010; Moore & Dockwray, 2010).

Pour illustrer d'avantage le contraste texturale entre les rôles fonctionnels des deux groupes, plusieurs chansons enregistrées par ces deux groupes seront comparées. Une version de « Living in Paradise » a été enregistrée au cours de la séances de studio pour *My Aim Is True*; la même chanson a été réenregistrée plus tard par les Attractions pour *This Year's Model*. De plus, des performances en concert des Attractions jouant des chansons du premier album mais remodelées à leur image seront également analysées.

Enfin, « Watching the Detectives », un simple sorti entre les deux albums et enregistré par un différent groupe de musiciens, sera examiné. Cette chanson sert de lien entre les deux albums et démontre un abandon des rôles fonctionnels habituellement prescrits au groupe rock pour des rôles plus fluides, entrelaçant plusieurs couches fonctionnelles dans un même instrument.

Cette thèse ajoute au discours académique de l'analyse de la musique populaire de deux façons. Cette recherche originale sera le premier examen analytique de ces albums enregistrés

par un musicien qui est bien connu dans la culture populaire, mais largement négligé dans la littérature académique. Cette recherche contribuera également au discours théorique sur la musique populaire en examinant la façon dont les paramètres analytiques traditionnels tel que l'harmonie, la mélodie, le rythme, la forme et la structure de phrase interagir avec les rôles texturales et les techniques d'enregistrement.

Chapter 1. Introduction

> "*My Aim is True* featured a set of session players who delivered the arrangements in forthright fashion. But they're strictly low key in relation to The Attractions – Elvis' own band formed after *Aim* who've played with him live ever since. They stomp into the music with such tigerish power you can only amaze at Elvis' ability to stay on top of 'em." – Anthony O'Grady in *RAM* (1978).
>
> "*This Year's Model* not only shows vast improvements, but a few stunning innovations as well. Elvis has shaken off a lot of the R&B associations and added the neatest Farfisa organ sound this side of ? and the Mysterians. The songs are stronger, the performances more intense and threatening, the arrangements more varied, and the music much more adventurous in structure and design." – Ira Robbins in *Trouser Press* (1978)
>
> "For *Aim* Elvis was supported by West Coast exiles Clover who, though involved in a mere session-playing capacity, nonetheless consistently outdid themselves, providing some superbly emphatic playing. By the time the album had been released Costello had drawn together his own band, The Attractions, a corporate with their own sound and personality that gave a thrilling taster for things to come." – Nick Kent in *New Musical Express* (1978)

Much has been said in the world of rock criticism about the stylistic change from Elvis Costello's first album, *My Aim Is True* (1977) to his second, *This Year's Model* (1978), hereafter referred to as "*Aim*" and "*Model*" respectively. But how can one quantify this musical transformation beyond the descriptive adjectives used by journalists? How does a music theorist compare a "low key," "superbly emphatic" album to a "tigerish," "adventurous" one? The goal of the following thesis is to use music-analytical tools to uncover differences in texture, the functional roles of the voice and instruments within the ensembles, their placements in the recording space, and their interactions with song form, and to compare the effects of these differences between the two albums. This analysis will clarify the musical factors that contribute to the perceived differences between *Aim* and *Model*, and more generally it will demonstrate the effects of changing functional roles and recorded placement on overall style.

1.1 History

Elvis Costello (born Declan MacManus in 1954) began recording his songs in 1974 with his pub rock band at the time, Flip City. Although these demos never generated a record contract, they have been released on CD reissues of *Aim,* and represent the earliest available recordings of Costello. In the wake of the breakup of Flip City, Costello signed with Stiff Records as a solo artist and released his debut album *Aim* in July of 1977 (Perone 1999, 1-2). The album, recorded at Pathway Studios, Islington, UK, was produced by Nick Lowe and featured the American band Clover as the backing ensemble. Consisting of John McFee on guitar, Sean Hopper on piano, Johnny Ciambotti on bass, and Mickey Shine on drums (Costello 2007), the band later went on to become the News of Huey Lewis and the News (LeMay 2002).

Aim was followed up by the single "Watching the Detectives" in October of 1977. Costello biographer James Perone points to "Watching the Detectives" as the turning point in Costello's sound, paving the way for the Attractions: "The tracks backed by Clover featured the lead guitar much more prominently than most later Costello productions, with very little keyboard. The basic Costello band sound was, rather, established by 'Watching the Detectives,' with its sparse guitar, virtuosic melodic bass guitar, frequent drum fills, and early-1960s style keyboard sound" (Perone 1999, 2). The song was performed by Costello, Andrew Bodnar on bass, and Steve Goulding on drums. Steve Nieve, who would go on to play in the Attractions, added organ and piano overdubs (Costello 2007).

For touring and recording purposes, Costello hired a permanent backing band consisting of Steve Nieve, a classically trained pianist who had studied at the Royal College of music, and two seasoned session musicians, Bruce Thomas on bass and Pete Thomas (no relation) on drums (Perone 1999, 3). Again under the production of Nick Lowe, the newly minted Elvis Costello &

the Attractions released *Model*, recorded at Eden Studios, London, in March of 1978 (Costello 2008).

Costello was initially packaged as a punk/new wave artist, although his first two albums contained tinges of country, reggae, and Tin Pan Alley, a stylistic diversity that only increased in his later work. Admitting to his varied influences, Costello said in a 2008 interview for *SPIN* magazine, "Well, I was marketed by other people, not by me. And 'punk'—what nonsense that was. Or 'new wave'—even bigger nonsense. I'm just a songwriter. I knew older stuff and I knew newer stuff" (Norris 2008). Costello's wide-ranging inspirations are evident on the albums examined in this thesis.

1.2 Literature Review

For a critically acclaimed Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, there are remarkably few scholarly writings on the music of Elvis Costello. What little has been published tends to fall into two categories, studies of harmony or of socio-historical considerations. David Brackett's article "Elvis Costello, the Empire of the E Chord, and a Magic Moment or Two" (2005) highlights an instance of intertextuality that recalls the Drifters' "This Magic Moment" (1960) in Costello's "It's Time" (1996). John McCombe explores Costello's depiction of gender roles on *My Aim Is True* and *This Year's Model* (McCombe 2009). René Boomkens traces Costello's evolution from an "angry young man" figure to a more widely accessible singer/songwriter and his coinciding move from a local youth-oriented audience to a global pop audience in the article "Uncanny Identities" (Boomkens 2004). Dai Griffiths' monograph *Elvis Costello* (2008) surveys Costello's life, discography, lyrical themes, and harmonic vocabulary over the course of his career. While these writings provide useful information regarding Costello's biography and social impact, none of them are primarily music-analytical in nature, and none explore the musical parameters that

create the sonic qualities of *Aim* and *Model*. For the core of my methodology, I have adapted ideas from several sources by music scholars that have been successfully employed to analyze texture and recordings in rock music.

My analyses will focus on the concept of functional layers in the rock ensemble, an analytical model put forth by Allan Moore to look at the interactions of different layers (voices and instruments) within the overall musical texture. In his book *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song* (2012, 20-22), Moore outlines four functional types of layers that comprise the basic texture of a recorded popular song. The explicit beat layer, usually played by the drum kit, establishes a regular pulse and iterates a rhythmic pattern, often including foreground syncopations and a backbeat. The functional bass layer, where most electric bass parts reside, anchors the harmony and establishes the bottom pitch range. The melodic layer is normally found at or near the upper register of the texture, and can be carried by vocals, lead guitar, strings, horns, etc. There can be more than one melodic layer occurring at a time, although typically one layer is primary and the others are secondary. Finally, the harmonic filler layer is used "to fill the 'registral' space between these bass and [melody] layers" with rhythm guitars, keyboards, orchestras, and more. Moore's functional roles can be used to examine textural differences between the two albums, an integral part of Costello's musical transformation.

Another important aspect of the overall stylistic change from *Aim* to *Model* is the production of the recordings. In order to examine each instrument's place within the recorded space, another analytical tool is required, one designed specifically to examine recorded music. Nicholas Cook provides a good starting place for understanding the various methodologies for analyzing recordings in a chapter of *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (2009). Cook stresses the value of visualizations of the recording, which allow for a heightened aural

understanding and, more importantly for this project, comparative analysis, either between songs or between sections within a single song (222-223). Two methods of sonic visualization are used in this project. Sound-box analysis, first developed by Allan Moore in *Rock: the Primary Text* (1993, 105-110) and expanded in two articles co-authored with Ruth Dockwray (Moore and Dockwray 2010, Dockwray and Moore 2010), is a means of mapping the stereophonic sound space into four dimensions: "lateral placement within the stereo field; foreground and background placement due to volume and distortion; height according to sound vibration frequency; and time" (Dockwray and Moore, 181). Additionally, albeit to a lesser extent, I use sound-wave visualizations to illustrate perceptible differences in volume or stereo panning.

1.3 Methodology

Expanding upon Moore's idea of functional layers, I have identified different subsets of Moore's layers as exemplified on *Aim* and *Model*, although they are more broadly applicable to other popular music as well. In each of the following lists, the functional role types described first are closest to being purely in one functional layer, while types that are described last are a mixture of layers that fulfill more than one functional role.

<u>Explicit beat layer</u>

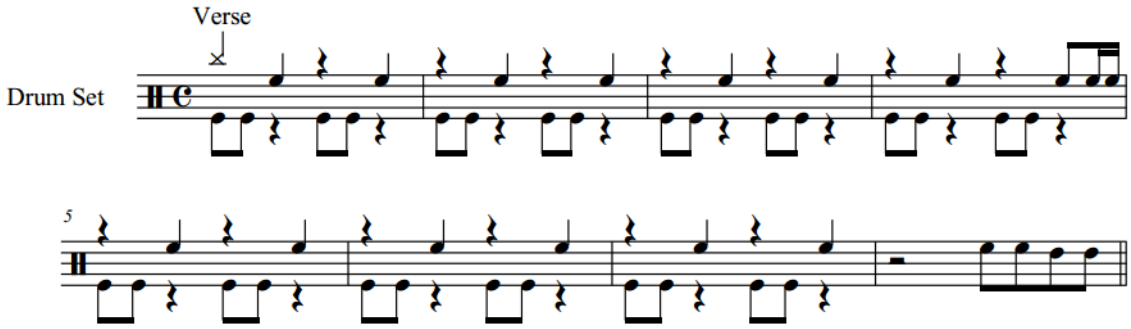
- Timekeeping: in the absence of a complete drum pattern, the drummer plays one piece of the kit (often bass drum or hi-hat) to keep time by establishing a regular pulse.

  Figure 1.1. "Blame It on Cain" (*Aim*), intro, 0'00"-0'06", hi-hat, timekeeping

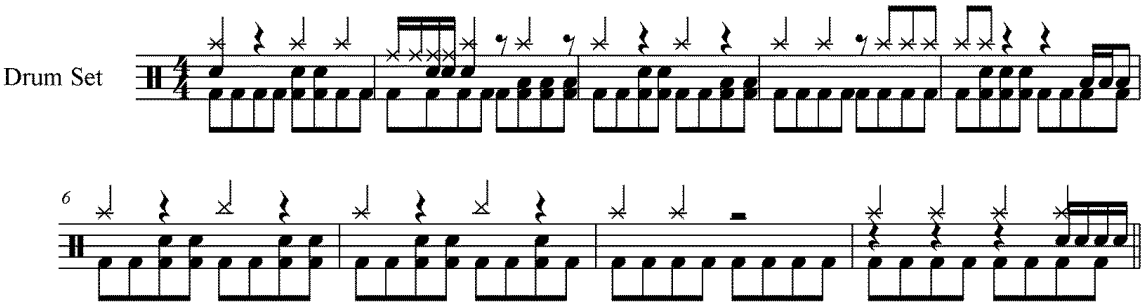
- Repeating drum beat: a ½-bar or 1-bar pattern repeated throughout a section of music (i.e., the chorus or the verse) with few or no fills that functions as a rhythmic timeline around which the other parts are organized, but does not add to the rhythmic complexity.

Figure 1.2. "Miracle Man" (*Aim*), verse, 0'08"-0'24", drum kit, repeating drum beat



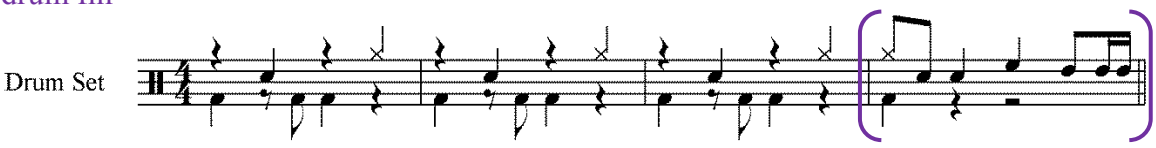
- Improvised drum beat: a drum beat that may have some patterning in the snare and kick drums, but often the accents and the tom and/or cymbal hits do not follow a predictable pattern. Improvisations can occur in any part of the measure or phrase, in contrast to fills, which only happen at the end of a phrase. This type of function does add to the rhythmic complexity.

Figure 1.3. "No Action" (*Model*), prechorus, 0'12"-0'28", drum kit, improvised drum beat



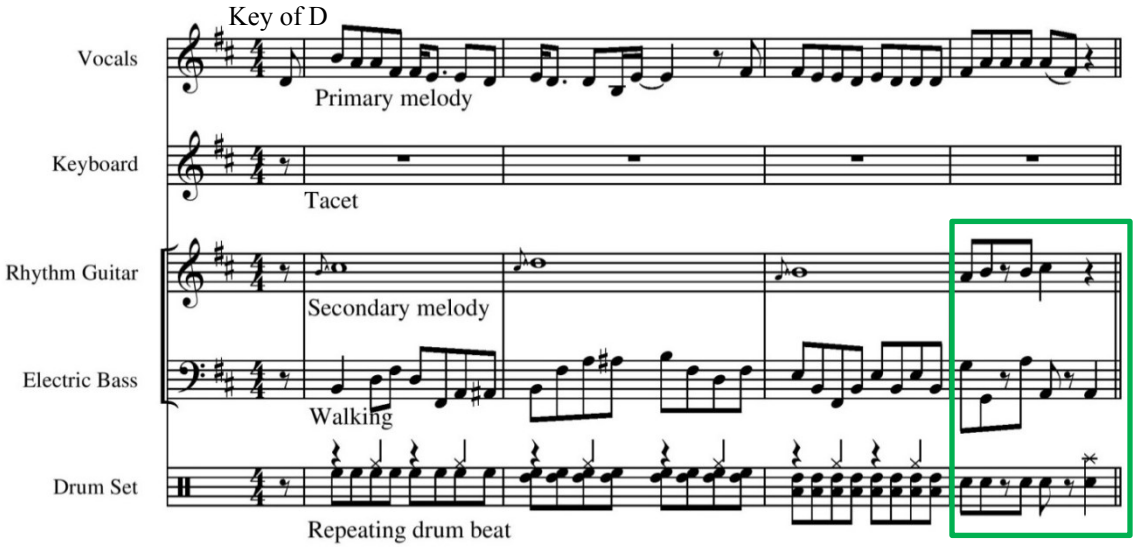
- Drum fill: a break in a repeating pattern that increases the rhythmic density, usually placed in the final measure of a phrase. These fills usually have an anacrustic function that increases the momentum into the next phrase.

Figure 1.4. "Welcome to the Working Week," (*Aim*), chorus, 0'20"-0'27", drum kit, drum fill



- Rhythmic reinforcement: other instruments in the ensemble play the same rhythm as the drum kit. Usually occurs in the last measure of a formal section, enhancing its anacrustic function.

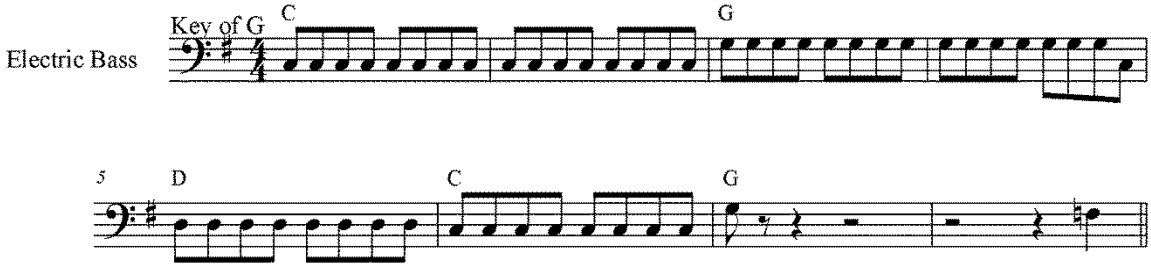
Figure 1.6. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), prechorus, 0'36"-0'43", guitar and bass, rhythmic reinforcement



Functional bass layer

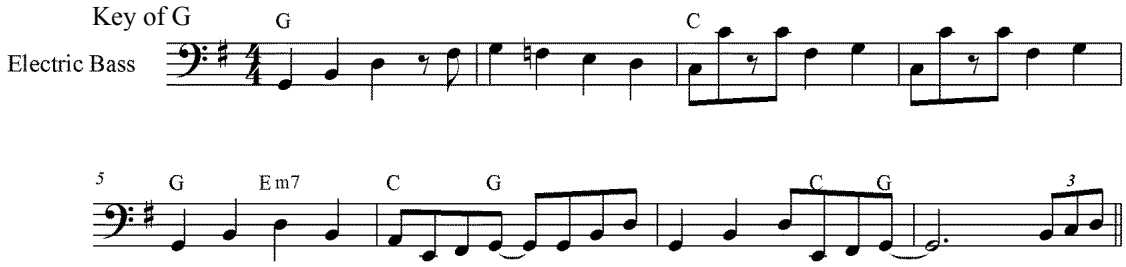
- Static: Mostly a single chord factor per harmony, most often the root. Melodically inert but may or may not be rhythmically active.

Figure 1.7. "Mystery Dance" (*Aim)*, chorus, 0'12"-0'22", bass, static



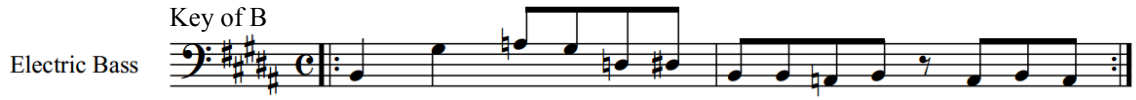
- Walking: arpeggiation of a chord or stepwise motion connecting notes of a chord. Melodically active, with a rhythm that is mainly based on quarter-note movement with occasional eighth notes or light syncopations.

Figure 1.8. "Pay It Back" (*Aim*), verse, 0'14"-0'29", bass, walking



- Bass riff: the bass plays a recurring melodic and rhythmic fragment while still occupying the lowest registral space in the ensemble. Melodically and rhythmically active, usually with distinctive contours.

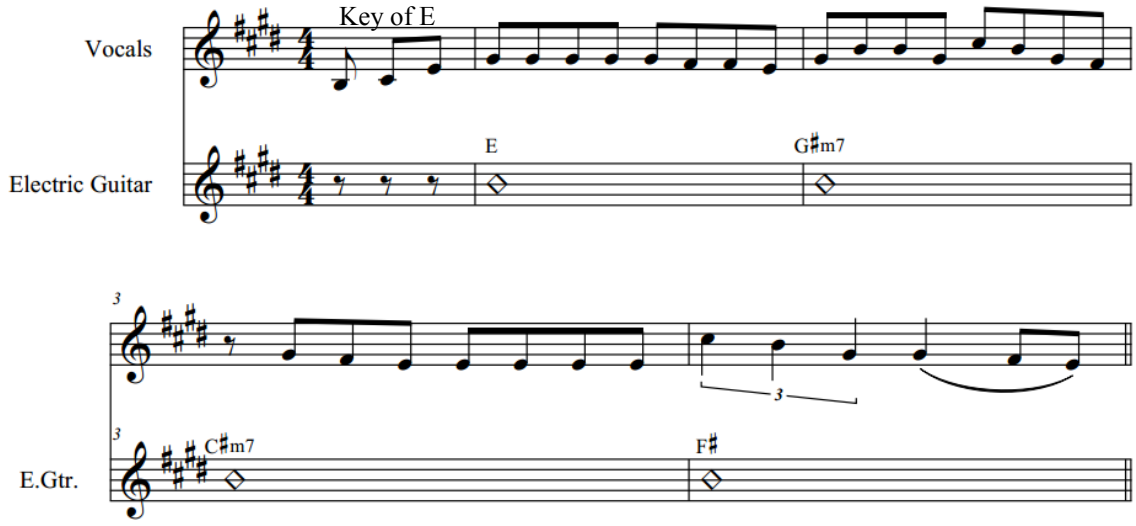
Figure 1.9. "Pump It Up" (*Model*), verse, 0'21"-0'35", bass, bass riff



Harmonic filler layer

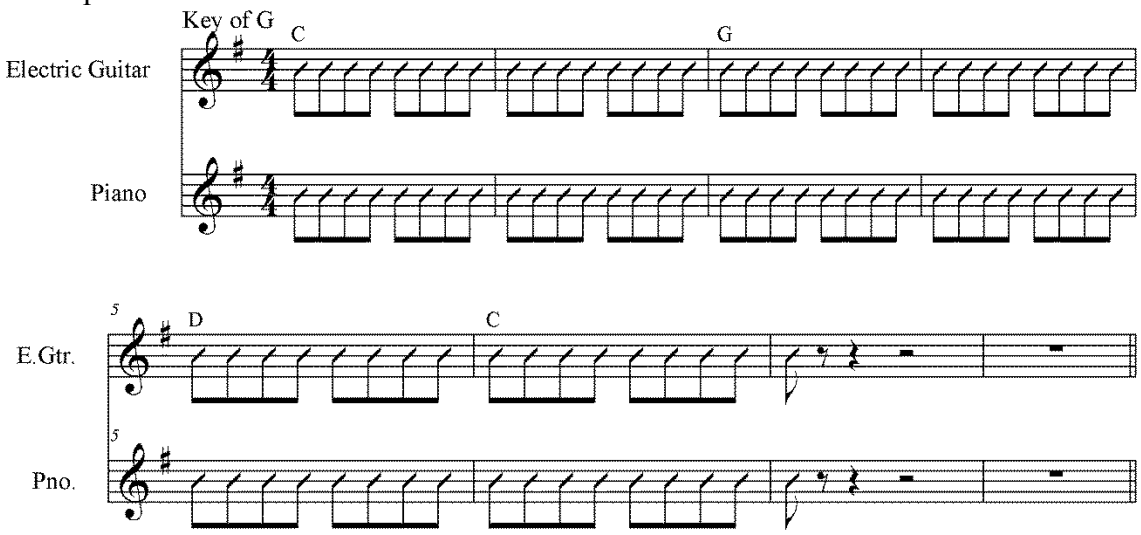
- Harmonic reinforcement: held chord tone(s), most often the chord root or the complete chord.

Figure 1.10. "Welcome to the Working Week" (*Aim*), intro, 0'00"-0'10", guitar, harmonic reinforcement



- Chordal accompaniment: chords in a repeated rhythm, usually involving straight or swung eighth and quarter notes. Harmonically and rhythmically active.

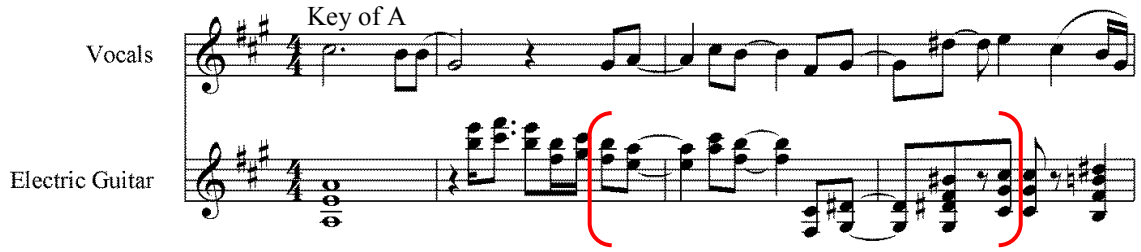
Figure 1.11. Mystery Dance (*Aim*), chorus, 0'12"-0'22", guitar and piano, chordal accompaniment



Melodic layer

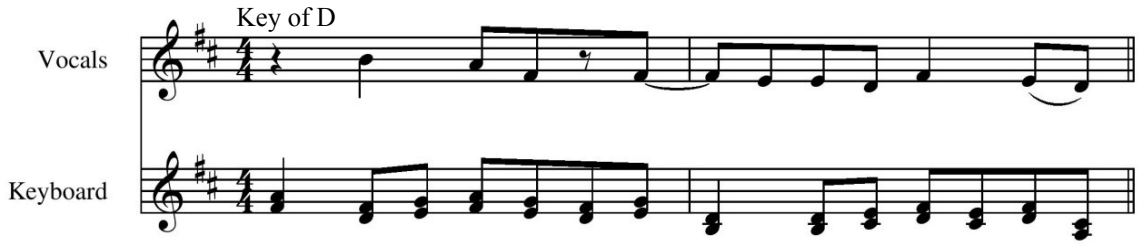
- Primary melody: the main melody of a section, usually carried by the voice, lead guitar, or a single-line keyboard part. Exemplified by Costello's vocal melody on any song.
- Melodic reinforcement: a melody parallel to the primary melody, in harmony or at the unison or octave, with the same rhythmic profile and melodic contour.

Figure 1.13. "Alison" (*Aim*), chorus, 0'54"-1'05", guitar, melodic reinforcement



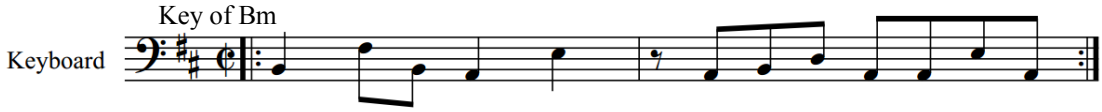
- Secondary or contrapuntal melody: a melody that is played at the same time as the primary melody, with a contrasting melodic and rhythmic contour. It is perceived as secondary because the primary melody has already been established as thematic.

Figure 1.14. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), chorus, 0'54"-1'00", keyboard, secondary melody



- Melodic riff: a short repeated melodic idea that is either monophonic or doubled (usually at the octave, 4th, or 5th) with minimal harmonic content. Melodic riffs typically have a distinctive rhythmic shape in addition to their distinctive melodic shape.

  Figure 1.15. "(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea" (*Model*), verse, 0'18"-0'38", keyboard, riff

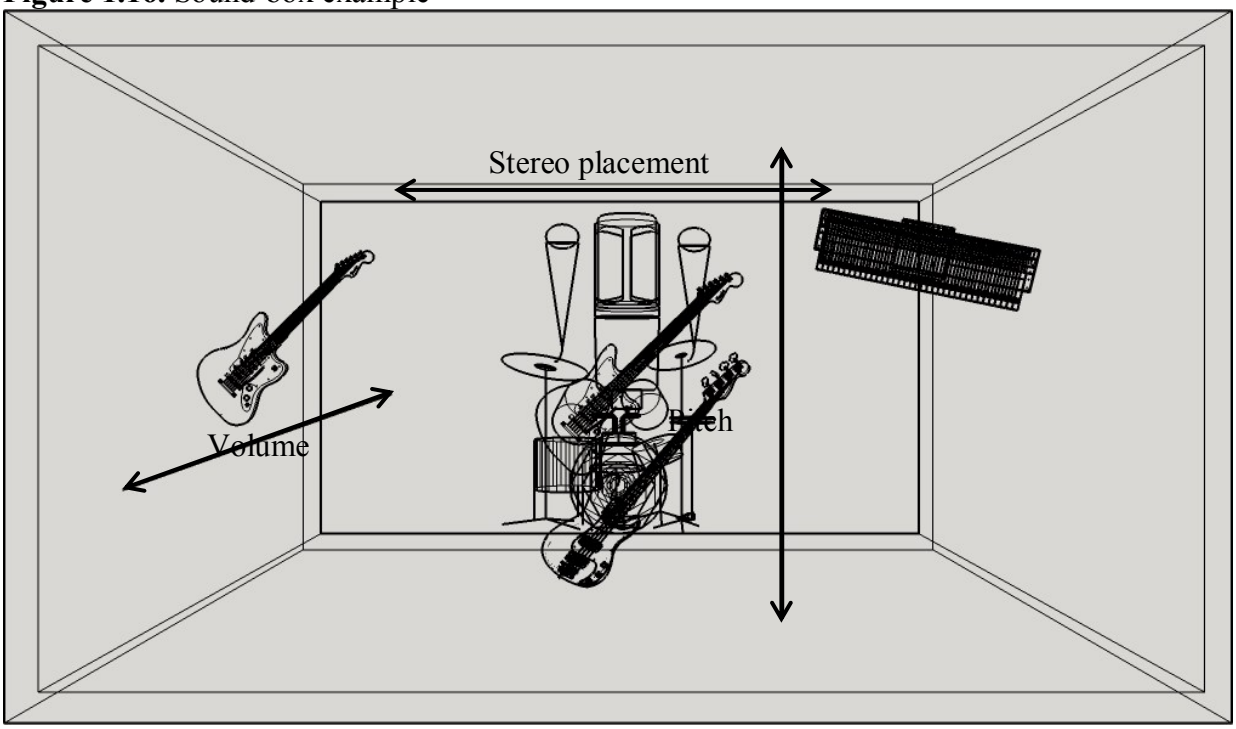


Many of the stylistic differences in functional roles between the two backing bands are likely borne out of the different purposes of the band: Clover were a studio group of session musicians while the Attractions were Costello's dedicated backing band. Whereas *Aim* was recorded in a total of 24 hours of time in the studio (Costello 1993), many of the songs from *Model* were refined by months of live performances prior to being recorded. My hypothesis as I began this project was that the songs on *Aim* are more likely to have functional layers that are clearly and simply separated: drums as the explicit beat layer playing repeating patterns, bass playing mostly root motion or walking, guitar and vocals stating the primary and secondary melodies, and guitar and piano providing harmonic filler. The songs on *Model* are more likely to have functional layers that are fused or more complex: riffs played by bass, keyboard, and guitar; improvised drum beats; the bass playing more active parts, either walking or riff-based. The texture on *Model* is more contrapuntal than that on *Aim*, with the keyboard playing secondary melodies or riffs under the voice's melody in "The Beat," "Chelsea," and "Living in Paradise."

While both albums were produced by Nick Lowe, the albums were recorded in different studios and with different backing bands, which had a noticeable effect on the overall sound of the albums. The focal points on *Aim* are the voice and the guitar. The recordings on *Model* put more emphasis on the rhythm section. Roger Bechirian, the audio engineer for *Model*, comments on his recording style on the album, "The mixes were always very kick drum and bass-heavy, with the vocal sitting in there and everything else then fitting around it" (Buskin 2011). I believe that the change in functional roles and the change in recording style are related; therefore, I will analyze the recordings in terms of the sound-box model in addition to the more traditional analysis of the rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic content.

As Lelio Camilleri points out, recorded sound when played back seems to be located in two spatial dimensions: foreground-background and left-center-right (Camilleri 2010). Moore's sound-box further divides recorded space into four dimensions: prominence (equivalent to Camilleri's foreground-background), stereo pan, pitch, and time. The model accounts for the foreground-background dimension by placing instruments from front to back on the z-axis (signified here by size), representing their relative prominence in the mix (determined primarily by volume). Left-center-right objects are placed accordingly on a horizontal axis representing stereo pan. Additionally, Moore and Dockwray use height to represent the pitch range of a voice or instrument, from low to high along a vertical axis. Sound-box analyses using Moore and Dockwray's model were generated using SketchUp Make, an open-source 3D modeling program (**Figure 1.16**). The fourth dimension of the sound-box, time, cannot readily be represented here as a 2D image, but changes in the sound-box parameters over time will be considered in the analyses.

Figure 1.16. Sound-box example



1.4 Organization

This thesis is divided into four analytical chapters. Chapter 2 compares two recordings of "Living in Paradise," one recorded with Clover as an outtake for *Aim* and one by the Attractions for *Model*. This instance of the same song recorded by both backing bands provides an ideal opportunity to make direct comparisons between functional roles in the ensembles. Chapter 3 is the main focal point of this study, comparing the roles of the vocals and instruments on *Aim* to the ones on *Model*. Because the Attractions served as Costello's touring band, they played the songs from *Aim* in concert as well as those on *Model*; Chapter 4 considers the Attractions' textural and functional differences between live and album recordings. In Chapter 5, I explore the idea of the single "Watching the Detectives" as a stylistic transition between *Aim* and *Model*, as the backing ensemble used for this recording is unique, lying somewhere between the two bands in terms of functional roles. Finally, a concluding chapter summarizes my findings and suggests avenues for further research.

Chapter 2. Two Recordings of "Living in Paradise": An Analytical Comparison of Texture

Two versions of "Living in Paradise" offer a chance to draw parallels and examine differences between the functional roles on *My Aim Is True* (1977) versus those on *This Year's Model* (1978). "Living in Paradise" was first released on *Model*, but the song itself dates back as far as Costello's early demo recordings with Flip City (1974). An outtake version recorded with Clover as the backing band is included on the Deluxe Edition of *Aim*. Because these two recordings of one basic harmonic and formal structure exist, we can look side by side at the disparities between the backing bands Clover and the Attractions. These two recordings will form the basis of a direct analytical comparison of functional roles on *Aim* vs. *Model*, offering a starting point for my discussion of the dissimilarities in texture across the two albums.

The overall forms of the two versions are similar: an introduction, three verse-prechorus-chorus cycles, and a fade-out ending. Compared to the verses on *Aim*, the verses on *Model* are doubled in length by adding a two-measure instrumental basic idea (labeled **b in Figure 2.1**) between each two-measure basic idea of the voice (labeled **a in Figure 2.1**). Although the verses on the *Aim* form diagram (**Figure 2.2**) are labeled as four-measure phrases, they can likewise be broken down into four two-measure basic ideas. Both versions of the song end with a repetition to fade-out of phrase *c* of the chorus, shortened by one measure to eliminate the transition back into the verse, although the *Aim* version's fade-out is eight measures longer than *Model*'s. The **a** section of *Model*'s final chorus is lengthened by four repetitions of the "Here we are living in paradise" two-measure basic idea, previously heard only once in each of the preceding **a** sections. The *Aim* version includes a bridge, absent on *Model*, that will be discussed in more detail shortly.

Figure 2.1. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), form diagram

Intro		Verse								Prechorus	Chorus			Repeat Verse-Prechorus-Chorus 2x	Outro			
4		16								4	13				~16			
a	a	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	a	b	c		c'	c'	c'	c'
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	5		4	4	4	~4
0'00"		0'07"								0'36"	0'44"			Verse 2: 1'07", Verse 3: 2'08"	3"19"			

Figure 2.2. "Living in Paradise" (*Aim* Outtake), form diagram

Intro		Verse		Prechorus	Chorus			Repeat Verse-Prechorus-Chorus	Bridge	Repeat Verse-Prechorus-Chorus	Outro					
4		8		4	13				5		~24					
a	a'	a	a'	a	a	b	c		a		c'	c'	c'	c'	c'	c'
2	2	4	4	4	4	4	5		5		4	4	4	4	4	~4
0'00"		0'06"		0'19"	0'26"			0'48"	1'29"	1'38"	2'18"					

I will examine these recordings section by section, noting analytically the contrasts of the functional layers and the sound stage. These differences are indicative of the differences in texture between *Aim* and *Model*. While not every category of functional role defined in Chapter 1 is always present, the different versions of this song are an excellent starting point for analysis of this type because they afford the opportunity for direct comparison by looking at the same harmonic and primary melodic material in different textural contexts.

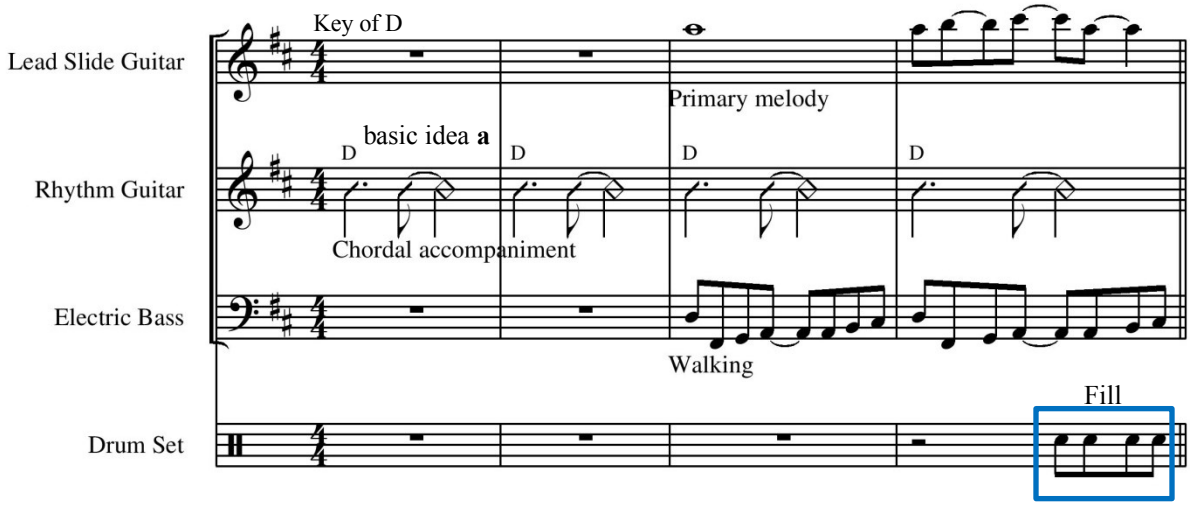
SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

2.1 Intro

Both recordings contain a four-measure introduction divided into two 2-measure basic ideas. On the *Aim* version, the first rhythmic basic idea, **a**, is played by rhythm guitar alone (**Figure 2.3**). The rhythmic component of this harmonic filler part is repeated by the rhythm guitar throughout the verses. On the first downbeat of the repetition of **a**, the lead guitar (played with slide) and the bass are introduced, playing parts that foreshadow their roles throughout the song. The bass's active eighth-note-driven arpeggiation (with passing notes) continues in the verses and the **a** section of the chorus, outlining the chords in a functional bass capacity while also helping to drive the rhythm. The slide guitar provides melodic material, specifically primary melody here in the intro and later in the bridge and secondary melody in the prechorus and

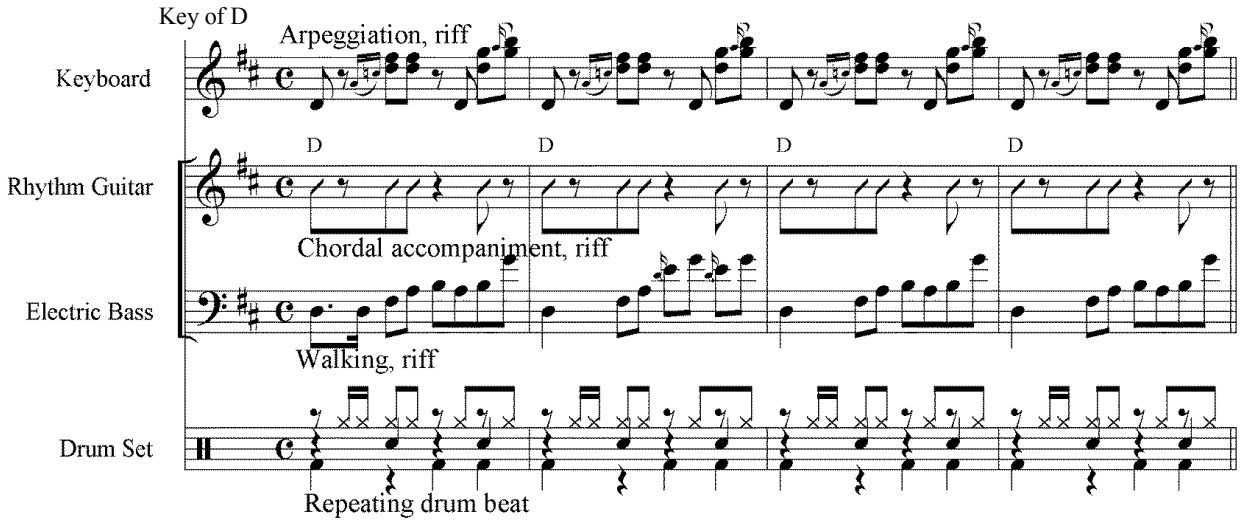
sections **a** and **c** of the chorus. Finally, the drum fill in beats 3-4 of the fourth measure signals the conclusion of the intro, transitioning into the verse.

Figure 2.3. "Living in Paradise" (*Aim* Outtake), introduction, 0'00"-0'06", functional layers



On *Model*'s version, however, the intro starts off with the full accompanimental texture (**Figure 2.4**). In fact, the basic idea played by keyboard, guitar, bass, and drums in the intro returns almost immediately as the **b** basic idea of the verses. The bass in this version also plays an active eighth-note-driven arpeggiation, this time without non-chord tones and covering a much wider range than the *Aim* bass. In this introduction, all of the instruments are contributing to the rhythmic layer. Each instrument clearly marks the downbeat of each measure. The hi-hat and the keyboard rhythmically reinforce each other; the keyboard uses grace notes to emphasize the two sixteenth notes in the hi-hat on the second half of beat 1. The keyboard, rhythm guitar, and bass play the same rhythm on beats 1 and 2, but are differentiated in the second half of the bar; each measure moves from rhythmic alignment to a mild rhythmic polyphony. The keyboard plays basically the same rhythm as the guitar, with two additional eighth notes on the upbeat and afterbeat of beat 4. The extra note in beat 4 helps emphasize the arpeggiation in the bass, adding an octave and third in harmony with the bass's D and F♯. While the keyboard provides chordal accompaniment, its ascending melodic content also makes it riff-like.

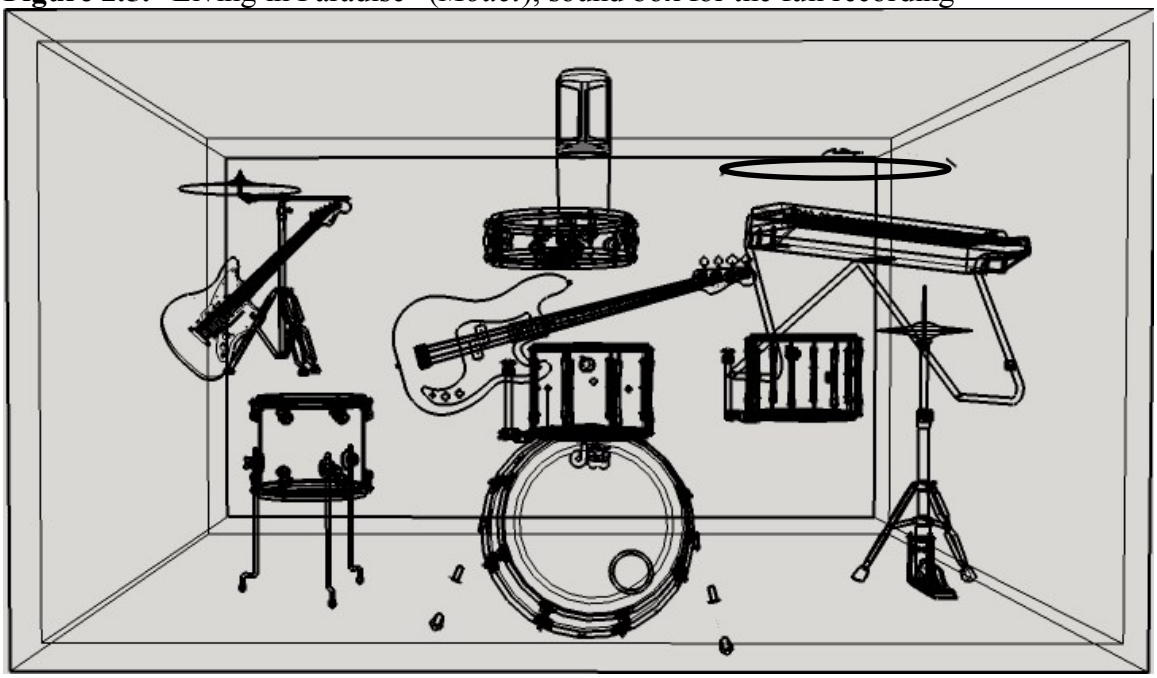
Figure 2.4. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Introduction, 0'00"-0'07", functional layers



In this introduction the keyboard, guitar, and bass each seem to serve the harmony and rhythm rather than the melody, yet the contrapuntal interaction between them combines into a resulting melody even though none of the parts are strictly melodic. I hear the rhythm guitar in the foreground with the keyboard brought to the fore on the second halves of beats 3 and 4, but after several repetitions of this riff, my focus is drawn to the bass, especially on beats 3 and 4 of each measure. This perception of the riff may be due to the spatial placement of the instruments (**Figure 2.5**). The rhythm guitar is panned hard to the left while the keyboard is panned hard to the right; the bass occupies the middle of the stereo space. The drums are panned according to their placement in the kit, with the kick, snare, and low-rack tom centered; hi-hat, crash cymbal, and high-rack tom panned slightly right; and ride cymbal and floor tom panned slightly left. These pans are maintained throughout the song and function as a sonic representation of the positions of the performers in a live setting (Camilleri 2010). The *Aim* version, on the other hand, is mixed in mono. Because this recording was not included on the official release of the album, I will not include it in my sound-box analysis for *My Aim Is True*. The intro sections demonstrate a

marked contrast between the two recordings—a gradual buildup on *Aim* versus a complete-ensemble texture on *Model*.

Figure 2.5. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), sound box for the full recording

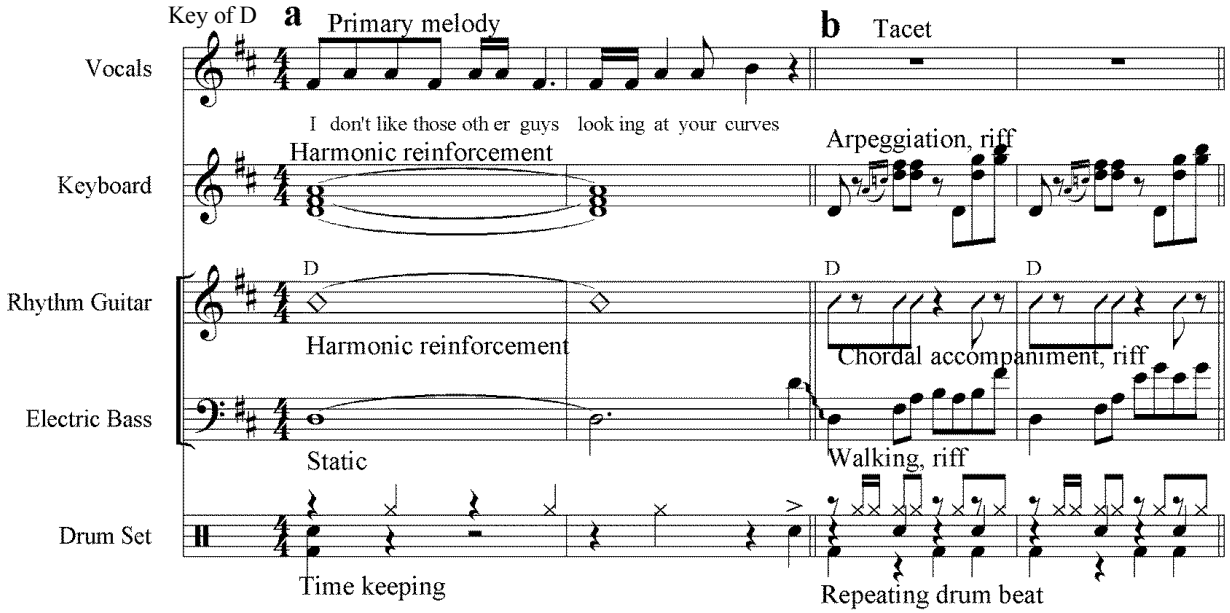


2.2 Verses

As previously mentioned, the verses of *Model*'s version are twice as long as *Aim*'s, because each of the four two-measure vocal basic ideas is broken up by a two-measure instrumental idea derived from the introduction. This results in a stark change of texture every two measures in the *Model* verse (**Figure 2.6**). Supporting the vocal basic idea **a**, the bass, guitar, and keyboard function as harmonic filler, holding out one harmony over the duration of the basic idea. More specifically, the bass is static and the guitar and keyboard provide harmonic reinforcement. The only melodic content comes from the voice. The drum kit quietly closes the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4, providing only timekeeping in the explicit beat layer until the last two beats of the second measure, when the snare hit kicks the band back into gear for the **b** instrumental basic idea. The **b** part of the verse contains exactly the same material as the

introduction, which provides a stark change of texture and functional roles from the **a** basic idea. Each of the four instrumental parts becomes drastically more active rhythmically, and, while the overall functional roles of each part do not change—the guitar and keyboard are still harmonic filler, the bass is still functional bass, the drums are still the explicit beat layer—the instruments do move to different categories of the functional layers.

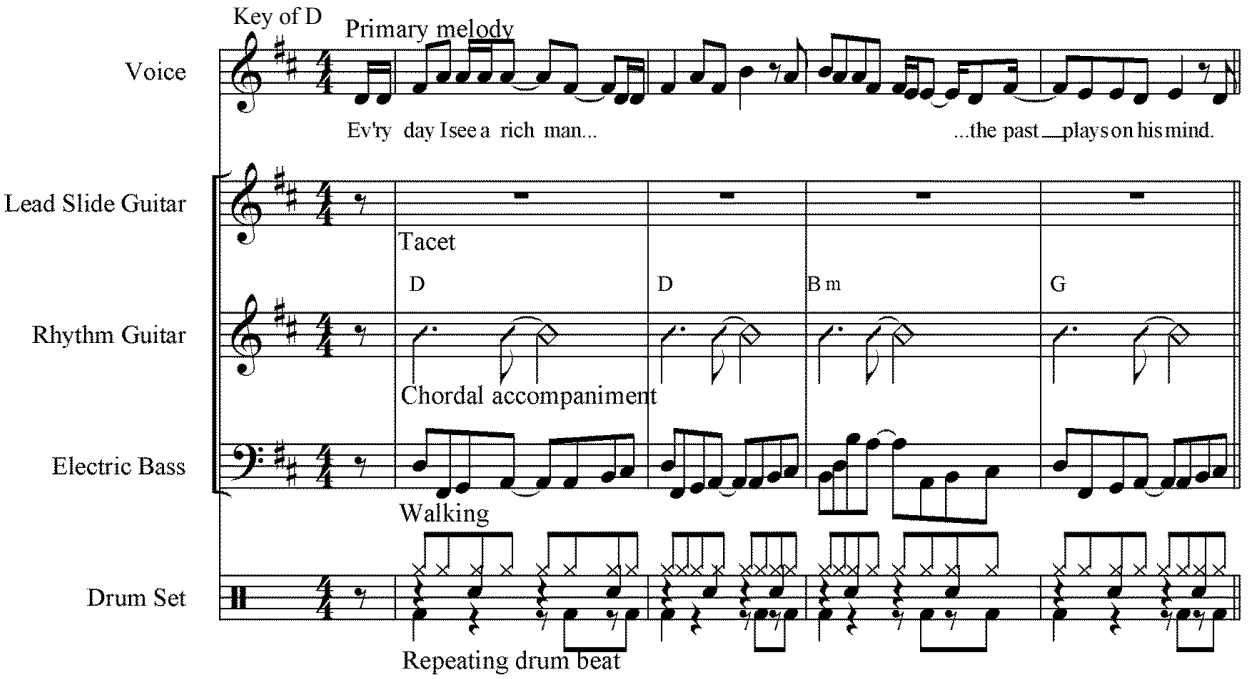
Figure 2.6. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Verse 1, 0'07"-0'14", functional layers



The verse on *Aim*'s version contains the only instance of differing harmonies between the two recordings' main formal sections (**Figure 2.7**). Here the two-measure basic vocal idea, which prolongs a tonic harmony, is answered with two more measures that begin with the submediant followed by the subdominant, a tonic expansion where different harmonies perform similar functions. On the other hand, *Model*'s version stands on the tonic throughout the verse. Despite the chord changes in the *Aim* version, the bass, rhythm guitar, and drums repeat their rhythmic profile every measure. The bass maintains its walking bass line, introduced in the repetition of **a** in the introduction, and the rhythm guitar continues its chordal accompaniment figure. The drum kit provides a steady backbeat by way of its repeating pattern. The slide guitar

is tacet, leaving the melody solely to Costello's voice. Compared to *Model*, this texture not only contains a more active harmonic rhythm, but a more active melodic layer. On *Model*, the vocal arpeggiates for two measures, and then the bass arpeggiates for two measures. On *Aim*, both the voice and bass move in more-or-less contrary motion for the duration of the four-measure phrase.

Figure 2.7. "Living in Paradise" (*Aim* Outtake), Verse 1, 0'06"-0'12", functional layers



Whereas each verse contains the same texture in the *Aim* version, the keyboard in *Model*'s version gradually embellishes the **a** section, adding more notes in each iteration of **a** in Verses 2 and 3, as is characteristic of Mark Spicer's idea of "accumulative form" in pop-rock music (2004). Most of its embellishments are arpeggios, filling out the harmonic layer with individually sounded chord tones (**Figure 2.8**). However, the embellishment in the third repetition of **a** in Verse 2 is a brief secondary melody, providing a point of interest while Costello's voice rests and providing descending motion to counterbalance the voice's ascending motion in the second measure of the example (**Figure 2.9**). The bass likewise adds melodic fills

on beats 3-4 of **a**'s second measure. Examples of the bass's countermelodic parts can be found in the third and fourth repetitions of **a** in Verses 2 and 3 (**Figure 2.10**). These fills have an improvisational feel because each is unique. The drum kit similarly provides changing improvisatory fills on beats 3-4 of the last measure of **a** (**Figure 2.11**).

In sum, the verses of the *Model* version are more texturally complex than the verses on the *Aim* recording. The instruments on *Model* cover a wider range of functional roles, and the verse on *Model* is divided into two texturally-distinct, alternating sections.

Figure 2.8. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Verses 2 and 3, keyboard, arpeggiation

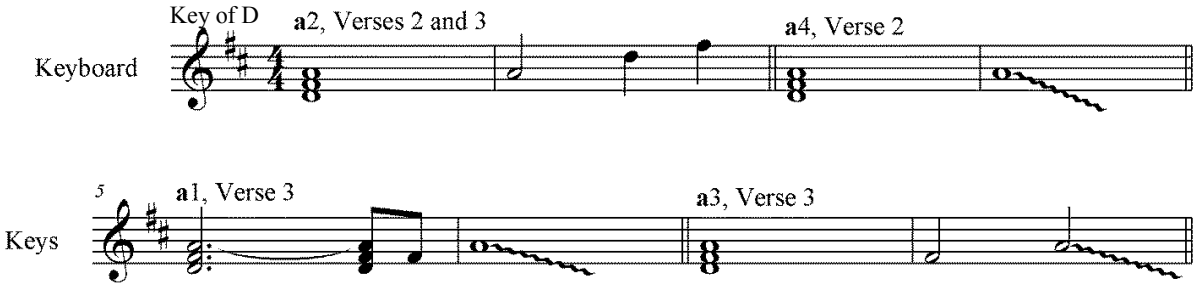


Figure 2.9. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Verse 2, 1'22"-1'26", keyboard, secondary melody

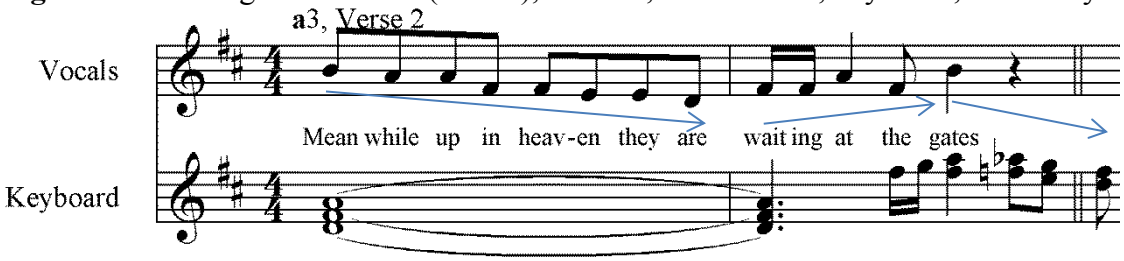


Figure 2.10. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Verses 2 and 3, bass, secondary melody

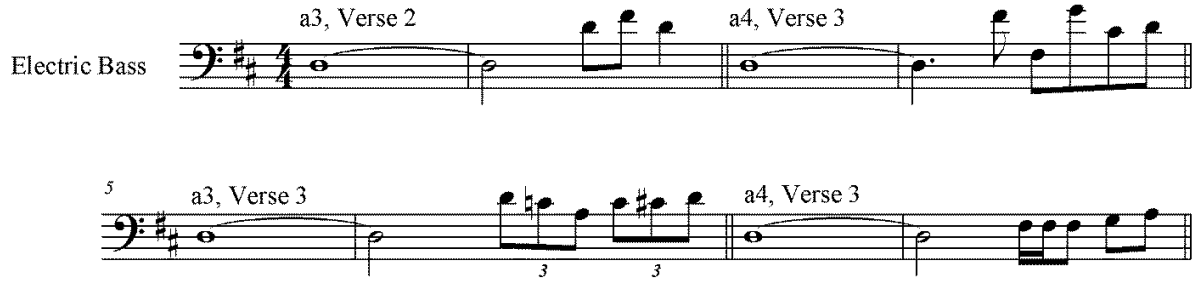
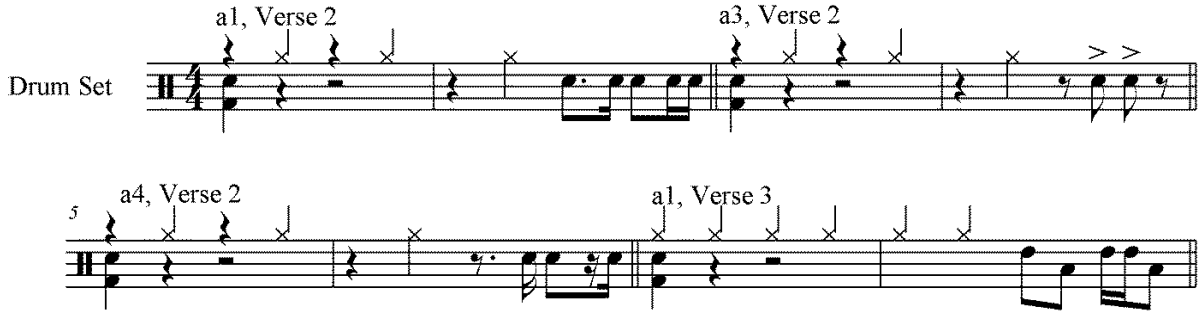


Figure 2.11. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Verses 2 and 3, drum kit, improvised beat

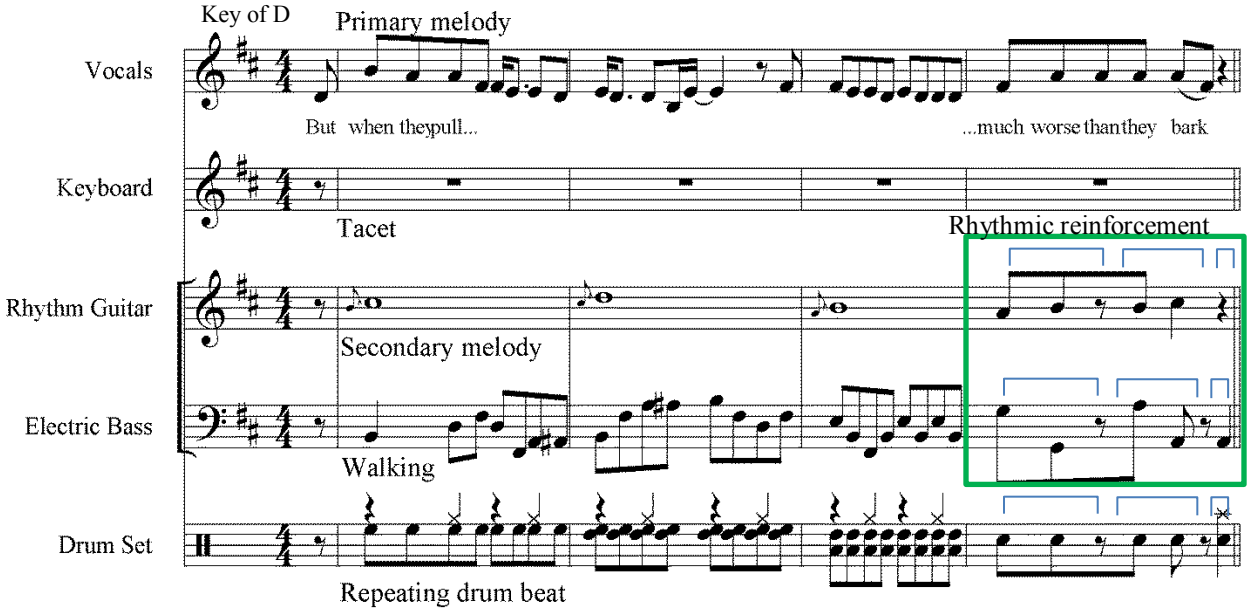


2.3 Prechorus

The prechoruses of both versions contain an intensification from the verse that is due to a shift in functional roles. On *Model*, the keyboard drops out entirely for the four-measure prechorus (**Figure 2.12**). The guitar moves from its role as harmonic filler to a melodic role. While the bass continues to play an active line based on arpeggiation of the harmony, it now adds chromatic passing notes rather than only chord tones as it did in the verse. The drum kit's rhythm changes from a backbeat with syncopated hi-hat to straight eighth notes on the toms, drastically reducing its range of timbre. Notably, in the final measure the bass and guitar mimic the rhythm of the drum kit, a 3+3+2 cadential hemiola, reinforcing the explicit beat layer for emphasis on this section's conclusion.

The functional roles on the *Aim* version's prechorus differ from its verse, but also from the functional roles on *Model* (**Figure 2.13**). The rhythm guitar changes from chordal accompaniment to harmonic reinforcement, playing chords in whole notes. The bass plays a countermelody to the voice, descending for the first two measures and then ascending for the final two. In contrast, the voice descends for a measure and a half, ascends for a measure, and then repeats the pattern. Therefore, the bass and vocals move in contrary motion for measures 2 and 3 and similar motion for measures 1 and 4. The intensified contrapuntal motion creates tension in the middle of the four-bar phrase. The drum kit again plays a repeating drum beat,

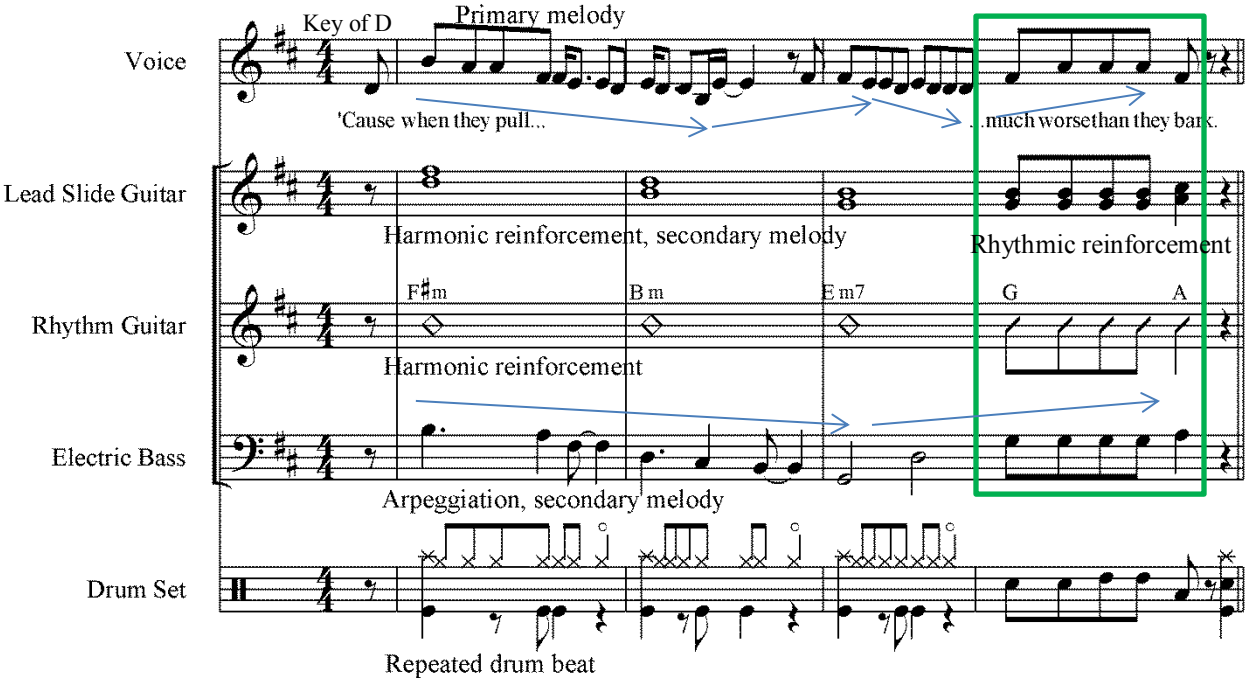
Figure 2.12. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Prechorus, 0'36"-0'44", functional layers



though the beat changes from the verse, now putting an emphasis on beat 4 by creating a stronger pickup to the next downbeat. This sets up the cymbal hit in the fourth measure, the only instrument that plays on beat 4, which provides a strong anacrusis into the chorus. The slide guitar plays a secondary melody that also functions as harmonic reinforcement because of its parallel thirds. As in the *Model* version, the rhythm guitar, electric bass, and in this case lead guitar and voice rhythmically reinforce the drum kit in the final measure, making the conclusion on beat 3 stronger and more stable.

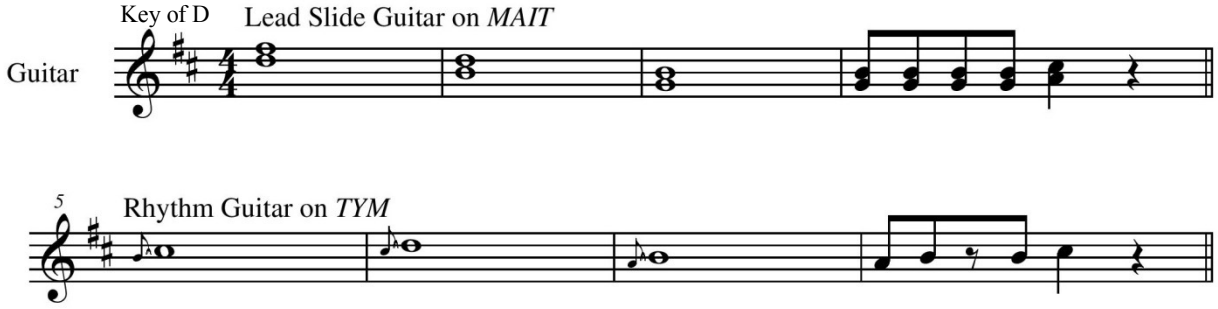
It is worth noting that the lead slide guitar melody on *Aim* and the rhythm guitar melody on *Model* are somewhat similar rhythmically and melodically (**Figure 2.14**), which highlights the differences in timbre and articulation between the two performers. The rhythmic components of the parts are identical save for the final measure. Despite fulfilling similar functional roles, the parts are timbrally very diverse because *Aim*'s is played by electric slide guitar and *Model*'s sounds as if it is played by a distorted electric guitar with vibrato created by the tremolo arm on a

Figure 2.13. "Living in Paradise" (*Aim* Outtake), Prechorus, 0'18"-0'26", functional roles



Fender Jazzmaster, Costello's signature instrument (McCombe 2009, 199). Further emphasis is brought to the contrapuntal guitar part on *Model* by placing it in the middle of the stereo mix instead of to the far left, where the rhythm guitar resides throughout the rest of the song. On both recordings, the prechorus serves to create a textural intensification over the verse and to build into the chorus.

Figure 2.14. "Living in Paradise," both recordings, prechorus, secondary melody in guitar

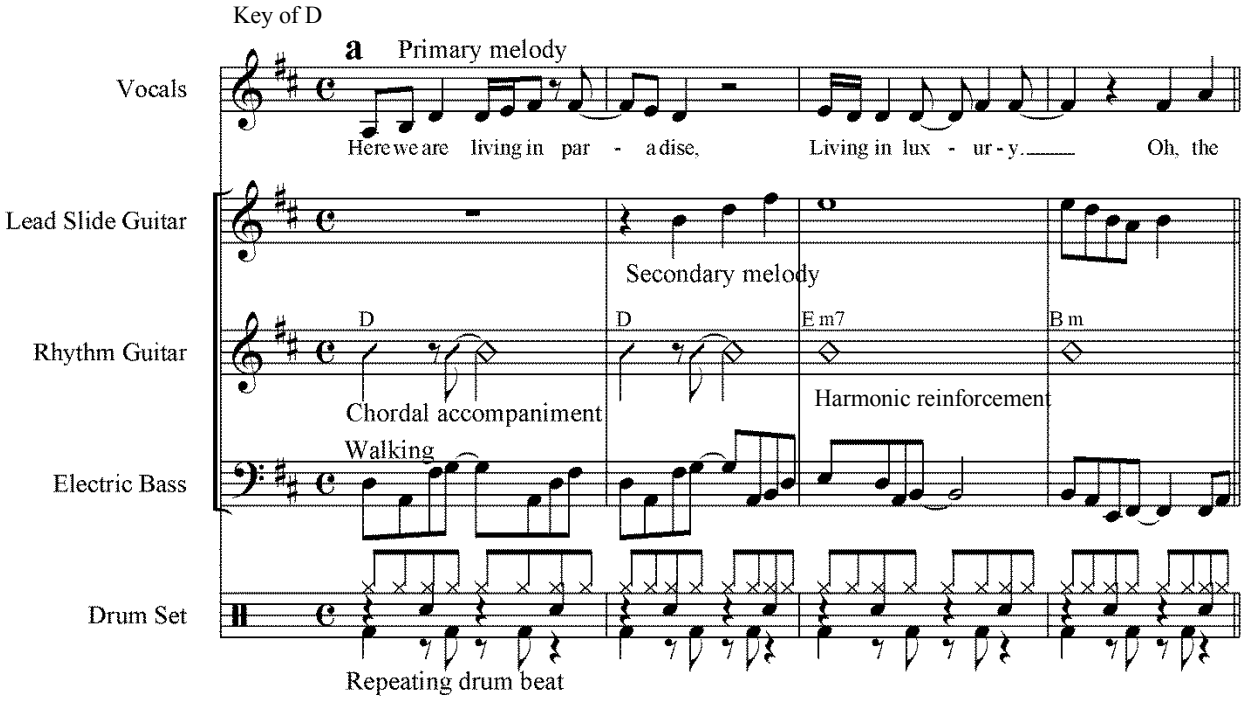


2.4 Chorus

The chorus is divided formally into three phrases, **a**, **b**, and **c**. I will begin by examining these three phrases separately for each piece and then move on to a comparison of *Aim* versus *Model*.

The **a** section of the chorus on *Aim* follows roughly the same functional roles as the rest of the song (**Figure 2.15**). The slide guitar plays a secondary melody which creates overlapping fills with Costello's vocal melody, resulting in continuous melodic activity. The rhythm guitar's chordal accompaniment in the first two measures gives way to harmonic reinforcement when the rhythm changes to whole notes for the last two measures; this more static rhythm creates space in the texture for the guitar's secondary melody.

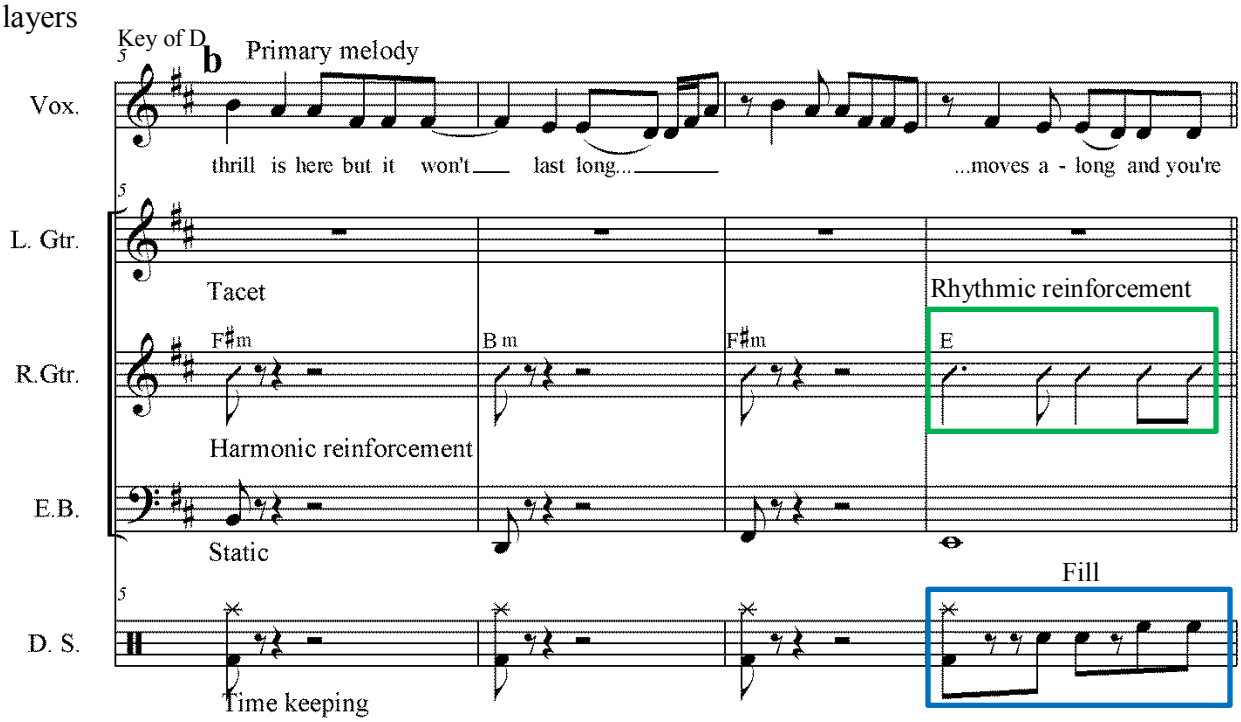
Figure 2.15. "Living in Paradise" (*Aim* Outtake), chorus phrase **a**, 0'27"-0'32", functional layers



Because the end of the **a** section does not contain any sort of change of rhythm in the drums to delineate the end of a phrase (as we saw at the end of the prechorus on both *Aim* and *Model* and after the **a** basic idea of the verse on *Model*), the change in texture between **a** and **b** is

particularly stark. The slide guitar drops out entirely, and the rhythm guitar, bass, and drum kit give only staccato hits on the downbeats of each of the first three measures (**Figure 2.16**). This change in functional roles places more emphasis on the vocal melody, as the instrumental texture is now comparatively empty. In the fourth measure, the band kicks back into gear. The rhythm guitar melodically reinforces the fill in the drums. The bass remains static, simply playing a rhythmically longer chord tone than it had previously in this phrase. The **b** phrase functions within the chorus like the trio in a minuet, providing a contrasting lighter texture between two denser outer sections. This more reserved **b** phrase allows the **c** phrase at the end of the chorus to be perceived as a high point.

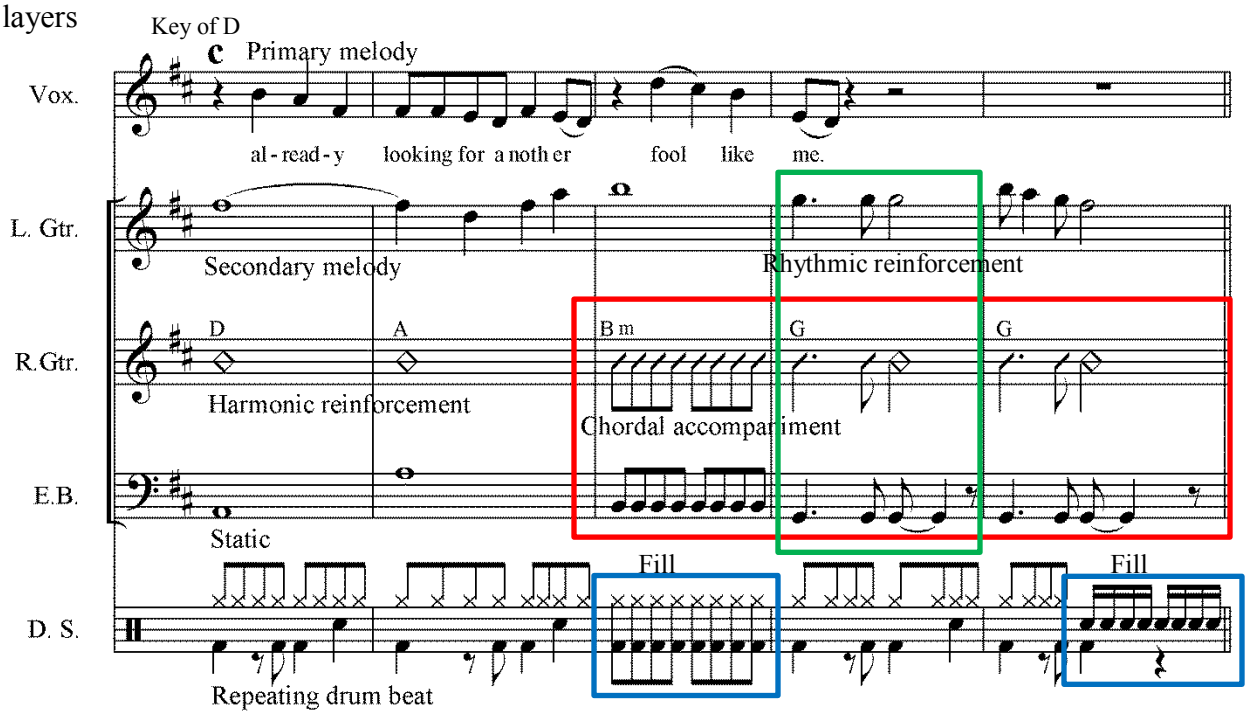
Figure 2.16. "Living in Paradise" (*Aim* Outtake), Chorus Phrase **b**, 0'32"-0'39", functional layers



Phrase **c** of *Aim* (**Figure 2.17**) carries a half-time feel because of its relatively laid-back repeating drum beat (a major contributing factor to this is that the snare is on beat 4 only, whereas it was on beats 2 and 4 in the **a** phrase of the verse and will return to beats 2 and 4 in the upcoming verse). The eighth-note fill in the third measure breaks the half-time feel momentarily,

but it returns for the fourth measure and the first half of the fifth until the sixteenth-note snare fill takes over the explicit beat layer. The lead slide guitar returns, again playing a secondary melody while Costello sings the primary melody. The bass continues playing a static line, although the rhythms do change over the course of the phrase. In measures 3-5 of **c**, the bass, along with the rhythm guitar playing chordal accompaniment, provides rhythmic reinforcement of the drum kit, playing eighth notes in the third measure and highlighting the kick pattern in the fourth and fifth measures. The lead guitar even joins in the rhythmic reinforcement in the fourth measure, but breaks the dotted-eighth note into an eighth and a quarter in the fifth measure. The increase in rhythmic density and the wider register create a feeling of culmination in this phrase. Additionally, the phrase deviation, five measures instead of the expected four, extends the phrase, creating anticipation for the return of the verse.

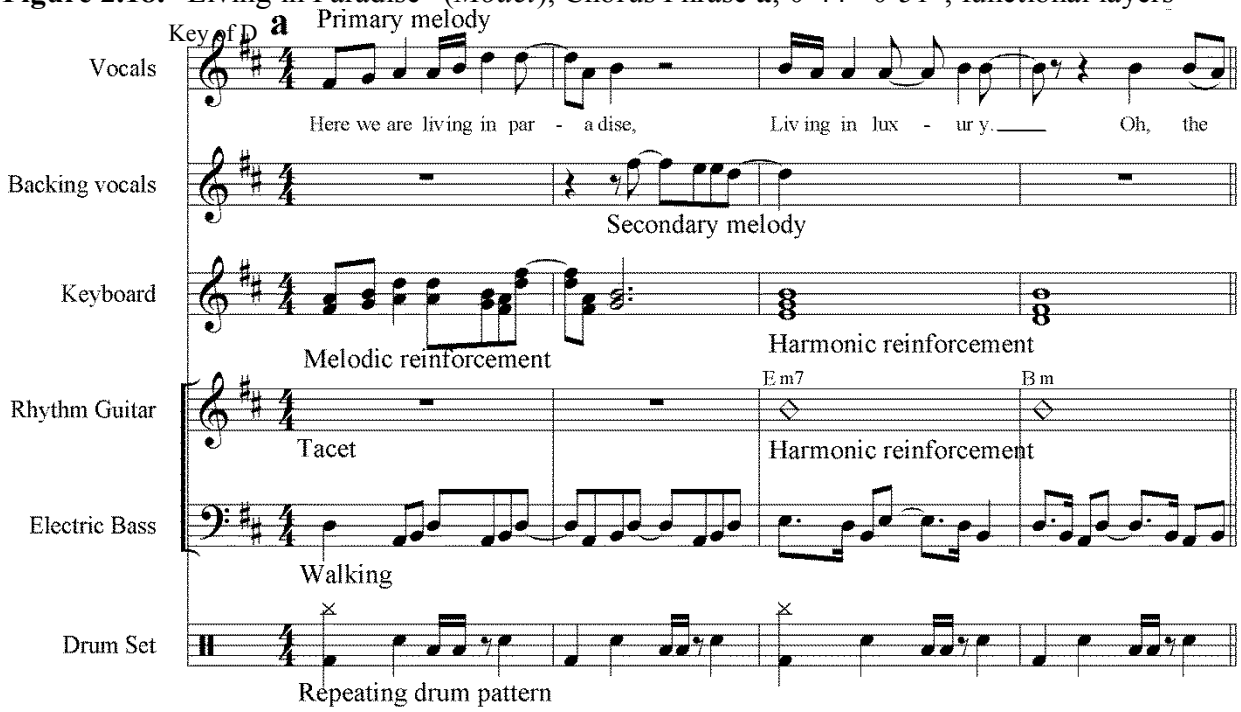
Figure 2.17. "Living in Paradise" (*Aim* Outtake), Chorus Phrase **c**, 0'39"-0'47", functional layers



The **a** phrase of *Model*'s chorus contains three melodic parts (**Figure 2.18**): Costello's primary vocal melody, a secondary melody in the backing vocals in measure 2 which answers

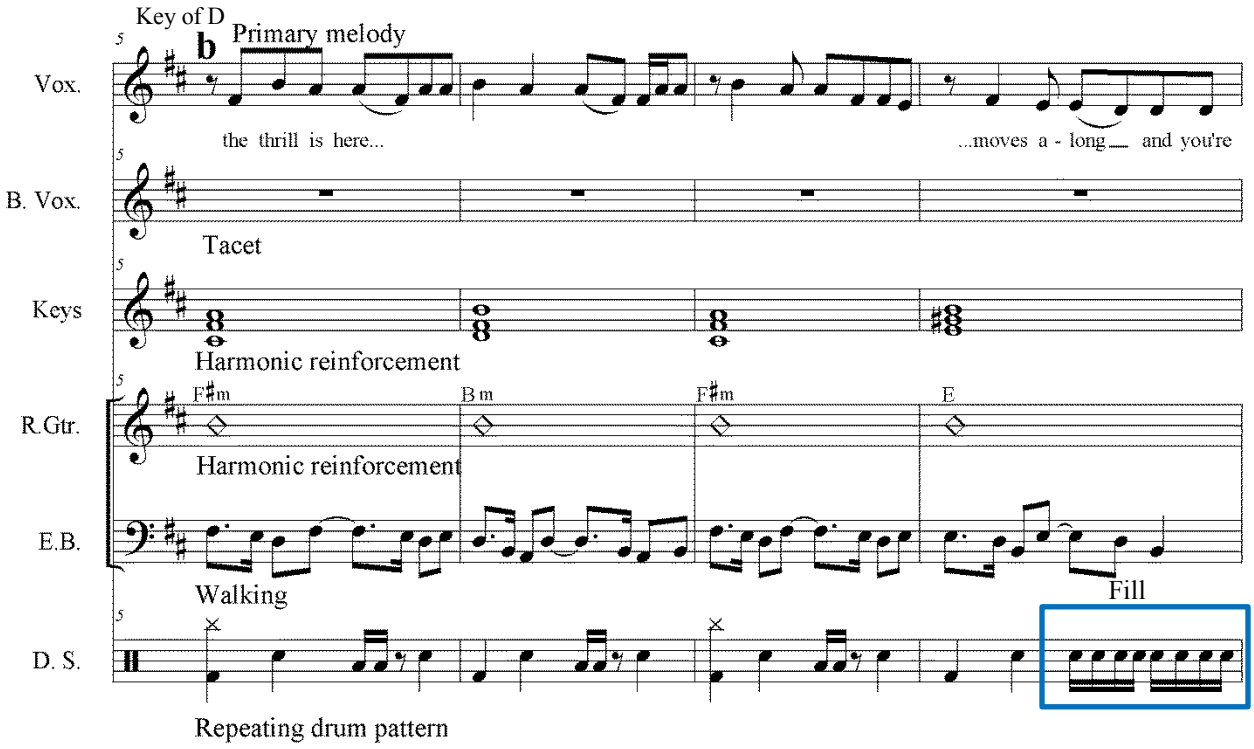
the primary vocal melody of measure 1, and melodic reinforcement of the vocal melody by the keyboard in measures 1-2, which provides both unison and harmonic support although the rhythmic and melodic content varies in beats 3 and 4. The keyboard switches to harmonic reinforcement in measures 3-4, as does the rhythm guitar, which was previously tacet in measure 1-2. As in the prechorus, the bass plays a walking line and the drum kit plays a repeating drum beat, but the rhythms vary from the prechorus, creating a sense of arrival.

Figure 2.18. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Chorus Phrase **a**, 0'44"-0'51", functional layers



In the **b** section of the *Model* version's chorus, each of the instruments retains the functional layers established in measures 3-4 (**Figure 2.19**). The only break in these functional roles comes in the drums on beats 3-4 in the final measure of the phrase, initiating the transition to the **c** phrase. As with the **b** phrase of *Aim*'s chorus, a lighter texture puts focus on the melody—and bass, in this instance—before returning to a thicker texture in the **c** phrase. Therefore, motivically the choruses are **abc**, but texturally they can be understood as **aba**.

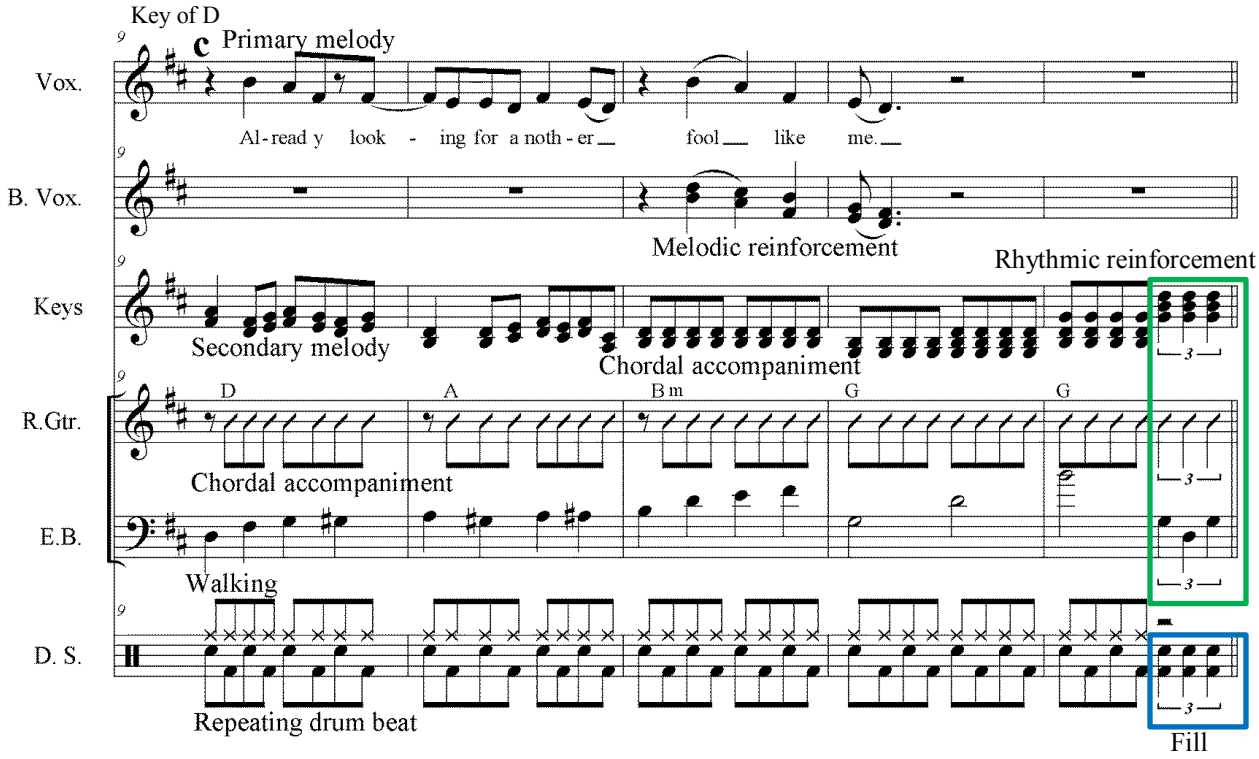
Figure 2.19. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Chorus Phrase **b**, 0'51"-0'58", functional layers



Finally, after six measures of one texture in phrases **a** (second half) and **b**, the functional roles change at the beginning of phrase **c** (**Figure 2.20**). The keyboard moves to a secondary melody panned to the right while Costello's primary vocal melody is mixed in the center. The rhythm guitar plays a strummed chordal accompaniment in eighth notes. The bass's walking becomes simpler, now quarter-note based, decreasing its rhythmic activity from the previous phrase. The drum kit plays a repeating drum beat, but now the snare is played on downbeats and the kick on upbeats, a flip from the metrically strong bass and metrically weak snare found elsewhere in the song. In the third measure, the keyboard switches to eighth-note based chordal accompaniment, and the backing vocals return to melodically reinforce Costello's voice. The backing vocals (also performed by Costello) sing unison and an intervallically close (mostly thirds) upper harmony and are mixed very slightly out of the center of the sound stage so as not to compete with his main vocal track. Finally in the fifth measure the kit plays a quarter-note

triplet to signal the end of the formal section, and the bass, rhythm guitar, and keyboard rhythmically reinforce this. In addition to this rhythmic intensification, the keyboard and bass provide a registral intensification.

Figure 2.20. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Chorus Phrase **c**, 0'58"-1'08", functional layers



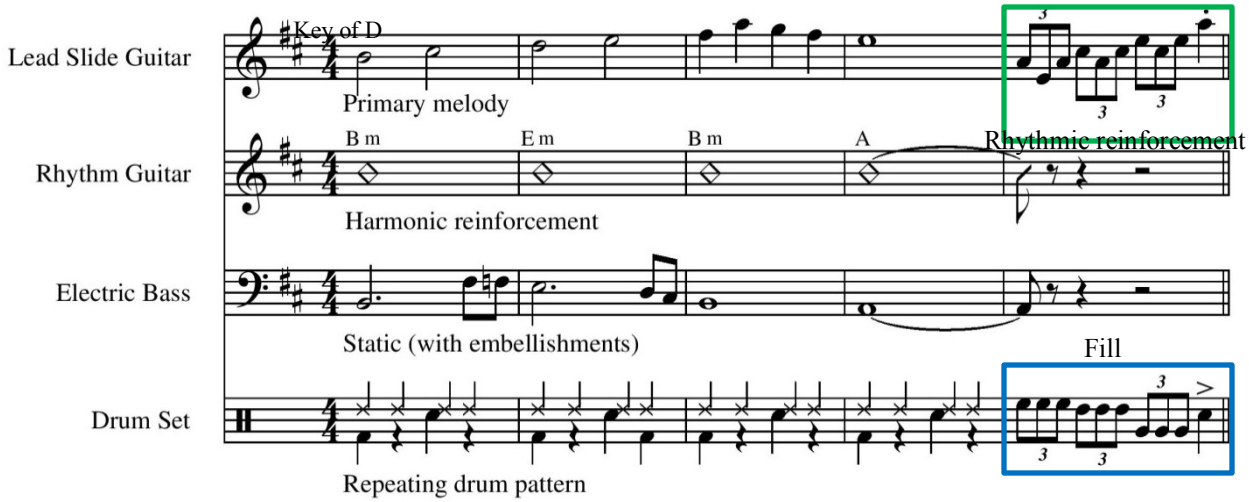
Comparing the choruses of the two versions, the distinction between **a** and **b** is more difficult to discern in *Model* because there is no clearly marked shift in functional roles between the two phrases. In fact, the shift in functional roles occurs at the third measure of **a**. Additionally, the B-minor harmony in measure 4 of **a** can be grouped with the F♯-minor harmony in measure 1 of **b** because this same B minor to F♯ minor progression repeats in measure 2-3 of **b**. Consequently these two phrases can be heard on *Model* as one long eight-measure phrase instead of two four-measure phrases. The shared repeating drum beat in **a** and **b** also reinforces the hearing of one long phrase. On *Aim*, however, the two phrases are clearly delineated by the loss of the slide guitar and the aforementioned drastic change of rhythmic content at **b**.

Overall, the chorus of *Model* contains more melodic material than the *Aim* outtake for two reasons, one instrumentational and one functional. First, the *Model* version includes backing vocals that are absent on *Aim*'s version. (Although there is an instrumentational and timbral difference between the slide guitar on *Aim* and the keyboard on *Model*, both function similarly as a lead melodic instrument.) In terms of function, the recording on *Model* includes instances of a third type of melody layer beyond the primary and secondary melody found in both versions: melodic reinforcement in the keyboard in phrase **a** and the backing vocals in phrase **c**.

2.5 Bridge

The *Aim* version includes one additional formal element that is absent from the *Model* version: a four-measure transitional bridge between the second chorus and the third verse (**Figure 2.21**). According to de Clercq, one of the main functions of a bridge is to contrast with the material preceding and following. In this example, the shift in functional roles provides the contrast. The main melodic feature of this bridge is a slide-guitar solo rather than a vocal melody. The drum beat introduces a half-time feel, with kick on beat 1, snare on beat 3, and ride cymbal on every quarter-note beat. The bass underscores the half-time feel with a rhythm of one dotted half note followed by two eighths. In the ultimate measure of this section, this beat is broken off into a fill of eighth-note triplets, mimicked by the slide guitar's rhythm in this measure and transitioning back into the verse beat. Harmonically, this measure contains a retransitional V chord, a common characteristic of bridges (de Clercq 2012, 71), which resolves to a tonic I in the first measure of the following verse. On *Aim*, the bridge is added to provide a textural contrast to the formal sections preceding and following it but is not formally necessary to link the chorus and verse, hence its absence on *Model*.

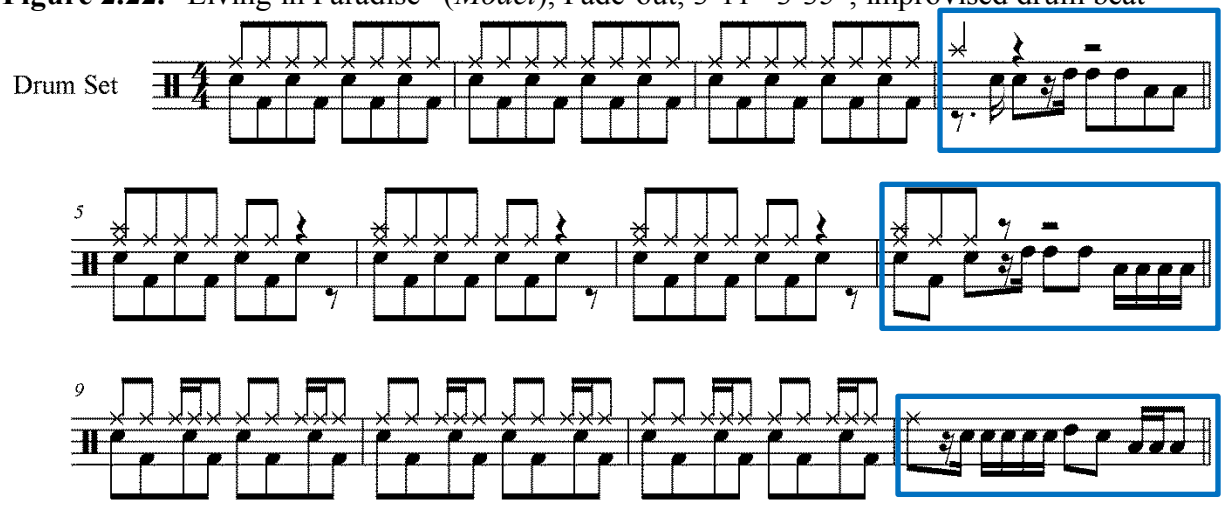
Figure 2.21. "Living in Paradise" (*Aim* Outtake), Bridge, 1'30"-1'38", functional layers



2.6 Final chorus and fade-out

In both recordings, the fade-out is a repetition of an altered version of the chorus's **c** phrase shortened to four measures instead of five, effectively cutting off the transition back to the verse. The instruments for the most part continue their functional roles as established in the chorus on both versions, the one notable exception being the drum kit on *Model*. Three of the repetitions of **c'** are shown in **Figure 2.22**. Not only does the fill in the final measure of the phrase change each time, but the repeated pattern itself is altered with each repetition, creating a feeling of improvisatory looseness in the tradition of soloing over the outro.

Figure 2.22. "Living in Paradise" (*Model*), Fade-out, 3'11"-3'35", improvised drum beat



2.7 Conclusion

More types of functional roles are represented by each instrument on *Model* than on *Aim* (**Figure 2.23**). In fact, there is only a single instance of an instrument on *Aim* containing a role that *Model* does not.[1] The lead guitar plays a primary melody in the intro of the *Aim* outtake. In the same formal section on *Model*, the keyboard, rhythm guitar, and bass all play riffs that result in an audible primary melody, as discussed previously.

Figure 2.23. "Living in Paradise," both versions, types of functional roles represented

	My Aim Is True Outtake	*This Year's Model*
Vocals	Primary melody Rhythmic reinforcement	Primary melody Secondary melody Melodic reinforcement Rhythmic reinforcement
Secondary lead	Primary melody Secondary melody Rhythmic reinforcement	 Secondary melody Melodic reinforcement Riff Arpeggiation Harmonic reinforcement Rhythmic reinforcement
Rhythm guitar	 Harmonic reinforcement Chordal accompaniment Rhythmic reinforcement	Secondary melody Riff Harmonic reinforcement Chordal accompaniment Rhythmic reinforcement
Bass	Static Walking Rhythmic reinforcement Secondary melody	Static Walking Rhythmic reinforcement Secondary melody Riff
Drum kit	Timekeeping Repeating drum beat Fill	Timekeeping Repeating drum beat Fill Improvised drum beat

[1] Although none of the previous examples show rhythmic reinforcement in the vocals on *Model*, it does in fact occur at the end of the second prechorus (only the first prechorus was included in Figure 2.12 because the vocal melody is the only instrument that varies between prechoruses, and it only does so because of the lyrics). Rhythmic reinforcement can be heard in the last measure of the second prechorus on the words "carries a gun."

Additionally, the functional roles of the instruments change more frequently in the *Model* verse than the *Aim* outtake. For instance, the intro and chorus have the same functional roles (except that the primary melody is played by guitar in the intro and voice in the verse) on *Aim*, but on *Model*, each instrument has a different role in the verse's basic idea **a** than it does during the intro or the verse's basic idea **b**. Furthermore, the texture changes every two measures from **a** to **b** in the verse of *Model*, creating the effect of a more fragmented texture, while *Aim* maintains one texture throughout. Furthermore, the keyboard, bass, and drum kit change their roles in iterations of the **a** basic idea in verse 2 and 3. In another example of the more frequent change of roles on *Model*, the fade-out of *Aim* repeats verbatim every four measures, but in the fade-out of *Model* the drum kit changes roles from repeating to improvised drum beats. The keyboard also occasionally changes roles in the middle of a formal section on *Model*, as seen in chorus phrases **a** and **c**. On *Aim*, however, the only times instruments change roles are at formal section breaks or in the measure before a section break, rhythmically reinforcing the drum kit or filling.

The results of this analytical comparison will be seen on a larger scale in the next chapter. In Chapter 3, I examine the whole of *My Aim Is True* and *This Year's Model*. Based on my findings in the small cross-section of the material in this chapter, I anticipated that *Model* would include more functional roles, more frequent changes in functional roles, and more mixed functional roles (i.e., roles that fall into more than one functional layer) overall than *Aim*. These analytical results will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

Chapter 3. *My Aim Is True* versus *This Year's Model*

In a 2002 Pitchfork review of *This Year's Model*, Matt LeMay asserts that "While *My Aim Is True* was largely a guitar-centered album, the sonic core of *This Year's Model* consists almost entirely of drums, bass, and keyboards. As a result, it's not only a more complex and dynamic album, but also one that steers well clear of the retro guitar twang that marred the less interesting bits of [Costello's] debut" (LeMay 2002). Although his comment focuses on instrumentation and timbre, LeMay hints at a clear stylistic change from Costello's first album to his second. This change in style is brought about by a change in functional roles: as Allan Moore notes, styles "can, in part, be defined simply by how they make [functional] layers explicit" (Moore 2012, 27). In this chapter, I will expand on LeMay's assessment of the musical surface in Costello's first two albums, analyzing the intricacies of the interactions of instruments on *Aim* and *Model*. By examining the disparities between functional roles, I will demonsrate how *Model* is more complex and dynamic than *Aim*, and how the transformation from guitar-centricity to a focus on drums, bass, and keyboard manifests itself.

The two opening tracks, "Welcome to the Working Week" on *Aim* and "No Action" on *Model*, provide an excellent starting point for comparison. In his 33 1/3 Series book on Costello's third album, *Armed Forces*, Franklin Bruno notes that both albums begin with Costello's voice alone, but the presentation and energy set the stage for the wide disparities in texture and style between the two albums.

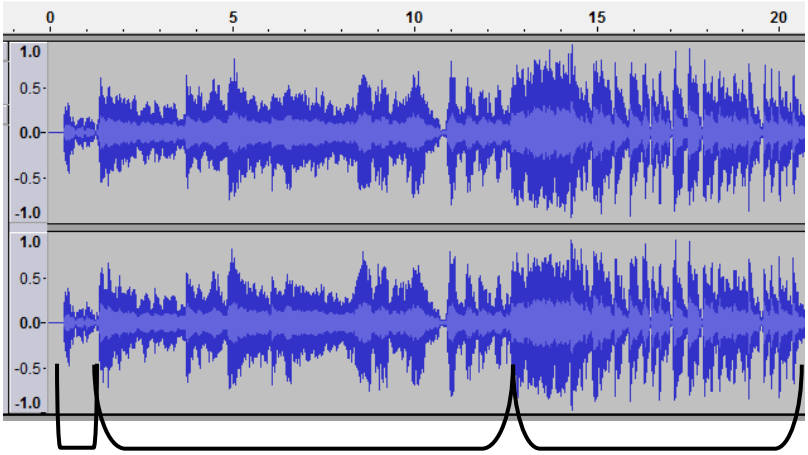
> "Each of [Elvis Costello's] first three albums announces the singer's presence by a snatch of unaccompanied vocal. This, we understand, conveys his urgency: He's too keyed up to wait for a downbeat, never mind a lengthy vamp. On 'Welcome to the Working Week,' from *Aim*, three pickup notes ('Now that your') rise into the guitar chords and backing vocal-group that enter on 'picture'; the band comes in, tidily, a bar before the chorus. By *Model*, less than a year later, he's recruited permanent backing, but there's not confusion about the main Attraction. 'I don't want to kiss you, I don't want to touch'; two full bars and a hint of anticipatory

> bass-drum, introducing the Who-inspired tumble of 'No Action'" (Bruno 2005, 3).

While Bruno's observation is focused solely on instrumentation, we can look further into the differences between album openers, comparing the production decisions as well as the functional roles.

On "Welcome to the Working Week," the voice only remains unaccompanied for the duration of a three eighth-note anacrusis. As we can see in the wave-form visualization in **Figure 3.1**, the volume gradually builds with each new entrance, starting quietly with voice only, gaining volume with the entrance of the guitar, and finally topping off with the entrance of the full band.

Figure 3.1. "Welcome to the Working Week" (*Aim*), 0'00"-0'20", spectrogram[2]

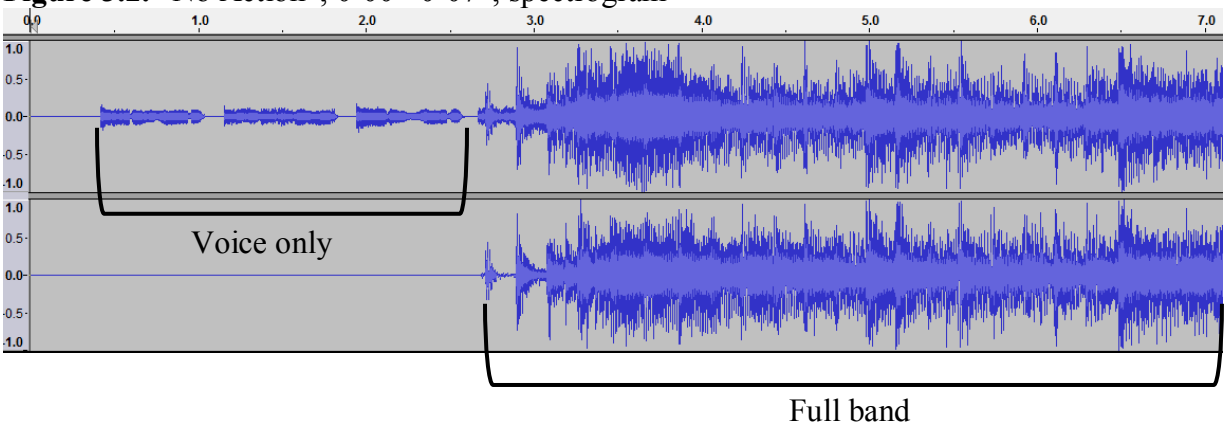


On the other hand, we can see simply by looking at the spectrogram of the beginning of "No Action" that Costello's vocals are mixed very quietly (much more quietly than in the introduction of "Welcome to the Working Week") for his opening two-measure phrase, making the full band's entrance in the third measure all the more raucous (**Figure 3.2**). The voice is panned to the left for its solo as opposed to centered vocal track on *Aim*, already hinting at more

[2] This image and the following were created in Audacity, a free audio editor and recorder.

ambitious production from Nick Lowe on this album that will be discussed in more detail shortly. When the full band enters in the third measure, the voice moves to the center of the stereo space, where it remains for the duration of the rest of song.

Figure 3.2. "No Action", 0'00"-0'07", spectrogram



The instruments in the introduction to "Welcome to the Working Week" feature rhythmically static roles (**Figure 3.3**). The drums provide a very rudimentary timekeeping function by playing ride cymbal hits on the downbeat of each measure. The bass and guitar play whole notes that reinforce the harmony, with the bass providing the registrally lowest pitches in the ensemble and the guitar playing bar chords. The band jumps into more rhythmically active roles in the final measure of the intro, to create momentum and transition into the chorus—the drums filling in eighth notes, the bass remaining melodically static by playing the registrally lowest pitch but now in eighth notes, and the guitar moving to chordal accompaniment. In the chorus, the guitar and bass maintain their harmonic roles while reinforcing the kick drum's repeated rhythm (**Figure 3.4**). The verse (which follows the same harmonic progression as the intro) maintains the functional roles of the chorus, except that the guitar and bass no longer provide rhythmic reinforcement as they return to playing straight eighth notes.

Figure 3.3. "Welcome to the Working Week" (*Aim*), functional roles of formal sections

	Intro	**Chorus**	**Verse**
Voice	Primary melody	Primary melody	Primary melody
Backing vocals	Harmonic reinforcement	Secondary melody	Secondary melody
Guitar	Harmonic reinforcement	Chordal accompaniment Rhythmic reinforcement	Chordal accompaniment
Bass	Harmonic reinforcement	Static Rhythmic reinforcement	Static
Drum kit	Timekeeping	Repeating pattern	Repeating pattern

Figure 3.4. "Welcome to the Working Week" (*Aim*); chorus; 0'14"-0'27"; guitar, bass, and drum kit; rhythmic reinforcement

The instruments stay within the traditional functional layers on "Welcome to the Working Week"—the drums create the explicit beat layer, the bass plays a functional bass line, the guitar acts as harmonic filler, and the vocals provide the melody. On "No Action," however, the functional roles of the instruments are more fluid (**Figure 3.5**). The keyboard moves from

supplying harmonic filler to expressing a melodic function in the second verse and the expanded version of the prechorus following the second verse. The keyboard, which was totally absent on *Aim*'s album opener, here presents itself as the lead instrument of the ensemble. The bass in the prechorus shifts from a static role to a more active, walking line. The drums play improvisatory beats in the verse and prechorus, then tighten up into a regular repeating pattern in the chorus—perhaps a manifestation in this layer of David Temperley's (2007) "loose verse/tight chorus" model. The secondary melody in the keyboard additionally contributes to the less unified texture in the verse.

Figure 3.5. "No Action" (*Model*), functional roles of formal sections

	Verse	**Prechorus**	**Chorus**
Vocals	Primary melody	Primary melody	Primary melody
Backing vocals			Secondary melody Melodic reinforcement
Keyboard	Harmonic reinforcement Secondary melody (second time only)	Secondary melody	Harmonic reinforcement
Guitar	Harmonic reinforcement	Harmonic reinforcement	Harmonic reinforcement
Bass	Static	Walking	Static
Drums	Improvisatory drum beat	Improvisatory drum beat	Repeating drum beat

The functional roles found on the album openers "Welcome to the Working Week" and "No Action" set the stage for similar role assignments on the whole of *Aim* and *Model*, respectively. The rest of this chapter will examine each instrument individually, exploring its functional contributions.

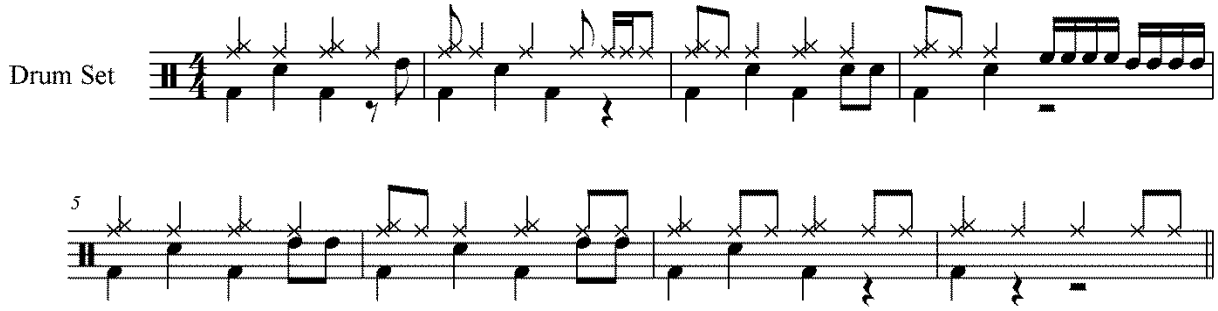
3.1 Drum kit

The drums on *Aim* are characterized by repeating one-measure patterns in 4/4 time. The ends of phrases often contain fills, but the album is virtually devoid of any improvisatory drum beats. Here the drum kit is very much a background instrument, providing a backbeat and never

drawing attention away from the main focus on the melody. The repeating drum patterns range stylistically from rockabilly-influenced shuffle beats ("Blame It on Cain," "Pay It Back," "Sneaky Feelings") to driving rock beats ("Mystery Dance," "I'm Not Angry").

Beyond fills at the ends of phrases (as in the last measure of Figure 3.4), the only obvious improvisatory drum beat occurs in "Miracle Man." In the second verse (**Figure 3.6**), the ride cymbal does not maintain a consistent pattern. Additionally, the fourth beat of the each measure is varied, containing either one or two eighth notes, sometimes played by snare and sometimes by tom.

Figure 3.6. "Miracle Man" (*Aim*), Verse 2, 0'56"-1'12", drum kit, improvisatory drum beat



On *Model*, the drum kit plays many more improvisatory drum beats, avoiding strict repetition by changing the rhythms in the toms and cymbals. In the prechorus of "No Action" (**Figure 3.7**), the kick plays eighth notes while the cymbals, snare, and toms play nonrepeating rhythms. Another example is found in the verse of "(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea." Shown in **Figure 3.8**, the hi-hat opens and closes in an unpredictable manner while the kick and snare more or less follow a repeating pattern.

Whereas on *Aim* the drums were always used to support the ensemble, in several instances on *Model* the drums are the sole focus as they begin a song alone, with the ensemble entering only after the drums have established the tempo and feel of the song. In "Lipstick Vogue," the drum kit plays a tom-based six-measure solo introduction (**Figure 3.9**). The

Figure 3.7. "No Action" (*Model*), Prechorus, 0'12"-0'28", drum kit, improvisatory drum beat

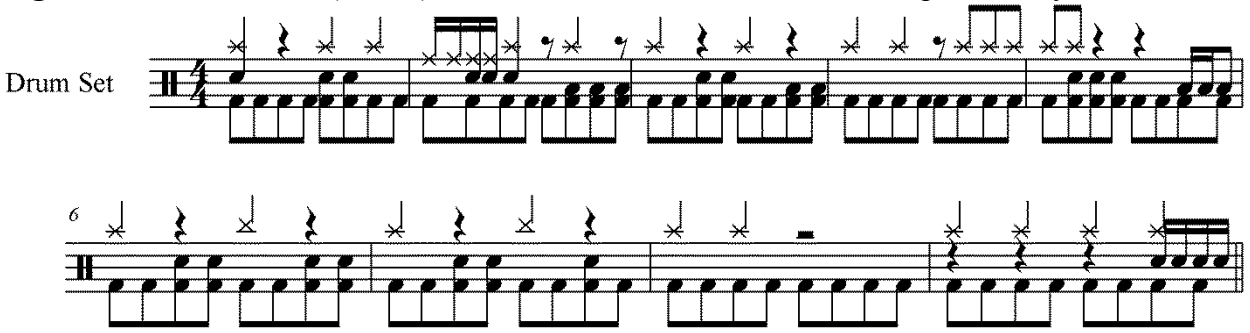
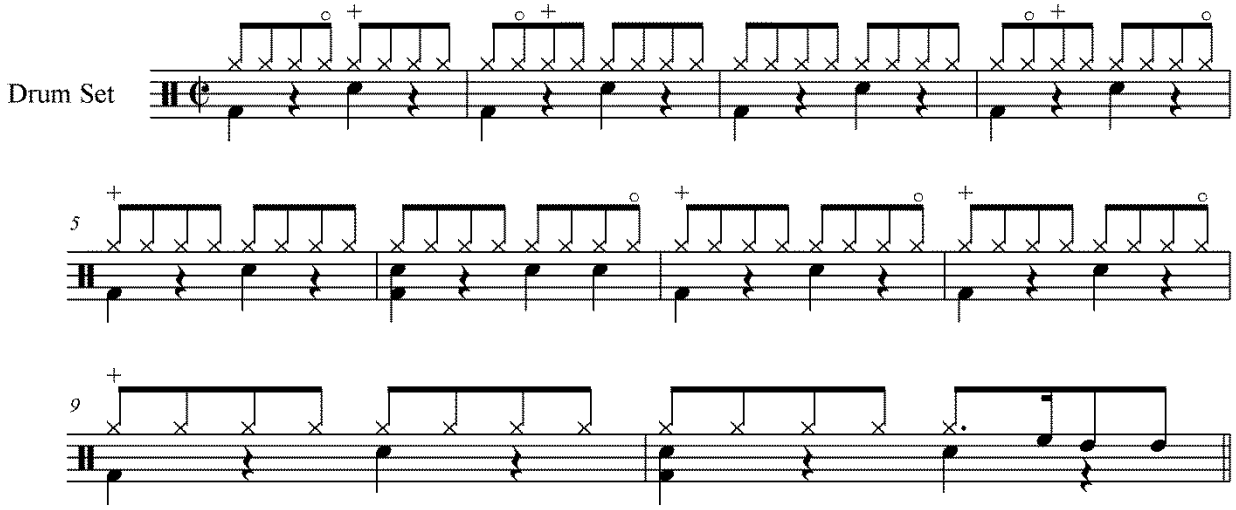


Figure 3.8. "Chelsea" (*Model*), Verse, 0'29"-0'43", drum kit, improvisatory drum beat



introduction is a repeating drum beat with fills in measures 4 and 6. The drum intro on "Chelsea," however, is improvisatory (**Figure 3.10**). This four-measure phrase uses the kick, snare, crash cymbal, and hi-hat in a variegated succession of timbres and rhythms. These drum solos demonstrate the increased importance of the drum kit on *Model*, showing that the drum kit is capable of playing interesting parts without the aid of the pitched instruments.

Figure 3.9. "Lipstick Vogue" (*Model*), intro, 0'00"-0'07", drum kit, repeating drum beat (solo)

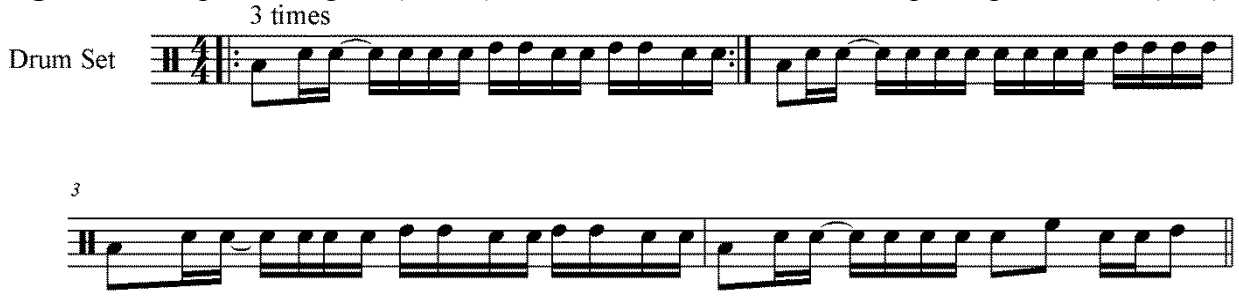
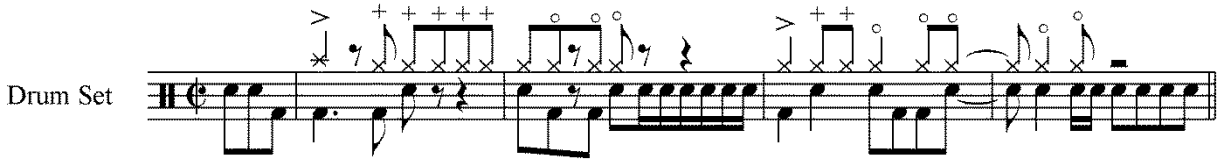


Figure 3.10. "(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea" (*Model*), intro, 0'00"-0'06", drum kit, improvisatory drum beat (solo)



Even the repeating drum patterns on *Model* are more rhythmically complex than those on *Aim*. The verses of "No Dancing" on *Aim* and "Hand in Hand" on *Model* can be used for a direct comparison, since both employ a common drum beat made famous by the Ronettes' "Be My Baby" (1966).[3] In "No Dancing" (**Figure 3.11**), only kick, snare, and a tom are used and the pattern repeats every two bars. However, on "Hand in Hand" (**Figure 3.12**), the drummer also uses a second tom and the hi-hat. "Hand in Hand" includes hits on every beat, whereas "No Dancing" has a rest on beat 2. The pattern in "Hand in Hand" is both more complex and also longer—it is twice the length of "No Dancing," repeating every four measures.

Figure 3.11. "No Dancing" (*Aim*), verse, 0'00"-0'15", drum kit, repeating pattern

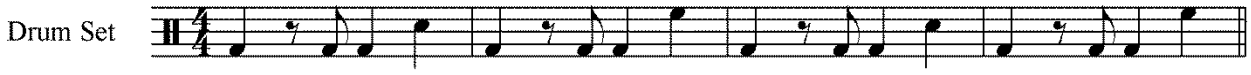


Figure 3.12. "Hand in Hand" (*Model*), verse, 0'37"-0'50", drum kit, repeating pattern

Figures 3.13-14 show two less similar (but not entirely dissimilar as shown below) patterns, one from each album. **Figure 3.13** transcribes the beat from the verse of "Less Than Zero." This same beat, a standard one used in many pop-rock songs, is also used on the verse of "Miracle Man" (0'24"-0'38") and the chorus of "Mystery Dance" (0'12"-0'20"), and a swung version with ride cymbal instead of hi-hat appears in the choruses of "Sneaky Feelings" (0'22"-0'33") and "Blame It on Cain" (0'31"-0'45"). The pattern features kick on beats 1, "and" of 2,

[3] For a non-academic but nonetheless edifying history of the "Be My Baby" beat, see Heller et al. (2013).

and 3, hi-hat on each eighth note, and snare on beats 2 and 4, creating a backbeat with an anacrusis to beat 3. **Figure 3.14**, the repeating pattern in the verses of "This Year's Girl," represents a more complex drum beat, with more timbres and greater use of syncopation. The kick plays on the first three beats; the hi-hat sounds on all four beats; the rack and floor toms are used on the off-beats on beats 3 and 4; and the snare only sounds once, on the downbeat of beat 2. These examples highlight Pete Thomas' proclivity for syncopation and toms on *Model* compared to Mickey Shine's strait-laced, backbeat-driven patterns.

Figure 3.13. "Less Than Zero" (*Aim*), verses, drum kit, repeating pattern

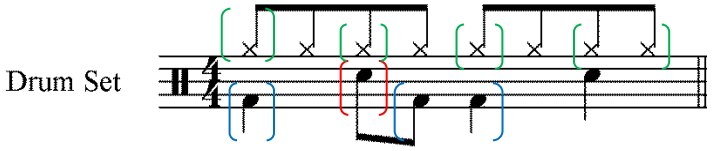
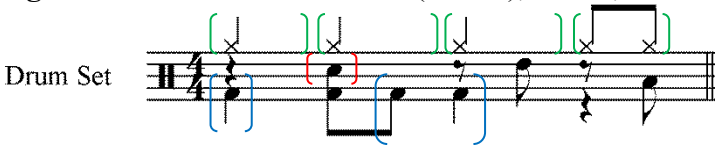


Figure 3.14. "This Year's Girl" (*Model*), verses, drum kit, repeating pattern

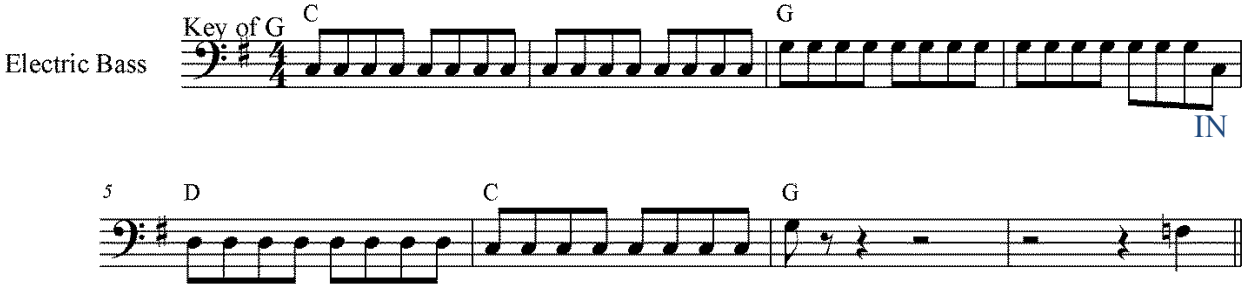


3.2 Bass

The bass parts on *Aim* tend to fall into two subcategories of functional bass: static or walking. The chorus of "Mystery Dance" (**Figure 3.15**) provides a representative example of a static bass line. The bass plays chord roots in eighth notes; the only point where this pattern breaks is the anacrusis to the fifth measure of the example, where the bass plays a C, the incomplete lower neighbor tone to the dominant, D, of measure 5, putting a slight emphasis on the dominant arrival.

Figures 3.16-17 show two examples of walking bass on *Aim*. In the prechorus of "Miracle Man" (**Figure 3.16**), the bass for the most part simply arpeggiates chords. The only nonchord tones in this example are the C♯s in measures 2 and 6, which function as upper

Figure 3.15. "Mystery Dance" (*Aim*), chorus, 0'11"-0'24", bass, static



neighbors to the Bs preceding. The verse of "Pay It Back" (**Figure 3.17**) contains considerably more nonchord tones, including passing tones in measure 2, and incomplete lower neighbors in measures 3, 4, 6, and 7.

Figure 3.16. "Miracle Man" (*Aim*), prechorus, 0'23"-0'39", bass, walking

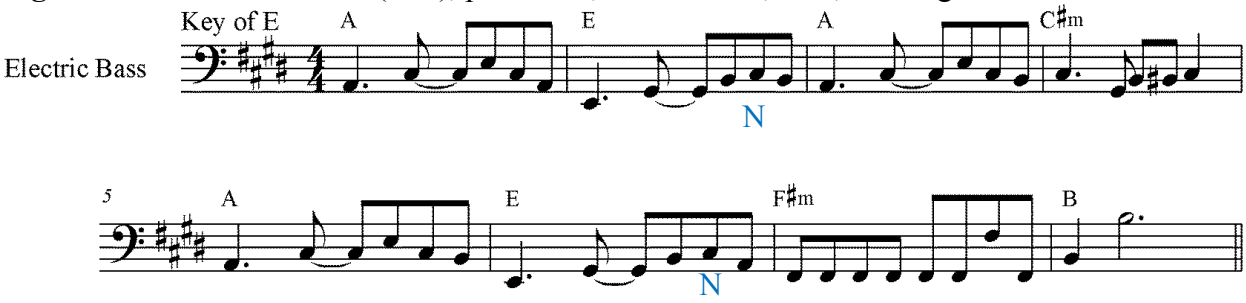
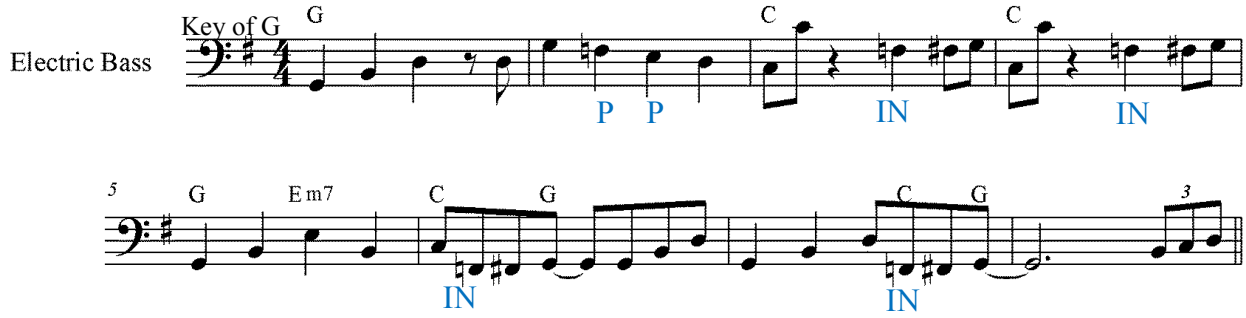


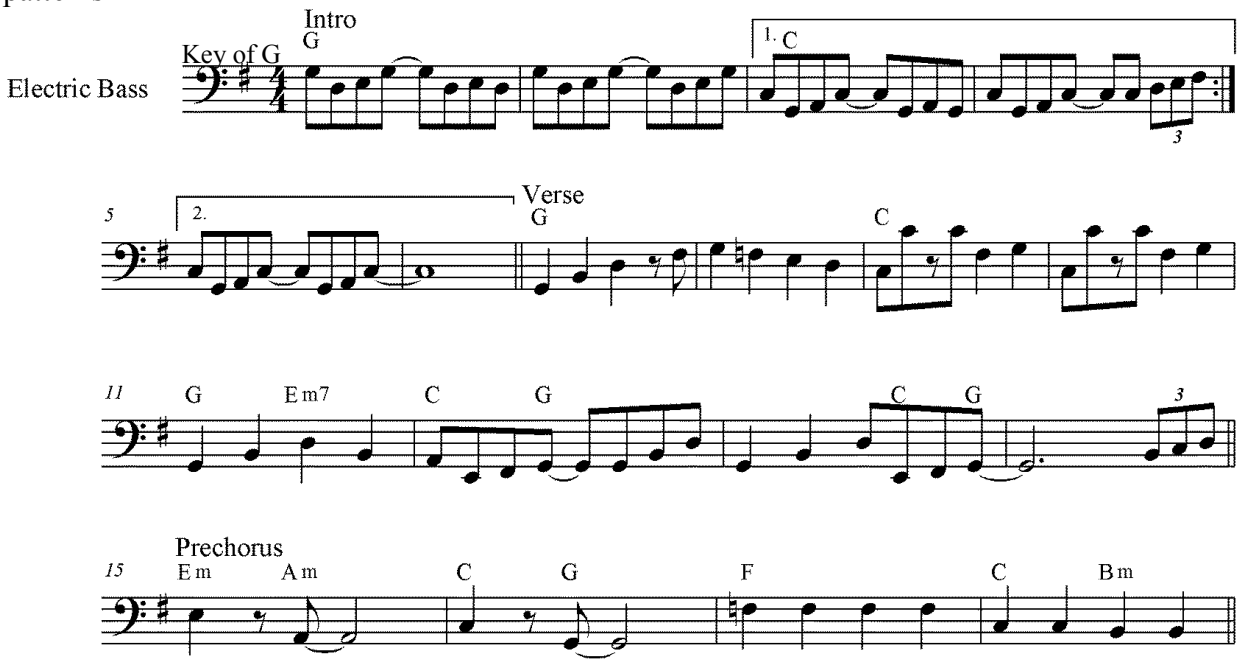
Figure 3.17. "Pay It Back" (*Aim*), verse, 0'14-0'29", bass, walking



While the bass lines on *Aim* tend to fall into either the static or walking categories, the rhythmic patterns on which these roles are based may change from section to section. For instance, in "Pay it Back" (shown in **Figure 3.18**) the intro follows a syncopated, mostly eighth-note pattern that repeats every measure. In the verse, the bass's rhythmic content is based more on quarter notes. The four-measure prechorus introduces yet another rhythmic pattern for two measures as the harmonic rhythm speeds up to two chords per measure, and then returns to

quarter notes for the final two measures. The chorus (not shown) follows the rhythmic pattern established in the intro.

Figure 3.18. "Pay it Back" (*Aim*); intro, verse, and prechorus; 0'00"-0'36"; bass; rhythmic patterns



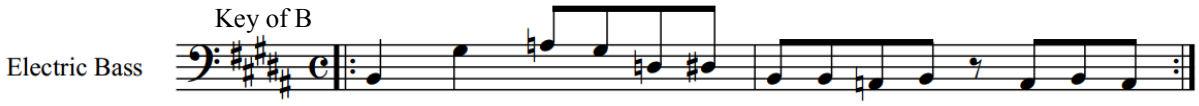
On *Model*, the bass is usually not static, instead relying on active walking bass parts and bass riffs, pushing the bass toward a considerably more melodic role than on *Aim*. Attractions bassist Bruce Thomas spoke about his process for writing bass parts to Costello's songs in a 2009 interview with *Fender News*:

> "I usually had in mind to construct something distinctive somewhere in the bass part. For example, 'Pump It Up' is what you might call a bit of organic sampling—a hybrid riff made up as follows: It's the same rhythm of the Everly Brothers/Bryan Ferry song 'The Price of Love,' but using the notes of Richard Hell and the Voidoids' riff from 'You've Got to Lose' and then one bar of 'You Really Got Me' by the Kinks added on. The chorus is actually the melody line of Glenn Miller's 'In the Mood'—I put that in because that was the signature tune of the Joe Loss Orchestra, whose singer was one Ross McManus (Elvis's dad), so a bit of an in-joke there" (Fender.com 2009).

This statement highlights Thomas' focus on melodic writing for the bass. The bass riff in the verses of "Pump It Up" is shown in **Figure 3.19**. Regardless of whether or not one can hear the

aforementioned influences in the riff[4], it is undeniably meant to be a melody rather than a functional bass part in the traditional sense. The song begins with bass and drums alone to establish the importance of this melody, with the drums playing a simple repeating two-measure pattern to complement the bass riff. The riff is then repeated throughout the verses.

Figure 3.19. "Pump It Up" (*Model*), verse, 0'20"-0'34", bass, bass riff



Another example of melodic bass playing is found on "Chelsea," which is driven by a two-measure repeated bass riff played by bass and piano. Bruce Thomas also talks about this riff in the Fender interview, affirming the importance of the riff to the compositional process.

> "'I Don't Want to Go to [Chelsea]' was originally written as a ballad like the Kinks song 'See My Friends.' It was very slow. It was a quite spontaneous idea to just start playing the arpeggiated riff that became the basis of the song" (Fender.com 2009).

Elvis Costello corroborates Bruce Thomas's influence on the song in the liner notes of the compilation album *Girls Girls Girls* (1989), saying,

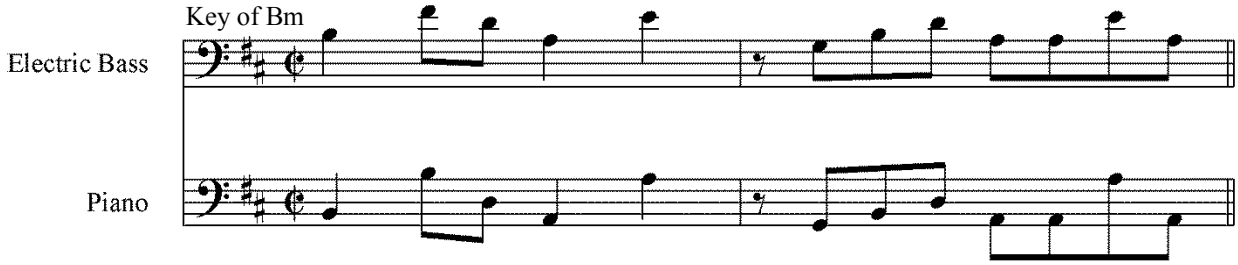
> "['Chelsea'] might have been just a poor relation to 'All of the Day (and All of the Night)' [by the Kinks], 'I Can't Explain' [by the Who] or even 'Clash City Rockers' [by the Clash] had it not been for Bruce Thomas' great bassline. Meanwhile I was trying to fit in this lick from an old Pioneers record, though which one I can't recall" (Costello 1989).

This riff functions similarly to the "Living in Paradise" riff discussed in the previous chapter, in that the piano and bass play slightly different melodies that, when combined, are of equal importance aurally. **Figure 3.20** shows that the riff is based on arpeggiations of the chord progression Bm-A-G-A, though the bass and piano sometimes play different chord tones. Here

[4] The bass has not only the same rhythm but also the same contour as the bass part in "The Price of Love" (which begins with an ascending 7th instead of a 6th, but has an ascending semitone at the end of the first bar, as here). The first five notes of the riff are taken from "You've Gotta Lose." The beginning of the 2nd bar is indeed the same as "You Really Got Me."

the piano occupies the lowest pitches registrally, with the bass situated one octave higher. As in "Pump It Up," this riff is repeated throughout the verses.

Figure 3.20. "(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea" (*Model*), 0'06"-0'17", bass and piano, bass riff



"Lipstick Vogue" is an example of the bass functioning as a primary instrument in a solo section. The drum kit provides rhythmic support, and the tremolo picked guitar provides harmonic support. The bass's solo consists mainly of ascending minor pentatonic scales, which are rhythmically altered gradually over the course of the section. By the penultimate repeated measure of the example, the melody has been reduced to the span of a tetrachord, and the leading tone has been added to the ascending line. The narrowing of the range of the melody and introduction of the leading tone—a chromatic note in this pentatonic context—create a pull toward the final tonic.

The chorus of "Pump It Up" offers a rare example of a formal section in which the bass plays a secondary melody (**Figure 3.22**). Here the bass breaks from its riff (shown in Figure 3.19) to play a melodic passage that counters the voice's primary melody. The bass's melody is loosely based on arpeggiation of the harmonies, especially in measures 1 and 3 of the example, but the stepwise motion in measures 2 and 4 situate this phrase in the melody layer.

3.3 Guitars

On *Aim*, most songs feature two guitar parts: a rhythm guitar played by Elvis Costello and a lead guitar played by John McFee. The respective guitar parts fall into the functional layers implied by their names: rhythm guitar plays harmonic filler while lead plays melody. More

Figure 3.21. "Lipstick Vogue" (*Model*), solo, 1'32"-2'04", bass, primary melody

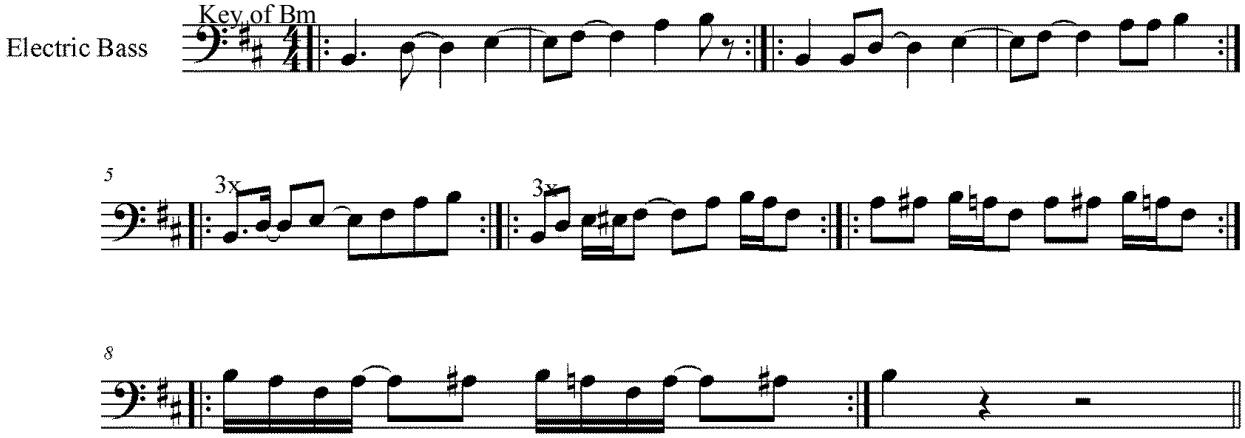
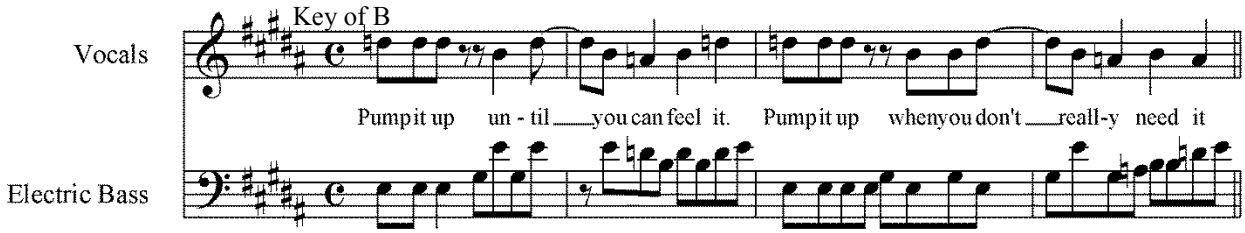


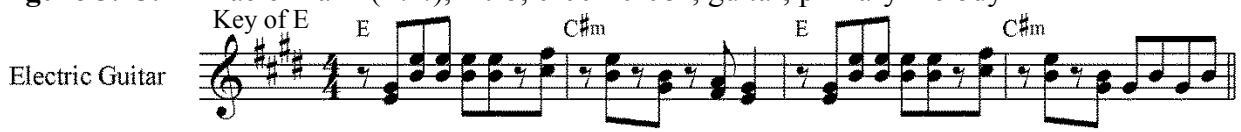
Figure 3.22. "Pump It Up" (*Model*), chorus, 0'34"-0'41", bass, secondary melody



specifically, within these layers, Costello's rhythm guitar part functions as harmonic reinforcement or chordal accompaniment (examples of which can be heard on any song on the album); McFee's lead guitar functions as the primary melody in formal sections without vocals, secondary melody in formal sections with vocals, and, less frequently, reinforcement of the vocal melody.

As noted above, the lead guitar plays the primary melody in formal sections where the voice rests. Most commonly, this happens during introduction sections, as in "Blame It on Cain" (0'00"-0'08"), "Alison" (0'00"-0'10"), and "Red Shoes" (0'00"-0'14"). **Figure 3.23** shows the intro to "Miracle Man." Here the guitar carries the melody for the four-measure introduction, which establishes the harmonic progression for the first phrase of the verse (E-C♯m-E-C♯m).

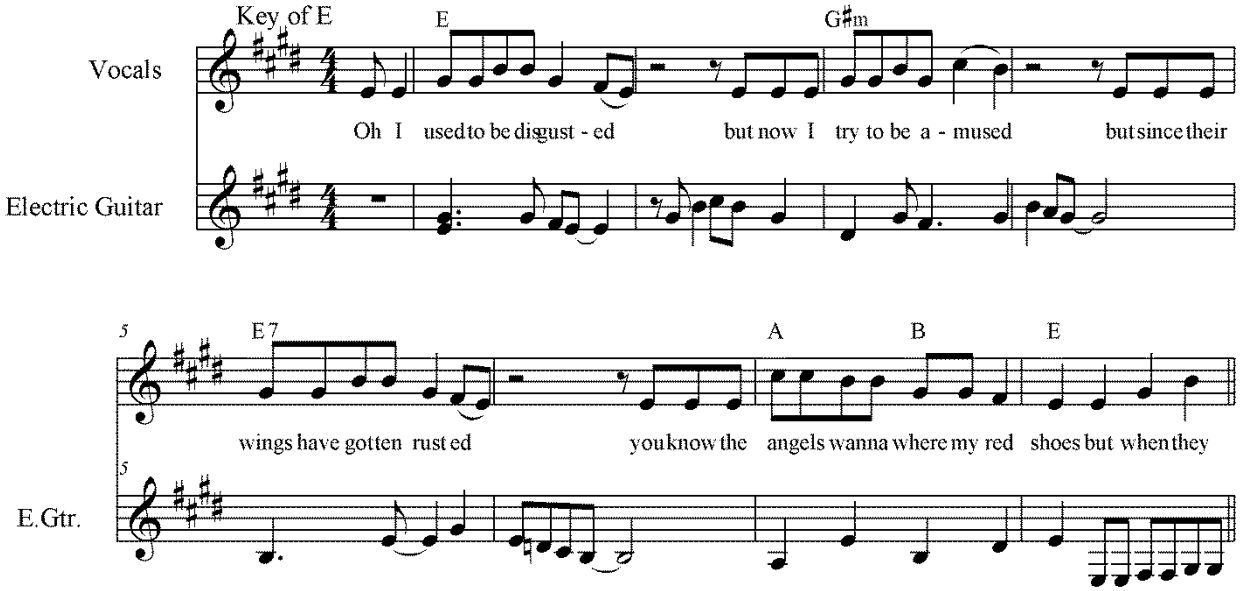
Figure 3.23. "Miracle Man" (*Aim*), intro, 0'00"-0'08", guitar, primary melody



Less often, the guitar moves to a primary melodic role during a solo section, a bridge without vocals, or an instrumental interlude between formal sections. Examples include the bridge of the "Living in Paradise" outtake (1'29"-1'38") discussed in Chapter 2, the interlude between the chorus and second verse in "I'm Not Angry" (1'01"-1'09"), and the guitar solo section in "Mystery Dance" (0'45"-0'56").

The lead guitar may also play a secondary melody. In the verse of "(The Angels Wanna Wear My) Red Shoes," the guitar plays a countermelody to the voice's primary melody (**Figure 3.24**). The guitar's melody is rhythmically and melodically independent from the voice, although the guitar does outline the harmonies to provide support for the primary melody.

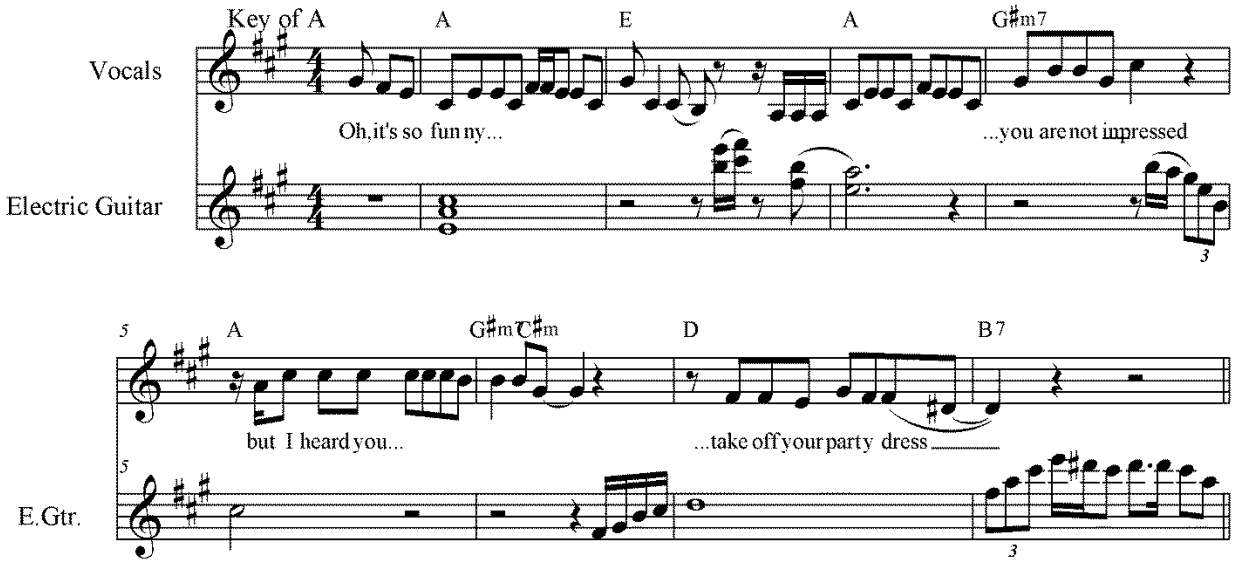
Figure 3.24. "Red Shoes" (*Aim*), verse 1, 0'14"-0'28", guitar, secondary melody



The role of the lead guitar with in the melody layer in "Alison" is more difficult to classify (**Figure 3.25**). The majority of the guitar's melodic material occurs at the end of the two-measure groups established by the melodic ideas in the vocal part. The voice rests for the final 1

½-3 beats of the two-bar idea, and the guitar plays melodic fills in the empty space created by the absence of the voice. Based only on this information, we might be tempted to classify the lead guitar as primary melody. However, I have chosen to define a secondary melody as any melody that occurs during a vocal-driven formal section, whether in direction competition with the vocal melody (as in the example from "Red Shoes") or complementing the melody (as in this example from "Alison"). Because the voice is the main melodic focus of the verse, the lead guitar is melodically subordinate to the vocal track, providing instrumental fills at the ends of phrases. Other examples of guitar-based secondary melody include the verses of "Miracle Man" (0'09"-0'24"), the prechorus of "I'm Not Angry" (0'29"-0'34"), and the second verse of "Sneaky Feelings" (0'43"-1'05").

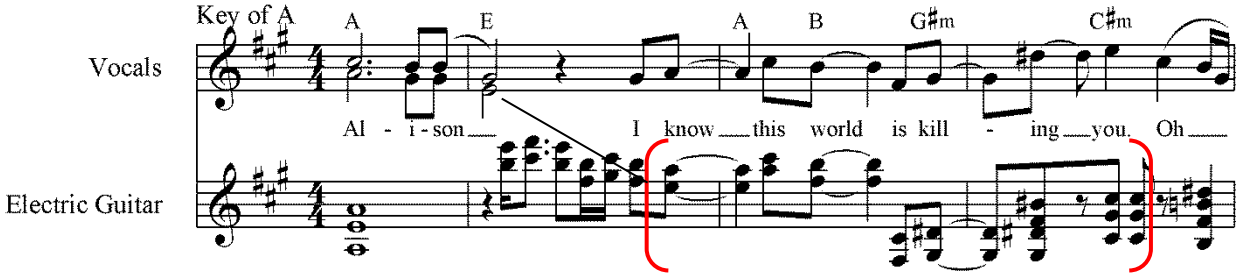
Figure 3.25. "Alison" (*Aim*), verse, 0'10"-0'32", guitar, secondary melody



The chorus of "Alison" presents a rare example of melodic reinforcement in the lead instrumental part (**Figure 3.26**). Throughout most of the chorus, the lead guitar plays a secondary melody, which provides rhythmic reinforcement and harmonic support for the vocal melody, except for measures 3-4. The melodic reinforcement in this two-bar idea follows the rhythmic content of the voice. In measure 3 (including the one-beat anacrusis), the higher of the

two voices in the guitar part sounds an octave above the vocal melody. The lower voice, which picks up where the harmonization of the backing vocals leaves off in measures 1-2, sounds an octave below the melody on the two notes of the anacrusis in measure 3, and then moves to an inner voice as the guitar part expands to four voices on beat 1 of measure 4. Finally, the guitar on beat 2 reduces to three voices, filling out the C-major harmony while not playing the third, E, which is stated in the voice part. By functioning as melodic reinforcement, the pitch content of the guitar fills out the harmony of the voice's melody, emphasizing the voice's primary melody.

Figure 3.26. "Alison" (*Aim*), chorus, 0'54"-1'17", guitar, secondary melody and melodic reinforcement



On *Model,* on the other hand, there is only a rhythm guitar part, played by Costello as the lead guitarist's role has been dropped in favor of Steve Nieve's keyboard. The function of the guitar on this album is dramatically reduced in comparison to *Aim*. The guitar on *Model* is either used as harmonic filler—as on *Aim*—or as a primary melodic instrument for a voiceless formal section, although this is far less prevalent on *Model,* where the lead-instrument duties more often fall to the keyboard. In fact, the guitar only plays a primary melody part in four songs: "Lip Service," "You Belong to Me," "Pump It Up," and "(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea."

The guitar plays the primary melody in the instrumental introductions of "You Belong to Me" and "Lip Service." On "Lip Service" (**Figure 3.27**), the guitar plays its melody over the full accompanimental texture—the bass, rhythm guitar, keyboard, and drum kit all enter on the downbeat along with the lead guitar (although other parts are not shown in the example). "You

Belong to Me," on the other hand, begins with a four-measure phrase of unaccompanied guitar melody (**Figure 3.28**) before the full band enters in the fifth measure (not shown). Whereas the guitar melody in "Lip Service" consists mainly of stepwise motion because harmonic support is supplied by the ensemble, the melody in "You Belong to Me" is arpeggiated in order to establish the harmonic content without the aid of the full band. The guitar tablature included in this example demonstrates the finger position of the performer, showing that the melodic content is built around the underlying chords.

Figure 3.27. "Lip Service" (*Model*), intro, 0'00"-0'13", guitar, primary melody

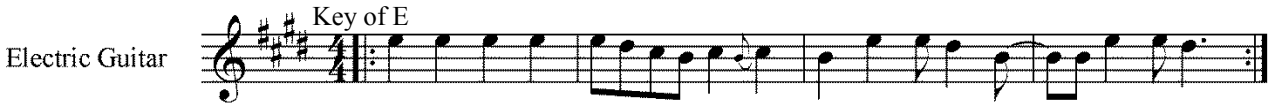
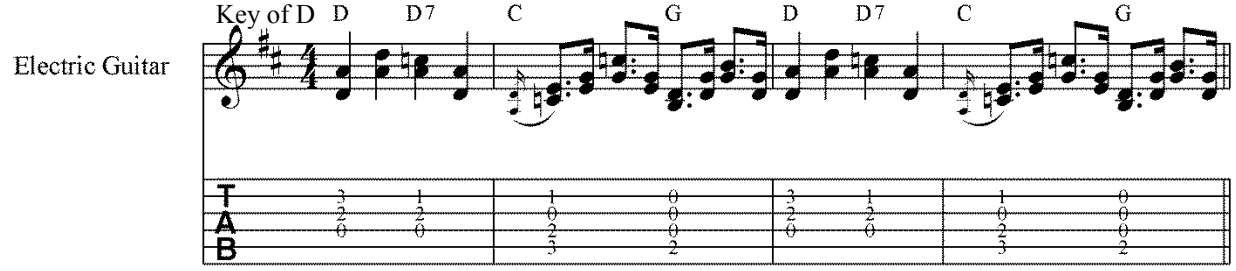


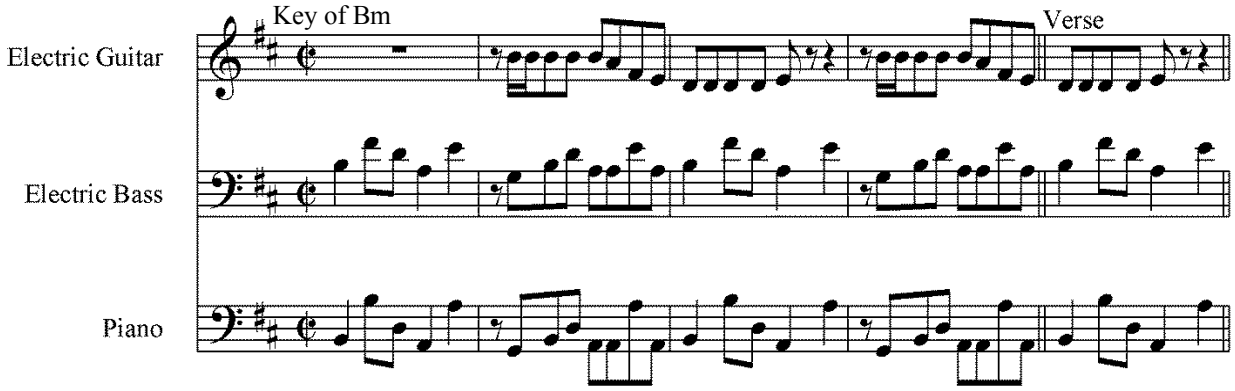
Figure 3.28. "You Belong to Me" (*Model*), intro, 0'00"-0'06", guitar, primary melody (solo)



In "(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea," the guitar plays the primary melody for the instrumental interlude, a four-measure section that occurs before each iteration of the verse. The piano and bass play the riff discussed previously and shown in Figure 3.20. As demonstrated in **Figure 3.29**, the guitar's melody is offset from the riff by one measure. While the piano-bass riff remains within the established four-bar hypermeter, the guitar's two-measure melodic idea is displaced one measure later, overlapping the piano-bass riff and causing tension through its hypermetrical dissonance. As a result of the guitar's hypermetric (dis)placement, its melody is elided with the beginning of the verse; the guitar continues to play during the first measure of the verse. Once its four-measure phrase is over, the guitar rests until the next occurrence of the

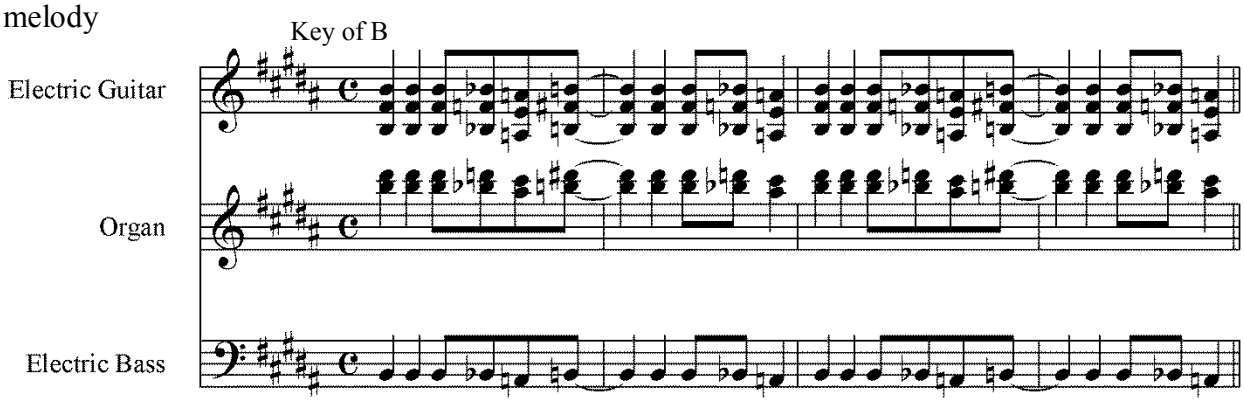
interlude.

Figure 3.29. "(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea" (*Model*), interlude, 0'58-1'06", guitar and bass riff, primary melody



The instrumental interlude before the verses in "Pump It Up" features a primary melody played not just by the guitar, but the organ and bass as well (**Figure 3.30**). The guitar plays power chords (open fifths doubled at the octave), moving down two frets by semitone. The organ plays the chord root and third while the bass plays the root in a lower octave. In this case, the riff spans four octaves and functions not only as the melody but also as harmonic filler, because the guitar and organ complete the triads. The only instrument in this formal section that is not playing the primary melody is the drum kit, which provides the rhythmic layer.

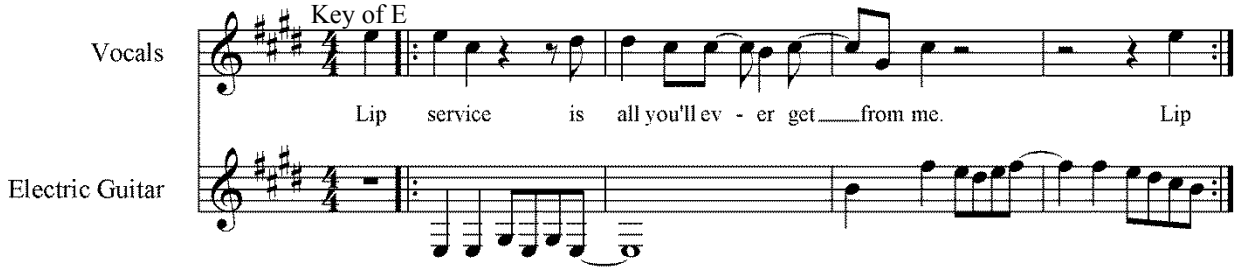
Figure 3.30. "Pump It Up" (*Model*); interlude; 0'42"-0'48"; guitar, organ, and bass; primary melody



A rare example of the guitar playing a secondary melody on *Model* can be found in the chorus of "Lip Service" (**Figure 3.31**). The guitar's melody is most active in measures 1 and 3 of

this example, where the voice is least active. The secondary melody is used to fill in places where the voice rests, similar to the role of the guitar in the verse of "Alison" (Figure 3.25).

Figure 3.31. "Lip Service" (*Model*), chorus, 0'49"-1'03", guitar, secondary melody



Additionally, the guitar may rest for entire large formal sections, underscoring the secondary, background role of the guitar on this album. Examples of sections where the guitar is absent include the verses and choruses of "Chelsea" (ex. 0'18"-1'00"), the second and third verses of "Lipstick Vogue" (ex. 1'10"-1'29") and the third verse of "The Beat" (2'23"-2'50"). The guitar most typically rests during verses, forging a textural/instrumentational change between large formal sections and creating a thicker texture and thus an intensification in the chorus.

3.4 Keyboards

On *Aim*, keyboard instruments function primarily as harmonic filler and are only used on a few songs, played by producer Nick Lowe. In the verses of "Alison," the keyboard plays chords held for the entire duration of each harmony, providing harmonic reinforcement (**Figure 3.32**). The organ part in the refrain of "I'm Not Angry" plays straight eighth notes (**Figure 3.33**), providing both harmonic filler and rhythmic density. Similar chordal accompaniment parts can be found in the piano parts during the chorus of "Mystery Dance" (0'12"-0'20") and the chorus of "Sneaky Feelings" (0'27"-0'34").

Figure 3.32. "Alison" (*Aim*), verse 1, organ, harmonic reinforcement

Key of A

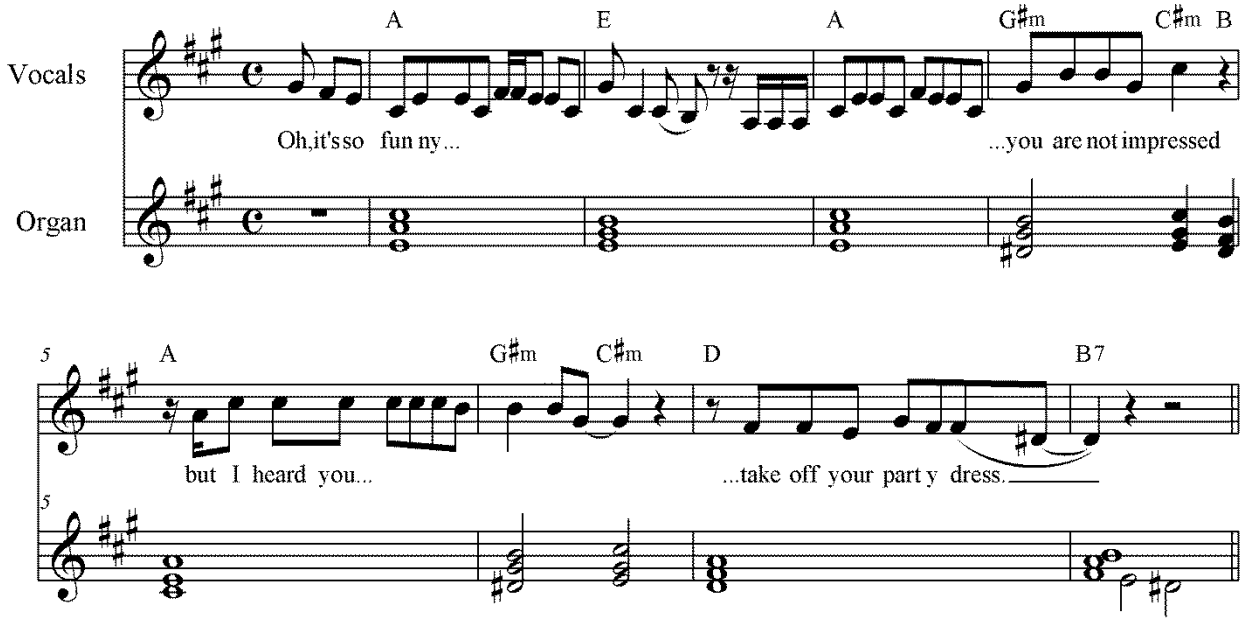
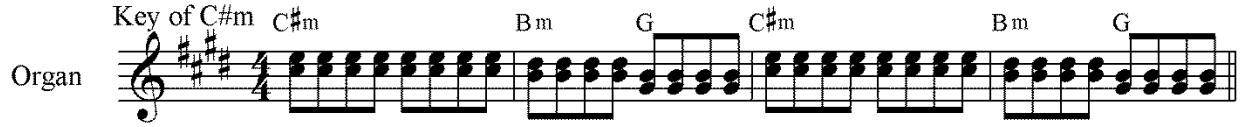
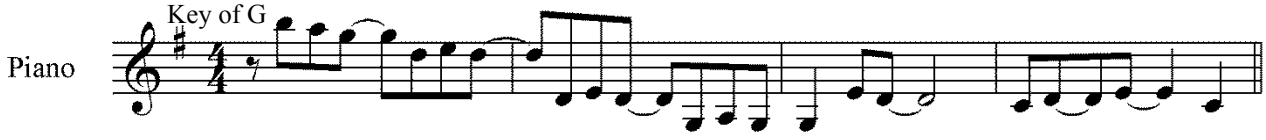


Figure 3.33. "I'm Not Angry" (*Aim*), refrain, organ, chordal accompaniment



In only two instances on *Aim* does a keyboard instrument fill a melodic role. The instrumental introduction of "Pay It Back" features piano as a pseudo-primary melody (**Figure 3.34**) while the guitars play chordal accompaniment, the bass walks, and the drum kit provides a repeating pattern. While the neighboring and passing motion in the piano part suggests a melody, the shifts in register indicate that this line is more of an accompanimental riff. In "Sneaky Feelings," the piano plays the primary melody in the instrumental interlude that occurs before the verses, but in this case the melody is doubling the electric guitar, which takes aural precedence over the piano because it is louder in the mix than the piano.

Figure 3.34. "Pay it Back" (*Aim*), intro, piano, primary melody

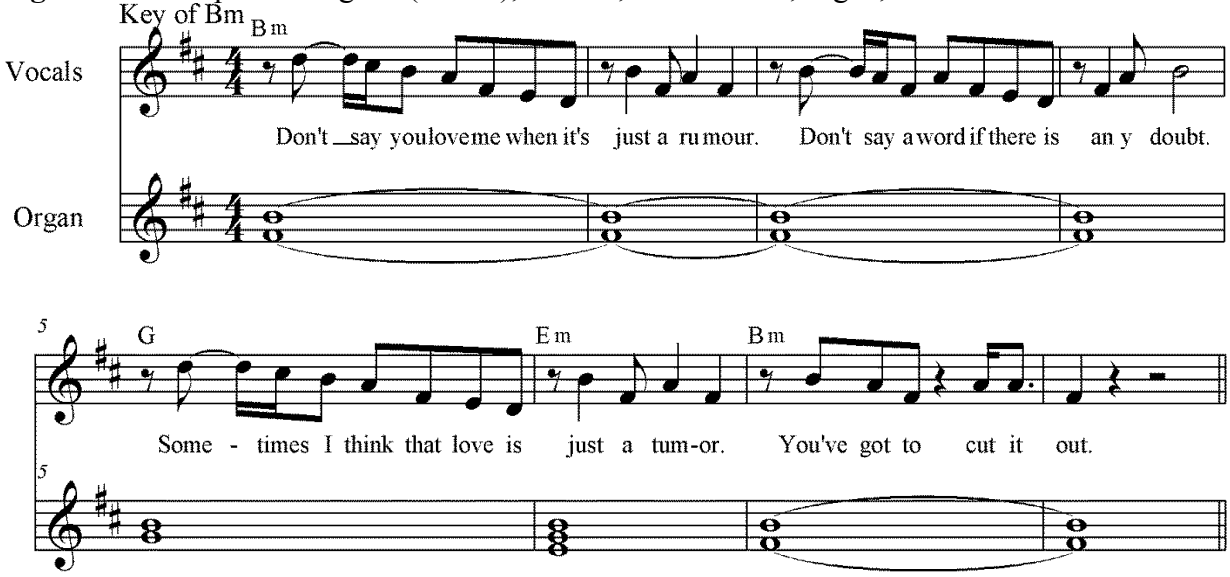


The keyboard instruments on *Model* take the place of the lead guitar on *Aim*, functioning

as primary and secondary melody, melodic reinforcement, and harmonic filler. In a 1983 interview with Timothy White, Elvis Costello spoke about the role of Steve Nieve's keyboard playing, saying "he has the most scope [of any of the Attractions] with his instrument because he's the main melodic interest on most tracks, and from the nature of his instrument he has more range than the bass or the drums" (White 1983). Dai Griffiths speculates that Costello chose to have a piano in his band rather than a second guitar because Nieve "[plays] the piano with enough control for it to take over from the guitar as chief 'chord-generator' for songs" (Griffiths 2008, 43), hinting toward the keyboard's dual use as both a harmonic and a melodic instrument in the Attractions.

When it acts as harmonic filler, the keyboard on *Model* functions in much the same way as the keyboard on *Aim*: it sustains chords as harmonic reinforcement, or plays chords as a repeated rhythmic accompanimental pattern. **Figure 3.35** shows an example of harmonic reinforcement in the verse of "Lipstick Vogue." The harmonic rhythm is fairly slow, so one harmony is held in the organ for the first four measures.

Figure 3.35. "Lipstick Vogue" (*Model*), verse 1, 0'10"-0'32", organ, harmonic reinforcement



The keyboard provides the melody layer considerably more often on *Model* than on *Aim*

due to its role as a lead instrument. Furthermore, on *Model* the keyboard fulfills more distinct functions within the melody layer. Examples of the keyboard playing riffs were presented in Chapter 2 in the discussion of "Living in Paradise" (Figure 2.4) and in this chapter in the discussion of "Chelsea" (Figure 3.20).

Model contains several instances of the keyboard playing secondary melody. In the verse of "The Beat" (**Figure 3.36**), the organ plays a secondary melody that seems to be rhythmically independent of the voice's primary melody. However, this example provides instances of melodic reinforcement: the keyboard sometimes aligns with the melodic contour of the voice, and adds higher harmonies to Costello's vocals. In the interlude of "Chelsea" (Figure 3.29), the keyboard provides a secondary melody to the guitar's primary melody (**Figure 3.37**). In this case, the keyboard lines up hypermetrically with the riff (not shown in this example), in opposition to the guitar's melody which is offset from the rest of the ensemble by one measure. The keyboard is considered secondary in this case because it does not appear in the first iteration of the interlude as the guitar does.

Figure 3.36. "The Beat" (*Model*), verse 1, 0'07"-0'21", organ, secondary melody

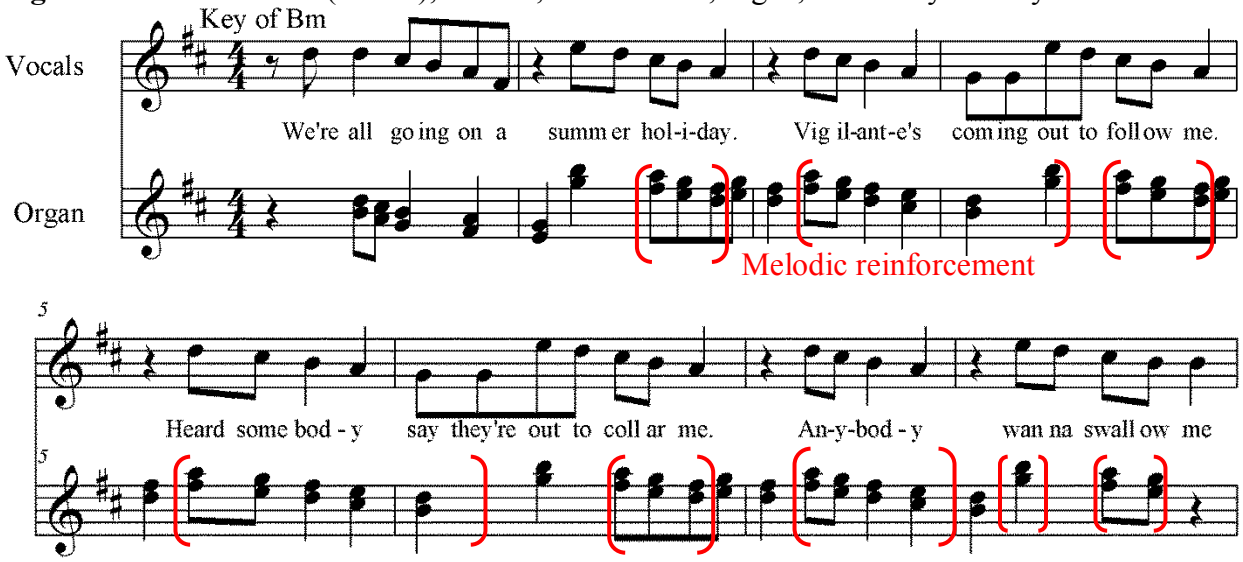
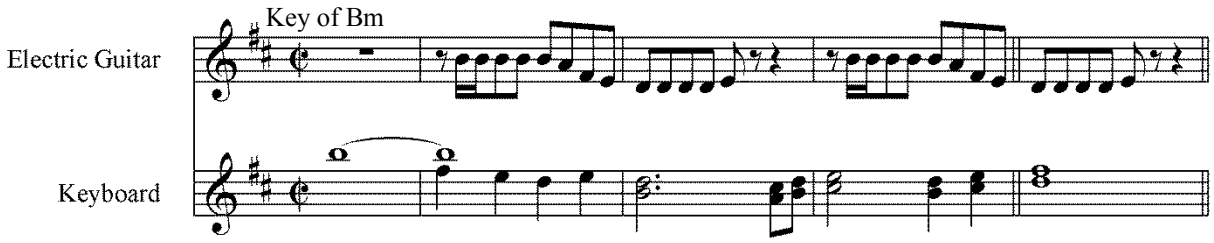


Figure 3.37. "(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea" (*Model*), interlude, 0'57"-1'04", guitar (primary melody) and keyboard (secondary melody)



3.5 Backing vocals

While Costello's main vocal track functions the same way on both albums, as primary melody, there is one distinct difference in the treatment of backing vocals between the two albums: a shift from other band members singing backing on *Aim* to Costello himself singing backing on *Model*. On both albums, the backing vocals may function as secondary melody (see **Figure 3.38** for an example) or melodic reinforcement (see **Figure 3.39** for an example). For instance, on *Aim* a secondary melody can be heard in the chorus of "Welcome to the Working Week" (0'36"-0'46"), and an instance of melodic reinforcement on the chorus of Alison (0'54"-1'09"); on *Model*, there is a secondary melody in the chorus of "No Action" (0'28"-0'37") and melodic reinforcement in the bridge of "This Year's Girl" (1'41"-1'58").

Figure 3.38. "Welcome to the Working Week" (*Aim*), bridge, 0'49"-0'-55", backing vocals, secondary melody

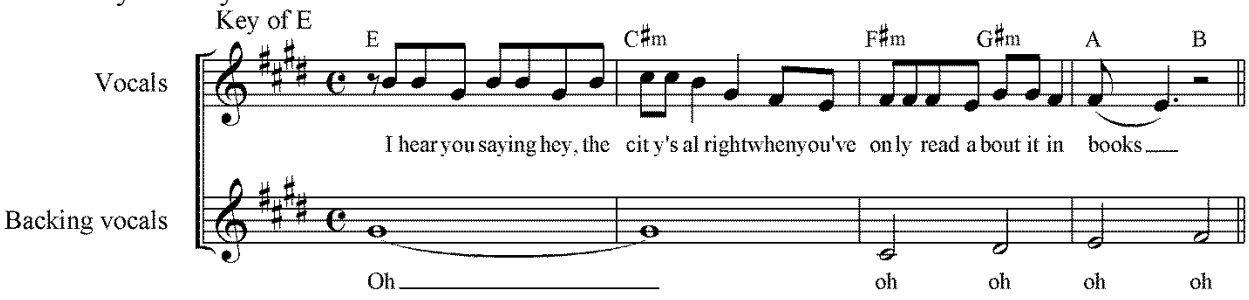
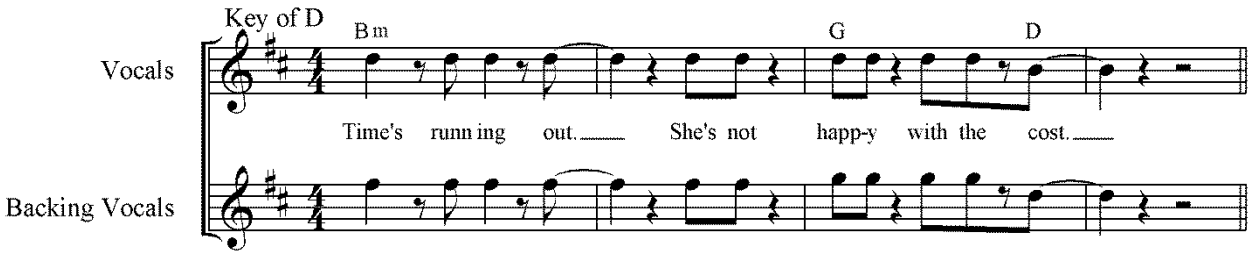


Figure 3.39. "This Year's Girl" (*Model*), bridge, 1'41"-1'58", backing vocals, melodic reinforcement



3.6 Production

Several notable production decisions differentiate the two albums. **Figure 3.40** shows a sound-box analysis for *Aim* and **Figure 3.41** shows one for *Model*. Instead of focusing on particular songs, I have created analyses that demonstrate overall trends in production for the main instruments on each album. Some slight differences may be heard between songs (for instance, the guitar is panned right and the keyboard left on "The Beat," but the positions of these instruments are switched on "This Year's Girl"), but this does not affect the conclusions drawn from the analyses.

On both albums, the drums are panned according to their standard position in the drum kit. The snare, kick, middle tom, and crash cymbal are in the center; the hi-hat and high tom are panned right; and the floor tom and ride cymbal are panned left. The drum kit is spread over a wider stereo space on *Model* than on *Aim*. On both albums, the vocals and bass are centered, and the rhythm guitar and lead instrument (guitar or keyboard) are panned to opposite sides. The instruments are louder overall on *Model*, which gives the listener a feeling of proximity—represented in the sound-box diagram by the size—not heard on *Aim* . While the production on *Aim* puts emphasis on the primary vocal melody, positioning the instruments as supporting players, the production on *Model* distributes the focus more evenly among all the band members.

Figure 3.40. *My Aim Is True*, typical sound-box example

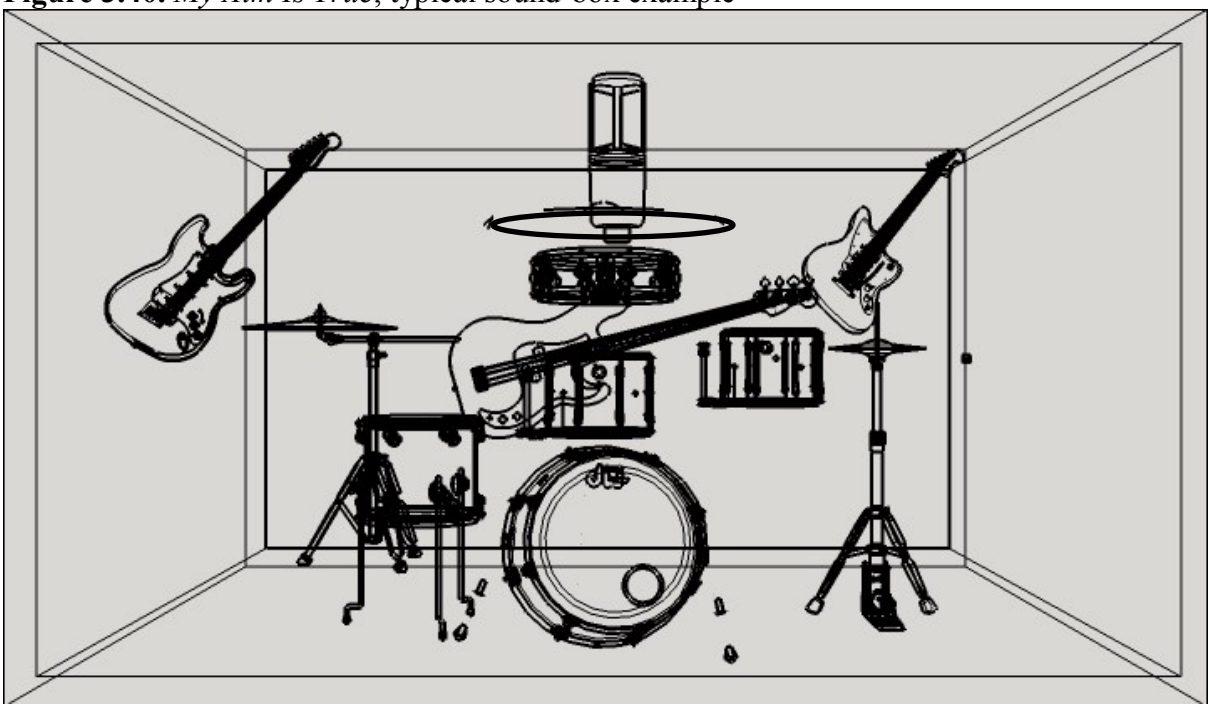
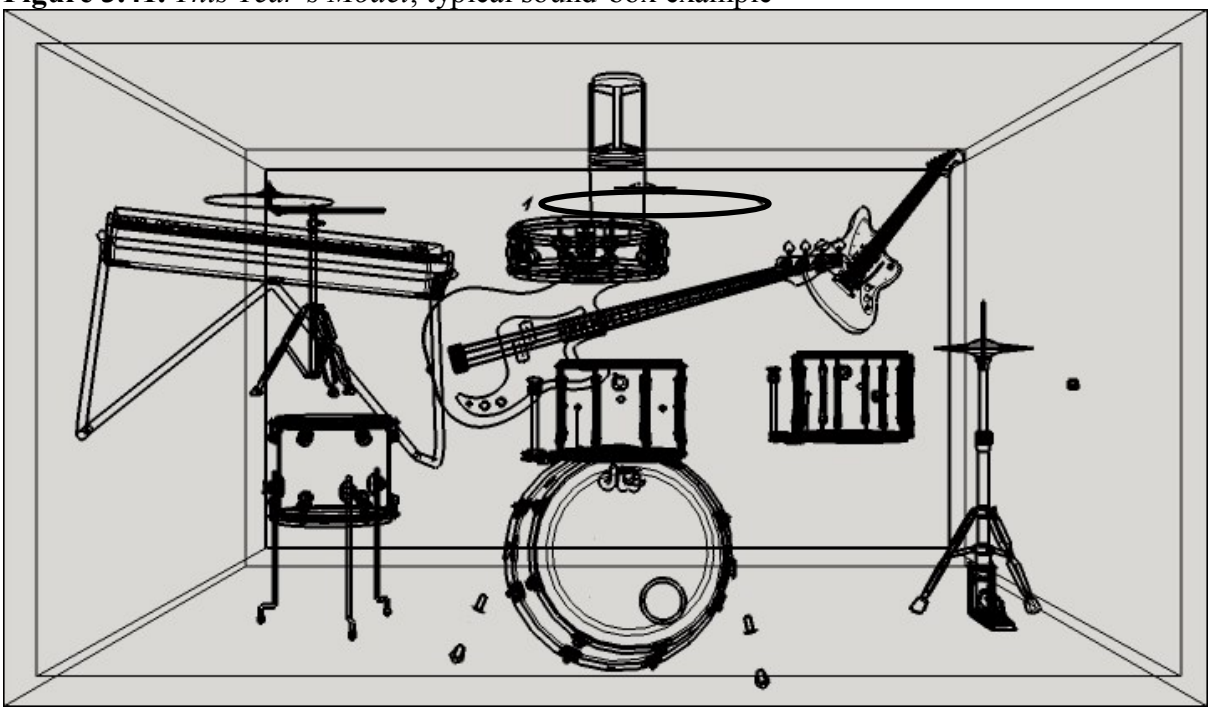


Figure 3.41. *This Year's Model*, typical sound-box example



3.7 Conclusion

While the harmonic and formal structures of the songs on *Aim* and *Model* are fairly similar, the textural components of the two albums are varied. **Figure 3.42** is a table comparing

the functional roles of each instrument. The guitar performs the same roles on both albums, though on *Model*, it is used considerably less often due to the keyboard's rise in textural prominence. The drum kit employs more improvisatory drum patterns on *Model* than on *Aim*. The keyboard and bass are likewise given significantly expanded roles on *Model*. Both of these instruments move from a primarily background function (harmonic filler and functional bass, respectively) on *Aim* to a more foreground, melodic function on *Model*. Going hand-in-hand with this increase in melodic function is the prevalence of riffs on *Model*. None of the songs on *Aim* are riff-based, while three songs on *Model* are based on riffs: "Pump It Up," "Chelsea," and "Living in Paradise."

Figure 3.42. *Aim* and *Model*, types of functional roles represented

	My Aim Is True	*This Year's Model*
Vocals	Primary melody	Primary melody
Backing vocals	Melodic reinforcement Secondary melody	Melodic reinforcement Secondary melody
Keyboard	Primary melody Harmonic reinforcement Chordal accompaniment	Primary melody Secondary melody Melodic reinforcement Riff Harmonic reinforcement Chordal accompaniment
Guitar	Secondary melody Primary melody Melodic reinforcement Harmonic reinforcement Chordal accompaniment Rhythmic reinforcement	Secondary melody Primary melody Harmonic reinforcement Chordal accompaniment Rhythmic reinforcement
Bass	Static Walking Rhythmic reinforcement	Static Walking Rhythmic reinforcement Primary melody Secondary melody Riff
Drum kit	Timekeeping Repeating drum beat Fill	Timekeeping Repeating drum beat Fill Improvised drum beat

Another notable disparity between the two albums is *Model*'s use of solo instruments in introduction sections. Buildup introductions in a thinner texture than the rest of the song (and sometimes fostering harmonic or metric ambiguity) became a convention in rock music beginning in the early 1970s. On *Aim*, only one song begins with a solo instrument: unaccompanied voice on "Mystery Dance." Costello sings an unaccompanied anacrusis in "Welcome to the Working Week" and "No Dancing," but in both of these instances, the band enters on the downbeat. *Model*, on the other hand, features many instances of songs that begin with solo instruments—and not just unaccompanied voice. "This Year's Girl," "Chelsea," and "Lipstick Vogue" all begin with a phrase of drums alone. "You Belong to Me" starts out with a solo guitar melody. The album as a whole begins with Costello's unaccompanied voice on "No Action."

The rise in melodic potential, the use of solo instruments in introductions, and the seemingly closer positioning of the instruments within the recording space seems to underscore the increased individuality of the performers on *Model*. Whereas the ensemble served to support Costello's vocals on *Aim*, the instrumentalists on *Model* are more autonomous, supporting the voice but also showing that they are all capable of taking the spotlight.

Chapter 4. The Attractions' Treatment of Songs from *My Aim Is True*

Clover, the band on *Aim*, served strictly as studio musicians for Costello. The Attractions were recruited by Jake Riveria, founder of Costello's label Stiff Records, to provide permanent backing, both in the studio and for live performances (Perone 1999, 2). The band first performed with Costello on July 14th, 1977 in Penzance, Cornwall (Lies and Inventions 2014). The Elvis Costello Wiki, a comprehensive fansite, confirms that prior to the Attractions' first gig Costello had been performing solo since the dissolution of Flip City in 1975 (Gigography 2013).

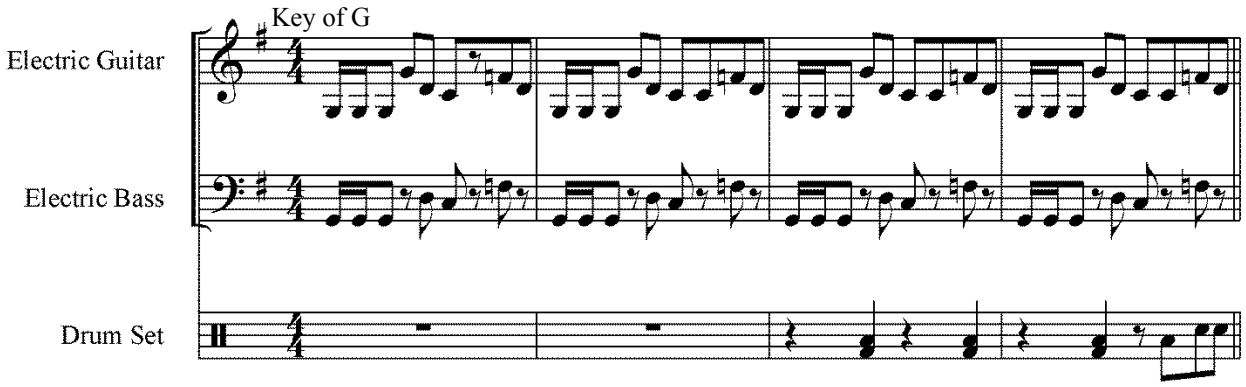
This chapter will focus on the differences between the songs on *Aim* and their live performances by the Attractions. Two concert recordings will be used as points of comparison with the studio album. *Live at the Nashville Rooms* (abbreviated *Nashville*), included on the Deluxe Edition of *Aim*, was recorded in London on August 7th, 1977, the month after the release of *Aim*. *Nashville* features 11 of the 12 songs on Aim, omitting only "I'm Not Angry." *Live at the Warner Theater* (abbreviated *Warner*), a recording of a February 28th, 1978 concert in Washington, DC, is included on the Deluxe Edition of *Model*. Recorded two weeks before the release of *Model*, *Warner* features only six songs from *Aim*.

"Waiting for the End of the World" appears on both *Nashville* and *Warner*. The treatment of its formal sections over the course of time can be used to illustrate the shift in texture, instrumentation, and functional roles from an *Aim* song to an Attractions song. The form of the song on both albums is three iterations of verse-prechorus-chorus bookended by an intro and an outro.

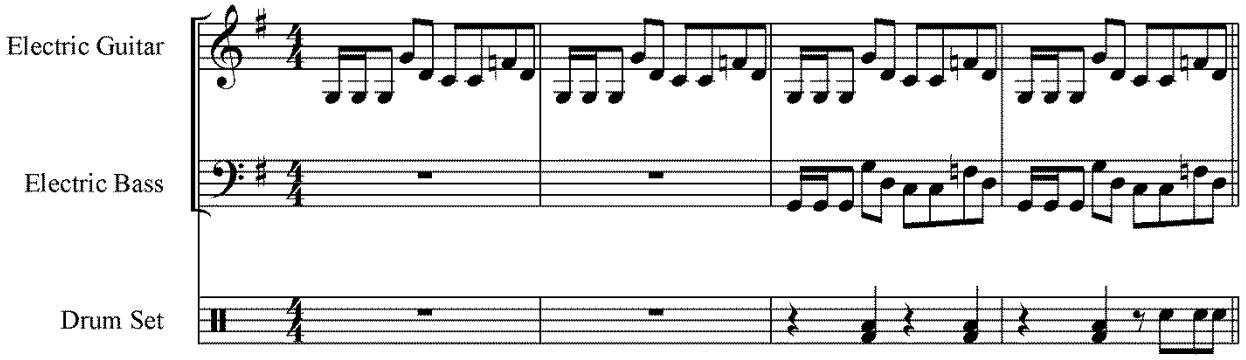
The recording on *Aim* begins with a repeating riff in the guitar, which is melodically reinforced an octave below by the bass, but not on every pitch (**Figure 4.1a**). While this riff fills a melodic role, it is qualitatively different than the kind of melodic idea that would appear as a

vocal melody because it also serves a clear accompanimental function, setting up for the arrival of the primary vocal melody in the verse. The drums enter in measure 3 with timekeeping tom hits on the backbeat. The verse begins in the fifth measure. On the *Nashville* performance, the guitar begins alone with its repeating riff (**Figure 4.1b**). The bass enters at measure 3 this time, now providing melodic reinforcement for every guitar pitch. Instead of the verse entering at measure 5, the intro is extended to 20 measures, featuring an improvised keyboard solo beginning at measure 5. These examples illustrate an expansion of the bass part from strictly functional bass to a more melodic role as well as the formal expansion of the introduction section in the *Nashville* version.

Figure 4.1. "Waiting for the End of the World" intro; guitar, bass, and drum kit
(a) *Aim*, 0'00"-0'08"



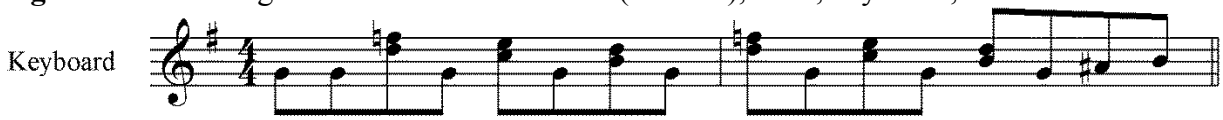
(b) *Nashville*, 0'00"-0'08"



The first immediately noticeable feature of the live recording of "Waiting for the End of the World" from *Warner* is that it is drastically faster (~132 bpm) than the versions on *Aim* (~112

bpm) and *Nashville* (~116 bpm). In the intro, the solo-style keyboard melody found on *Nashville* is replaced by a two-measure repeating melodic idea (**Figure 4.2**), which is more typical of the instrumental introductions of Costello's *Aim* songs than the free improvisation of the earlier live recording. This new primary melody relegates the established guitar/bass melody to the role of secondary melody, though in the *Nashville* recording the guitar moves to the harmonic filler layer, strumming a tonic G-major chord beneath the keyboard's melody, which leaves the bass to play the secondary melody line alone.

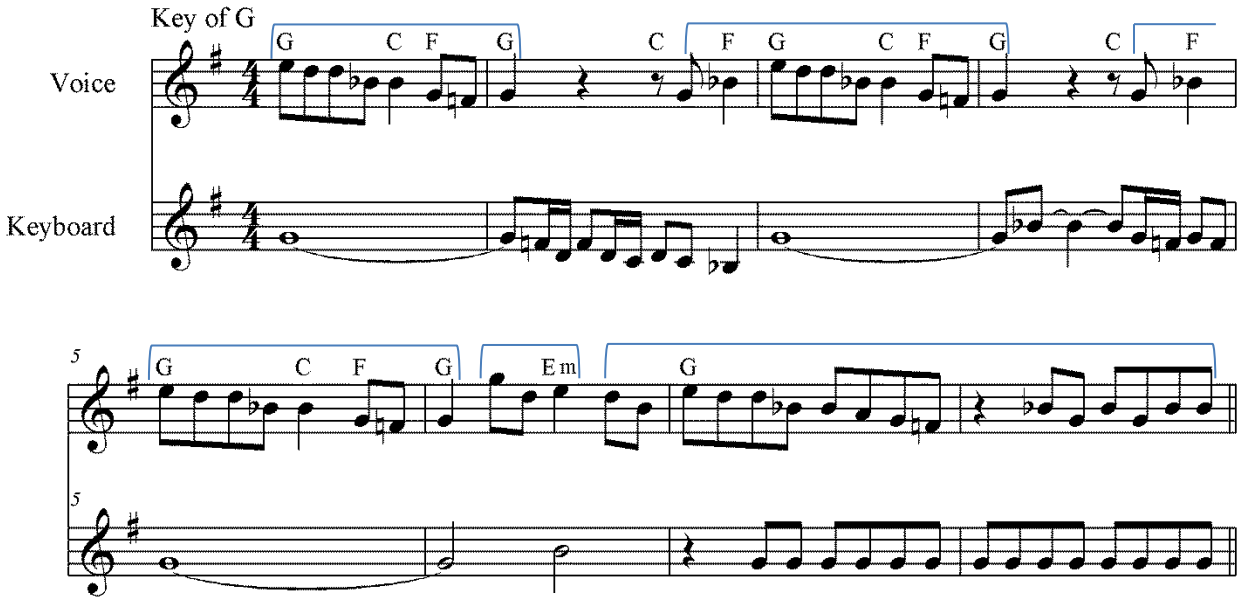
Figure 4.2. "Waiting for the End of the World" (*Warner*), intro, keyboard, riff



The keyboard is also given a melodic role during the chorus, playing a secondary melody subordinate to the voice (**Figure 4.3**). In measures 2 and 4 the keyboard fills in the melodic space while the voice rests. Its function is similar to the excerpt in Figure 3.25, in which the secondary melody is played by the guitar during the verses of "Alison." In the second half of each chorus of "Waiting for the End of the World," measures 5-8, the keyboard moves to a role of monophonic harmonic reinforcement as the vocal line becomes more continuous melodically by the elimination of rests between phrases. Measures 5-8 of the voice are essentially a repetition of the vocal part in measures 1-4, but the rest between melodic ideas is eliminated by the inclusion of an additional melodic idea in beats 2-3, essentially an exclamation in the lyrics: "We were waiting for the end of the world/*Dear Lord*." The vocal melodic idea of measures 3-4 is expanded to encompass all of measures 7-8 with a complete sentence in the lyrics: "I sincerely hope you're coming 'cause you really started something." These changes to the structure of the vocal part eliminate the need for a secondary melody, so the keyboard moves to a more

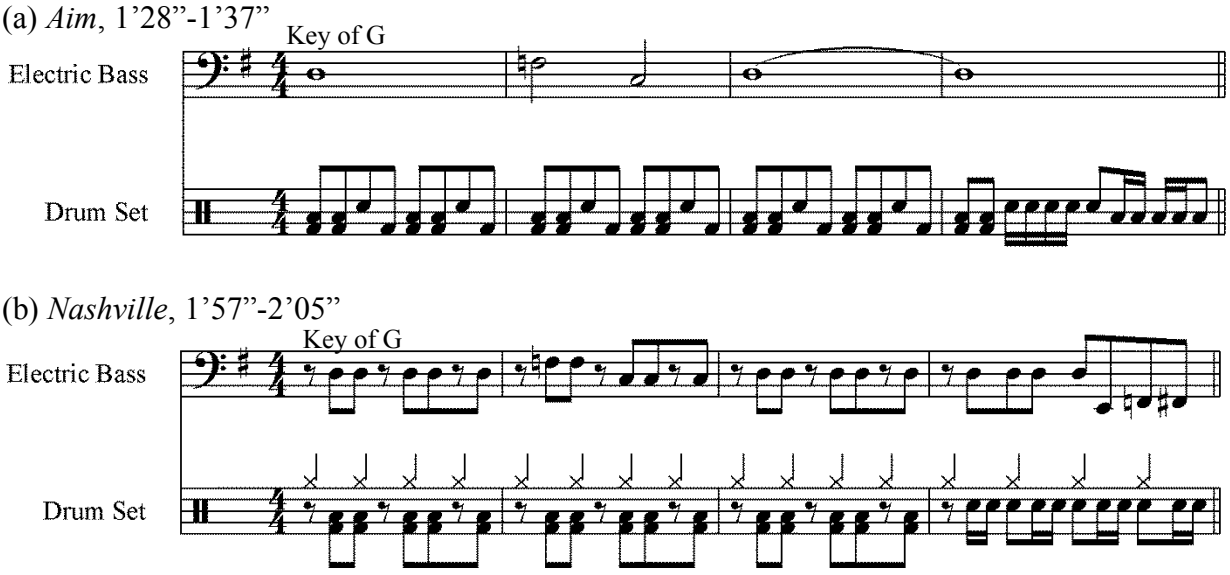
background role. The chorus of the *Nashville* recording is representative of the increased melodic role of the backing band in the Attractions.

Figure 4.3. "Waiting for the End of the World" (*Nashville*), chorus, keyboard, secondary melody



Like the increased role of the melody, the rhythmic component is also intensified in the live setting. The prechorus of the *Nashville* recording demonstrates an increase in rhythmic complexity compared to the version on *Aim*. On *Aim*, the drum kit plays a straightforward one-measure repeating pattern with the kick and low tom accenting the strong beats on 1 and 3 and the snare providing the backbeat on beats 2 and 4 (**Figure 4.4a**). The bass plays a static line, its only purpose being to provide chord roots in the lowest registral position. The *Nashville* version, on the other hand, omits the snare backbeat entirely, places hi-hat on each beat, and provides a displaced tresillo rhythm in the kick and low tom shifted one note late (**Figure 4.4b**). This pattern creates a metrical dissonance of 3+3+2 against 2+2+2+2 in the hi-hat; this dissonance contributes to the tension-building role of the prechorus. The bass, while still anchoring the chord roots, rhythmically reinforces the syncopated tresillo rhythm, placing the focus on the 3+3+2 rather than the simple duple meter of the hi-hat.

Figure 4.4. "Waiting for the End of the World," prechorus, drum kit and bass, functional roles

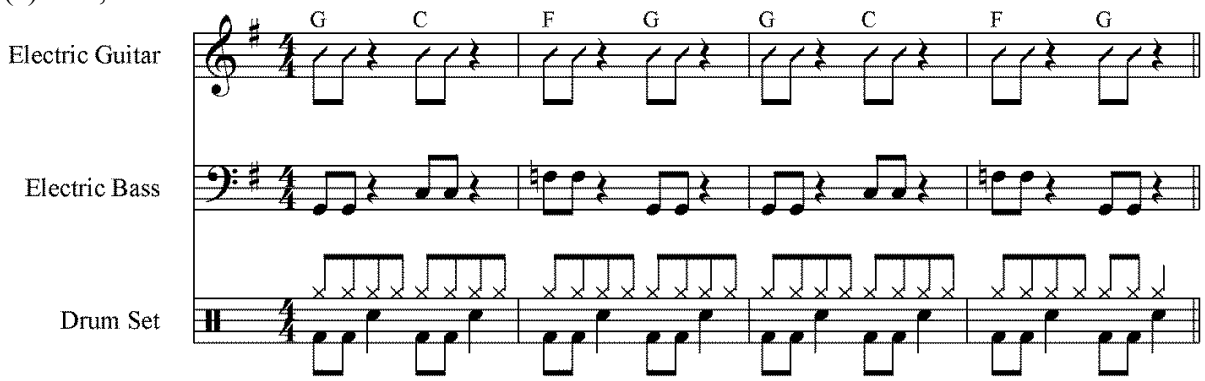


Another shift in the focus of the rhythmic layer is witnessed in the third verse, creating an intensification from the previous two verses. On *Aim*, the guitar and bass rhythmically reinforce the kick drum's rhythm, as shown in **Figure 4.5a.** This kick rhythm is part of a simple repeating pattern with a snare backbeat and steady eighth notes from the hi-hat. The drum pattern is drastically altered on *Nashville*, demonstrated in **Figure 4.5b**. The kick rhythm is reinforced by toms, creating a timbral intensification. The snare drum has been removed altogether, replaced by improvised cymbal hits on the weak beats. By removing the strong snare backbeat from the pattern, drummer Pete Thomas makes the rhythm in the guitar and bass more salient than they were on the studio recording. These alterations result in a tighter, more unified texture.

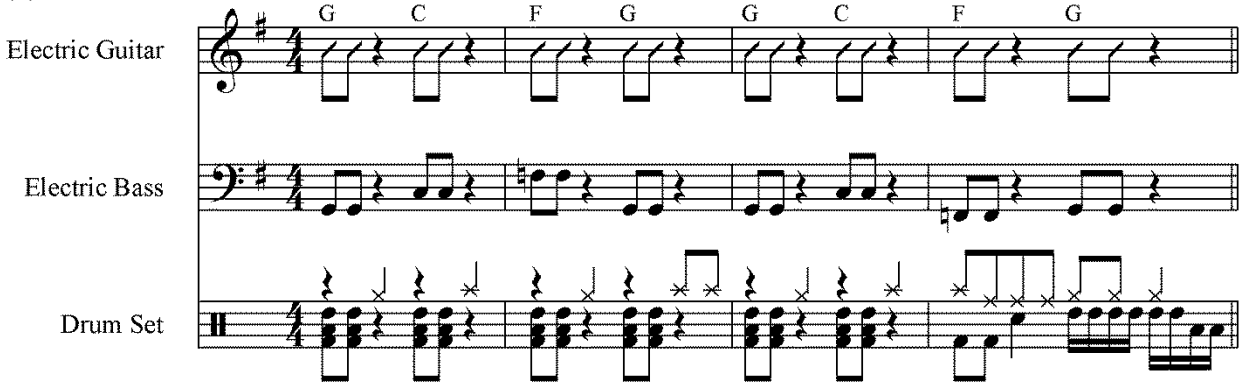
These examples of the Attractions' treatment of "Waiting for the End of the World" point toward three fundamental changes the band has made to the song: 1) a shift to more melodic functional roles in the keyboard and bass, 2) an increase in rhythmic density and complexity, and 3) formal deviations, especially in the instrumental introductions and outros. As the following

Figure 4.5. "Waiting for the End of the World," verse 3; guitar, bass, and drum kit; rhythmic reinforcement

(a) *Aim*, 2'02"-2'11"



(b) *Nashville*, 2'29"-2'38"



examples will illustrate, these alterations are not specific to "Waiting for the End of the World", but are made across the board in the live settings of songs from *Aim*.

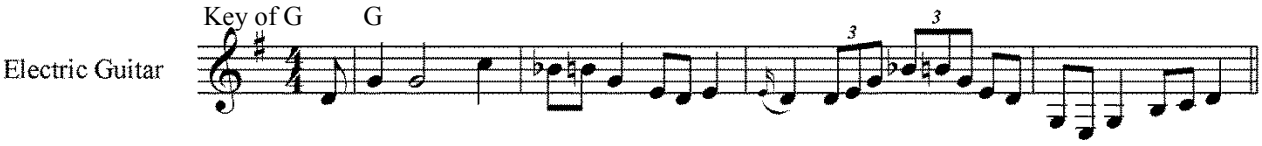
4.1 Shift to more melodic roles

On both *Aim* and the *Nashville* recording, "Blame It on Cain" begins with a primary guitar melody in the instrumental introduction. The melody on the *Aim* recording, played by John McFee, prolongs the G-major tonic chord by moving mostly between $\hat{1}$, $\hat{3}$, and $\hat{5}$ (**Figure 4.6a**). Costello's guitar melody on the Nashville recording is drastically reduced in comparison, in terms of pitch range, rhythmic content, articulation, and melodic motion (**Figure 4.6b**). This melody moves mostly in quarter notes and comes to rest on $\hat{4}$ over a tonic chord for the final half of the phrase. Although the guitar fulfills the same function of primary melody in both of

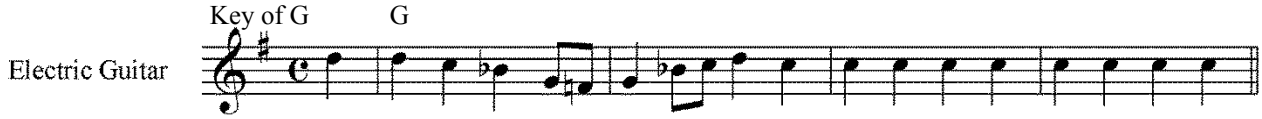
these recordings, the simplified melody in the *Nashville* recording underscores the reduced role of the guitar in the Attractions compared to the backing band on *Aim*.

Figure 4.6. "Blame It on Cain," intro, guitar, primary melody

(a) *Aim*, 0'00"-0'08"



(b) *Nashville*, 0'06"-0'14"



During the verse of the *Nashville* recording of "Blame It on Cain," the keyboard, which was used solely as chordal accompaniment on *Aim*, takes on a more melodic role, functioning here as a secondary melody (**Figure 4.7**). The keyboard part consists of a repeating two-measure descending blues riff that prolongs the tonic G-major harmony in measures 1-4 and 7-8 of the example, following and reinforcing the melodic contour of the voice. In measure 5-6, the keyboard emphasizes flat-$\hat{7}$ in the neighboring C dominant-seventh chord. In measure 5, there is increased rhythmic activity and an expansion of the register in the keyboard part in order to fill in when the voice rests.

On the *Nashville* performance of "Red Shoes," the keyboard takes over a secondary melody part that was played by the guitar on *Aim* (**Figure 4.8a** and **b**). While the keyboard line of *Nashville* by no means replicates the guitar line on *Aim*, as it features differing melodic and rhythmic content, both serve a strictly melodic role. The keyboard has simply taken the place of the lead guitar in the texture, and thus the keyboard has no need to take on roles from other layers, as the drum kit is carrying the rhythmic layer, the bass is anchoring the harmonies in the lowest register, and Costello's guitar is providing harmonic filler.

Figure 4.7. "Blame It on Cain" (*Nashville*), 0'13"-0'28", verse, keyboard, secondary melody

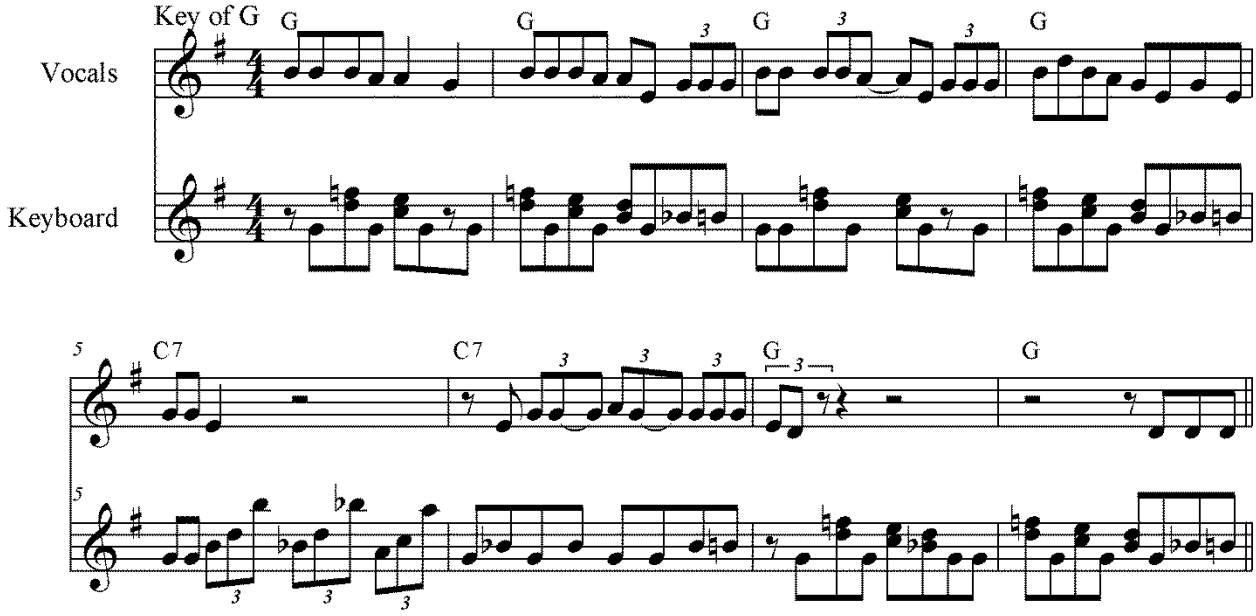
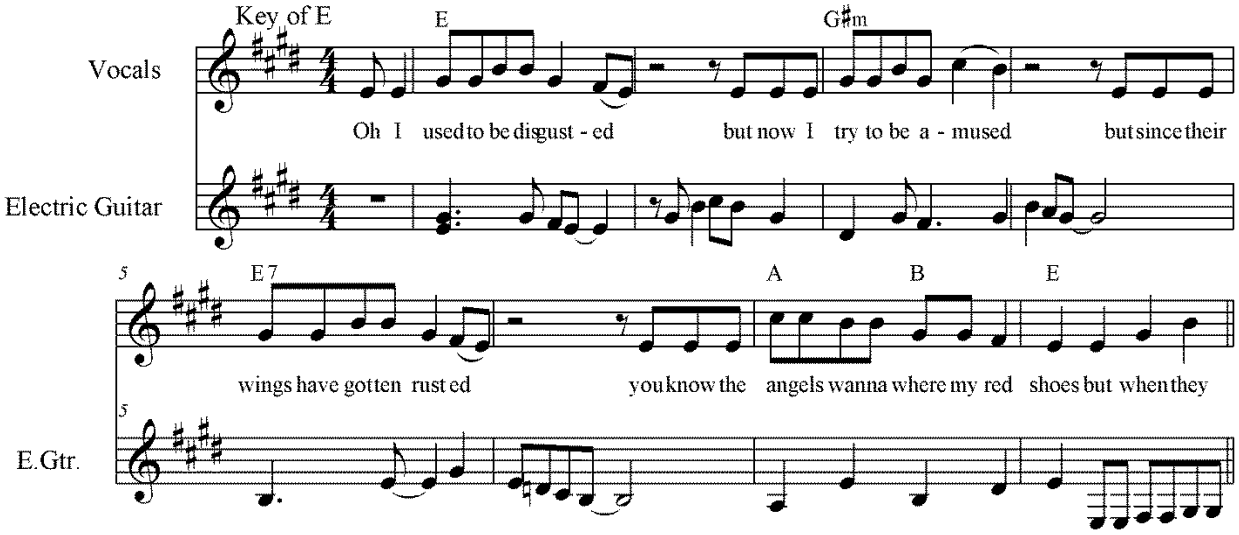
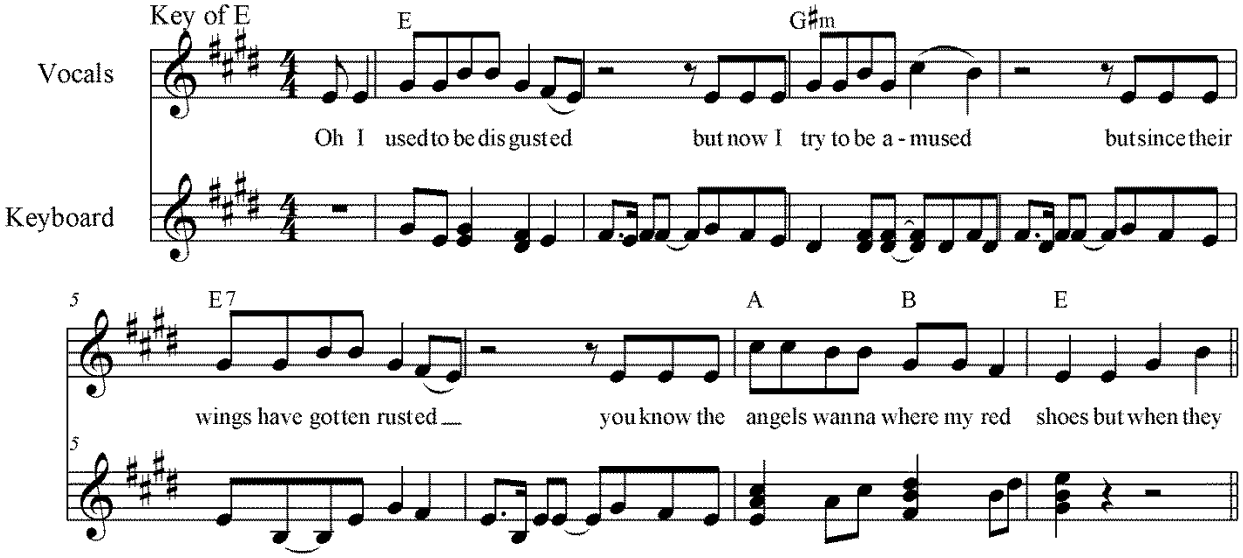


Figure 4.8. "Red Shoes," verse, secondary melody
(a) *Aim*, guitar, 0'14"-0'28"

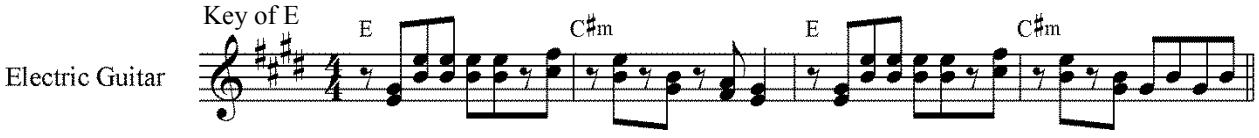


(b) *Nashville*, keyboard, 0'20"-0'35"

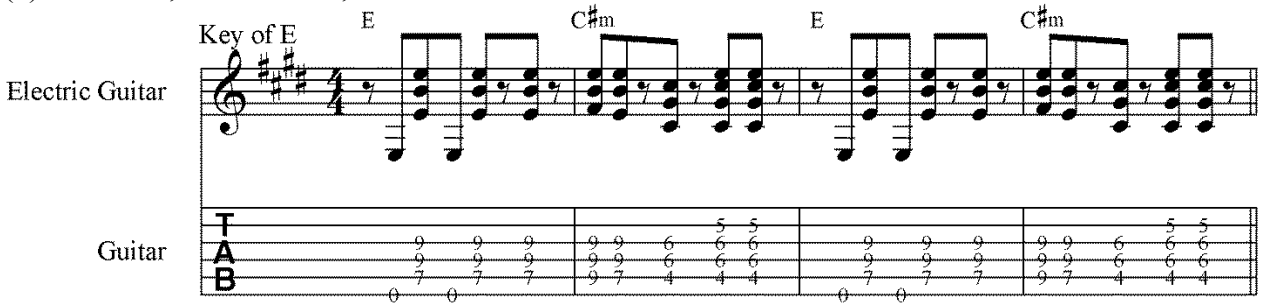


On *Aim*, "Miracle Man" begins with a minimally-melodic riff played by the guitar (**Figure 4.9a**). As is often the case in instrumental introduction sections on *Aim*, the guitar part functions solely within the melodic layer while a second guitar provides harmonic filler. The primary guitar melody in the introduction of the *Nashville* recording, however, contains a more obvious harmonic component. Whereas the guitar on *Aim* is played soloistically, with changing hand positions in order to produce the stepwise melodic motion, the guitar part played on *Nashville* is based on barre chords, alternating between only two positions on the neck of the instrument.

Figure 4.9. "Miracle Man," intro, guitar
(a) *Aim*, 0'00"-0'08", primary melody

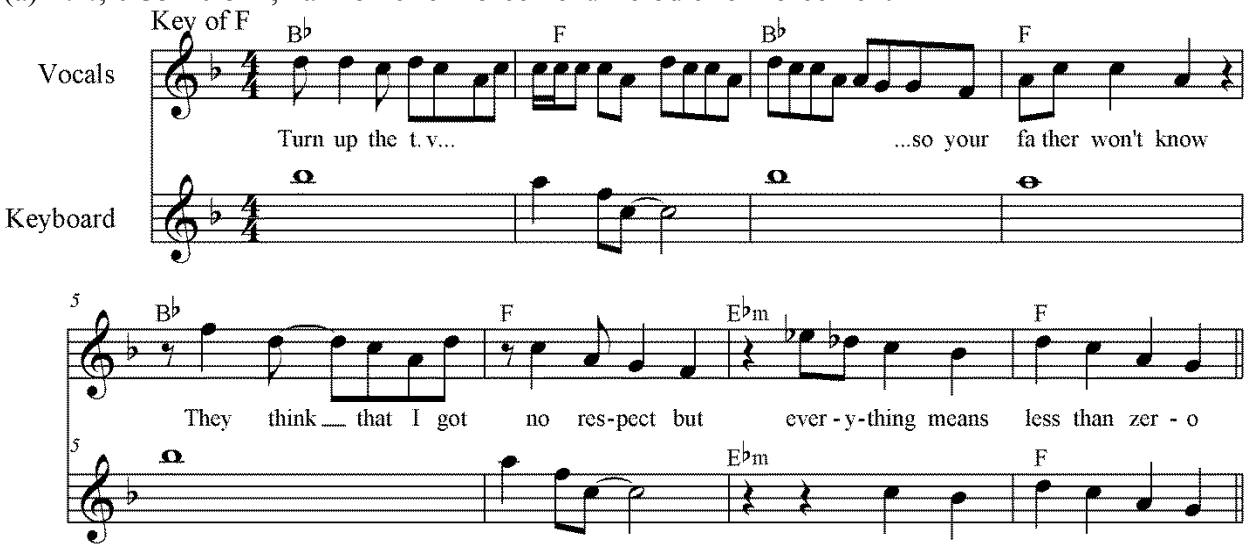


(b) *Nashville*, 0'00"-0'08", riff

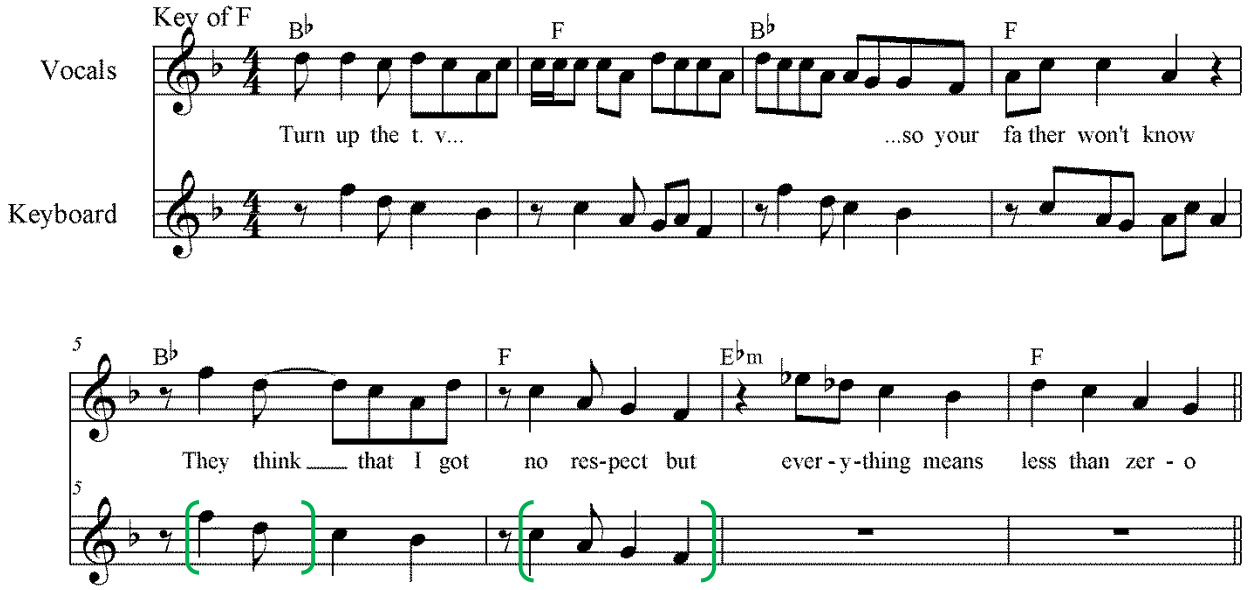


"Less Than Zero" provides an example of how the Attractions keyboardist Steve Nieve alters the function of an existing keyboard part from *Aim*. During measures 1-6 of the chorus of the *Aim* recording (**Figure 4.10a**), the keyboard functions mainly as harmonic reinforcement, providing a single note that often only moves when the harmony changes (the descending arpeggiation in measures 2 and 6 being exceptions). In measures 7-8, the end of the chorus, the keyboard moves to melodic reinforcement of the vocal line. On the *Nashville* recording, the keyboard functions as secondary melody in measures 1-5 with a syncopated descending line beneath the voice's primary melody (**Figure 4.10b**). This example also includes melodic reinforcement, but in a different place than the *Aim* example. Here the keyboard reinforces the vocals in unison at measure 6, and then rests for the duration of measures 7-8 rather than providing melodic reinforcement as on *Aim*. As these last two measures of the chorus function as a retransition into the verse, the reduction in texture helps move the music toward its goal: the tonic of the first measure of the verse. This textural reduction is more drastic on *Nashville*, beginning with polyphony between the vocal and keyboard in measures 1-4, moving to homophony in measures 5-6, and ending with monophony in mm 7-8. Further highlighting to this textural reduction, on *Aim* the guitar, keyboard, and bass melodically reinforce the voice during the retransition; on *Nashville*, only the bass does.

Figure 4.10. "Less Than Zero," chorus, keyboard
(a) *Aim*, 0'35"-0'52", harmonic reinforcement/melodic reinforcement



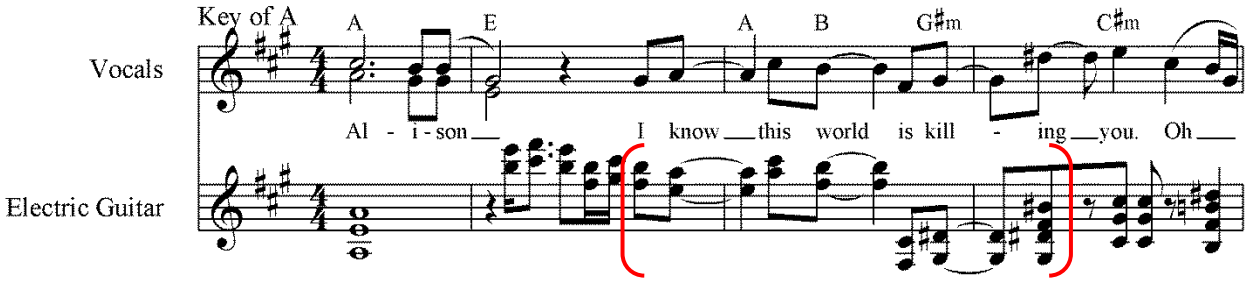
(b) *Nashville*, 0'42"-0'59", secondary melody/melodic reinforcement



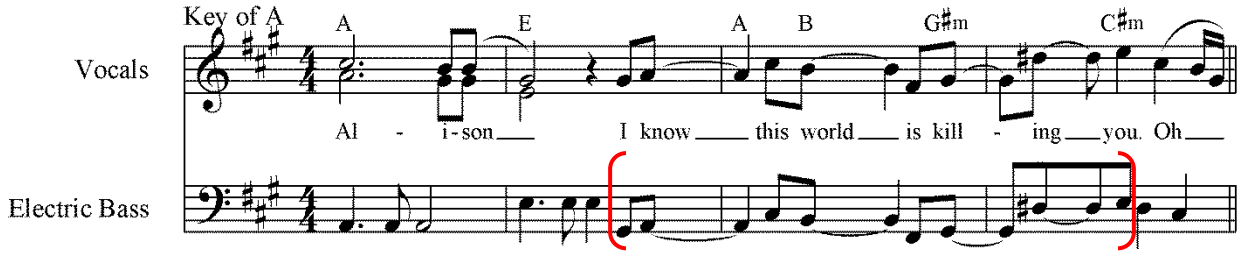
As noted earlier, the bass also takes on an increased melodic role on the live recordings. On the *Nashville* performance of "Alison," the bass takes over the role of melodic reinforcement in the chorus that was played by the guitar on the studio recording. As shown in **Figure 4.11a**, the guitar on *Aim* fills in the harmonies supporting the voice's primary melodic line in measures

3-4. On *Nashville*, the bass assumes this function, although the melodic content is different from that of the guitar; here the bass plays in octaves with the vocal melody (**Figure 4.11b**).

Figure 4.11. "Alison," chorus, melodic reinforcement
(a) *Aim*, 0'54"-1'05", guitar



(b) *Nashville*, 1'02"-1'12", bass



More often, however, the bass's contribution to the melody layer is in the form of a fill at the end of a phrase. In the second verse of "Alison" on *Nashville* (**Figure 4.12**) the bass breaks from its static role on the last half-beat of measure 2, arpeggiating the harmonies in measures 3-4. The bass is most rhythmically active in measure 4 of the example (measure 8 of the verse section, the end of a phrase) while the voice rests. The bass also plays a fill at the end of the chorus of "Blame It on Cain" during the *Warner* concert (**Figure 4.13**). Although this fill in measures 3-4 contains little melodic motion—only a small descending motion in m. 4 b. 4—the bass nonetheless draws the listeners' attention to it by way of a huge registral leap up two octaves. Once the focus is on the bass, the descending motion ushers in the return of the verse.

Figure 4.12. "Alison" (*Nashville*), verse 2, 1'33"-1'44", secondary melody

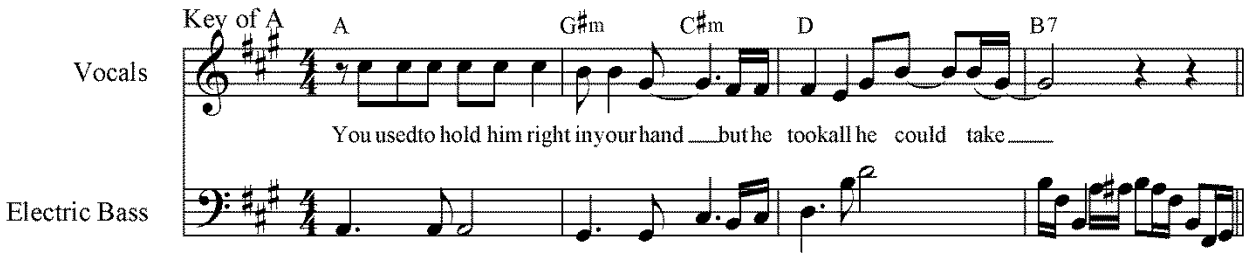
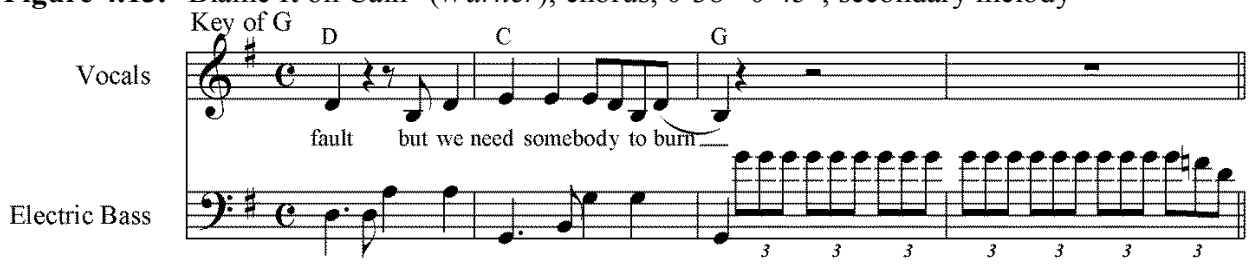


Figure 4.13. "Blame It on Cain" (*Warner*), chorus, 0'38"-0'45", secondary melody

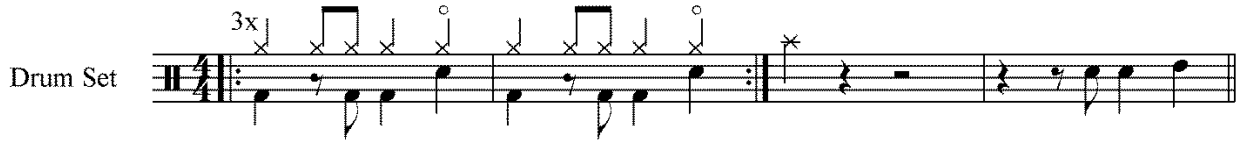


4.2 Increase in rhythmic complexity

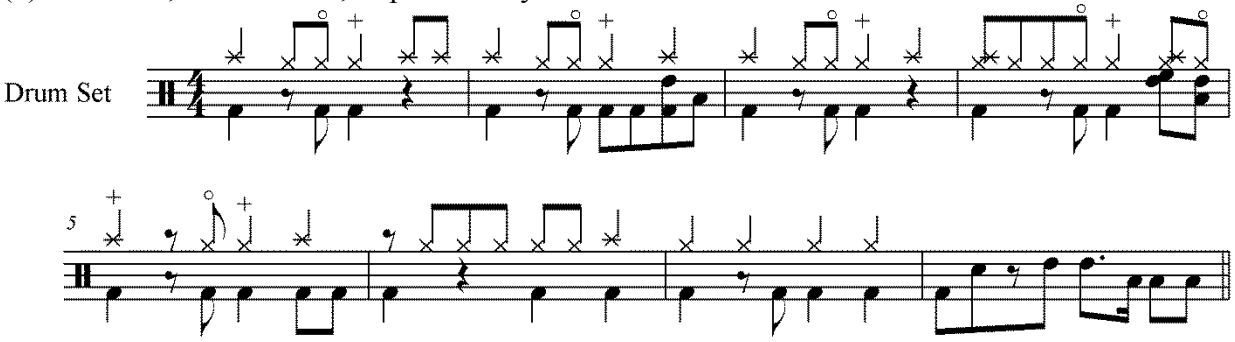
As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the drum parts played by Pete Thomas on *Model* are considerably more likely to have an improvisatory feel than the strict repetition of patterns played by Mickey Shine on *Aim*. Thomas' proclivity toward tom and cymbal embellishments is also in evidence on live settings of *Aim* songs. The chorus of "Less Than Zero" is one such example. On *Aim*, the drum kit plays a repeating one-bar pattern in measures 1-6 that emphasizes beat 4 with a snare hit and open hi-hat (**Figure 4.14a**). The drum pattern on *Nashville* (**Figure 4.14b**) eliminates the snare backbeat and open hi-hat on beat 4. In several measures, the missing quarter-note snare hit on beat 4 is replaced with an eighth-note subdivision in the hi-hat (measures 1 and 4) or kick drum (measures 2, 4, and 5), which expresses a more strongly anacrustic function. This increases the overall sense of momentum. The kick pattern from *Aim* is kept intact except for measure 6, but it is embellished with added notes in measures 2 and 5. The cymbal part is expanded timbrally and rhythmically from its counterpart on *Aim*, adding crash cymbal; more opening and closing of the hi-hat; increased rhythmic density in measures 1, 4, and 6; and rhythmic reinforcement of the kick in measure 5. Instead of resting in measures 7-8 until

the fill signaling the transition back to the verse as on *Aim*, the drum kit on *Nashville* continues its pattern in measure 7. All of these rhythmic deviations contribute to the overall increase in rhythmic density and complexity on the live version.

Figure 4.14. "Less Than Zero," chorus, drum kit
(a) *Aim*, 2'17"- 2'34", repeating drum beat



(b) *Nashville*, 2'21"-2'37", improvisatory drum beat

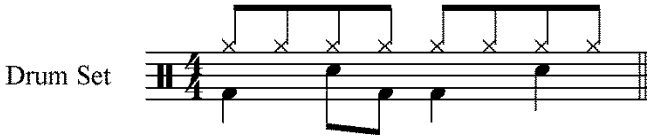


Another example of a reworked drum beat is found in the verse of the *Warner* recording of "Less Than Zero." On *Aim*, the repeating drum beat (**Figure 4.15a**) is the most common one-measure pattern on the album, a version of the standard rock beat featuring kick on beats 1 and 3, snare on beats 2 and 4, and straight eighth notes on the hi-hat. On the intro and first verse of the *Warner* recording (**Figure 4.15b**), the kick is moved to the backbeats and the snare is omitted entirely. The hi-hat straight eighths of *Aim* are rejected in favor of mostly quarter notes, which help keep time in the absence of kick hits on beats 1, the "and" of 2, and 3. The drum pattern in this example is repeated in verbatim in measures 2 and 3, and the hi-hat differs in measures 1 and 4, creating a repeating drum beat with minimal improvisatory qualities. The lower register and duller attack of the kick on the backbeats as well as the emptiness (save for hi-hat) on beats 1 and 3 create a feeling of anticipation. On this and other *Aim* songs such as "Miracle Man" (first

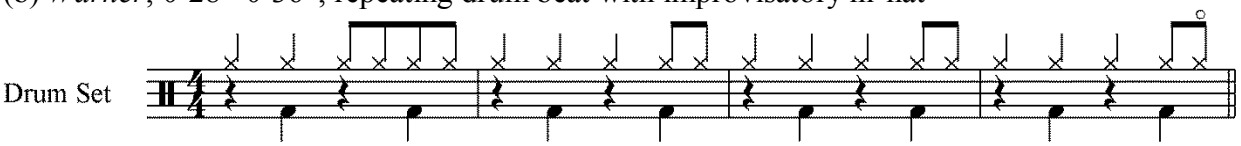
verse) and “Blame It on Cain” (intro), the emphasis on the backbeat coupled with empty strong beats serves an initiating function, one that is later abandoned in favor of a more standard rock drum pattern. In later verses of the Warner performance, this rhythmic tension is released; the beat is “flipped” to a drum pattern similar to the one on the *Aim* recording with the kick on beats 1 and 3 and the snare on beats 2 and 4.

Figure 4.15. “Less Than Zero,” verse, drum kit

(a) *Aim*, 0’09”-0’17”, repeating drum beat

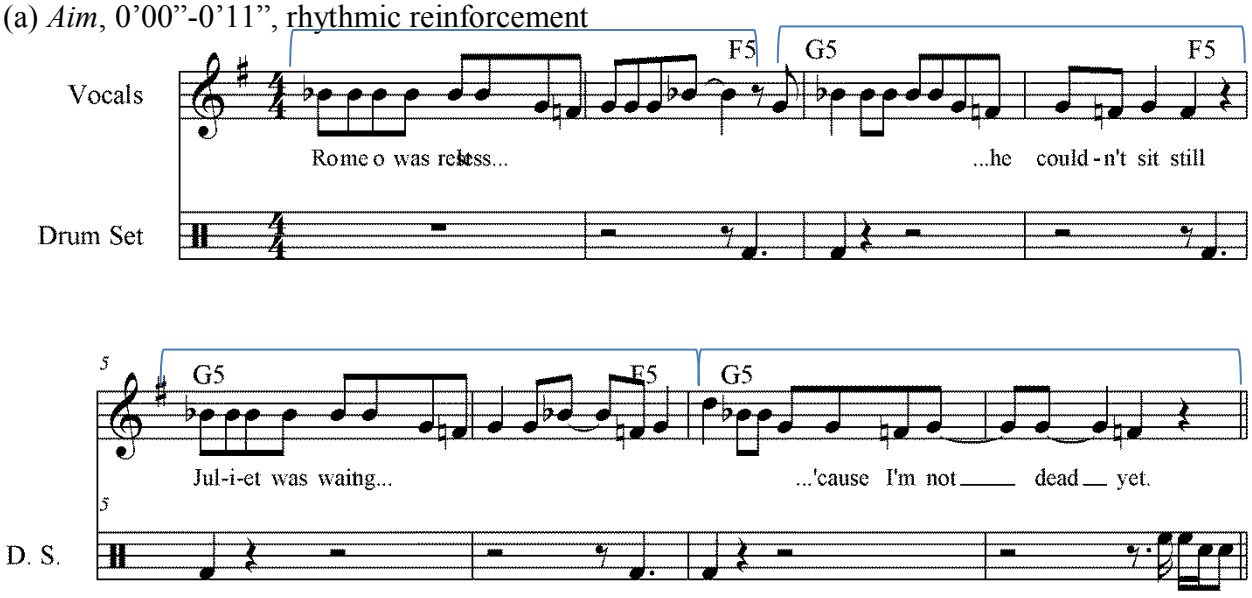


(b) *Warner*, 0’28”-0’36”, repeating drum beat with improvisatory hi-hat

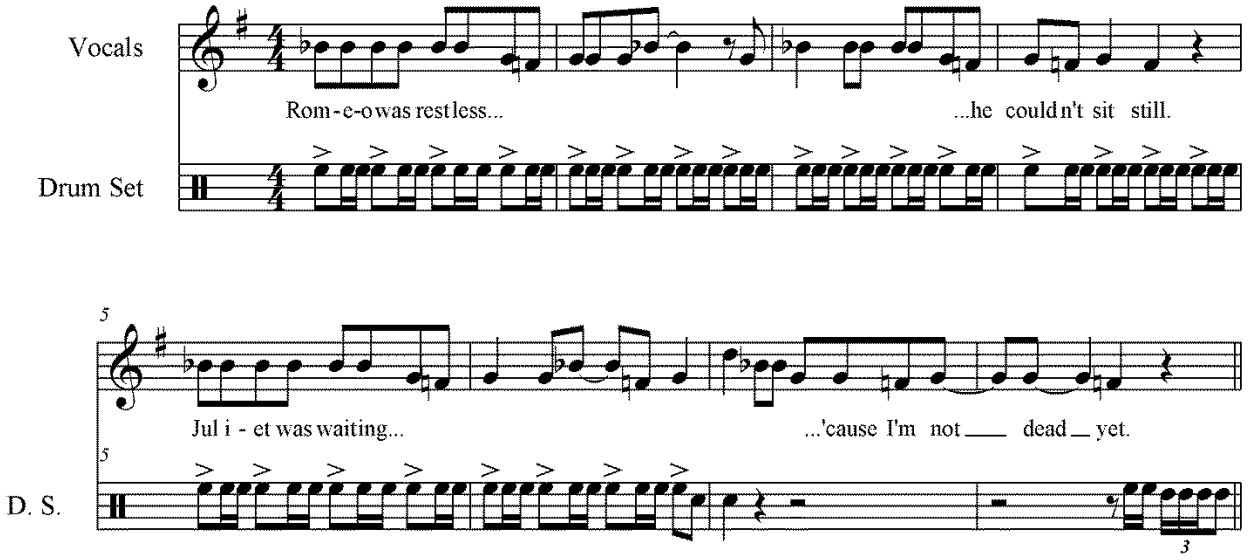


An increase in rhythmic complexity is also heard on the *Nashville* recording in “Mystery Dance,” in which a timekeeping pattern is added to the verse. The drums on *Aim* (**Figure 4.16a**) are tacet for most of this section except for the kick, which rhythmically reinforces the guitar and bass harmonies: an F power chord on the anacrusis and a G power chord on the downbeat of every two-measure melodic idea. On the *Nashville* version (**Figure 4.16b**), the guitar and bass are tacet. Rather than leave this section to be carried by vocals alone, Pete Thomas adds a repeating eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes in order to keep time and fill in the otherwise thin texture with rhythmic subdivisions.

Figure 4.16. "Mystery Dance," verse, drum kit
(a) *Aim*, 0'00"-0'11", rhythmic reinforcement



(b) *Nashville*, 0'10"-0'20", timekeeping



4.3 Formal deviations

The *Nashville* recording of "Miracle Man" expands the instrumental introduction from one four-measure phrase to four phrases, a total of 16 measures. **Figure 4.17** shows the functional roles of the instruments in the intro on *Aim* **(a)** and *Nashville* **(b)**. The instruments on *Aim* fit neatly into their prescribed functional layers: lead guitar as melody, rhythm guitar as harmonic filler, drum kit as the explicit beat layer. The bass is absent from the texture. On

Nashville, the roles shift over the course of the formal section. As shown in Figure 4.9b, the rhythm guitar plays a simple primary melody that also serves a chordal accompaniment. The guitar melody is repeated in the second phrase, this time supported by bass and drums providing the functional bass and explicit beat layers, respectively. In the third and fourth phrases, the keyboard takes over the melody—creating a timbral shift as well as a registral expansion—while the guitar moves to strictly harmonic filler. The bass uses a repeating rhythm to reinforce the repeating drum beat delivered by the drum kit. This example demonstrates not only the Attractions' changing of functional roles over the course of a formal section, but also the contributions to multiple layers of the texture that is characteristic of the band. Whereas the roles on *Aim* fit neatly into Moore's functional layers, the guitar in the first and second phrases and the bass in the third and fourth phrases contribute to two layers at once, blurring the distinction between layers.

Figure 4.17. "Miracle Man," intro, functional roles
(a) *Aim*, 0'00"-0'08"

	Phrase 1
Lead guitar	Primary melody
Rhythm guitar	Chordal accompaniment
Bass	
Drum kit	Timekeeping (backbeat)

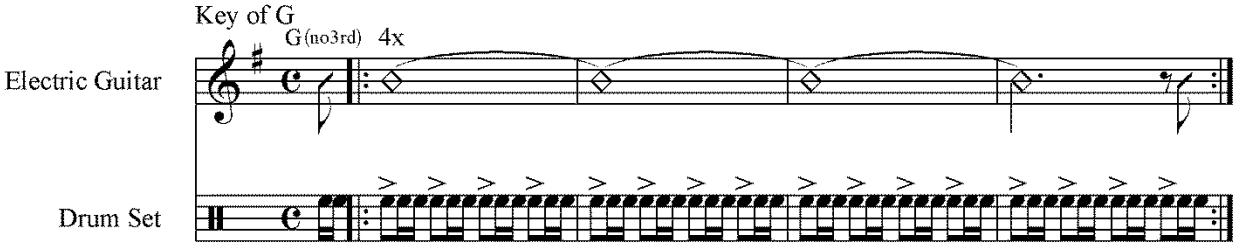
(b) *Nashville*, 0'00"-0'30"

	Phrase 1	**Phrase 2**	**Phrase 3**	**Phrase 4**
Keyboard			Primary melody	Primary melody
Rhythm guitar	Primary melody, chordal accompaniment	Primary melody, chordal accompaniment	Chordal accompaniment	Chordal accompaniment
Bass		Static	Static, rhythmic reinforcement	Static, rhythmic reinforcement
Drum kit		Repeating pattern	Repeating pattern	Repeating pattern

The Warner recording of "Mystery Dance" begins with the timekeeping rhythm on the high tom shown in Figure 4.15b. The drum kit repeats this rhythm for nine hypermeasures (45

seconds) as Costello harangues the audience to stand up. In order to get a starting pitch for his voice after this lengthy rhythmic introduction, Costello adds a tonic-prolongational guitar figure before the verse, which also contributes to a small-scale textural buildup (**Figure 4.18**). This figure, consisting of an anacrusis and a four-measure (or one-hypermeasure) G power chord, is repeated four times (20 seconds). This guitar intro also sets up the entrance of the guitar and bass power chords in the verse, as heard on *Aim* and discussed in Figure 4.15(a), which were omitted from the *Nashville* performance.

Figure 4.18. "Mystery Dance" (*Warner*), intro, 0'46"-1'07"



Several live versions of *Aim* songs also feature extended outros as well as extended intros. "Sneaky Feelings," "Mystery Dance," and "Less Than Zero" end with fade-outs on *Aim*. In the live performances (**Figure 4.19**), the Attractions overcome the difficulty of replicating a studio fade-out ending in concert by composing out the closing sections to include keyboard solos. In each of these examples, Costello contributes vocal melodies based on the last phrase of the lyrics, but the keyboard is considered the primary melody due to its improvisatory, soloistic feel which is bought about by its varied rhythmic and melodic content.

Figure 4.19. Extended outro sections on *Nashville*

	Time markers	Repeated lyric	Closing function
"Less Than Zero"	2'37"-3'24"	"Everything means less than zero"	New material ending in a tonic chord
"Sneaky Feelings"	1'16"-2'10"	"Still got a long way to go"	Introduction + tonic chord
"Mystery Dance"	1'21"-1'55"	"I can't do it anymore and I'm not satisfied"	New material ending in a tonic chord

Although the outros are extended to accommodate the keyboard solos, these songs still need some sort of closing function to complete them. "Sneaky Feelings" concludes with the introduction, which thus frames the body of the song, with a held tonic chord added onto the end to create closure. The other two examples, however, use new material to bring the piece to a final cadence. In "Less Than Zero," the keyboard and bass play descending melodic lines that accomplish closure when they reach the tonic (**Figure 4.20**). On beats 1-2 of the first measure, the two instruments move stepwise in parallel octaves from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{2}$. On beats 3-4 the parts diverge, with the keyboard playing $\hat{1}$ - $\hat{7}$ - $\hat{6}$ - $\hat{7}$ and then resolving back up to $\hat{1}$ in measure 2; the bass repeats its descending line an octave lower, resolving to $\hat{1}$ from above, creating a contrapuntal cadence with the keyboard part. On "Mystery Dance," the song is closed by the double plagal progression ♭VII–IV–I, repeated four times (**Figure 4.21**). As in the previous example, the keyboard and bass move in contrary motion, which highlights the arrival on the tonic chord but stands in contrast to the more typical descending contour of a double-plagal cadence (most often $\flat\hat{7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$ in the melody over $\flat\hat{7}-\hat{4}-\hat{1}$ in the bass).

Figure 4.20. "Less Than Zero" (*Nashville*), closing function, keyboard and bass

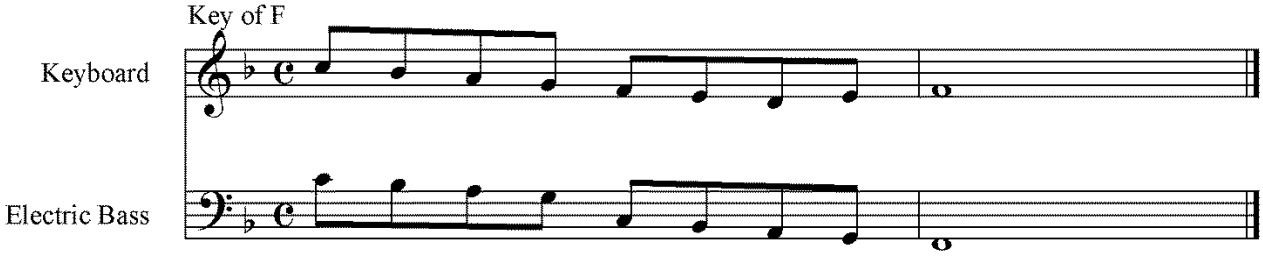
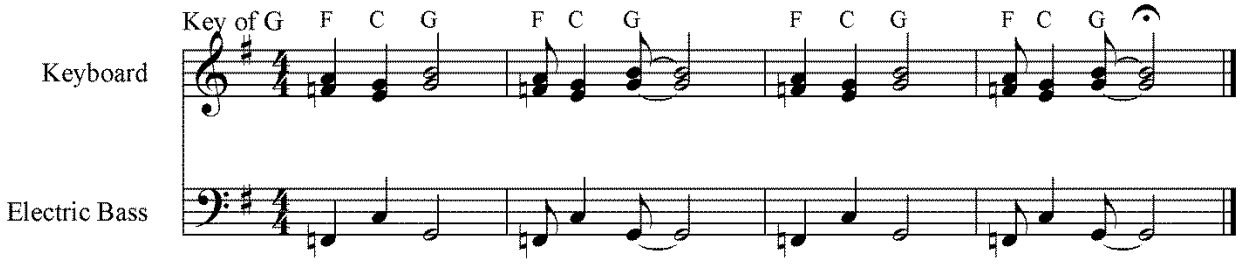


Figure 4.21. "Mystery Dance" (*Nashville*), closing function, keyboard and bass



4.4 Conclusion

The Attractions' reworkings of the songs from *Aim* place more melodic emphasis on the keyboard and, to a lesser extent, the bass. In many instances the keyboard takes over the lead instrument function, often playing a melodic role in place of the lead guitar on *Aim*, though the actual melodies are often altered. The extended intros and outros create more space for improvisation, giving the keyboard ample opportunity to solo. The bass's melodic contributions are often fills, creating a transitional melodic link between vocal phrases while the voice rests. The role of the guitar is scaled back to mostly harmonic filler, with even its primary melody on "Miracle Man" serving a harmonic purpose. The drum part on the live performances is often altered from the studio recordings, with rewritten material including more complex rhythms and more improvisatory material. The conclusions drawn from this chapter are consistent with the findings of Chapter 3: more foreground, melodic roles for the keyboard and bass; a shift from melody to harmonic filler in the guitar; and more rhythmic complexity for the drum kit.

Chapter 5. Transition: "Watching the Detectives"

After the release of *My Aim Is True* but prior to the formation of the Attractions, Elvis Costello released the single "Watching the Detectives" in the U.K. on October 17, 1977. Recorded in May and June of 1977, the recording features a four-piece ensemble consisting of Costello on guitar, Andrew Bodnar and Steve Goulding of Graham Parsons' band the Rumour (Perone 1999, 2-3) on bass and drums respectively, and Steve Nieve on organ and piano (Costello 2007). As Costello biographer James Perone points out, texturally the song is a departure from the sound of *Aim*:

> "…*My Aim Is True* provided only a hint of a Costello ensemble sound…The basic Costello band sound was, rather, established by 'Watching the Detectives,' with its sparse guitar, virtuosic melodic bass guitar, frequent drum fills, and early-1960s style keyboard sound" (Perone 1999, 2).

This intermediary backing group resembles the Attractions in terms of instrumentation, although as I will show in my analysis, the keyboard's role is drastically more reserved than on Attractions songs. This chapter will analyze the functional roles of the ensemble on "Watching the Detectives," positioning this recording as a textural and stylistic transition between *Aim* and *Model*. Additionally, I will use this song as a means to discuss how considerations of texture and functional roles can inform formal analysis.

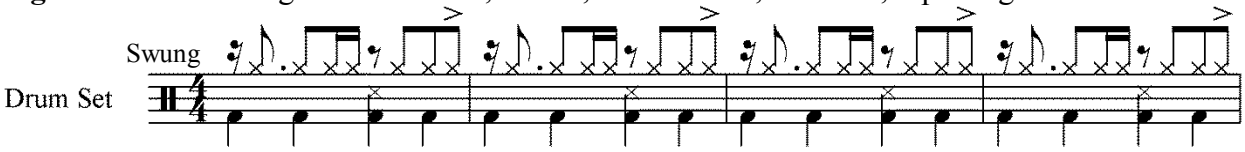
5.1 Functional roles

5.1.1 Drum kit

More important than the frequent drum fills mentioned by Perone is the increase in rhythmic density and complexity and the proliferation of improvisatory material in the drum kit compared to the material on *Aim*. **Figure 5.1** shows the repeating drum beat played in the verses. The hi-hat's rhythm is considerably more complex than any of the rhythms found on *Aim*, which tend to rely on repeated eighth-note motion; the hi-hat on "Watching the Detectives" is much

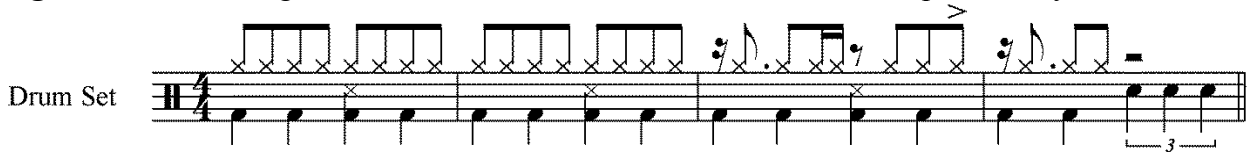
more closely related to the rhythmically complex hi-hat parts on *Model*. Another stylistic departure from *Aim* is the omission of a backbeat on beats 2 and 4. In this example, the snare sounds on beat 3, creating a half-time backbeat at a higher metric level. The "four-on-the-floor" pattern of the kick drum is also a stylistic departure from Aim, which generally relied on kick drum on beats 1 and 3.

Figure 5.1. "Watching the Detectives," verse, 0'24"-0'30", drum kit, repeating drum beat



Improvisatory drum beats are found most frequently in the introduction, chorus, and fade-out outro sections. As with the improvisatory beats on *Model*, the cymbals are the most likely to have altered rhythms between measures, whereas the kick and snare parts remain relatively unchanged. One such example[5] is found in the intro (**Figure 5.2**). The kick plays on every beat, and the snare plays on each beat 3. The hi-hat delivers a straightforward eighth-note rhythm for two measures before becoming more rhythmically dense and varied in m. 3. The improvisatory, rhythmically dense drum parts on this track are overall more similar to *Model* than to the relatively conservative repeating patterns on *Aim*.

Figure 5.2. "Watching the Detectives," intro, 0'02"-0'09", drum kit, improvisatory drum beat



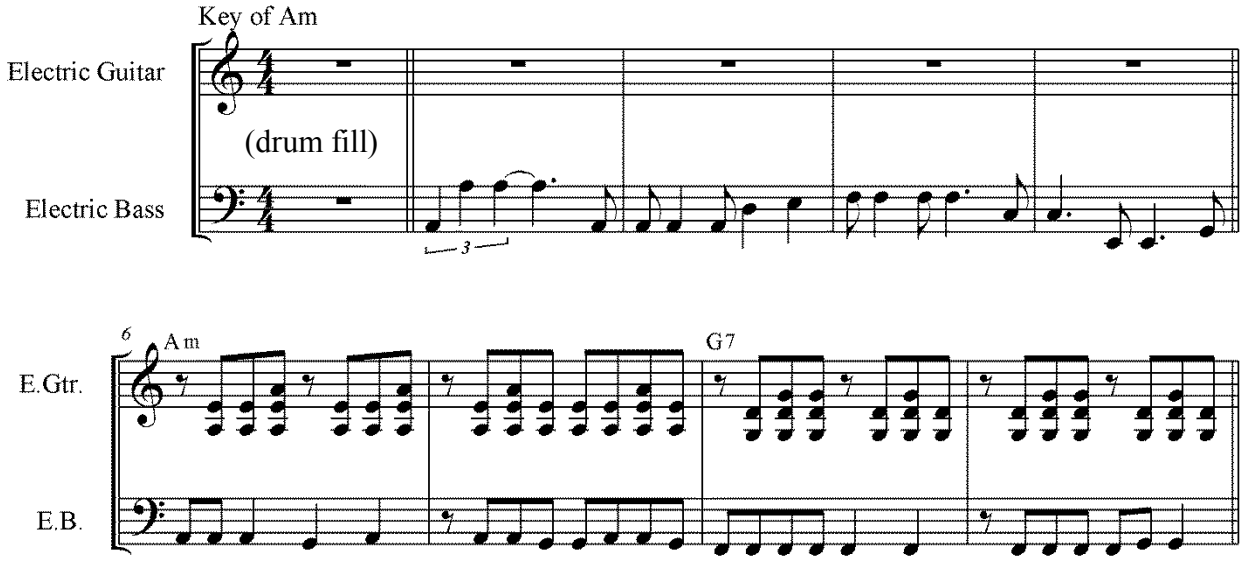
5.1.2 Bass

The bass on "Watching the Detectives" is given a more prominent part in the texture than its strictly functional bass role on *Aim*. In the first phrase of the introduction, the texture consists

[5] For additional examples, listen to the first phrase of the chorus (0'59"-1'06") and the fade-out outro, specifically the second phrase and onward (3'27" to the end).

solely of drum kit and bass. To compensate for this limited instrumentation, the bass plays a part that provides melodic motion while still anchoring the harmonic content. When the guitar enters in the second phrase with its palm-muted chordal accompaniment figure, the bass changes to the role of static functional bass. Because of the addition to the texture, the bass can move to a more subtle background role.

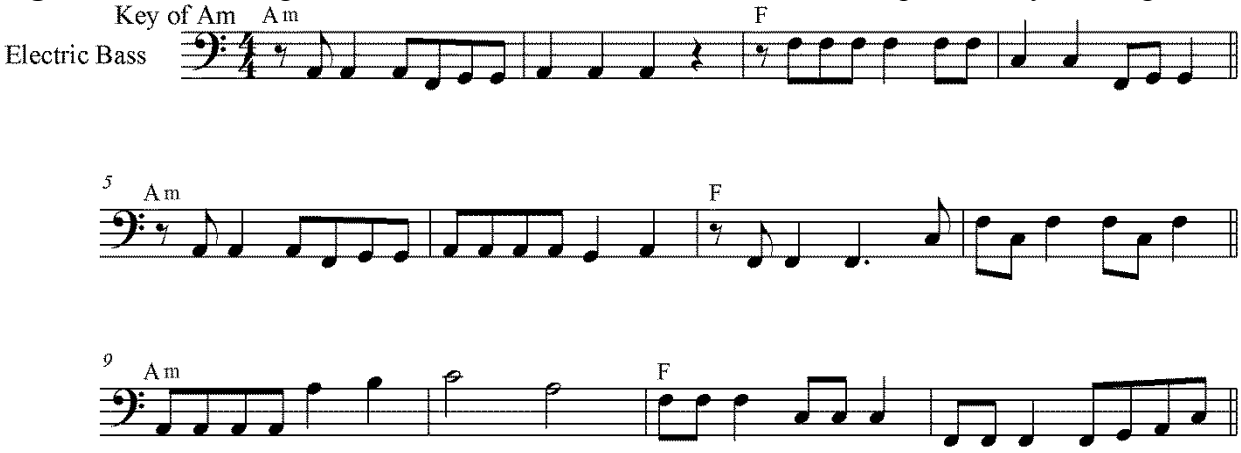
Figure 5.3. "Watching the Detectives, intro, 0'02"-0'16", bass, primary melody changing to static bass line



The bass on "Watching the Detectives" tends to be more expressive than the bass on *Aim* due to its melodic contour, varied rhythm, and wide range. **Figure 5.4** shows the bass part of the complete first verse. The walking bass part does not follow a set rhythmic pattern, creating an improvisatory feel. This line covers a melodic range that is wide for a functional bass part: a twelfth from F2 to C4. A similarly improvisatory walking bass part is employed in the chorus.

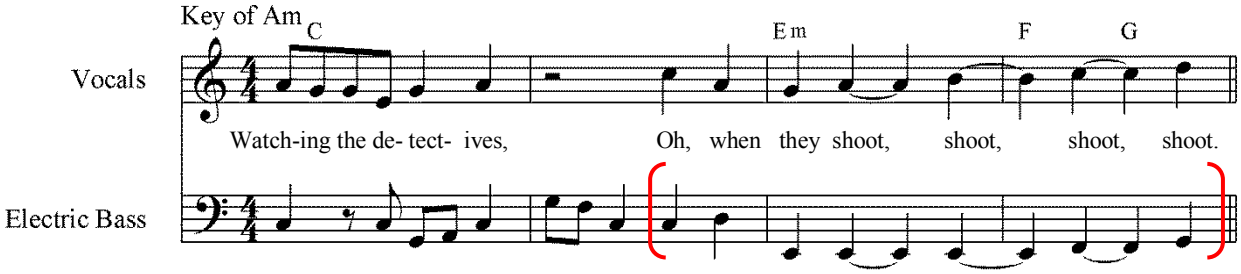
In addition to its melodic role in the first phrase of the intro shown in Figure 5.3, the bass provides a different type of melodic function in the prechorus, that of melodic reinforcement. As shown in **Figure 5.5**, the bass mirrors the rhythm of the vocal melody in measures 3-4 of the example. The bass simultaneously anchors the harmony (albeit with upward-resolving

Figure 5.4. "Watching the Detectives," verse 1, 0'24"-0'45", bass, improvisatory walking bass



suspensions on beats 1 and 3 of measure 4) and provides support for the primary melody. The more melodically active bass on "Watching the Detectives" foreshadows the style of bass line characterized on *Model* and presents a move away from the strictly functional bass lines of *Aim*.

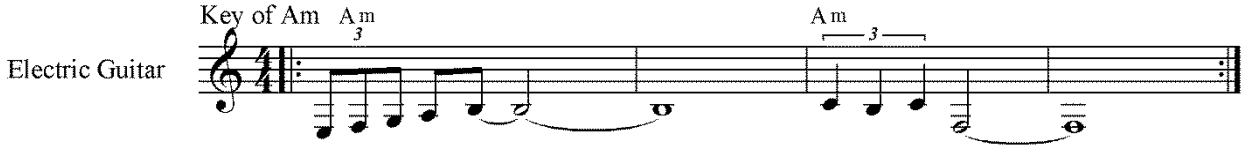
Figure 5.5. "Watching the Detectives," prechorus, 0'52"-0'59", bass, melodic reinforcement



5.1.3 Guitar

The guitar on "Watching the Detectives" functions mainly as chordal accompaniment across all formal sections, as shown in Figure 5.3. Although the guitar's chief function is as harmonic filler, a second guitar track plays a primary melody in the instrumental introduction and the fade-out outro (**Figure 5.6**). In the intro, this brief lead guitar part enters after the rhythm guitar plays one four-measure phrase. Stylistically, the part is composed more like the guitar melodies on *Model* than the ones on *Aim*, as Costello is playing this line. This guitar melody is simpler than many of the primary guitar melodies found on *Aim*, occupying a melodic range of only a minor sixth and containing long-held notes after two beats of motion.

Figure 5.6. "Watching the Detectives," intro, 0'16"-0'23", guitar, primary melody

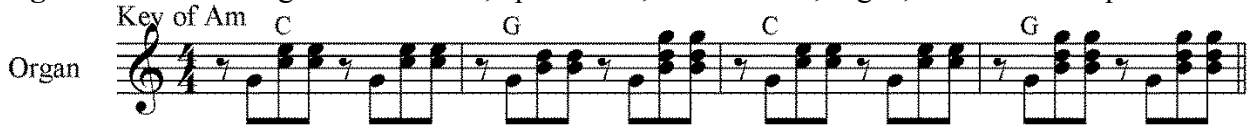


5.1.4 Keyboard

As mentioned in the quote from Perone in the opening paragraph of this chapter, the keyboard sound on "Watching the Detectives" is timbrally similar to the keyboard sound in the Attractions' recordings. This resemblance in tone can be explained by the fact that these keyboard parts were played by the same musician, Steve Nieve, in the only instance of a member of the Attractions playing on a pre-Attractions recording. Nieve's contribution is listed in the liner notes of *Aim* as "keyboard overdubs," meaning that his parts (piano and organ) were a late addition to the mix (Costello 2007). As such, the keyboard parts serve mainly as background harmonic filler, closer to the instrument's function on *Aim* than their extensive melodic capacity found soon afterward on *Model*.

The bulk of the keyboards' contribution to the song is heard in the prechorus and chorus. The organ's chordal accompaniment figure in the prechorus (**Figure 5.7**) follows the same rhythmic pattern as the guitar's (Figure 5.3). The organ is used to fill out a higher register than the guitar and to provide the chordal thirds missing from the guitar's power chords.

Figure 5.7. "Watching the Detectives," prechorus, 0'45"-0'52", organ, chordal accompaniment



In addition to the aforementioned harmonic filler part in the prechorus, the organ and piano provide several fleeting contributions to the melody layer in the prechorus. These parts will be explored further in the next section, which will consider the role of texture in form.

5.2 Form

5.2.1 Prechorus and chorus

The form of "Watching the Detectives" can be interpreted in two ways: verses are followed by a prechorus followed by a chorus, or simply a long chorus. I assert that the form is verse-prechorus-chorus (**Figure 5.8**). As Paul Harris notes, prechoruses are often harmonically unstable, beginning with a harmony other than the tonic chord (Harris 2007, 64-65). **Figure 5.9** shows the harmonic content of the three main formal sections. The prechorus section begins with a move to C major, the mediant key of the tonic A minor. The chord progression of the prechorus presents a sharp increase in harmonic activity after the static tonic prolongation of the verse which contributes to the tension-building effect. The chorus can be read as a return to the tonic key because of the initial A minor chord, or as a continuation of the mediant key because it concludes with a normative progression, V-IV-I-V.

Figure 5.8. "Watching the Detectives," form diagram

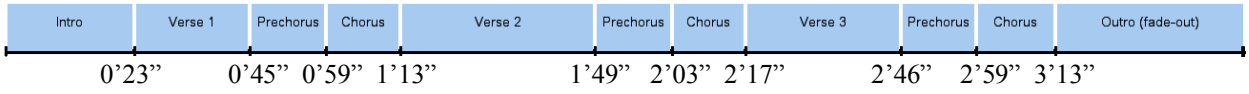


Figure 5.9. "Watching the Detectives," harmonic analysis

	Verse	**Prechorus**	**Chorus**
Harmonic content	Am: i VI i VI i VI	Am: v VI ♭VII C: I V I V I iii IV V	I ♭VII VI III ♭VII VI V IV I V

Texture, as well as harmonic content, often marks changes in formal sections. There is a change in functional roles between the prechorus and chorus sections. The main textural differences between the two sections are heard in the drum kit and the keyboards (organ and piano). Additionally, the guitar drops out for the first phrase of the chorus, an unconventional textural approach to the typically denser chorus that further emphasizes the boundaries of the form. The guitar returns in the second phrase with the same palm-muted chordal accompaniment pattern shown in Figure 5.3.

The drum kit in the prechorus plays a rhythmically consonant repeating pattern (**Figure 5.10**). The drum beat played during the chorus is more rhythmically complex than the one in the prechorus, especially in the hi-hat and kick drum parts (**Figure 5.11**). It is also improvisatory: whereas the drum beat in the prechorus is strictly repeated, the hi-hat and kick drum in the chorus do not follow a set pattern.

Figure 5.10. "Watching the Detectives," prechorus, 0'45"-0'52", drum kit, repeating drum beat

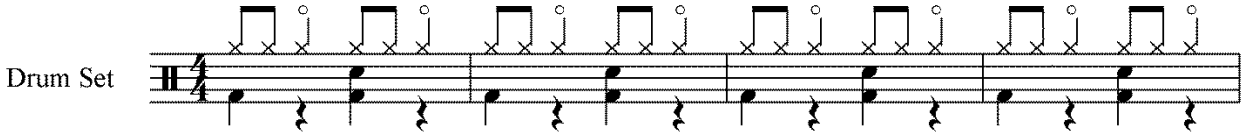
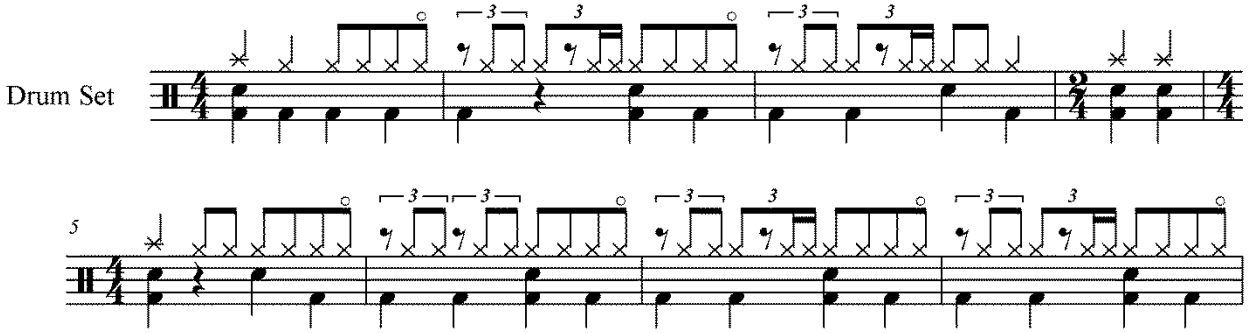


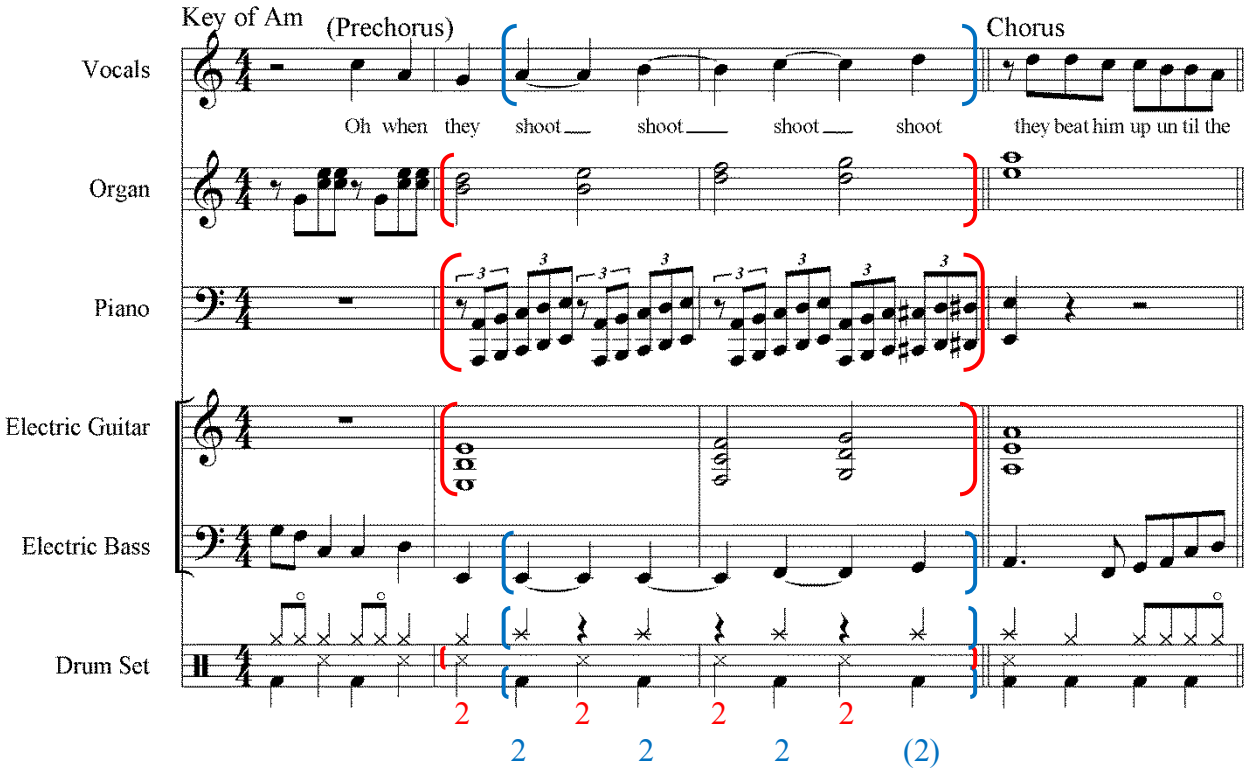
Figure 5.11. "Watching the Detectives," chorus, 0'59"-1'12", drum kit, improvisatory drum beat



As shown in Figure 5.7, the organ, which is absent from the verses, enters in the prechorus, providing chordal accompaniment similar to the guitar's part. **Figure 5.12** shows that in the final two measures of the prechorus, the organ (along with the guitar and snare) anchors the established meter on beats 1 and 3 while the voice, bass, crash cymbal, and kick drum emphasize beats 2 and 4, creating a "displacement dissonance" (Krebs 1999). This rhythmic dissonance occurs on the beat or "tactus level" (Biamonte 2014), and is a typical tension-building device in prechorus sections. The displacement dissonance builds anticipation and strengthens the arrival of the chorus, typical characteristics of the prechorus (de Clercq 2012, 116). The piano meanwhile plays a secondary melody that ascends diatonically through the first five notes of the A minor scale—a transposed diminution of the ascending scale in the vocal

melody (scale degrees 1-5 of G major)—in eighth-note triplets, a shift from the prevailing duple subdivision that adds to the rhythmic complexity. This rhythmic and melodic pattern is played three times before it is rhythmically offset by deletion of the triplet eighth rest on the beat. Chromatic tones are added to the melody in order to place the registral climax on the downbeat of the chorus, which is where the rhythmic dissonance in the bass and voice parts resolve. The repeated ascents in the piano part enhance the slower ascending motion in the vocal melody.

Figure 5.12. "Watching the Detectives," prechorus, 0'54"-1'01", full texture, rhythmic dissonance



The organ's accompanimental figure from the prechorus is liquidated during the displacement dissonance, leading to a change in functional roles for the keyboard instruments. The organ and piano play a rather sparse role in the chorus, providing harmonic filler and a fleeting instance of melody while expanding the pitch space used in the chorus (**Figure 5.13**). In the chorus, the organ holds out chord tones to provide harmonic reinforcement. The piano and

organ in the second half of measure 2 leading into measure 3 function as a brief secondary melody, filling in the space while the voice holds a pitch on the word "start" and then briefly rests, and providing a passing-chord link between the A minor harmony in measyres 1-2 and F major in measures 3-4. This sparser keyboard texture couples with the absence of the guitar to make the chorus less texturally dense than the prechorus, providing textural contrast between these two formal sections.

Figure 5.13. "Watching the Detectives," chorus, 0'59"-1'12", organ and piano, harmonic reinforcement and secondary melody

The 2/4 measure in the above example creates a small-scale grouping dissonance at the end of the first phrase of the chorus. Nicole Biamonte states that when such truncations occur at the end of a formal section, they act as "partial-bar links" to "create momentum leading into the next formal section" (Biamonte 2014, 7.6). In this example (**Figure 5.14**), the phrase following

the 2/4 measure functions as a transition back into the verse, meaning that this truncated measure may reasonably be interpreted as a partial-bar link. The chorus's vocal line ends on the downbeat of the second phrase with the word "heart," and textural aspects of the rest of the phrase support this "chorus becomes transition" reading: the organ and bass step in to provide brief melodies before the voice returns in the verse.

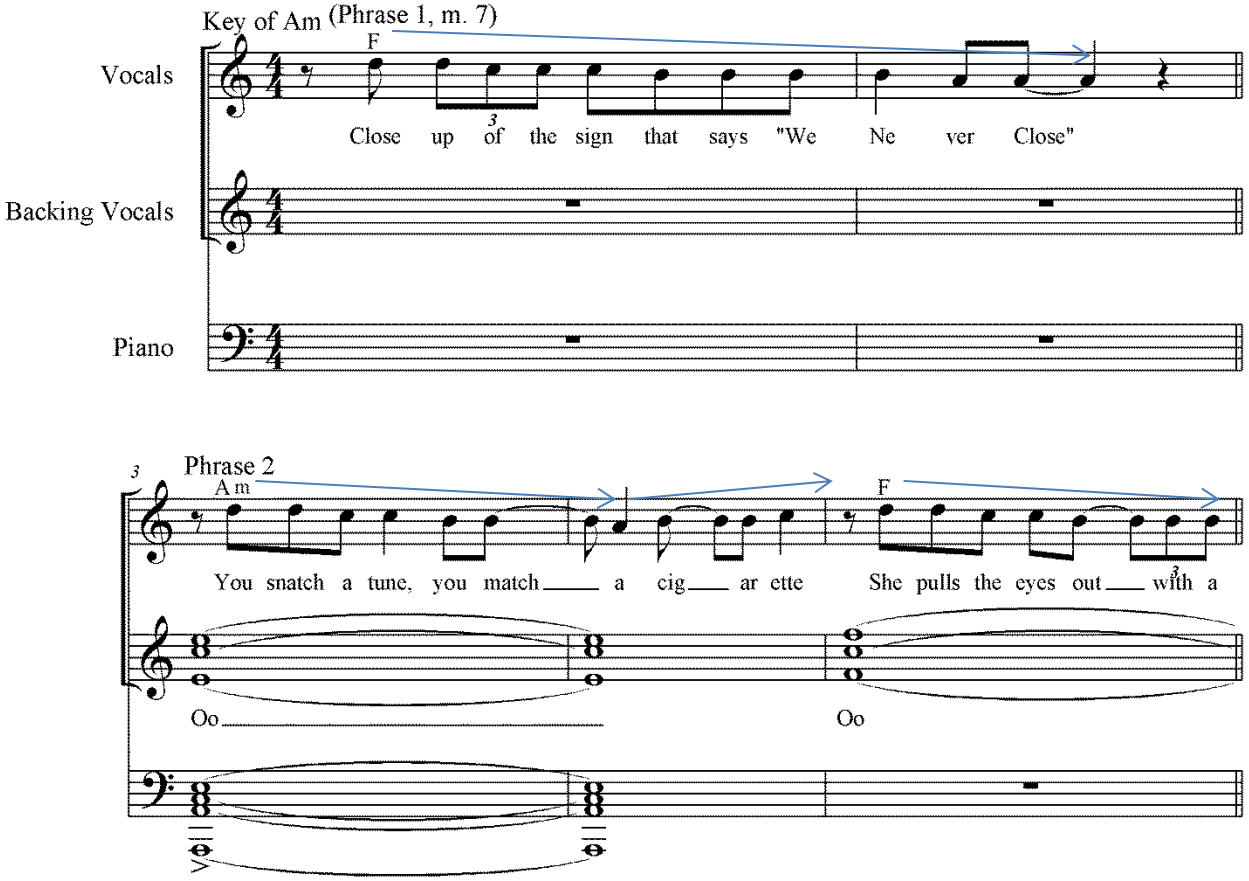
Figure 5.14. "Watching the Detectives" chorus; 1'03"-1'15"; voice, organ, and bass; primary melody

5.2.2 Verses

As shown in the form diagram in Figure 5.8, the first verse is shorter than the second and third. More specifically, verse 1 is eight measures in length while verse 2 and 3 both span 20 measures. In the final two verses, the piano is used to create a formal division of the section into

two phrases. The piano is tacet for the first eight measures[6] of the verse, but plays a forceful A-minor chord on the downbeat of the ninth measure to signal the start of a new phrase (**Figure 5.15**). This divides the verse into two unequal phrases, the first eight measures in length and the second twelve. The piano's only function in the verse is to separate the two phrases through its harmonic reinforcement; once the chord decays, the piano returns to silence. This formal division between phrases is also reinforced by the entrance of backing vocals in the ninth measure of the verse.

Figure 5.15. "Watching the Detectives," verse 2, 1'24"-1'33", piano and backing vocals, harmonic reinforcement



[6] In the fourth measure of the second verse (1'19"-1'20"), the piano plays a descending glissando, which serves as text painting of the lyric "invisible shivers running down my spine." This device does not recur in the third verse, which has different lyrics.

Texturally, rhythmically, and harmonically, the verse is the sparsest of the main formal sections (excluding the buildup of the instrumental introduction). It is mainly driven by drums, bass, guitar, and vocals. The keyboards are absent throughout most of the verse except for the piano chord shown in Figure 5.15. Missing also are any secondary melody figures. The bass is improvisatory and melodically active (Figure 5.4), but serves more of a functional bass role than a melodic one. The verse lacks the rhythmic tension found in the prechorus (Figure 5.12) and the chorus (Figure 5.14). Harmonically, the accompaniment consists of tonic prolongation oscillating between the tonic A minor and submediant F major (Figure 5.9) while the voice performs a similar oscillating figure moving stepwise between D and A.

5.3 Conclusion

The functional roles of the instruments on "Watching the Detectives" place this song closer stylistically to *Model* than to *Aim*. The drums and bass show more expressive power than on *Aim*, and the guitar's role is limited. However, the keyboards on "Watching the Detectives" function more as background instruments than on *Model*, providing harmonic filler and highlighting phrase divisions. Therefore, the "Watching the Detectives" single serves as a stylistic transition between the two albums, pointing toward the new sound on *Model* but not quite fully achieving the functional roles that would sonically define the Attractions.

Furthermore, this analysis demonstrates the textural changes that often accompany formal divisions (**Figure 5.16**). The introduction of "Watching the Detectives" is marked by a gradual buildup of texture, beginning with a drum fill, and then adding bass, rhythm guitar, and lead guitar phrase-by-phrase. The division between the prechorus and the chorus is marked by a shift in function by the drum kit and the organ. Within the larger formal section of the verse, the piano and backing vocals are used to denote the beginning of a new phrase grouping. While the form

can be analyzed without regard to the texture, this chapter[7] demonstrates that texture is often linked to form, with functional changes between phrase and section boundaries carefully planned by the composer or the ensemble.

Figure 5.16. "Watching the Detectives," functional roles in formal sections

	Intro	**Verse**	**Prechorus**	**Chorus**
Vocals		Primary melody Harmonic reinforcement	Primary melody	Primary melody
Keyboard		Harmonic reinforcement	Chordal accompaniment	Harmonic reinforcement Secondary melody
Guitar	Chordal accompaniment Primary melody	Chordal accompaniment	Chordal accompaniment	Chordal accompaniment (in transition phrase only)
Bass	Primary melody Static	Walking	Walking	Walking Primary melody
Drum kit	Improvisatory	Repeating	Repeating	Improvisatory

[7] This is the first chapter to explicitly discuss the relationship between form and texture because it focuses on an individual song rather than excerpts from various songs on an album.

Chapter 6. Conclusions

In terms of harmony and form—the parameters of music most commonly examined by music theorists—there is very little difference between *My Aim Is True* and *This Year's Model*. As Dai Griffiths notes, Costello composed primarily on the guitar until his 1982 album *Imperial Bedroom* (2008, 43). The guitar-based compositional process[8] for *Aim* and *Model* contributed to similar harmonic content on the two albums. Most of the songs on both albums are based on compound strophic verse-chorus forms, occasionally with prechoruses and contrasting bridges. However, by examining the textural content of the two albums, we can see a distinct divide between them. This investigation has answered several key research questions, but also brought up avenues for further research, as detailed below.

6.1 Answered questions: findings from this research

How do the functional roles of the ensemble change from *Aim* to *Model*?

On *Aim* the backing band performs a more strictly accompanimental role, supporting the vocal melody. The instruments fit neatly into Moore's functional layers (2012, 20-2): the drums play repeating patterns to create an explicit beat layer, the bass fills the functional bass layer with static or walking bass lines, the rhythm guitar contributes harmonic filler, and the lead guitar adds to the melodic layer, with secondary melodies that accompany the voice and primary melodies that provide melodic interest while the voice rests. The role of the keyboard on *Aim* is mainly a background one; it appears on only a few songs to add harmonic filler.

The instruments of the backing band on *Model* take on more independent roles, with a shift toward more melodic function. The drum kit more often plays improvisatory material, and the bass gains a more prominent role by playing primary and secondary melodies and riffs. The

[88] See Moore (1993, 54-5), Koozin (2011), and Yim (2011) for more details about guitar-based compositional idioms.

role of the guitar is drastically more reserved, mainly serving as harmonic filler. The keyboard rises to the position of lead instrument, providing primary and secondary melodies similar to those of the lead guitar on *Aim*.

The ensemble on "Watching the Detectives," a single that was recorded between *Aim* and *Model*, acts as a transition between the two albums in terms of functional roles. The drum patterns are more rhythmically dense, and the bass is more melodically active. The keyboard instruments, while still mainly serving as harmonic filler, are more prominent in the recording than the keyboards on *Aim*. The guitar plays harmonic filler, and a guitar overdub plays a primary melody during the instrumental introduction and fade-out.

How is this change in functional roles represented in the recordings?

In the recordings on *Aim*, the instruments are spread across the stereo space according to their expected placement in a live setting. The two guitars are panned left and right respectively, the bass is centered, and the pieces of the drum kit are placed according to their left-to-right location in the kit. The vocals are centered, and this, combined with their louder volume, makes them the main focus of the recording. This placement in the recording space underscores the functional roles of the instruments on the album, highlighting the backing band's position as subordinate to the vocals.

The recordings on *Model*, while following the same basic stereo placement but with keyboards replacing the lead guitar on one side of the stereo spread, place the backing instruments further in the foreground; they are much louder than their counterparts on *Aim*. The more uniform volume across the ensemble emphasizes the increased prominence and melodic role of the backing band on *Model*.

How do the Attractions handle playing songs that were originally recorded by Clover for *Aim*?

In live recordings of the songs from *Aim*, the Attractions often alter the source material in order to fit the style of the ensemble. In the absence of a lead guitar, the bass and keyboard take over many of the primary and secondary melodies, altering them in the process in order to be more idiomatic to the given instrument. The drum beats are more rhythmically complex than those on *Aim* and also more improvisatory. In terms of the formal structures, instrumental introductions and closing sections are sometimes extended, creating an opportunity for the keyboard to solo. This results in an overall feel that is more melodic and improvisatory, which is in keeping with the established stylistic traits of the Attractions.

6.2 Unanswered questions: avenues for future research

Are there stylistic changes on later Attractions albums?

Further research could explore stylistic changes between Costello albums with the same backing band. On later Attractions albums, the basic functional roles remain the same, but the production values become more ambitious. Elvis Costello writes in the liner notes of *Armed Forces* (1979), his third album, that "at the time [of the recording sessions], it seemed as if we were making an impossibly sophisticated leap from the sound of *This Year's Model*" (Costello 2002). Roger Bechirian, a sound engineer for *Model* and later Attractions albums elaborates: "…something like 'Goon Squad' would have probably been done in a very sparse, punchy way on *This Year's Model*, whereas on *Armed Forces* it had this big, cinematic sound" (Buskin 2011). To understand the changes between *Model* and later albums, one must primarily investigate the recorded sound space.

William Moylan's theory of "perceived performance environment (PPE)" includes more dimensions of the recorded space than the model used in this thesis, Moore's sound-box. Moylan states:

> "The characteristics of the perceived performance environment are (1) any frequency alterations to the overall sound of the recording (incorporating bass ratio), (2) how those alterations unfold over time, (3) reverb time and density, (4) pre-delay and the spacing of reflections in the early time field, (5) ratio of direct to reverberant sound, and (6) unfolding dynamic relationships between the direct sound and reflections/reverberation" (2012, 164).

Moylan's addition of reverb time and delay to analysis of the recorded space could prove invaluable to understanding production differences on later Attractions albums. Additionally, examining the overdubs (especially in the vocals and keyboards) would aid in analyzing the textural changes.

How does the backing band influence the song's composition? Would a different backing band result in a different sound?

As mentioned in Chapter 3, both Elvis Costello and Bruce Thomas attest to Thomas' contributions to "Pump It Up" and "(I Don't Want to Go to) Chelsea," crediting him with the creation of the main bass riff that drives the songs. For further information on how the backing band contributes to the overall sound of a song or album, we can examine Costello's later albums. The 1983 album *Punch the Clock* features female backing vocals and a horn section alongside the Attractions. 1993's *The Juliet Letters* was backed by a string quartet instead of a traditional rock band. Most recently, Costello released an album on which he collaborates with American hip-hop and soul band The Roots. Just as songs recorded with Clover sound wildly different, stylistically and texturally, than those recorded with the Attractions, *Wise Up Ghost* (2013) is equally dissimilar to the Attractions, Elvis Costello as a solo artist, or the Imposters (the Attractions minus Bruce Thomas). The backing band undoubtedly influences the sound of an album, and further research could delve into the specific ways that Costello's sound has changed over the course of his career. A study of this kind could perhaps use an analysis of stylistic markers as its basis, similar to Mark Spicer's 2010 study of the Police's style influences.

What is the relationship between form and texture?

As I have shown in several chapters of this thesis, there is a clear link between form and texture. While formal sections are not inevitably marked by a textural change—such as addition or subtraction of instruments, a shift in functional roles, a change in dynamics, etc.—most often they are. On *Aim* and *Model*, formal functions are most likely to change between phrases or sections. Additional research could further explore this phenomenon, searching for formal-textural norms and patterns.

6.3 Final thoughts

From Elvis Costello's first album, *Aim*, to his second, *Model*, the backing band changed, presenting a clear and immediate shift in functional roles in the rock ensemble. As noted previously, a large part of the shift in functional roles on *Model* stems from the inclusion of the keyboard as the lead instrument. John Covach denotes the synthesizer as a stylistic marker of new-wave music when discussing the Cars:

> "There is one distinctive feature of this track that is markedly anti-hippie but that makes no reference to pre-psychedelic rock, and this is [the Cars' keyboardist] Greg Hawkes's use of the synthesizer. Hawkes opts for very simple tones on the synth, seemingly in an attempt to make the instrument sound plain and unsophisticated. The use of very lush synthesizer settings, with pronounced filter-envelope settings creating harmonic sweeps through the overtone series, was a strong marker of the technological sophistication of seventies rock…" (Covach 2003).

The same could be said of Steve Nieve in the Attractions: by using a simple Vox organ tone, Nieve (and Costello by proxy) is distancing himself from the decadent keyboard tones of the 1970s. In comparison, the lead-guitar work on *Aim* then seems like a stylistic relic of mainstream 1970s rock music. *New Musical Express* reviewer Nick Kent called the album "a touch heavy on the old Graham Parker, Van Morrison, etc. influences" (1978). While the choice of musicians factors into the overall sound of *Aim* and *Model*, *Model* also presents a stylistic swing toward

new wave. In these harmonically and formally similar albums, Elvis Costello's stylistic transformation from 1977 to 1978 is represented primarily by the ways in which the instruments interact.

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