

AN ANALYSIS OF DISCO-POP, ALTERNATIVE-POP & GOSPEL AND SOUL INSPIRED-POP MUSIC.

Thomas Benjamin Marlow

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Introduction

In the 1960's, "pop music" described a music genre that's accessible and commercial' (Clark, 2021). Over the course of time, despite evolving and giving rise to a plethora of sub genres, it remains true that all pop genres are relevant in today's commercial market. In this assignment, in addition to analysing the defining characteristics of disco-pop, alternative-pop and gospel and soul inspired-pop music, I will discuss how three chosen reference tracks are aligned with these genres. The production methods used in these genres and in the creation of the reference tracks will be investigated, and the application of these methods in my tracks will be examined.

See Appendix (A) for further information regarding the analysis methods and conditions adhered to in the completion of this assignment.

Instrumentation

In gospel and soul inspired-pop, the vocals are a genre defining characteristic. Mahalia Jackson-the "Queen of Gospel" and mentor of Aretha Franklin was a 'major influence' on future gospel artists (Miguel, 2017). This powerful, raw and passionate vocal delivery is evident in *Adele's* performance on *Hold On* (Adele, 2021). In my track *Shout*, it was important to keep the natural vocal performance intact, maintaining the breaths and imperfections to enforce the emotion of the vocals. Tuning and quantizing the vocals would take away the human element which is fundamental to this genre. Fairly heavy compression and manual gain adjustment was used in *Shout* to control the massive dynamic range of the vocalist. This also helped to make the vocal feel more intimate by raising the level of quiet phrases, which in turn brought out small details in the vocal performance.

In comparison, the vocals in *Say So* from *Doja Cat* (Doja Cat, 2019) are extremely 'polished'. This is evident in the use of precision time alignment and tuning. Whilst the tuning has not been used to the extent of *Cher's* vocal in *Believe* (Heigl, 2018), it is clear it has been utilised to achieve pitch perfection. This is a common characteristic of the disco-pop genre. In my track *Nothing On Me*, although the backing vocals reflect those heard in *Say So*, with the addition of further harmonies, doubles and compression a thicker and richer sound could have been achieved.

The backing vocals in gospel and soul inspired-pop are also a signature part of this genre. The choir and gang vocals are used to dramatic effect, often in call and response with the lead vocal. In *Hold On*, this is heard between the backing vocals and lead vocal with the line 'hold on' (Genius, 2021). In my track *Shout*, whilst there are backing vocals towards the end of the song, they don't have the qualities of a gospel backing group due to the fact they are sung by the same vocalist. In order to achieve the large backing vocal effect heard in *Hold On*, it would be better to record with different singers in several layers. This will achieve separation from the lead vocal and enhance the power of the backing vocals which is important in this genre. In *Shout*, due to a combination of the vocalist's timbre and microphone choice, there were very present upper-mid resonant frequencies in the backing vocals. These frequencies interacted unpleasantly with the lead vocal, which required relatively severe EQ moves to help them sit together in the mix.

One of the defining characteristics of disco-pop is the four-on-the-floor kick drum pattern. In addition to providing a strong and steady beat, it also helps the 'drummer lock in with the song's bass line' (Masterclass, 2021). The tightly quantized, compressed and melodic bass guitar reinforces the groove of the track, usually landing on the beat of the kick which enforces the low-end thump as heard in *Say So*.

In a video from 'ill Factor' (Academy, 2020), the Grammy-Nominated producer breaks down the production of *Say So* and explains how the bass guitar is side-chained subtly to the kick to enhance the groove. In *Nothing On Me*, a compressor with a key input from the kick was used on the live bass guitar which resulted in gain reduction with each hit of the kick. To better match the even dynamic playing of the bass heard in *Say So*, I could have performed the part using fingers instead of a plectrum. This would have created a less dynamic performance and would have reduced the need for as much compression and EQ as applied.

In comparison to disco-pop, alternative-pop makes use of a variety of bass instruments, often varying from section to section. In *Like A Boy* from *Lauren Weintraub* (Weintraub, 2021), the chorus contains a staccato and sparse yet impactful live bass part, whereas the verse has a sustained synth bass with less sub information. In gospel and soul inspired-pop, there is often a live bass guitar playing 'rhythmic, riff-based bass lines' (Green, 2014). Unlike disco-pop, here the bass guitar performance is left relatively unprocessed and natural, being more dynamic and unquantized. This can be heard in *Hold On* towards the climax of the song. In *Shout*, implementing this process with the bass guitar resulted in a performance which maintained its 'live' feel. Soul music has its roots in 'the gospel music of the black church' (Masterclass, 2021), where the 'The power, energy, and message' of gospel music empowered its audience via live performance (Herd, 2014). This is still relevant today and is the essence of gospel and soul inspired-pop.

A defining characteristic of alternative-pop is to manipulate the sound of a live instrument to make it sound unnatural or larger than life. In *Like A Boy*, two hard panned double tracked guitars are heard in the chorus, however they have a synth like quality. Using a guitar in this way tricks the brain, which relates the performance to a guitar but recognises the sound as a synth. The 'Shepard-Risset Glissando' is an illusion whereby a musical note sounds like it is 'forever rising in pitch' (Cox, 2021). This is an example of how audio can be manipulated to confuse one's perception of something. To achieve this sound in *Good On My Own*, a distortion plugin and EQ were used to manipulate the sound. This could have been improved by using the bridge pickup on the single coil guitar opposed to the neck pickup to give a thinner sound which would have better matched the reference track.

The layering of live and synthesized drum samples is a trait of alternative-pop music, achieving a larger than life sound which again fools the brain. *Like A Boy* features punchy electronic drums in the chorus, layered with live acoustic drum samples to add life and depth. In *Good On My Own*, the natural attack of a live kick sample added a 'more interesting front end' to the body of the four-layer synthesized kick (Computer Music, 2019).

The opposite can be said for gospel and soul inspired-pop, with the drums being live recordings and relatively unprocessed. In *Hold On*, the wide dynamic range and panning of the drum kit elements portray a very natural and human feeling performance. Recreating this in *Shout* using live drum samples, manual programming of midi produced variation in the velocity and timing of the midi notes. Whilst this provided a more organic feel to the synthesized drums, an improvement would be to take a pre-recorded drum loop and use Pro Tools beat detective feature to extract the groove into midi data. This could then be further manipulated to fit with the track, creating an even more life-like performance (Boloni, 2019).

The snare-clap is a sound which defines the disco-pop genre. Placing a clap slightly before a grid quantized snare produces 'more of a retro kind of sound' (Oliver, 2021), as heard in *Say So*. In *Nothing On Me*, this technique was applied using two frequency rich Linn Drum LM-1 clap and snare samples and offsetting the timing of the clap. Released in the early 1980's, the Linn Drum LM-1 'represented a significant step forward for the production of popular music' (French, 2019). Using

these samples immediately gives a nostalgic feeling to the track, which is quintessential to the disco-pop genre. Live claps doubling the snare are another characteristic of disco-pop. Due to the fact that snares and claps both share fast and sharp transients, masking can occur which makes them 'less audible at a given fader level' (Senior, 2010). In *Nothing On Me*, it was discovered that nudging the time of the clap sample to enter just before the snare allowed them to come forward in the mix and be more prominent as heard in *Say So*- without the need for EQ or level adjustment. An alternative solution to this would be to have recorded live claps which would inherently contain timing differences, therefore negating the issue of masking.

Track Information

With disco-pop, the steady four-on-the-floor rhythm naturally lends itself to an upbeat tempo. 108bpm was found to be the optimum tempo for 'feelings of pleasure or enjoyment' (Etani, 2018). *Say So* is found to have a tempo of 111bpm with a 4/4-time signature. To ensure *Nothing On Me* had a similar upbeat groove, a tempo of 110bpm was decided. It was discovered that *Say So* was written in the key of D major in the Ionian mode. The Ionian mode is essentially the major scale, which 'has a very positive and happy sound' (Hayes, 2021), which is clearly why it is used in disco-pop music. The same key signature and mode were applied in *Nothing On Me*, but with a variation in the chord sequence which was found to work well with the vocal melodies. In *Say So*, at the end of each 8 bars a B major 7 chord is heard. Here, they are playing off the parallel major mode- that is to say, the exact opposite key signature to the home note. By doing this, they are also raising the third, which is common to both the Phrygian and Dorian modes. This creates tension, and with it being at the end of each 8-bar section, a sense of relief is felt when the next section begins. This is an effective way to take the listener on a journey throughout a track. This technique could have been used in *Nothing On Me*, however it did not seem to work well with the vocal melodies.

The tempo of alternative-pop music can vary greatly due to the wide variety of influences in the genre. *Like A Boy* was found to have a tempo of 85bpm with a 4/4-time signature in the key of D# major, and in the Ionian mode. During the writing process of *Good On My Own*, our initial idea lent itself naturally to a quicker tempo of 100bpm, which remained in place. It was decided to use the same chord pattern as used in *Like A Boy* which uses the 'magic I, IV, V, and vi' chords (Longdon, 2019) in the order- I, V, vi, IV, but in the key of D major.

The tempo of gospel and soul inspired-pop is generally at a much slower tempo than other pop genres, allowing the vocalist to have more time between beats to explore each vocal phrase. This allows more emotion to be expressed which is important in this genre. *Hold On* is found to be written in the key of C major in the Ionian mode at a tempo of 83bpm in 4/4. A similar tempo of 80bpm was chosen for the track *Shout*, and the key signature of G major was favoured by the vocalist to enable them to sing comfortably in their vocal range.

Structure & Arrangement

Whilst there are similarities in the structure and arrangement of songs between the three genres, there are some key differences. A defining characteristic of alternative-pop is the dramatic change of instrumentation between sections, as is evident in *Like A Boy*. See Appendix (B) for a full breakdown of structure and arrangement for this track. Alternatively, typical of the genre, the arrangement of *Say So* stays relatively regular throughout the track keeping the rhythm and pulse of the track consistent. This was obeyed in *Nothing On Me*, where a similar arrangement was followed. See appendix (C) for further information on the structure and arrangement of *Say So*.

The structure and arrangement in gospel and soul inspired-pop takes the listener on a journey, reaching a dramatic climax at the end of the song, as heard in *Hold On*. Using this idea in *Shout*, the arrangement at the end of the song is dense which creates a powerful and climatic ending. See appendix (D) for more details on the structure and arrangement used in *Hold On*.

In my tracks, there are some differences in the structure and arrangement compared with the reference tracks. Mostly this was due to shortening and adding sections to the songs to be able to explore the possibilities of the tracks further. This was the case with *Nothing On Me* with regards to adding a middle 8 section. Similarly, since the tempo of *Good On My Own* is 15bpm faster than *Like A Boy*, it was not possible to completely follow the structure as the song felt rushed. Therefore, it was decided to add a pre-chorus to in effect 'slow down' the track. With *Hold On* being a 6-minute track, it was decided to shorten this length in *Shout* to align with the typical length of other songs in this genre.

Lyrical Content

In the three genres, there are trends in the lyrical content used in each. In the case of *Like A Boy*, there is no explicit language. However, it is often common place in alternative-pop music, as heard in the track *BITTER* from *Marisa Maino* (Maino, 2021). Therefore, in *Good On My Own* the choice was made to use explicit language. Songs in this style and language are very popular on the platform TikTok, with users creating videos of themselves acting and lip-syncing to the lyrics. The popularity of this content is influencing pop-culture and creating a 'major impact on the music industry' (Grimes, 2021).

Comparatively, the lyrical content used in gospel and soul inspired-pop is far more personal and sentimental, often depicting events in the writer's life- as is the case in *Hold On*. In disco-pop music, the lyrical content is less meaningful and in comparison, covers shallower topics. Due to the uplifting nature of disco-pop, listeners are less engaged with the lyrics as they are with the overall groove of the track. These lyrical themes were explored in my tracks.

Mixing Techniques

In each of the three genres, the lead vocal is prominent and forward in the mix. Regarding the pop parent genre in general, the vocal is very important as it is the main element which the listener focuses on. The use of volume automation is required to ensure each word is audible, and 'changing the level of certain vocals' can add to the emotional impact of a song (Owsinski, 2014).

In disco-pop, the drums are an essential part of each track, and for this reason are positioned forward in the mix. This is heard in *Say So*, and was replicated in my track *Nothing On Me*. Clearly the drums must be relatively loud in level, but also the fact that they have no reverb or ambience means they appear closer to the listener, as depth is 'usually done with reverbs and delay' (Owsinski, 2014). In *Nothing On Me*, the use of bus compression on the drums helped to create a cohesive sound, whilst parallel compression set with a fast attack and release and 10dB of gain reduction made the drums 'sound punchy in a very natural way' (Owsinski, 2014). Similarly, to achieve the punchy kick heard in *Like A Boy* and in alternative-pop in general, a compressor with a slow attack and fast release enables one to shape the waveform of the kick. By allowing its attack to pass through and its decay to be shortened, the result is a tight and punchy kick.

In gospel and soul inspired-pop, as portrayed in *Hold On* the low end of the track is fairly dynamic. The kick drum and bass guitar are not very cohesive, resulting in a low end which varies in level. On the other end of the scale, the low end in disco-pop and especially in *Say So* is extremely even in dynamics. In combination with the four-on-the-floor kick pattern, a solid and punchy low end is achieved. Using a multiband compressor, it was discovered that the kick sits above the bass in relation to the amount of low-end sub frequency information. This information was used in the creation of *Nothing On Me* when tone shaping the kick and bass. To ensure the low end of the bass guitar was consistent, using clip gain was effective in manually lowering the level of more resonant notes. These techniques were also utilised in *Good On My Own*, where it was also necessary to achieve a controlled low end to match the characteristic of the alternative-pop genre.

Effects

In gospel and soul inspired-pop, an ethereal ambience is a defining characteristic of the genre. As heard in *Hold On*, there is a large hall reverb on *Adele's* lead vocal. To achieve this same effect in *Shout*, a de-esser alongside a compressor side-chained to the lead vocal were used on the reverb track to ensure the vocals were not masked by the reverb. To have achieved a more natural hall reverb sound, an impulse response reverb would have been superior.

In difference, the ambience of the lead vocal in disco-pop is very low in level. Keeping the lead vocal dry helps to enhance the tight groove of the track. In alternative-pop music, there is a combination of both extremes, with the perceived depth of the track varying from section to section. This can be heard in *Like A Boy* and was put into action in *Good On My Own* with the use of volume automation.

Conclusion

On reflection, I feel that I have convincingly created three tracks which utilise the production techniques analysed in the three reference tracks, and which conform to their respected genres. In addition, I have made my own musical decisions in the creation of my tracks, especially with regards to structure. In hindsight, with *Nothing On Me* I wish more time was spent on the overall balance of the elements in the track to align more closely with *Say So*. Nevertheless, the song is undeniably disco-pop and matches closely in timbre with the two reference tracks. In *Shout*, the song could be greatly improved by recording a live drum kit and piano. Having the ability to shape the tone of the instruments through microphone choice and placement would take the track to another level. In *Good On My Own*, I wish that more gang backing vocals were recorded in the chorus to add extra power and depth to the track. However, I believe it faithfully uses many production techniques used in alternative-pop, and it fits well alongside the reference tracks.

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Appendix A

Analysis Methods

In order to effectively and critically analyse audio, it is advised to follow the guidelines stated in the EBU Tech 3276 document as closely as possible- ensuring that the acoustic centre of loudspeakers are 'approx. 1.2m above the floor level' and their distance from 'surrounding walls should be at least 1m' (Laven, 1998). This helps to ensure that the listening environment has the least impact on the audio as possible, which is important when determining frequency balance and spatial width and depth of a stereo recording.

Multiband analysis is a useful tool to understand the low frequency content of audio with regards to the kick and bass instruments. It is possible to determine the position and placement of these instruments within the sub and low frequency range of the reference tracks, which is useful to be aware of.

Reduced listening is a useful analysis method to focus on one particular sound, allowing you to 'disclose its essential, invariant properties' (Kane, 1973). Listening repeatedly to the same piece of audio allows you to focus on a sound in more detail.

Appendix B

Lauren Weintraub- Like A Boy: Structure and arrangement breakdown

- **1 bar intro**
 - Synth bass with glide feature to smoothly transition between notes. Has a defined attack and percussive nature. Bright and upfront. No ambience.
- **4 bar verse**
 - Lead vocals enter. Dry and forward in the mix. Long dark spot reverb used on the last word of each vocal phrase to fill the gap.
 - Synth bass from intro continues but with a low pass filter. Dry.
 - Wide stereo image low pass filtered percussive element with a short decay playing in rhythmic unison with the synth bass. Heavily rolled off high frequencies, just providing the low-end thump. Dry. Doubler effect to give a stereo effect.
 - Wide stereo automated panned snap alternating between the 2nd and 4th beat. Snap on the 2nd beat is panned hard left and right, but on the 4th beat it is panned much more centrally. Forward and bright. Very short ambience to make them sound more realistic.
 - One small formant vocal adlib on the offbeat in gap between vocal phrases on the first time round only. Very low in level with low frequencies rolled off. Dry.
- **4 bar pre-chorus**
 - Different sub bass replaces existing. This has a less harmonically rich tone and no longer has the gliding feature between notes. More subtle than previous and just provides a sustained low end. Dry.
 - BV's enter and contain level automation with a fade in during the 1st bar. The level is increased by a few dB's during the 'aah's'. Double tracked panned left and right. Dry.
 - Dry syncopated guitar riff enters with slight distortion on the edge of breakup. Sounds like a guitar with single coils were used due to the bright and thin tone. Forward in the mix. Emphasis in the mid-range with a smooth high end. Panned slightly to the left.
 - Guitar bend/fill enters to fill gap between first and second half. Same tone as other guitar. Low in level so it sounds further back. Panned slightly to the right. Dry.
 - Wide sustained snare with an emphasis in the lower frequencies layered under snaps to add body. Low in level tucked under snaps. Dry.
 - Synth plucks enter striking with the snare and snaps. Soft timbre with medium attack and short decay. Low in level and subtle. Wide stereo image. Dry. Modulated with a varying automated low frequency cut-off.
 - White noise riser enters on the last bar. Mono with lows and highs reduced. Low in level and panned centre. Dry.
- **8 bar chorus**
 - Bass guitar enters. Cuts through in the mix without having a lot of noticeable high end. Layered with a sub bass. Tight and quantized. Dry.
 - Mono guitar doubling the bass with power chords. Very saturated harmonically. Very midrange focused. Extreme lows and highs filtering. Sits in the mix between the bass and lead vocal. Panned slightly to the left. Sounds like it was recorded in a small room with a very short decay.
 - Double tracked fuzz guitars enter. Made to sound more like a synth. Doubling the mono guitar. At the end of the last chord there is a tape stop effect. Quiet in the mix. Mid-range focused. Dry.

- Two hard panned crashes hit on the first beat of bar 1 and 4. Long and sustained. Loud and bright. Long bright reverb.
- New snare enters. Sounds like it is made from layers- one layer providing the low-end body, and another providing the crisp high-end bite. The snare is quite sustained. Has a compressed low-end thud with a crispy top end. Bright short/medium decay reverb on snare.
- Wide claps layered under snare. Short decay. Very slightly delayed from the snare to make them sound wider. Dry and low in level.
- Tight and punchy kick with a short decay. Noticeable attack to cut through the mix. A focus in the higher octaves of the resonant frequency so that it cuts through the mix. Dry.
- Gang vocal enters. Slightly delayed from lead vocal. Low pass filter on gang vocals to separate them from the lead vocal. Loud in the mix. Very little direct sound, and sound like they were recorded in a medium sized room. The attack of the transients is slow and seems to fade in.
- Syncopated high pitched bell sound enters acting as a hi hat. Fast attack and medium decay. Very quiet in mix. Panned slightly left. Dry.
- Syncopated high pitch piano in rhythmic unison with bell enters. Has a vintage and warm tone. Quiet in the mix, panned around 60-70% to the right. Dry.
- **1 bar break (the same as intro)**
- **4 bar verse**
 - Same bass re-enters as verse 1.
 - Same percussive element enters as verse 1.
 - New kick enters. Soft attack and dull tone. Low in level. Dry.
 - Same snare enters as in pre-chorus 1.
 - Same clap as chorus 1.
 - Same guitar enters as in pre-chorus 1.
 - Lead vocal enters. Same tone as verse 1. No spot reverb this time though.
 - Tambourine enters. Playing 16th notes. Tight and short decay. Not overly bright. Fairly quiet in the mix. Dry. Panned towards the right.
 - Shaker enters in and out. Has a snare quality regarding its pitch, attack and tone. Mid-ranged focused. Dry. Panned centre.
 - Same guitar bend/fill as pre-chorus 1.
 - New guitar fill enters in the last bar. Slightly broken up tone and palm muted style. Dry. Panned hard right.
 - Vocal adlib enters in last bar. Same timbre as lead vocal. Dry.
 - Snap drops out compared with first verse.
 - Vocal formant adlib drops out compared with first verse.
- **4 bar pre-chorus**
 - BV's enter. Loud and present. Panned hard left and right.
 - Same synth plucks as pre-chorus 1 enter.
 - New snare enters. Has body.
 - New piano enters. Bright and thin, syncopated. Panned almost hard right.
 - Bass drops out in the last 2 bars.
 - Synth plucks drop out in the last 2 bars.
 - New snare drops out after 2nd beat of last 2 bars.
 - Clap drops out in the last 2 bars but comes back in on the second beat of last bar.
 - Reverse guitar swell enters on build into chorus. Low end focused. Panned hard left.
- **8 bar chorus**
 - Same as chorus 1, except for the addition of the same tambourine as verse 2.

- Tom drum fills sound like live drums. Slightly crunchy texture to give them character. Panned like a real drum kit where high pitch tom is slightly to the left and floor tom towards the right. Forward in the mix. Dry.
- Fast hat fills panned hard left. Bright and quiet in the mix.
- **8 bar middle 8**
 - Same as chorus 2.
 - Sustained synth lead has a strings like tone. Low in level. Panned centre but has wide stereo width. Large ambience.
 - Small guitar fill at the end of every 2 bars has the same treatment as other guitars. Low in level. Panned hard right. Dry.
 - Syncopated acoustic bright and wide enters in 2nd half. Little low end. Double tracked panned hard left and right. Dry.
- **4 bar stripped chorus**
 - Everything drops out except lead vocal. Lead vocal has some ambience and depth. Reverb is mono panned centre.
 - New guitar plays sustained 5th harmonies following the chords. Has some ambience and sounds like it is playing in the same space as the vocal. Panned slightly right. Fairly bright sounding.
 - Double tracked and panned distorted guitar enters leading into final chorus. Thick fuzzy tone. Thick in timbre and mid-ranged focused. Loud. Dry. Mid-scooped.
- **4 bar rest of chorus**
 - Same as chorus 2 with the addition of the sustained synth from middle 8.
 - Shaker enters playing 8th notes. Mid-range in pitch but has a fairly bright sound to cut through. Low in level. Dry.
 - Instead of music dropping out in last bar, it drops out in the 2nd bar for variation.
- **4 bar copy of middle 8**
 - Same as second half of middle 8 including:
 - Small guitar fill at the end of every 2 bars has the same treatment as other guitars. Low in level. Panned hard right. Dry.
 - Reverse cymbal at very end is bright and pans from left to right.
 - Syncopated acoustic bright and wide enters in 2nd half. Little low end. Double tracked panned hard left and right. Dry.
- **4 bar rest of copy of middle 8 stripped**
 - Everything drops out except for all drums, percussion and BV's.
 - Hi hat from the end of chorus 2 enters.
 - Music drops out at the end leaving only the vocal on the last line.

Appendix C

Doja Cat-Say So: Structure and arrangement breakdown

- **4 bar intro**
 - Filtered drums dry. Right hand side slightly delayed from left. Lows and highs rolled off.
 - Filtered guitar enters. Filter gradually opens up slightly. Reverb long.
 - Filtered synths atmospheric. High end rolled off.
- **16 bar chorus**
 - Lead vocal enters. Breathy and airy performance. Bright and forward in mix. dry.
 - BV's enter. Loud and bright. Double tracked panned hard left and right. dry.
 - Further BV's enter after 8 bars. Fairly loud and dry.
 - Bass guitar enters. Contains a lot of low end and sub information. Provides most of the low end in the track, whereas the kick just provides the rhythm. High end rolled off. Side chained to the kick.
 - Kick drum enters. Sharp attack, very short decay, not much low end. Just loud enough to cut through. Dry.
 - Snare enters. Relatively low in level. Dry.
 - Wide clap enters. Bright and loud. Stereo and wide. Slightly roomy sound. Every other beat it is panned more centrally.
 - Off-beat closed hi hat enters. Mono and panned centre. Bright, short decay and tight. Dry.
 - After 8 bars the closed hi hat raises in level a couple of dB.
 - Open hi hat enters after 8 bars. Mono and panned centre. Bright. Dry.
 - Pad enters. Very low in level. Stereo and atmospheric.
 - Guitar enters. Bright and forward in mix. Mono panned centre. Mono mid-range focused reverb with a medium decay.
 - Keyboard enters. Very low in level. Stereo and atmospheric.
- **8 bar verse**
 - Everything remains the same except:
 - Closed hi hat drops back down in level.
 - Open hat drops out.
 - Guitar has low pass filter applied which slowly raises up in frequency allowing higher frequencies to be heard.
 - BV's drop out, and re-enter in the last 2 bars.
- **8 bar pre-chorus**
 - Guitar filter continues to open up.
- **16 bar chorus**
 - Short crash enters on first beat of first bar. Forward in mix. Mono and panned centre. Dry.
 - Long dark stereo white noise impact enters on the first beat of bar 1 & 8. Quiet in mix and moves between left and right. Atmospheric.
 - Closed hi hat comes up in level.
 - Open hi hat re-enters.
 - Single hit ride enters on the last off beat of each 4 bars. Bright, mono and panned centre. At same level as open hat. Dry.
 - Very quiet stereo shaker enters. Bright, wide and very quiet. Dry.
 - BV's enter.
 - Further BV's enter after 8 bars.

- Synth stab enters in last 4 bars. Mono and panned midway between centre and right. Mono reverb panned in same position, which has a delayed repeat which enters midway between centre and left.
- **16 bar rap verse**
 - Same instrumentation as verse 1.
 - Instruments drop out in places and the vocal continues.
 - Pad and filtered keyboard remain muted after the first drop out until the next bar.
 - Guitar reverb is louder and wider than verse 1.
 - BV's enter in bar 8 and 12.
 - Closed hi hat drops down in level.
 - Open hi hat enters after 8 bars but accents on different beats to the chorus.
- **16 bar chorus**
 - Same as chorus 2 except the synth stabs enter immediately and remain throughout.
- **8 bar instrumental/vocal section**
 - Same as chorus but with vocal adlibs.
- **8 bar outro**
 - Drops down to a filtered version of the drums and synths only. The filter gradually opens up slightly to reveal higher frequencies.
 - An atmospheric vocal adlib with reverb and delay enters on bar 1 and bar 4. Loud and bright. $\frac{1}{4}$ delay stereo and long.
- **8 bar outro**
 - Drops down to filtered guitar and synth only. The filter gradually opens up.

Appendix D

Adele-Hold On: Structure and arrangement breakdown

- **16 bar intro**
 - Piano enters. Sounds like an upright because of decay and body and has quite narrow stereo field. Also quite dry. Obviously recorded in a small room.
 - Ambient vocal enters. Heavy mix of reverb. Mono panned centre.
- **16 bar verse**
 - Lead vocal enters. Long dark reverb with highs and lows filtered off. Sounds like a hall reverb.
- **16 bar chorus**
 - Ambient vocal re-enters.
 - Electric guitar enters. Panned hard right following chords of piano in low register. Mid ranged focused and clean in sound. Dry. Slight tremolo effect at a rate of 1/16th note.
 - Further backing vocals enter after 8 bars. Same effect as ambient vocal.
 - Acoustic enters after 8 bars panned left. Mid-range focused and clean in sound. Dry.
- **16 bar verse**
 - Same instrumentation as chorus.
 - Organ enters. Leslie organ enters doubling piano stereo and quiet.
 - Backing vocals drop out.
- **8 bar chorus**
 - Same instrumentation as verse 2.
 - Tambourine enters. Stereo and warm in timbre. Relatively loud. Medium room reverb.
 - Ambient vocal re-enters.
 - Drum fill enters in the last bar.
- **8 bar instrumental/adlib section**
 - Drums enter. Natural sounding, dynamic and organic. Sound like they're recorded in a small room. Longer reverb on the snare. Low in the mix.
 - Bass guitar enters. Low in the mix. Warm. Dry.
 - Further backing vocals enter. Panned centre.
- **5 bar build**
 - Electric guitar fill enters. 'Wah' type effect. Panned slightly left. Low in mix.
- **24 bar chorus**
 - Strings enter. Sustained strings are low in mix. Stab strings loud in mix.
 - Choir enters. Loud in mix. Wide stereo image.
- **8 bar outro**
 - Drops down to lead vocal, backing vocals, piano, bass and toms.