

Hooks and Riffs

Exploring Repeated Musical Patterns



A. Key Words

HOOK – A ‘musical hook’ is usually the ‘catchy bit’ of the song that you will remember. It is often short and used and repeated in different places throughout the piece. HOOKS can either be a:

MELODIC HOOK – a HOOK based on the instruments and the singers

RHYTHMIC HOOK – a HOOK based on the patterns in the drums and bass parts or a

VERBAL/LYRICAL HOOK – a HOOK based on the rhyming and/or repeated words of the chorus.

RIFF – A repeated musical pattern often used in the introduction and instrumental breaks in a song or piece of music. RIFFS can be rhythmic, melodic or lyrical, short and repeated.

OSTINATO – A repeated musical pattern. The same meaning as the word RIFF but used when describing repeated musical patterns in “classical” and some “World” music.

BASS LINE – The lowest pitched part of the music often played on bass instruments such as the bass guitar or double bass. RIFFS are often used in BASS LINES.

MELODY – The main “tune” of a song or piece of music, played higher in pitch than the BASS LINE and it may also contain RIFFS or HOOKS. In “Classical Music”, the melody line is often performed “with” an OSTINATO pattern below.

B. Famous Hooks, Riffs and Ostinatos

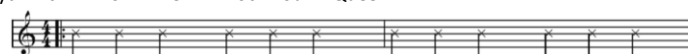
Bass Line Riff from “Sweet Dreams” – *The Eurythmics*



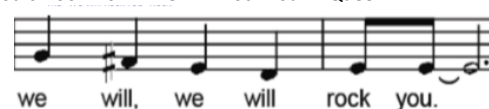
Riff from “Word Up” – *Cameo*



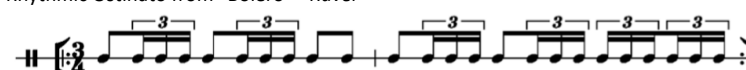
Rhythmic Riff from “We Will Rock You” – *Queen*



Vocal and Melodic Hook from “We Will Rock You” – *Queen*



Rhythmic Ostinato from “Bolero” - *Ravel*



Bass Line Ostinato from “Habanera” from ‘Carmen’ - *Bizet*



Ostinato from 2nd Movement of Symphony No.101 (The Clock) - *Haydn*



C. Music Theory

REPEAT SYMBOL – A musical symbol used in staff notation consisting of two vertical dots followed by double bar lines showing the performer should go back to either the start of the piece or to the corresponding sign facing the other way and repeat that section of music.



TREBLE CLEF – A musical symbol showing that notes are to be performed at a higher pitch. Also called the G clef since it indicates that the second line up is the note G.



BASS CLEF – A musical symbol showing that notes are to be performed at a lower pitch. The BASS LINE part is often written using the BASS CLEF. Also called the F clef since it indicates that the fourth line up is the note F.

