

R&B Song writing

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Hello! Hope you're well. Here is another song writing study where we look at structure.

The song is 'I Heard it Through the Grapevine' by Marvin Gaye.

The reason for studying this song is to consider the structure of it and how it is put together.

Let's dissect all the elements of it.

- Lyrics
- Melody
- Structure

Let's begin by analysing the lyrics.

*Ooh, I bet you're wondering how I know. Bout your plans to make me blue.
With some other guy you knew before, between the two of us guys you know I
love you more*

These lyrics are written in 1st person and are very conversational. Marvin is talking directly to the woman who was messing around behind his back. This makes the listener feel like they're hearing a private conversation between 2 people and this makes listening to the song feel quite intimate.

Now let's think about the melody. Have a go at singing this whole section:

*ooh, I bet you're wondering how I know. Bout your plans to make me blue.
With some other guy you knew before, between the two of us guys you know I
love you more.*

*It took me by surprise, I must say. When I found out yesterday. Don't you know,
I heard it through the grapevine. Not much longer will you be mine.*

*Ooh I heard it through the grapevine. And I'm just about to lose my mind,
honey, honey yea.*

Where does the melody take us?

We have an initial lift in the verse on the word 'guy'. Then, the chords change with 'it took me by surprise I must say'...

We then return to our familiar chord sequence for the chorus.

The melody is constantly ebbing and flowing through the song like ocean waves, drawing the listener's ear in and out of the tension of the story.

Let's return to the lyrics again to figure out the structure.

Have a go at singing the section above again and this time, I'd like you to identify the Verse, the pre chorus and the chorus.

Now, just for fun, have a go at singing the whole song! And maybe focus on the story of the song and where it takes you. ENJOY!

"I Heard It Through The Grapevine"

I bet you're wonderin' how I knew
'Bout your plans to make me blue
With some other guy you knew before
Between the two of us guys
You know I loved you more
It took me by surprise I must say
When I found out yesterday
Don't you know that I heard it through the grapevine
Not much longer would you be mine
Oh I heard it through the grapevine
Oh I'm just about to lose my mind

Honey, honey yeah.
I heard it through the grapevine
Not much longer would you be mine baby

I know a man ain't supposed to cry
But these tears I can't hold inside
Losin' you would end my life you see
'Cause you mean that much to me
You could have told me yourself
That you loved someone else
Instead I heard it through the grapevine

Not much longer would you be mine
Oh, I heard it through the grapevine
And I'm just about to lose my mind

Honey, honey yeah
I heard it through the grapevine
Not much longer would you be mine, baby

People say believe half of what you see
Some and none of what you hear
But I can't help but be confused
If it's true please tell me dear
Do you plan to let me go
For the other guy you loved before?

Don't you know I heard it through the grapevine
Not much longer would you be mine, baby yeah
I heard it through the grapevine
I'm just about to lose my mind
Honey, honey, yeah
I heard it through the grapevine,
Not much longer would you be mine, baby yeah

Honey, honey, yeah
I heard it through the grapevine,
Not much longer would you be mine, baby yeah yeah
I heard it through the grapevine,
Not much longer would you be mine, baby yeah yeah