

Defying Gravity from the musical **Wicked**

Stephen Schwartz

Tonality

The work is essentially in **D major**, however there are moments where the key is less stable.

Sudden modulations from bar 20 in B, then F and back to D are an example of this. There are also moments of **chromatic** melody writing which can cloud the tonality, e.g. b121

Harmony

Suspended chords are a feature – where 3rd is replaced with the 4th of a chord. There are frequent **pedal points**. These can be **upper**, **inner** or **lower** and have a degree of the scale attached to them.

Rhythm & Metre

Sections of the music are sung as **recitative** – where a vocal line sits part way between singing and speaking. The following tempo terms are used: **Andante**, **Moderato**, **Allegro**, **Maestoso**. Regular **syncopation**, especially at the start of phrases. The piece is in $\frac{3}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$

Texture

The texture is broadly **homophonic**: melody with accompaniment.

Vocalists either sing alternately, or in unison. There are just a few short passages of harmonised vocals.

Structure

Within the show as a whole this piece of music brings Act I to a close.

The piece in isolation can be referred to as being in **verse-chorus** form.



Resources

23 musicians: 2 vocalists, 2 violins, viola, cello, double bass, 4 doubling woodwind players, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, 2 French horns, 2 guitars, harp, drum kit, percussion, three keyboards.

Brass are often used **chordally**. The guitars use various **effects** in their performance inc. **distortion**. Frequent moments where the drummer **fills**. Strings use **tremolo**. **Scalic figures** in wind and strings. **Tutti** means ‘all’. Keyboards will be required to change the sound frequently during the show – using synthesizers, string sounds etc. Vocals utilise **recitative**, or sing-speak!

Melody

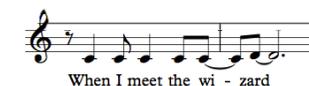
Melodies are often drawn from the chords which accompany them – this is known as **triadic**.

When the lyrics ...*defying gravity*... are sung, these are known as a **title hook**.

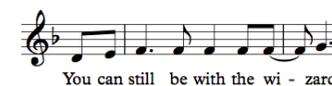
Word setting is mainly **syllabic**.

Leitmotifs

...a short musical idea which is repeated and adapted throughout an individual piece, or an entire show. Often used to represent characters, or places. The first motif is from a different song in *Wicked*...



...the second motif is from “*Defying Gravity*”. They have the same melody, but start on a different pitch.



Schwartz uses material from the original “*Wizard of Oz*” to create the ‘unlimited’ motif:



See how Schwartz uses the same intervals as the familiar ‘Over The Rainbow’ melody in his motif. Even a further adapted version in the synth.