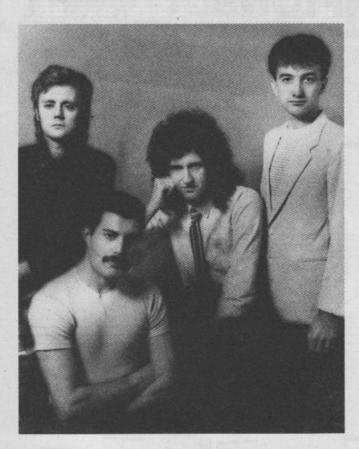
"We Are the Champions" Queen



By Jordan Baker

ew bands have made as much of an impact on rock as Queen did with 1977's News of the World. In a changing musical world in which punk was gaining ground, Queen proved that they could adapt and survive, combining the aggressiveness of tracks like "Sheer Heart Attack" and "Get Down, Make Love" with anthems such as the album's opening medley, "We Will RockYou/We Are the Champions." While "We Will Rock You" became an all-time favorite at sporting events, "We Are the Champions"

maintained the grandiose elements of classic Queen material, with Freddie Mercury's soaring vocals guiding the band and Brian May adding just the right touches in both rhythm and lead guitar tracks.

SIMPLE VS. COMPOUND METER

"We Are the Champions" has a 12/8 time signature, which, along with an intermittent 6/8 time signature, falls into a category called compound meter. In each of these signatures, the main pulse is divided into three smaller parts—one strong note fol-

lowed by two weak ones. In simple meter, on the other hand, each beat is divided into two parts—one strong and one weak. So, in a simple meter such as 4/4, the eighth notes are counted "one-and, two-and, three-and, four-and"; in 12/8, however, they are counted "one-and-uh, twoand-uh, three-and-uh, four-anduh." At faster tempos, you generally count or tap your foot only to the main beats; as such, it's important to get a feel for compound meters at a slow speed, where you can make sure to give equal time to each part of the beat, tapping your foot or counting aloud as needed.

THE VERSE

Since Mercury's piano style is full of ringing arpeggios and righthand octave leaps, it's difficult to duplicate it note for note on the guitar; however, our transcription's arrangement will suffice, as long as you pay proper atten-

tion to dynamics and phrasing. Note that the second beat is often accented, and that staccato notes occur on or just after the third beat of each measure. If you're fluent with two-hand-touch, or tap-style, playing, you may want to try expanding the range of this C minor-

based part by using a pattern such as the one in Fig. 1.

May also plays arpeggios when he enters with the clean guitar part—at this point, the harmonic emphasis shifts to an Eb chord, the tonic of C minor's relative major key. While the key signature doesn't change (Eb major and C minor both contain three flats), this move sets up the transition (up a whole step) to F major in the chorus, aided by a Bb5–C5 sequence (the IV and V chords of F major). Since Bb5 is the V chord of Eb, and therefore diatonic (within the key) to both Eb and F major, it helps smooth out the key change.

THE CHORUS

With his volume cranked, May launches into the power chordladen chorus figure—the perfect counterpart to the piano-driven verse-and finishes up with some wide voicings of inverted chords. Mercury makes an interesting harmonic choice at the four-bar interlude tagged onto the chorus; there, he uses phrasing similar to the verse but replaces the Cm chord with the iv chord, Fm. This iv-v sequence makes the Fm act briefly as the tonic-resulting in the fusion-like sound of F Dorian (F-G-Ab-Bb-C-D-Eb)-before

returning to the Cm chord as the vocals reenter.

In the second chorus, May puts his unmistakable phrasing, bending, and vibrato into some lead fills, creating a calland-response effect before harmonizing with Mercury's vocals. Despite having single-

coil pickups in his homemade guitar, May gets outrageously thick lead tone. A humbucker-equipped guitar wouldn't be out of the question for approximating May's sound, but if you're going for it with single-coils (which are generally brighter than humbuckers), be sure to add enough midrange for a good amount of bite and sustain.





TONE ZONE

GUITARS: Solidbody **PICKUP/POSITION:** Singlecoil/Bridge and Middle **GAIN:** 7

EQ: Bass/Mid/Treble: 5/7/6

Download presets at www.digitech.com



:: DigiTe

As Recorded by Queen

(From the Hollywood Recording NEWS OF THE WORLD)

Transcribed by Jordan Baker

Words and Music by Freddie Mercury



Lyrics

I've paid my dues, time after time. I've done my sentence, but committed no crime. And bad mistakes, I've made a few. I've had my share of sand kicked in my face, but I've come through. And I need to go on and on and on and on.

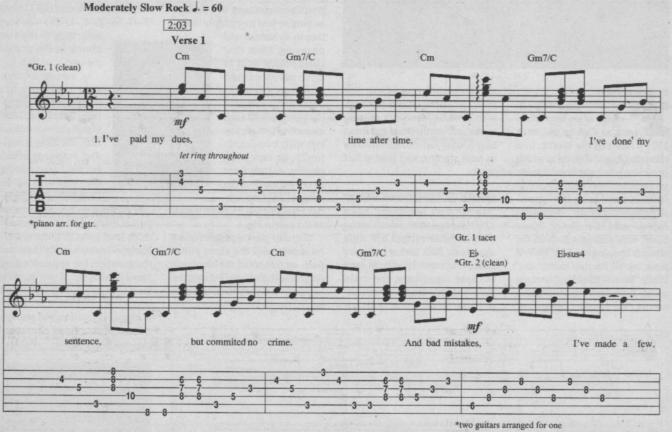
Chorus

We are the champions, my friends,
And we'll keep on fighting 'til the end.
We are the champions, we are the champions.
No time for losers, 'cause we are the champions of the world.

Verse 2

I've taken my bows, and my curtain calls.
You brought me fame and fortune and everything that goes with it. I thanked you all. But it's been no bed of roses, no pleasure cruise.

I consider it a challenge before all human race, and I'd never lose. And the meters go on and on and on and on.



Copyright © 1977 QUEEN MUSIC LTD.

All Rights for the U.S. and Canada Controlled and Administered by BEECHWOOD MUSIC CORP.

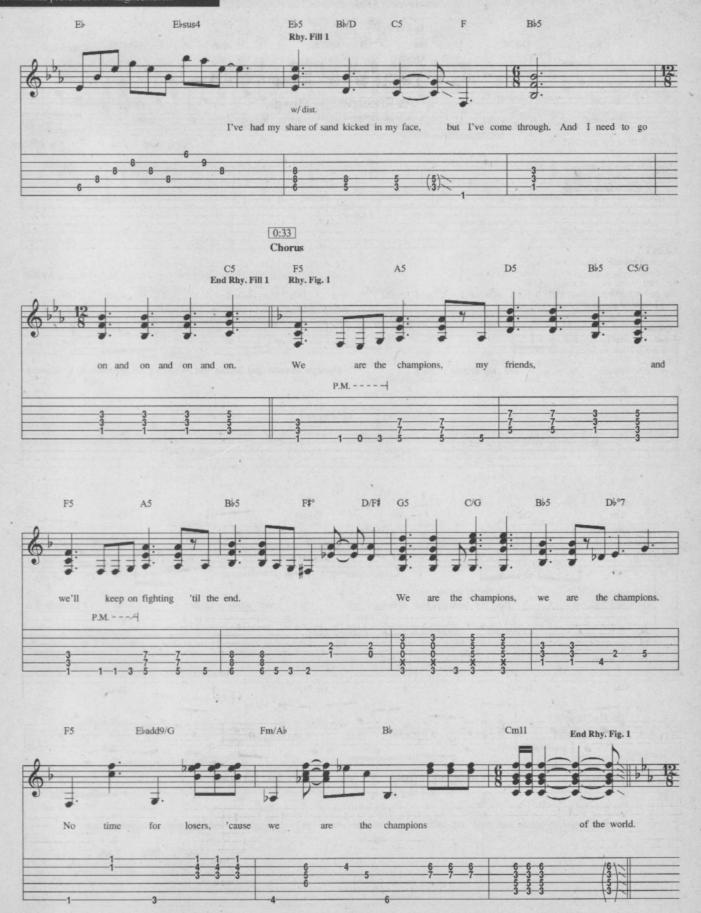
All Rights for the World excluding the U.S. and Canada Controlled and Administered by EMI MUSIC PUBLISHING LTD.

All Rights Reserved International Copyright Secured

Used by Permission

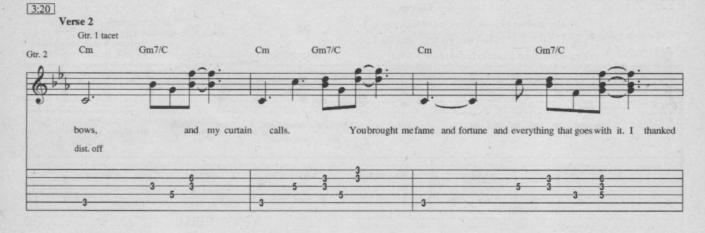
Reprinted by Permission of Hal Leonard Corporation

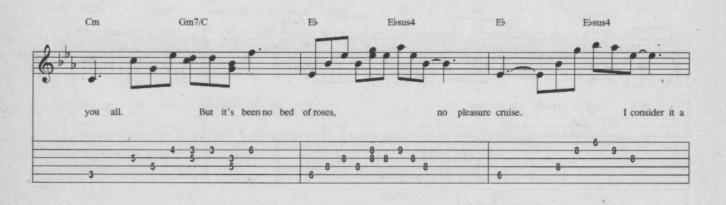
We Are the Champions

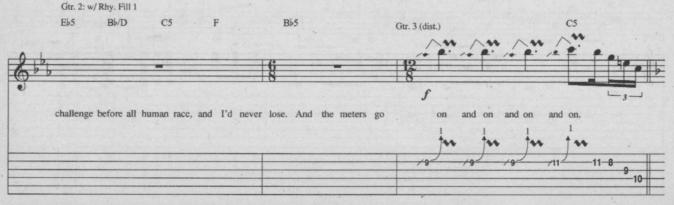


3









Download presets at www.digitech.com.



