

THE EAGLES: "Hotel California"

The making of a studio masterpiece.

BY PAUL ROBINSON

THIS TITLE CUT from the Eagles' Grammy-winning "1977 Record of the Year" was originally conceived by guitarist Don Felder, who then presented his initial sketches to the rest of the band for refinement. Don Henley and Glen Frey applied their lyrical talents to the music; Joe Walsh's contribution was mainly in the areas of production and arrange-

ment, with such classic Walshian touches as the background "chick-a" track (Gtr.3) and the octave-doubled bass figure (Gtr.4), beginning with the first verse (see rehearsal letter C).

The opening eight bars feature Felder playing a Takamine acoustic 12-string guitar recorded with both a microphone and an internal pickup. The microphone's signal was sent directly into the mixing board, while the pickup's signal was sent through a Leslie (rotating speaker) that was placed between two additional microphones.

Felder used a capo for this part, clamping it down behind the 7th fret (between the 6th and 7th frets). This enabled him to play the arpeggiated chords as clearly and effortlessly as if they were in the open position. For example, to play the first chord (Bm) without the capo, he

would have had to barre his index finger behind the 7th fret (an almost unreasonable request on a 12-string!). With the capo, he was able to finger it like an ordinary open E minor chord. The six-string acoustic guitar (Gtr. 2) that enters at rehearsal letter B is a Martin D-35.

The classic lead guitar finale, beginning at rehearsal letter K, features Felder and Walsh trading licks and eventually teaming up for a climactic harmonized duet. Notice the distinctly different, yet complementary, tones of the two guitars (Felder uses a Gibson Les Paul; Walsh plays a Fender Telecaster through a phase shifter).

And so at last, here are *all* the guitar tracks recorded on "Hotel California." Thanks to Don Felder for his consultation.

"Hotel California"

WORDS AND MUSIC BY DON FELDER, DON HENLEY AND GLEN FREY

TRANSCRIBED BY PAUL ROBINSON AND JESSE GRESS

A Intro

Moderately $\text{♩} = 74 \text{ b.p.m.}$

1 **Bm** **F#7** **Aadd9** **E9**

* Gtr.1 (Acous. 12-string)

let arpeggio ring

5 **G** **D** **Em7** **F#7**

* Capo at 7th fret.
Gtr.2 (acous. 6-string) doubles first chord

B

(0:26)

9

Gtr.1

Bm **F#7** **Aadd9**

let arpeggio ring

Gtr.2 (acous. 6-string)

From the Elektra/Asylum recording *Hotel California*

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12 E9 G D Em7

Gtr.1

Gtr.2

Gtr.3 (Elec. 6-string w/dist., flange, reverb)

Fade in w/vol. control

dim.

let arpeggios ring

mp

C 1st Verse

(0:52)

On a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair, warm smell of colitas,

16 F#7add4 Bm F#7 Aadd9

Gtr.1

(drums)

let arpeggios ring throughout

Gtr.3 (Elec. 6-string)

Rhy. Fig. 1

* F.H.M.

* Heavily muted with fretting hand

Gtr.4 (Elec. 6-string)

Rhy. Fig. 2

mf

P.M. J

rising up through the air. Up ahead in the distance, I saw a shimmering light. My head grew heavy and my sight grew dim.

[illegible]

D 2nd Verse
(1:18)

I had to stop for the night.
F#7

There she stood in the doorway. I heard the mission bell and I was thinking to myself this could be

Bm
w/Rhy. Figs.1., 2

F#7

Aadd9

24

W/Rhy. Figs. 1, 2

end Rhy. Fig. 1 * Rhy. Fig. 3

Gtr. 5 (Elec. 6-string)

Gtr. 6 (Elec. 6-string)

f w/dist. dim. *f* w/dist. dim. *f* w/dist. dim.

Drums

* includes gtrs. 5 and 6

end Rhy. Fig. 2

P.M.

lovely face.

Plenty of room at the Hotel California.

Any

Bm

G

D

36

F 3rd Verse

(2:10)

time of year, (any time of year) you can find it here.

Her mind is tiffany twisted.

Em

F#7

Bm

39

She got Mercedes Benz. She got a lot of pretty, pretty boys that she calls friends. How they dance in the courtyard,

42 F#7 Aadd9 E9 G

sweet summer sweat. Some dance to remember, some dance to forget.

46 D Em7 F#7

G 4th Verse
(2:36)

So I called up the captain, "Please bring me my wine." He said, "We haven't had that spirit here since nineteen sixty nine."

Bm F#7 A E

Gtr 1

49 w Rhy. Figs. 1, 2 and 3
* Gtr 7 (Elec. 6-string)
* Gtr 8 (Elec. 6-string)
Divisi

And still those voices are calling from far away.

Wake you up in the middle of the night just to hear them say;

Chord progression: G, D, Em, F#7

Measure 53: Musical notation for guitar with fret numbers (10, 9, 10, 12, 12, 11, 12) and dynamics (dim., f).

[H] 2nd Chorus (3:02)

"Welcome to the Hotel California."

Such a lovely place, such a lovely face. They're

Chord progression: G, D, F#7, Bm

Measure 57: Musical notation for guitar with fret numbers (10, 9, 10, 12, 12, 11, 12) and dynamics (dim., f). Includes guitar-specific notation like "Gtr. 1", "Gtr. 5", "Gtr. 6", "Divisi", and "P.H. (15ma)".

* Gtrs. 7 and 8 tacet

pitch: D - C#

livin' it up at the Hotel California.

What a nice surprise. Bring your alibis.

Chord progression: G, D, Em, F#7

Measure 61: Musical notation for guitar with fret numbers (22, 22, 22, 22, 19, 21) and dynamics (dim., f). Includes guitar-specific notation like "Gtr. 5", "Gtr. 6 tacet", "full hold bend", and "P.H. 1/2".

pitch: E - F# E

I 5th Verse

(3:29)

Mirrors on the ceiling and pink champagne on ice. And she said, "We are all just prisoners here of our own device."

65 Bm F#7 Aadd9 E9

Gtr.1 (2) *mf* let arpeggios ring throughout

* All other gtrs. tacet

And in the master's chambers they gathered for the feast. They stab it with their steely knives but they just can't kill the beast.

69 G D Em F#7

J 6th Verse

(3:55) Last thing I remember I was running for the door. I had to find the passage back to the place I was before. (first 7 bars only)

Bm F#7 Aadd9 E9

w/ Rhy. Figs. 1 and 2

Gtr.1

73 Gtr.5 Gtr.6 Divisi *f* dim. > full 1/2 dim. > dim. >

8 va

Gtr.7 Gtr.8 Divisi

"Relax," said the nightman, "We are programmed to receive. You can check out any time you like but you can never leave."

Relax, and the nightman, we programmed to relax.

G D Em F#7

77

dim. $\frac{1}{2}$

1st solo gr.
(Don Felder)
w/dist.

(Gtrs. 7 and 8 tacet)
f w/dist.

K Guitar Solo

(4:21)

Bm
Rhy. Figs. 1, 2

F#7

A

81

W/Rhy. Figs. 1, 2

Gr. 1

Gr. 5

Gr. 6

Dist. w/dist. dim. w/dist. dim. w/dist. dim.

1st Solo Gr. (Felder)

1 1/2 (12) 10 12 11 9 7 9 7 1/2 0 9 12 9 7 1/4 (7) 1/2 7 9 7 9 6 9 7 9 7 full

3 even bend 1/4 3

X X X

Rhy. Fill 1

F#7

- * Fret-hand muting

E G D

84

dim. ∇ dim. ∇

hold bend full 1/2 let ring full full hold bend *mp* *f* full *mp* *f*

10 10 (10) 7 10 8 7 10 10 (10) 10 10 7 10 10 (10) 8 10 8 10 9 9 (9) 7 7 6 7 (7) X X

Em F#7

87

1/2 1/2 slight P.H. 1/2 1/2 1/2 full full full full

7 9 X 7 (7) 9 7 9 7 (7) 9 7 7 10 9 7 (7) (9) 7

L
(4:46)

Bm w/Rhy. Figs. 1 and 2 F#7 Aadd9

Gtr. 1

89 Gtr. 5 Gtr. 6

dim. $\frac{1}{2}$ full

2nd Solo Gtr. (Joe Walsh)

widist. and phase shifter

full $\frac{1}{2}$ full $\frac{1}{2}$ full $\frac{1}{2}$ full $\frac{1}{2}$ full

10-12 (10)12 11 10 9 (9) (9) 14 12 15 17 15 17 17 (17)15 17 15 17 15 16 17 17 17 (17) 15 17 17 15

E9 G D

92

dim. $\frac{1}{2}$ full

8 va

hold bend full

full $\frac{1}{2}$ full full full

10-12 (10)12 11 10 9 (9) (9) 14 12 15 17 15 17 17 (17)15 17 15 17 15 16 17 17 17 (17) 15 17 17 15

* Pre-bend ② w/ ①

Em F#7

95

hold bend full

lay back

17 15 13 11 9 7 5 3 2 1

* 1st Solo Gtr.
reenters (downstemmed notes)
TAB numbers are on right
side of slashes.

M
(5:13)

Bm w/Rhy. Figs. 1 and 2 F#7 A

97

dim.

full

17 15 13 11 9 7 5 3 2 1

E9 **G** **D**

Gr.1

100 Gr.5

Gr.6

dim.

(Felder)

full

(Walsh)

full

10 15 14 12 10 12 12 9 12 12 10 9 10 12 12 14 10 12 10 12 (12) 11 11

12 10 11 9 7 9 11 10 (10) 7 9 7 10 7 7 9 7 7 9 7 12 11 11 9 (9) 7 7

Em **F#7** **Bm**

Gr.1

103 Gr.5

Gr.6

12

full

Riff A Gr.5 (5:39)

Gr.6

full

(Felder)

Riff A Gr.7 (Felder) 8 va.

12 12 10 12 11 9 10 12 14 10 14 10 14 10 14 10 12 12 14 10 12 14 10 12 14 10 12

(Walsh)

Riff A Gr.8 (Walsh)

9 9 7 0 7 0 7 0 10 7 10 7 10 7 10 7 10 7 7

* Riff A includes gtrs. 5, 6, 7 and 8

F#7 **A** **E9**

106

12 9 11 12 9 11 12 9 12 10 12 9 10 12 9 10 10 7 9 10 7 9 10 7 10 10

G **D**

109

10 7 0 10 7 0 10 7 0 10 7 0 10 7 0 10 5 7 10 5 7 10 5 10 14 7 3 9 7 3 9 7 3 9 7 3 9 5 2 3 5 2 3 5 2 5 10

TRADING LICKS

Em F#7

111

end Riff A

1/2

end Riff A

end Riff A

□

(6:05) Begin fade
w/Rhy. Figs. 1, 2 and Riff A

113 Bm Gtr.1 F#7 A E

f *mf*

117 G D Em F#7 fade out

mp *p* *pp* *ppp*