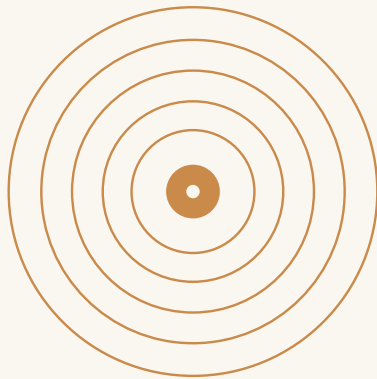


A SONGWRITING ANALYSIS



Farewell

Rush, the Last Tour

Brandon Chavez

ONETHINGNEEDEDSHOP

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01

"A Farewell To Kings"

Six Voices, Six Forms, and the Trio as Third
Author

02

Preface

The album opens with a guitar and a bird. Alex Lifeson sits in a Welsh farmyard in summer 1977 with a classical guitar and a microphone, and the first thirty seconds of *A Farewell To Kings* is the sound of a stringed instrument and the actual birds of Rockfield Studios captured outdoors on tape. The choice is not a sound-effect, it is a thesis. The band that had just released the most aggressive prog-rock side of its career, 2112's title suite, walks into the next record by opening with the quietest, most pastoral, most literary gesture it had recorded to that point.

A Farewell To Kings is a literary album made by a polyphonic trio, and that is the book's central claim. Neil Peart writes lyrics that read like a six-piece verse cycle, an epic in miniature, with Stephen Fry's prosody and Adam Bradley's pop-poetry frame the right tools to hear what the lines are doing. The musical setting under those lines is a three-voice argument, in which Geddy Lee's bass and vocal, Alex Lifeson's guitar, and Neil Peart's drum kit function as three independent contrapuntal voices, each one carrying part of the case the lyric is making. The album is a literary text that is also a polyphonic text, and the book reads it both ways at once.

This was the band's fifth studio album, recorded summer 1977 at Rockfield Studios in Wales, released September 1, 1977 on Mercury in the United States and Anthem in Canada. It followed 2112, which had broken Rush commercially the year before, and preceded Hemispheres, which would resolve A Farewell To Kings's closing cliffhanger. The album peaked at #11 in the UK and #33 on the Billboard 200, the band's highest US chart placement to that point. The single "Closer To The Heart" cracked Top 40 in Canada and the UK, the first Rush song to do so. Critically the album split the room. Allan Moore, writing twenty years later in *Rocking The Classics*, would treat it as one of prog's late-period craft statements. Robert Christgau, writing in the moment, would not.

The frame for this book is built from six sources. Stephen Fry's *The Ode Less Travelled* and Adam Bradley's *The Poetry Of Pop* supply the lyric and prosody vocabulary. Ken Stephenson's *What To Listen For In Rock*, Allan Moore's *Rock: The Primary Text*, Drew Nobile's *Form As Harmony In Rock Music*, and Edward Macan's *Rocking The Classics* supply the rock-on-its-own-terms musical vocabulary, which the analysis will use rather than relabel the music with classical or jazz theory. Walter Piston's *Counterpoint* and Kent Kennan's *Counterpoint* give the trio analysis its multi-voice language. John Riley's *The Art Of Bop Drumming* and Cooper and Meyer's *The Rhythmic Structure Of Music* give Peart's playing its analytical vocabulary. Bill Bruford's autobiography and Robert Christgau's record guide give the reception context. The book cites these authors rather than the skills that bundle them.

The book reads end-to-end as six chapters, one per track, with three framing chapters before them and a closing chapter after. The framing chapters set the literary, the musical, and the

trio-counterpoint lenses. The per-track chapters use all three lenses on the same material. The closing chapter argues the album's place in 1977 and in the prog canon Macan eventually wrote down. The original pair-by-pair lyric reading is preserved verbatim inside each track chapter, and the musical and contextual layers wrap around it.

A note on method. Where the analysis names a key, a meter, a bar, or a chord, the claim is verifiable against the released recording. Where the analysis claims a counterpoint event between two voices, the claim is named at section level rather than at the exact bar, because the album-side counterpoint analysis is in service of describing what the trio does, not in service of a per-bar transcription. The book trusts a reader to put the record on. The original lyric pair-analysis is verbatim from the source document, and the labels Pair 1, Pair 2, etc. count by lyric pair rather than by musical bar.

03

Frame I: The Literary Address (Fry and Bradley)

Stephen Fry insists that English-language poetry lives in **stress**, that the metrical foot is the cell of the line, and that figures of speech are the poet's strongest tools for what Shelley called "lifting the veil of familiarity." Adam Bradley reframes the same machinery for popular song. Lyrics, he argues, are sounded poetry, a "dance of the rhythmic pulse of the lyric over and against the rhythmic pulse of the music." Rhymes in pop tend to be **rhythm-rhyme units**, binding whole phrases rather than terminal monosyllables. Stories rely on the careful trade between specificity (details that anchor) and ambiguity (gaps that invite the listener in).

Neil Peart writes inside this conversation. His lines lean **iambic** but freely substitute trochees at heads and spondees at climaxes. He favors **anaphora** (initial repetition), **apostrophe** (direct address to abstract ideals), **mythic synecdoche** (a single emblem standing in for a whole condition), and **epistrophic refrains** that turn a title phrase into a moral compass. The album is built like a six-piece verse cycle, an epic in miniature, with the opening title song and the closing Cygnus framing two pairs of human-scale ballads

(Closer / Cinderella Man) and one love-lyric (Madrigal) around the centerpiece quest of Xanadu.

The per-track chapters carry the user's thematic gloss verbatim and add craft notes labeled **Sound**, **Figure**, **Prosody / Form**, and **Pop-poetry frame**, pulling vocabulary from Fry and Bradley wherever the line actually rewards it.

04

Frame II: The Musical Frame (Macan, Stephenson, Moore, Nobile, 1977)

Edward Macan's *Rocking The Classics* defines progressive rock as a music that absorbs classical-music ambitions of form, length, instrumental virtuosity, and conceptual narrative without losing its rock-band instrumentation. The book treats Rush in passing as one of the prog bands that survived the genre's mid-decade peak and adapted past punk's 1977 pressure. Rush in 1977 is on the lip of that adaptation. *A Farewell To Kings* is the album where the band's classical ambitions sit cleanly inside a rock-trio format, before the synth-and-pop adjustments of the early 1980s. The album's two long tracks (*Xanadu*, *Cygnus X-1*) are full prog suites in Macan's sense, multi-section, thematically recurrent, with named subsections and tempo shifts. The album's four shorter tracks are rock songs in conventional length but with prog texture and prog harmonic palette. Macan's analytical model for the prog suite, which he develops at chapter length in the book, is the most useful single-source frame for *Xanadu* and *Cygnus* on this album.

Ken Stephenson's What To Listen For In Rock supplies the **harmonic vocabulary for the rest of the record**. Stephenson's central insight is that rock harmony often operates non-functionally, that the dominant-to-tonic progression that organizes common-practice classical music is one option among several in rock, and that **modal practice** (Mixolydian, Aeolian, Dorian) and **retrogressive progressions** (going against the classical pull toward the dominant) are equally common. The riff in A Farewell To Kings's title track operates in A Mixolydian, with the characteristic $\flat VII$ (G major) chord appearing where a classical reading would expect a dominant. Cinderella Man's bright $B\flat$ major operates closer to common-practice harmony but borrows freely from the parallel minor. Madrigal's quiet D major holds Lydian color in the upper voices. None of this is "non-functional" in the sense of being randomized, it is non-functional in the sense Stephenson means, organized by modal and stepwise considerations rather than by the V-to-I pull. Reading these songs through Stephenson rather than through a classical-harmony lens gets the analysis closer to what the music actually does.

Allan Moore's Rock: The Primary Text contributes the **sound-box model**. Moore treats every rock recording as a three-dimensional space, with **lateral** position (stereo left to right), **vertical** position (frequency low to high), and **depth** position (close to far). The producer and engineer arrange the band's voices inside this box, and the box's organization is one of the album's principal expressive instruments. A Farewell To Kings is a Terry Brown production (Brown co-produced with the band, as he had since Fly By Night), and the box is conventional rock-trio architecture with one significant variation. The classical guitar on the title track's intro and Closer To The Heart sits forward-center in the box and lower-vertical than the electric guitar would, an

acoustic instrument occupying a different vertical zone from the electric in the same hands. The tubular bells, glockenspiel, and temple blocks on Xanadu occupy the highest vertical zone and far depth, far back behind the band, the kind of orchestral-percussion placement that Moore identifies as one of prog's signature box-arrangements. The Taurus bass pedals on Cygnus X-1 occupy the lowest vertical zone, below Geddy's electric bass.

<!-- visual:MODE_TABLE@page-2 -->

Mode	Intervals	Signature	Characteristic chords
Mixolydian	1 2 3 4 5 6 b7	b7 over major	I, bVII
Aeolian	1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7	natural minor	i, bVI, bVII
Dorian	1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7	b6 over minor	i, IV
Lydian	1 2 3 #4 5 6 7	#4 over major	I, II

<!-- /visual:MODE_TABLE@page-2 -->

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-2 -->

Scale of A mixolydian

A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#	A
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-2 -->

Drew Nobile's Form As Harmony In Rock Music gives the formal-functional vocabulary for what each section of each song is doing. Nobile distinguishes **loops** (repeated short cycles that don't progress) from **progressions** (chord sequences that move toward a goal). He distinguishes the **verse-prechorus-chorus** harmonic function (each section does a different harmonic job) from the **four-phase verse** (a single long section that builds in four stages). On A Farewell To Kings, Closer To The Heart is the album's only song with a clear

verse-prechorus-chorus architecture in Nobile's strict sense. Cinderella Man is a verse-chorus song without a prechorus. The title track operates as a verse-refrain song with a short instrumental section, which Nobile would treat as an older rock form predating the prechorus elaboration. Xanadu and Cygnus X-1 are suites, not verse-chorus forms, and Nobile's vocabulary applies to their internal sections rather than to the whole song. Madrigal is a two-stanza form, the closest the album comes to a strophic structure.

The 1977 context matters because the album sits at a hinge moment in rock. Punk had broken in the UK in late 1976, the Sex Pistols' "Anarchy In The UK" had been released in November 1976, the Clash's first album appeared in April 1977, and the press narrative that summer was that prog and arena rock were finished. Robert Christgau, writing in Christgau's Record Guide: The '80s and earlier columns, took the punk side and graded Rush albums consistently below the line. His position was the dominant critical position in the New York and London press in 1977. The musicians' press read it differently. Bill Bruford, in his autobiography, treats Rush in the late seventies as a band of serious craftsmen working in the same prog tradition he had built with Yes and King Crimson, and he names Peart specifically as a drummer he respected. Will Romano's Prog Rock FAQ retroactively treats A Farewell To Kings as one of the canonical prog-rock albums of the post-2112 period, alongside Yes's Going For The One (also 1977) and Genesis's Wind & Wuthering (released January 1977). The album was made inside the critical squeeze but outside the punk-vs-prog discourse. The band recorded it at Rockfield, a rural studio used by Queen and Bowie and far from the London press cycle, and the record's literary, pastoral, and orchestral textures read as the band's deliberate response.

05

Frame III: The Trio as Polyphonic Argument (Counterpoint and the Kit)

Rush is a three-voice band, and that fact has more analytical consequences than the band's standard rock-trio designation suggests. Walter Piston's Counterpoint opens with what he calls the **two-axis quality test**, the principle that in any multi-voice texture, every voice must work both as melody (it has its own shape, climax, and recovery) and as a contributor to the harmony (its notes fit the chord at each beat). Piston is writing about Bach. The principle applies to Rush. Alex Lifeson's guitar carries the harmonic skeleton of every song, voicing the chords and adding melodic counter-figures. Geddy Lee's bass plays an **independent line**, often in contrary motion to the guitar, often in the upper register where it functions as a counter-melody rather than a root-doubling support. Geddy's vocal is the fourth voice on top of the trio, and the bass-vocal coordination is the band's signature texture. Neil Peart's kit functions as the third voice in the instrumental texture, and the kit's role on this album is structurally compositional rather than merely time-keeping.

Kent Kennan's Counterpoint catalogs the four motion types between any two voices, parallel, similar, contrary, and oblique. A two-voice passage that consists entirely of parallel motion has only one melody, the second voice is the first voice's shadow. A passage that consists entirely of oblique motion (one voice still, one voice moving) has a melody over a drone. Real contrapuntal interest comes from passages that vary the motion type, and especially from passages with substantial contrary motion (the two voices moving in opposite directions). The Rush prog profile reads Geddy's bass as required to be 30% or more non-root notes in counter-melody mode, which puts the trio's two-voice analysis squarely inside Kennan's frame. On A Farewell To Kings the bass-guitar pair operates with substantial contrary motion in Xanadu's verse, in Cygnus X-1's main theme, and in the title track's instrumental section. The same pair operates closer to parallel and oblique motion in Closer To The Heart and in Madrigal, where the song calls for a more conventional rock-trio texture.

Peart's kit is the album's third compositional voice, and the right reference for how it functions is closer to Bill Bruford's playing on Close To The Edge than to a conventional rock-drummer's role. Bruford in his autobiography names Peart as one of the prog drummers he watched develop, and the influence ran both ways, Peart cited Bruford repeatedly as a major influence in his Modern Drummer columns of the late seventies and eighties. Both drummers treat the kit as a **melodic** instrument, with the tom rack as a tuned set of pitches and fills as **compositional events** rather than as punctuation between vocal lines. Cooper and Meyer in The Rhythmic Structure Of Music distinguish **foreground** rhythmic events (fills, ornaments, surface flourishes) from **structural** rhythmic events (tempo shifts, meter

changes, ride-vs-snare-driven section switches). Peart on this album produces both at high density. The Bruford-influenced extended toolkit appears across the record, woodblocks on the Cygnus X-1 prologue, tubular bells on the Xanadu intro, glockenspiel on Closer To The Heart, china cymbals on every section transition in the prog tracks. The kit is itself an orchestra.

The album's most polyphonic moments are the ones where all three voices operate in maximum independence

simultaneously. Xanadu's verse, where Lifeson plays a chord-arpeggio figure, Geddy's bass plays a counter-melody contrary to the arpeggio, and Peart's kit drives an odd-meter pattern with the kick locked to a 7/8 grouping, is the album's clearest example. Cygnus X-1's climactic descent, where the three voices spiral together with the guitar and bass approaching unison while Peart's drums accelerate against them, is the album's most extreme. The four shorter tracks operate at lower polyphonic density. Closer To The Heart is the album's most conventional rock-trio texture. The book reads the polyphonic density of each track as one of its principal expressive parameters.

This frame is the corrective to a long critical tradition of reading Rush primarily as a band of virtuoso individuals. Each of the three musicians is a recognized virtuoso on his instrument, and the discourse around the band frequently centers on what each one does individually. The contrapuntal reading places the band's interest at the level of the **interaction**, what the three voices do together, what kind of musical conversation the trio is conducting on each track. The frame applies most strongly to Xanadu, Cygnus X-1, and the title track, and less strongly to Closer To The Heart, Cinderella Man, and Madrigal, where the trio's role is closer to support of a song than to argument with a song. That

distinction itself is one of the album's organizing features.

06

"A Farewell To Kings"

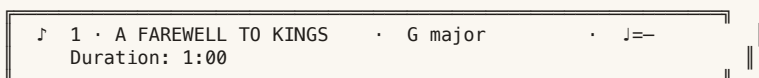


Figure · Scale of G major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Timestamps mentioned: 1:00

Shape note. A medieval address (the title evokes the abdication of an old order) framed as a question put to future readers. Verse couplets in loose iambic pentameter, refrain in a tighter trimeter pulse. The dominant trope is **apostrophe to posterity** crossed with **synecdoche** (cities, castles, halls, paths) that lets a few emblems carry a whole civic argument.

Music. The track opens with a classical guitar passage recorded outdoors at Rockfield, with audible birdsong on the tape, before the band enters at roughly 1:00. The intro is the album's quietest single passage and the band's first acoustic-foregrounded gesture

on record. The main riff section, beginning around 1:00, operates in A Mixolydian with the characteristic $\flat VII$ (G major) chord providing the riff's principal harmonic landing. The riff itself sits in a **7/8 grouping** (2+2+3) that Lifeson plays as a single arpeggiated figure across the bar, and Stephenson's reading of modal rock harmony applies directly, the G major chord in this context is not a dominant in any classical sense but a Mixolydian $\flat VII$ functioning as a phrase-ending station. The verse sections shift to a more conventional 4/4 with a chord progression that walks D, G, A, the same Mixolydian palette in different sectional placement. The refrain ("Closer to the heart" first appears here as a fragment) opens onto an Oberheim Polyphonic synthesizer pad, the album's first major synthesizer entrance. The form follows what Nobile would call a verse-refrain shape with an instrumental episode, an older rock form preceding the verse-prechorus-chorus elaboration. The song closes by returning to the classical guitar that opened it, a bookend gesture that Macan identifies as one of prog's signature structural moves.

Trio. The intro is a Lifeson solo, classical guitar without bass or drums, the only solo-instrument passage on the album. Geddy's bass enters with the main riff and immediately occupies the upper bass register (E2 to D3), the high-bass position the prog profile names as Rush-normal. The bass during the 7/8 riff plays a syncopated counter-figure against Lifeson's arpeggios, with substantial **contrary motion** between bass and guitar as Lifeson's figure descends and Geddy's bass climbs. The verse sections show a more parallel relationship, with bass and guitar moving in similar directions but at independent rhythms. Peart's kit enters with the band on the riff and immediately establishes the song's compositional voice through the kick pattern, the kick locks to the 7/8 grouping with hits on beats 1, 3, 5 of the 2+2+3 bar, and the

snare cracks on the count-of-5 inside the bar rather than on the conventional beat 2 or 4. Lifeson's overdubs on the studio recording stack a clean electric over the classical, a configuration he uses across the album, and the multi-tracked guitar functions as its own internal counterpoint.

Drums. Peart's kit work here is the album's first declaration of his orchestral approach. The intro carries no drums, the main riff section uses kick and snare in a 7/8 lock with china cymbal accents at every two-bar boundary, the verse sections switch to ride for a quieter feel, the refrain returns to hi-hat with a more conventional backbeat. Peart's fills cross the section boundaries rather than landing inside them, a structural-event placement in Cooper-Meyer's sense rather than a foreground punctuation. The kit's expressive range across the song is substantial, the loudest section (the instrumental break) carries china and ride at velocity, the quietest section (the closing acoustic reprise) carries no drums at all, and the dynamic arc between is the song's principal non-lyric expressive parameter. Riley's principle from *The Art Of Bop Drumming*, that a drummer's role is to "sense the form" of the song rather than impose a pattern on it, reads as Peart's working method here.

Reception and context. The title track was the album's opening statement, released as a Mercury single in late 1977 with minor chart action (it did not crack the Top 40). The classical-guitar intro was widely noted at the time as an unexpected gesture from a band whose previous album had opened with the seven-part 2112 suite. Rolling Stone's contemporary review was mixed, the magazine had been skeptical of Rush across the decade. The British press, especially *Sounds* and *Melody Maker*, treated the song more positively. Edward Macan's *Rocking The Classics*, two decades

later, names the song as an example of prog's capacity for "pastoral counterweight" against the genre's longer, denser pieces. Will Romano's Prog Rock FAQ treats it as one of Rush's signature mid-period openings, alongside the title track of 2112 and the opening of Hemispheres.

Pair 1: *"When they turn the pages of history, " / "When these days have passed long ago, "*

- The song opens with judgment from the future, asking how history will measure people who let corruption grow around them.

- **Figure:** classic **apostrophe to posterity**, the speaker addressing a "they" who do not yet exist. Fry treats this as one of the oldest rhetorical figures, and Peart uses it to install moral distance from the present.

- **Prosody:** parallel **anaphora** ("When they, / When these, ") sets a hymn-like cadence. Each line lands on a long open vowel ("history, " "ago"), giving feminine and masculine cadence side by side.

- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley's "story" chapter calls this the **frame outside the frame**, a speaker who narrates the present as if it were already past. The chorus tense is future-perfect, which is rare in rock lyric and gives the song its lecturing weight.

Pair 2: *"Will they read of us with sadness, " / "For the seeds that we let grow, "*

- The sadness comes from responsibility, because the damage began as small choices people allowed to take root.

- **Figure:** the seed image is **agricultural metaphor** for moral causation, a trope as old as the Gospels. Bradley would note how this single image carries the whole ethical claim of the chorus,

"calcified figure of speech," he warns, only when overused. Here it stays live because it sits inside an unresolved question.

- **Sound:** soft **sibilance** in "sadness / seeds," binding the question to its answer at the level of consonant texture.

- **Prosody:** the line "for the seeds that we let grow" scans as a clean **iambic tetrameter**, a beat shorter than the verse, which lets it land like a verdict.

Pair 3: "*We turned our gaze from the castles in the distance,* " / "*Eyes cast down on the path of least resistance,* "

- The distant castles suggest higher ideals, while the people look away from nobility, wisdom, and long-term vision.

- **Figure:** **metonymy** of "castles" for civic ideals (the medieval throne standing in for governance), then **synecdoche** of the lowered eye for moral surrender. The pair compresses an entire civilizational diagnosis into two body-postures.

- **Sound:** internal rhyme of *distance* / *resistance* is a Bradley **rhythm-rhyme unit**, both lines rotate on the same dactylic ending, "dis-tance" and "re-sis-tance," and the surrounding phrases mirror in shape ("turned our gaze" / "cast down our eyes"). Fry would call this **isocolon**.

- **Prosody:** both lines are roughly **iambic pentameter** with feminine endings, the most quietly elevated cadence in English verse. Peart uses pentameter where he wants the line to sound public and considered.

Pair 4: "*Eyes cast down on the path of least resistance,* " (carried)

- The lowered eyes show surrender, because comfort becomes the route people choose when courage feels costly.

- **Figure:** **kenning-like** noun phrase, "path of least resistance," a cliché reanimated by the moral context, exactly the move Bradley says Shelley demanded of poetry, lifting the veil from a familiar phrase.

Pair 5: "*Cities full of hatred, fear and lies,* " / "*Withered hearts and faded memories,* "

- The city becomes a moral sickness, filled with fear, cruelty, lies, and people emotionally dried out by corruption.

- **Figure:** the city is **personified** as a body filled with diseased humors. "Withered hearts and faded memories" pairs two **metonymies** (the heart for the moral life, the memory for the cultural inheritance).

- **Sound:** the triple of "hatred, fear and lies" is a **tricolon**, Fry's term for the three-beat list. The vowels darken from open A to closed I across the three, which makes the line feel like it is closing on itself.

- **Prosody:** "Withered hearts and faded memories" reads as a **trochaic tetrameter with feminine ending**. Trochaic openings (stressed-unstressed) drive declarative force, the same meter Blake uses in "Tyger, tyger."

Pair 6: "*Scheming demons dressed in kingly guise,* " / "*Beating down the multitude,* "

- Power wears royal clothing here, but its real behavior is predatory, violent, and hostile toward ordinary people.

- **Figure:** **personification** of corrupt power as "scheming demons," costumed in royal disguise. The image is a Reformation-era topos (Spenser, Milton), and Peart leans into the archaism deliberately.

- **Sound:** heavy **plosive alliteration** in "Beating, multitude," matching the violence of the act to the consonant texture.
- **Prosody:** clipped two-stress phrases ("Beating down / the multitude") work as a **dimeter pulse** under the larger pentameter verse, the prosody itself enacting the beating.

Single line: "*Scoffing at the wise*"

- Wisdom becomes the target, because corrupt rulers must mock discernment before people can trust deception.
- **Figure:** **catalectic** half-line, a fragment without partner. Fry teaches that the dropped foot at the end of a line, or the missing partner-line, creates a hanging emphasis the ear treats as italicized.
- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley's "voice" chapter would point to delivery here, Geddy Lee sings the single line in a higher register on the recording, performing the absence of the missing balancing line.

Pair 7: "*The hypocrites are slandering,* " / "*The sacred Halls of Truth,*
"

- The attack moves toward truth itself, because false leaders distort sacred places, sacred speech, and shared moral memory.
- **Figure:** **apostrophe to the abstract**, "Truth" as a personified institution housed in sacred Halls. Capitalized abstractions in this style descend from Pope, Dryden, and the eighteenth-century moral essay, which Peart was steeped in.
- **Sound:** the slow assonance on long A ("slandering / sacred / Halls") gives a ceremonial, hymnal weight, exactly the register the lyric needs at this point.

Pair 8: "*Ancient nobles showering,* " / "*Their bitterness upon the youth,* "

- The older ruling class poisons youth, passing down resentment instead of wisdom, stewardship, and moral strength.

- **Figure: liquid metaphor** of bitterness as a rain. Peart pairs it with the social image of nobles "showering" downward, the gesture of patronage perverted into contamination.

- **Prosody:** "showering" is a **dactyl** (stressed-un-un) inside an iambic verse, a Fry-style substitution that gives the verb a tumbling motion appropriate to its sense.

Pair 9: "*Can't we find the minds,* " / "*Can't we learn to feel,* "

- The question turns into a plea, asking whether people can recover the minds and conscience that made society strong.

- **Figure: anaphora** ("Can't we, / Can't we, "), Fry's signal repetition for prayer and exhortation, also the structural device behind every great civic-religious chorus from "Let My People Go" to "We Shall Overcome."

- **Prosody:** the two questions are perfectly **isometric**, same syllable count and stress pattern, so they sound like the second clause of a single thought rather than two separate appeals.

Pair 10: "*And what's wrong?*" / "*What's wrong?*"

- The repeated question shows exhaustion, because the speaker sees obvious moral collapse while people keep drifting.

- **Figure: epizeuxis**, the immediate self-repetition of the same phrase, which Fry classes with anaphora and anadiplosis as a "rhetorical pulse-repetition." It marks the speaker's breath shortening.

- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley would call this a **vocal gesture** more than a textual feature, the meaning is in the second utterance being a half-step quieter than the first. Geddy delivers it that way on the record.

Pair 11: "*Cities full*, " / "*Withered hearts*, " (refrain return)

- The repeated city image confirms the pattern, showing hatred and fear as civic conditions rather than isolated moods.

- **Form:** the recurrence functions as **rentrement**, Fry's term for a refrain whose returning lines accumulate weight on each pass. The second hearing carries the moral charge the first only proposed.

Pair 12: "*Scheming demons*, " / "*Beating down*, " (refrain return)

- The rulers repeat their abuse, which makes the refrain feel systemic, organized, and deeply entrenched.

- **Form:** same rentrement principle, the refrain now reads as evidence rather than accusation.

Single line: "*Scoffing at the wise*"

- The wise remain the rejected witnesses, standing as the people who could identify the rot.

- **Sound:** the lone half-line returns with the same hanging stress, **palilogy** in Fry's catalogue (intentional repetition of a phrase across distant locations in the same poem).

Pair 13: "*Can't we raise our eyes*, " / "*Can't we find the minds*, "

- The final turn asks for leadership, raising the eyes from passive survival toward moral renewal.

- **Figure:** the **anaphora** is now climactic, the third "Can't we, " inverting the earlier "eyes cast down" image. Fry would mark this

as a **chiastic motion** at the level of the whole song, the eye-down of Pair 3 answered by the eye-up of Pair 13.

- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley's chapter on story, the protagonist of the argument is a collective "we" recovering agency rather than a single person. The pronoun is the hero.

Single line: "*Closer to the heart?*"

- The phrase becomes the album's ethical center, pointing toward conscience, compassion, and rightful authority.

- **Form:** a **question-stub refrain**, deliberately incomplete, that previews and sets up the third track. Albums of this era used such hooks to bind the sequence into a cycle, the way Spenserian stanzas chain across cantos.

07

"Xanadu"

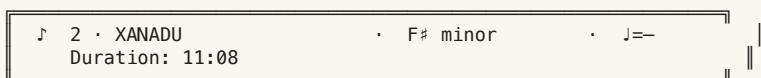


Figure • Scale of F# minor. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

F#	G#	A	B	C#	D	E	F#
1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	1

Figure • Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Timestamps mentioned: 11:08 • 1:30 • 5:00 • 6:30

Shape note. Peart's setting of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," reimagined as a first-person quest narrative. The verses lean **trochaic** (commanding, incantatory), the chorus pulls back into **iambic** (reflective, claimed). Coleridge's Pleasure Dome enters as **mythic synecdoche** for any earthly paradise pursued past the point of return. The song's most powerful single device is **anaphora** scaffolded by an infinitive parade ("To seek, To walk, To stand, To taste, "), the grammar of vow.

Music. Xanadu at 11:08 is the album's longest track and one of the most architecturally ambitious pieces in the Rush catalog. The

opening five minutes carry no vocal at all, the instrumental introduction working through a sequence of textural and harmonic episodes that establish the song's storyworld before Geddy enters. The intro opens with sustained tubular bells (Peart on percussion ensemble), wind sounds, and atmospheric synthesizer pads, the most explicitly orchestral opening on the album. Lifeson's classical guitar enters around 1:30 with a melodic figure in F# minor, then a slow build through bass and additional guitar layers, with Peart's woodblocks and temple blocks adding rhythmic punctuation. The first vocal entry around 5:00 lands on the lyric "To seek the sacred river Alph," and the body of the song operates in F# minor with frequent excursions to E Mixolydian during the guitar-lead arrival sections. The time signature alternates between 7/8 and 4/4, with the verses in 4/4 and the bridge passages in 7/8. Macan's reading of the prog suite applies cleanly here, the song divides into prologue (intro), exposition (first verse), development (instrumental middle), recapitulation (final verse), and coda, with thematic material returning across sections. The Pleasure Dome section, around 6:30, is a tempo-modulated arrival, the song's harmonic and dynamic peak. The closing minutes return to the slow F# minor material of the opening, the bookend gesture Macan names as prog-normative.

Trio. Xanadu is the album's clearest example of Rush's three-voice independence. Lifeson plays both classical guitar (acoustic, picked finger-style) and electric (chorused clean and overdriven sections), often overdubbed against himself, producing a guitar texture that functions internally as two voices in counterpoint. Geddy Lee plays bass with his hands while operating Moog Taurus pedals with his feet, adding a third sub-bass layer below the regular bass register, and sings the lead vocal over all of it. The bass-guitar pair shows substantial contrary motion across the verses, with Geddy's bass

climbing as Lifeson's guitar voicings descend. The Bruford-style bass counter-melody appears in the verse at "To taste anew the fruits of life," where the bass line walks an independent melodic shape against the guitar's chord pattern, the kind of bass voice Piston's two-axis test would identify as melodic-and-harmonic-at-once. Peart's drums are the third independent voice, with the kit's pattern locked to the 7/8 grouping in the bridges and switching to a more standard 4/4 in the verses. The texture density varies across the song's eleven minutes, from the near-solo opening to the full-trio climax of the Pleasure Dome arrival.

Drums. Peart's playing on Xanadu is the album's most orchestral kit performance. The opening five minutes use tubular bells, glockenspiel, temple blocks, woodblocks, and various small percussion, with the standard kit entering only after the first guitar build. In the verses Peart uses ride cymbal as the default pulse, switching to hi-hat for the arrival sections and to china for the climactic Pleasure Dome moment. The fills cross multi-bar boundaries, with tom cascades that descend across the rack and the floor toms. The decay section after the climax uses brushes (one of the few brushed passages on the album) and a deliberately reduced kit. The Bruford influence reads most strongly here, the Bruford-on-Close-To-The-Edge model of treating the kit as an orchestral instrument with its own melodic palette rather than as a time-keeping foundation. Cooper and Meyer's distinction between foreground and structural rhythmic events applies, the fills are foreground, the multiple tempo shifts and meter changes across the song's eleven minutes are structural, and Peart deploys both in service of the song's narrative arc.

Reception and context. Xanadu was not released as a single (its length would have prevented radio play) but became one of the band's signature live tracks immediately, played at nearly every Rush concert from 1977 through the early 1980s. Allan Moore in *Rock: The Primary Text* names the song specifically as an example of prog's "literary borrowing" mode, the song that takes a famous Romantic poem and rebuilds it as a first-person quest narrative. Macan in *Rocking The Classics* treats Xanadu as one of the canonical prog suites of the late 1970s, alongside Yes's "Awaken" from the same year. Bill Bruford in his autobiography mentions seeing Rush perform Xanadu live during the 1977 tour and registering the band's compositional ambitions as serious. The Coleridge source poem, "Kubla Khan," is itself a famously unfinished poem, the Romantic-era prototype of the deliberate non-ending, and Peart's choice of source text aligns the song's circular form with Coleridge's own circular method.

Pair 1: *"To seek the sacred river Alph, " / "To walk the caves of ice, "*

- The quest begins with sacred geography, where the speaker chases a mythical place tied to hidden knowledge and danger.
- **Figure: allusion** to Coleridge, who is himself alluding to Pausanias on the Alpheus. Bradley's "story" lens, the song borrows a ready-made storyworld, freeing it from exposition and letting it concentrate on motive.
- **Prosody:** opening infinitives create **anaphoric incantation**. Each "to + verb + the + adjective + noun" pattern is a five-beat invocation, the prosodic shape of an oath.
- **Sound:** "sacred river Alph" and "caves of ice" carry a cold-vowel palette (long A, long I), Fry's domain of **vowel-music**.

Pair 2: *"To break my fast on honey dew, " / "And drink the milk of paradise, "*

- The food imagery promises paradise, giving the quest a sensual, almost Edenic pull.

- **Figure:** more **direct quotation** of Coleridge ("honey-dew, milk of Paradise"). Bradley argues that lyric quotation is the pop song's analogue to literary allusion, a way of summoning a whole prior text into a single line.

- **Sound:** "honey dew" and "milk" cluster soft consonants and round vowels, giving the line a tongue-feel of the very sweetness it describes, what Fry calls **expressive sound**.

Pair 3: *"I had heard the whispered tales, " / "The deepest mystery, "*

- Immortality enters as temptation, drawing the speaker toward mystery with spiritual hunger and dangerous curiosity.

- **Figure:** the "whispered tales" are **hearsay personified**, the rumor itself acquiring agency.

- **Sound:** heavy **alliterative W** ("whispered, tales, deepest"), a soft hissing that mimes the secrecy of the rumor.

Pair 4: *"From an ancient book I took a clue, " / "I scaled the frozen mountain tops, "*

- The search becomes self-directed obsession, with old writing sending him into remote and punishing terrain.

- **Figure:** **synecdoche** of "an ancient book" for the whole tradition of esoteric knowledge.

- **Prosody:** "I scaled the frozen mountain tops" reads as crisp **iambic tetrameter**, a marching pulse. Peart often switches from incantatory infinitives to first-person past-tense to dramatize a turn

in the quest.

Pair 5: *"Time and Man alone, " / "Searching for the lost, "*

- The speaker isolates himself from humanity, turning the search into a contest between one person and time.
- **Figure:** the capitalization (heard as emphasis in delivery) makes "Time" and "Man" into **allegorical figures**, in the manner of Pope or Spenser.

Single line: *"Xanadu."*

- The place gains ritual weight, because the single word feels like an invocation.
- **Form:** the place-name as **refrain monad**, what Fry would call a one-word **rentrement**. The name itself is the chorus, and the song's most concentrated rhythm-rhyme unit (in Bradley's sense) is the act of pronouncing it.

Pair 6: *"To stand within the Pleasure Dome, " / "Decreed by Kubla Khan, "*

- The Pleasure Dome represents forbidden arrival, where human desire enters a ruler's fantasy of controlled paradise.
- **Figure: synecdoche** of "Pleasure Dome" for the entire archetype of imperial paradise. "Decreed by Kubla Khan" is a **historical name-drop** that anchors the myth in a real ninth-century Mongol order.
- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley's chapter on story, names anchor the storyworld in something the listener can hold. The Khan's name does the work of a footnote without the footnote.

Pair 7: *"To taste anew the fruits of life, " / "The last immortal man, "*

- The speaker imagines himself as chosen, claiming life beyond ordinary human limits.
- **Figure: hyperbole** in service of obsession, the speaker promotes himself to "the last immortal man." The grandeur is the symptom Peart wants to expose.
- **Sound:** the **assonance** chain "taste, anew, fruits" builds toward the long O of "immortal," a phonetic upward climb that matches the speaker's ascending claim.

Pair 8: *"To find the sacred river Alph, " / "To walk the caves of ice, "* (recapitulation)

- The earlier quest language returns, which makes the pursuit feel cyclical and consuming.
- **Form: palilogy** with the song's own opening lines, but inserted now into the moment of arrival rather than departure. The recurrence makes the listener realize the same words now mean a different thing, what Bradley calls a "shift under the enchantment of context."

Pair 9: *"I will dine on honey dew, " / "And drink the milk of paradise, "*

- The speaker commits fully to the fantasy, treating paradise as something he can possess through will.
- **Figure:** the future tense ("I will dine") is a key turn. The earlier infinitives were vows of intent. The future indicative is appetite already chewing.
- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley would mark the **tense as voice**, the same vocabulary delivered in a new grammatical mode shifts the speaker from pilgrim to consumer.

Pair 10: "*A thousand years have come and gone, " / "Stars stopped in the sky, "*

- The victory curdles into stasis, because immortality freezes experience instead of expanding it.

- **Figure: cosmic personification**, the stars themselves "stop." Time abandons its job.

- **Sound:** the stop on "Stars stopped" is a **spondee** (two consecutive strong stresses), Fry's preferred substitution for a moment of arrest inside a flowing line.

Pair 11: "*Frozen in an everlasting view, " / "Waiting for the heat of day, "*

- Endless life becomes waiting, with beauty locked in place and time stripped of movement.

- **Figure: oxymoron** without melodrama, "everlasting view" sounds wonderful, then the listener registers the trap inside the phrase. Fry calls this **understated paradox**.

- **Prosody:** "Waiting for the heat of day" is again **iambic tetrameter**, the cool, plain meter of patience.

Pair 12: "*Weary of the cries, " / "Praying for the sun, "*

- The immortal man becomes desperate, craving release from the night he once pursued.

- **Figure:** the second appearance of **anaphora** ("Weary, Praying, "), now framed as gerundive postures rather than vows. The grammar itself has slumped.

Pair 13: "*The Pleasure Dome, " / "Xanadu"*

- Paradise becomes confinement, with the desired place turning into the shape of punishment.

- **Figure: antanaclasis**, the same word used twice with shifted meaning. The first "Xanadu" was a destination, the second is a cell. Fry classes antanaclasis among the rhetorical "ringers," words that ring differently depending on where they sit.

Single line: "*Xanadu*."

- The repeated title now feels heavier, carrying triumph, regret, and spiritual exhaustion.

- **Form: palilogy** completes itself, the third utterance of the title rings a different bell from the first two.

Pair 14: "*Held within the Pleasure Dome*, " / "*Decreed by Kubla Khan*, "

- The speaker is possessed by the dome, because the place he reached now holds him.

- **Figure: inversion of agency**, the active verb of Pair 6 ("To stand within") has been replaced by a passive ("Held within"). Fry teaches that verb-voice changes are often the strongest plot move a line can make.

Pair 15: "*To taste anew the fruits of life*, " / "*As a mad immortal man*, "

- The achievement becomes bitter, and immortality destroys the sanity that once pursued it.

- **Figure:** the same fragment from Pair 7 returns with "mad" replacing "last," **lexical substitution** as plot. One adjective change does the work of an entire bridge.

- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley's "rhythm-rhyme unit" lens, the line keeps its scansion and its rhyme position, and the listener registers the single swap as a turning point in the story.

Pair 16: *"Nevermore shall I return, " / "Escape these caves of ice, "*

- The final refusal becomes a trapped cry, because return and escape both feel sealed away.

- **Figure:** "Nevermore" is a deliberate **Poe quotation**, dragging "The Raven" into the room. The borrowed word performs its own job, signaling that the speaker has joined the Romantic lineage of the haunted.

- **Sound:** open-vowel **assonance** on "shall / return / escape / caves" gives the line a long, echoing acoustics, the prosody of a cave.

Pair 17: *"For I have, " / "And drunk the milk of paradise, "*

- The paradise meal becomes evidence against him, proving that the gift he seized became his curse.

- **Figure:** the final line is the **Coleridge tag** lifted whole. Bradley would call this a **closing sample**, an outside text imported entire to seal the song.

- **Form:** the song begins and ends inside Coleridge's lines, what Fry would call a **circular form**, the lyric biting its own tail.

08

"Closer To The Heart"

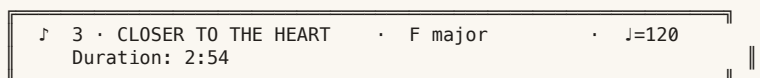


Figure · Scale of F major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

F	G	A	B $\flat$	C	D	E	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Timestamps mentioned: 2:54

Shape note. A civic hymn, structured as four **occupational stanzas** (rulers, blacksmiths/artists, philosophers/plowmen, captain/cook) each closing on the **epistrophic refrain** "closer to the heart." Each stanza names a role and asks the role to bend toward conscience. The form is medieval, the cadence almost a **carol**.

Music. Closer To The Heart is the album's commercial concession and the band's first under-three-minute song, clocking 2:54. It opens with a brief classical-guitar figure in F major, then enters the verse with the full band at moderate tempo (around 120 BPM).

The harmonic palette is unusually conventional for Rush, the verse moves I, vi, IV, V in F major (F, Dm, Bb, C), the kind of common-practice progression that the rest of the album avoids. The refrain ("And the men who hold high places") sits firmly on the tonic, and the song's structural cadence falls on a clear V-to-I at the end of each refrain, which is Nobile's strict-sense chorus-arrival behavior, the only time the album operates in that mode. The track ends with the same classical-guitar figure that opened it, a tight bookend gesture. The form is verse-chorus with no bridge, no instrumental section, and no extended outro, the most compact structure on the album. Stephenson's reading of rock harmony as either functional or non-functional reads this song as the album's most clearly functional, the chord progressions pulling toward goals in the common-practice sense.

Trio. The trio is at its most consciously restrained here. Lifeson plays both 12-string acoustic and a lightly overdriven electric, but the textures sit beside each other rather than against each other. Geddy's bass holds close to the root motion of the chords, with little of the high-register counter-melody behavior that defines his playing elsewhere on the album. Peart's kit is reduced to hi-hat-driven backbeat with brief tom fills at the section boundaries. The polyphonic density that defines the prog tracks is intentionally minimized here, and the song's structure depends on the simpler trio relationship. Piston's two-axis test still applies, every voice is functioning, but the test grades the song as harmonically-foregrounded rather than as melodically-foregrounded across three voices. The vocal carries the song's principal melody, the band supports.

Drums. Peart on *Closer To The Heart* plays his most conventional rock-drumming on the album. Hi-hat eighth notes drive the verse,

a kick-snare-kick-snare backbeat anchors the chorus, and the fills are short two-beat tom passes rather than the multi-bar cascades of the prog tracks. The kit's color palette is reduced as well, with no china, no tubular bells, no orchestral percussion. Riley's principle of sensing the form applies, the form is a 2:54 verse-chorus pop song with no instrumental episode, and Peart's playing serves that form rather than expanding past it. Glockenspiel appears in the intro and outro as a coloristic touch but does not function as a melodic voice in the way it does on Xanadu.

Reception and context. Closer To The Heart was released as a single in October 1977 and became Rush's first chart hit in multiple territories, peaking at #45 on the US Billboard Hot 100, #36 on the UK singles chart, and #28 in Canada. The song's chart placement was the band's commercial breakthrough at radio, and it remained a setlist staple through the band's career. The lyric was co-written with Peter Talbot, a friend of Peart's, and Talbot is credited in the album's liner notes alongside Peart. Robert Christgau in his Record Guide gave the song no separate review (he graded the whole album poorly, his usual treatment of Rush). The British music press treated the song more positively, with Sounds and Melody Maker both noting the band's apparent embrace of a more accessible song format. The song's lyrical content (the four occupational stanzas asking different roles to bend toward conscience) is the album's most direct statement of the civic-hymn mode that the title track had introduced.

Pair 1: *"And the men who hold high places, " / "Must be the ones to start, "*

- The song begins with public responsibility, saying leaders carry the first burden for moral change.

- **Figure: periphrasis**, "men who hold high places" instead of "leaders." The indirection elevates the diction without raising the volume.

- **Sound: alliterative H** ("hold high") locks the leader-role to its altitude.

- **Prosody: clean iambic tetrameter**, the working meter of the English ballad. Fry treats tetrameter as the natural meter of public song, easier on the breath than pentameter and friendlier to memorization.

Pair 2: *"To mold a new reality, " / "Closer to the heart, "*

- Reality can be shaped by conscience, when authority serves human need and moral clarity.

- **Figure: clay metaphor** for civic shaping, ancient (Genesis, Plato's Demiurge). Peart trusts the trope to do its old work.

Single line: *"Closer to the heart"*

- The repeated phrase works like a compass, pulling every role toward compassion and integrity.

- **Form: epistrophe** at the level of the whole song, every stanza terminates on the same phrase. Fry classes this with **rentrement** when the repeated tag accumulates meaning rather than only marking time.

- **Sound:** the phrase is built on a **trochaic** foot ("CLO-ser") followed by an iambic ("to the HEART"), a Fry-style **mixed-foot line** that lets the title both push and pull.

Pair 3: *"The blacksmith and the artist, " / "Reflect it in their art, "*

- Craft and art share responsibility, because work itself can carry the values of the maker.

- **Figure: merism**, two roles bracketing the field between hand-work and image-making. The figure says "every kind of maker" without listing them.

- **Sound:** the soft **end-rhyme** on "art / heart" is the song's structural rhyme, Bradley's **rhythm-rhyme unit** binding the inner couplet to the refrain.

Pair 4: "*They forge their creativity*, " / "*Closer to the heart*, "

- Creativity becomes civic labor, shaping culture through beauty, skill, and purposeful invention.

- **Figure:** "forge" is a **dead metaphor reanimated**, picked up directly from "blacksmith" two lines earlier. Bradley argues that the live use of a dead metaphor is one of pop's standard moves, what he calls "decalcifying the cliché."

Single line: "*Closer to the heart*"

- The refrain gathers every vocation, making reform something shared across daily life.

- **Form:** the second pass of the refrain begins to function as a **leitmotif**, a recurring small theme around which the song's variations are arranged, an idea Fry borrows from music to describe poetic refrain.

Pair 5: "*Philosophers and ploughmen*, " / "*Each must know his part*, "

- Thinkers and workers both matter, because wisdom and labor belong in the same moral order.

- **Figure:** another **merism**, this one rhyming the head and the hands. Peart loves the pairing trick, it is his most reliable civic move.

- **Sound: alliterative P** ("Philosophers and ploughmen") yokes the two roles by consonant, the way a **kenning** yokes by image.

Pair 6: *"To sow a new mentality, " / "Closer to the heart, "*

- A new mentality grows through participation, with each person planting better habits into the culture.

- **Figure: agricultural metaphor** answers the **forge metaphor** above, the song catalogues moral action through the verbs of trades.

Single line: *"Closer to the heart"*

- The center remains moral direction, rather than status, spectacle, or institutional pride.

- **Form:** the third pass turns the refrain into a **moral spine**, by now the listener anticipates it and finishes the line in the head before Geddy sings it.

Pair 7: *"You can be the captain, " / "I will draw the chart, "*

- The final image becomes cooperative leadership, with one person steering and another mapping the way forward.

- **Figure:** the second-person turn ("You can be, I will, ") is the only **direct address** in the song. Bradley's "voice" chapter would mark this as the moment the speaker stops generalizing and turns to a specific listener.

- **Sound:** the rhyme "chart / heart" closes the song's central rhyme-circuit, every refrain to this point has been waiting for a partner-word inside a verse.

Pair 8: *"Sailing into destiny, " / "Closer to the heart, "*

- Destiny becomes chosen movement, guided by courage, planning, and shared conscience.

- **Figure: journey metaphor** caps the song, the captain-and-cartographer image earns its keep by giving the abstract "heart" a vector. Fry would say the song's metaphors form a **cluster** (mold, forge, sow, sail) that all describe creative agency in different materials.

09

"Cinderella Man"

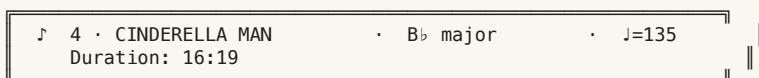


Figure · Scale of B $\flat$ major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

B $\flat$	C	D	E $\flat$	F	G	A	B $\flat$
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Timestamps mentioned: 16:19

Shape note. A character song in Peart's hand, based on Frank Capra's "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town." Verse-chorus structure with **third-person narration** in the verses and a **second-person address** in the chorus, the most intimate grammatical move in the song. The dominant tropes are **paradox of innocence**, Christic **kenosis** (self-emptying), and the **misnamed protagonist** (the crowd calls him mad, the song calls him a man).

Music. Cinderella Man operates in B $\flat$ major at roughly 135 BPM in 4/4 throughout. The harmonic vocabulary is closer to common-practice than the album's prog tracks but still draws freely

from the parallel minor, the verse moves through B $\flat$, Gm, E $\flat$, F (I, vi, IV, V) before the chorus settles on a IV-V-I pattern. Stephenson's modal-borrowing concept applies during the bridge, which moves into G minor briefly before returning to B $\flat$ major. The form is verse, chorus, verse, chorus, bridge, chorus with a brief instrumental break (a Geddy Minimoog solo over a sustained bass pedal) before the final chorus. Nobile's verse-chorus model applies here, with the verses carrying the narrative and the chorus carrying the address. The song has no extended outro, ending on a clean tonic resolution. Moore's sound-box reading places the Minimoog forward-center for the solo and pushes Geddy's lead vocal slightly back during the chorus to make room for the synthesizer in the middle frequency range.

Trio. Cinderella Man is the album's closest approach to a conventional rock-trio arrangement. Lifeson handles both rhythm and lead guitar duties, with the rhythm guitar in a moderate-overdrive setting through the verses and a more pushed tone in the chorus. Geddy's bass operates closer to the chord roots than on the prog tracks, with the non-root-note density well below the album's average, more comparable to a hard-rock bass approach than to a prog counter-melody approach. Peart's kit drives a straight rock backbeat. The polyphonic density is reduced from the suites' levels but higher than Closer To The Heart's, the band is playing as a rock trio rather than as a pop arrangement. Piston's two-axis test grades the song as well-functioning across all three voices but without the contrary-motion peaks of the prog tracks. The texture is parallel-and-similar-motion dominated.

Drums. Peart's drumming here is the album's most conventional rock part. The verses use hi-hat eighth notes with kick on 1 and 3, snare on 2 and 4. The chorus opens up to ride cymbal and adds

occasional tom hits. The bridge brings a single multi-bar fill, the kind Peart was known for, with a tom cascade that crosses the kit. The fill placement is functional rather than structural in Cooper-Meyer's sense, marking the boundary between bridge and final chorus. The cymbal palette is limited, with crash on section transitions and ride or hi-hat on the steady time. Peart sometimes deploys ghost-snare 16ths in the verses, the Bruford influence audible in the looseness of the ghost-note placement rather than in the kit's overall density.

Reception and context. Cinderella Man is one of the few Rush songs with a lyric not written by Peart, Geddy Lee wrote the lyric here, with Peart suggesting the Capra source. This division of labor was unusual for the band, Peart was the principal lyricist from 1975 through 2018, and Geddy's lyrical contributions are rare across the catalog. The song became a setlist regular without being released as a single on the 1977 and 1978 tours. Critical reception treated it as a more accessible second-side track. Frank Capra's "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" (1936) is the lyric's stated source, the film featuring Gary Cooper as a small-town newspaperman who inherits a fortune and is then tried for being mentally incompetent because he gives money away. The song's reading of the Capra plot focuses on the trial sequence and on the protagonist's reclamation of the "mad" label that the prosecution applies to him.

Pair 1: "*A modest man from Mandrake, " / "Travelled rich to roam, "*

- The story begins with sudden elevation, where a humble man enters wealth without losing his inner simplicity.

- **Sound:** dense **M-alliteration** ("modest, man, Mandrake"), Fry treats opening alliteration as the song equivalent of a title card, a way of marking the protagonist as significant before the listener

even knows what he does.

- **Figure:** "Mandrake" is a **borrowed proper noun** (a fictional town in Capra's film and a magical root in folklore), a **double name-drop** carrying both narrative and mythic weight.

- **Prosody:** the line scans as **trochaic tetrameter** (MO-dest MAN from MAN-drake CAME), the meter of fable and ballad.

Pair 2: *"He had won a fortune, " / "A use for it at last, "*

- Wealth creates moral pressure, because he wants money to have purpose instead of vanity.

- **Figure:** "a use for it" is **understatement**, Fry's **litotes**, where the moral seriousness is hidden under casual phrasing. The single word "at last" carries the protagonist's entire backstory of patient need.

Pair 3: *"Because he was the kind of man, " / "Because he had a generous heart, "*

- His humanity and goodness mark him as strange, showing how decency looks irrational inside a cynical world.

- **Figure: anaphora** on "Because he, " stacks reasons in the manner of a hymn, each "because" giving the protagonist another count of unfashionable virtue.

- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley calls this a **list-as-portrait**, you build a character by chaining the conditions of his behavior rather than by describing him.

Pair 4: *"Because he didn't fit the mold, " / "They called him insane, "*

- Moral clarity gets pathologized, because people treat generosity as madness when greed feels normal.

- **Figure: passive-voice othering**, "they called him insane." Fry teaches that whenever a poet shifts to "they," he is summoning a chorus of social opinion to play the antagonist.

Pair 5: "*Delusions of grandeur*, " / "*Visions of splendor*, "

- The labels expose social contempt, as people explain away idealism through psychiatric language and mockery.

- **Figure: medical diction** as social weapon, the crowd reaches for clinical vocabulary to neutralize the protagonist's threat.

- **Sound: end-rhyme** on the feminine endings "grandeur / splendor" plus internal rhyme on "delusions / visions," a tight Bradley **rhythm-rhyme unit** with four rhyming syllables in two short lines.

Pair 6: "*A manic-depressive*, " / "*He walks in the rain*, "

- The rain gives him outsider dignity, showing a wounded figure moving through public judgment alone.

- **Figure: emblem image** of the man walking in the rain. Bradley's "story" chapter, the storyworld stops to give one frozen frame, the kind of detail that anchors the song in image rather than argument.

Pair 7: "*Eyes wide open*, " / "*Heart held open*, "

- He remains emotionally available, seeing clearly while keeping himself open to pain.

- **Figure: parallelism** with deliberate noun-swap ("Eyes / Heart"), Fry calls this **isocolon with variation**, two clauses of the same shape with one element substituted to push the meaning forward.

- **Sound: alliterative H** ("Heart held") and the matched feminine endings give the lines a clean fold.

Single line: "*Innocence untarnished*"

- His innocence survives contact with the world, which makes him morally powerful rather than naïve.

- **Form: fragmentary half-line**, the same device used in the title song. The lyric pauses the verse to set a single phrase on a frame, like a museum caption.

- **Sound:** the soft **N-cluster** ("innocence untarnished") makes the line itself sound protected.

Pair 8: "*Cinderella Man*, " / "*Doing the best he can*, "

- The chorus honors practical goodness, praising a person who acts from conscience with whatever he has.

- **Figure: address by epithet**, the chorus speaks to the protagonist by his crowd-given nickname. The lyric reclaims the insult by repeating it.

- **Sound:** the rhyme "Man / can" is **monosyllabic and masculine**, Bradley's plain-rock register, deliberately humble after the polysyllabic medical-diction verse.

Pair 9: "*They can't take away*, " / "*What it really means to be a man*, "

- The crowd lacks the inner key, because they cannot grasp the spiritual meaning behind his choices.

- **Figure:** the chorus pivots on **antanaclasis**, "Man" used first as nickname, second as moral category. Fry's favorite ringer.

Pair 10: "*Cinderella Man*, " / "*Hang on to your plans*, "

- The song protects his private vision, urging him to keep his plans through ridicule.

- **Figure:** the **imperative turn** ("Hang on to your plans") is the song's only direct command. Bradley's voice chapter, this is the moment the song stops describing the protagonist and starts coaching him.

Pair 11: *"Try as they might, " / "They cannot steal your dreams, "*

- His dreams remain guarded inside him, beyond the reach of social pressure and humiliation.

- **Figure: adverbial concession** ("Try as they might") is borrowed from older balladry, Peart consistently archaizes his syntax to give the storyworld a slightly out-of-time feel.

Pair 12: *"In the betrayal will come the test, " / "To face the cold of the night, "*

- Betrayal matures his innocence, forcing him to meet the world's coldness directly.

- **Figure: prophetic future**, "will come" rather than "comes," lifting the lyric briefly into a register of inevitability.

- **Sound:** the cold-vowel cluster (long O of "cold," long I of "night") brings back the song's outdoor-rain image.

Pair 13: *"And a look in his eye, " / "Awakened him to the world, "*

- Hunger becomes his moral summons, because suffering gives his wealth a clear purpose.

- **Figure: synecdoche of the look**, a single facial detail (the hungry man's eye) does the work of an entire scene of suffering. Bradley would call this the **anchor detail** that lets the listener fill in the surrounding scene themselves.

Pair 14: *"He held the keys to the kingdom, " / "To challenge what was wrong, "*

- He turns riches into confrontation, using money to answer need and expose indifference.

- **Figure: keys-to-the-kingdom** is a **biblical idiom** (Matthew 16:19) given a populist reading, the kingdom redefined as moral courage rather than ecclesial authority.

Pair 15: *"Purposeful, but a man of action, " / "For one mad afternoon, "*

- His supposed madness becomes disciplined action, proving that compassion can look strange to hardened observers.

- **Figure: reclamation of "mad"**, the word the crowd used for diagnosis now belongs to the protagonist as a self-description. The lyric annexes the insult.

Pair 16: *"They tried to stop him, " / "Just couldn't break his stride, "*

- The opposition fails against conviction, because his goodness gives him endurance.

- **Figure: idiomatic phrase** ("break his stride") used neat. Peart deploys idioms sparingly, which makes the few he keeps land harder.

- **Prosody:** the line reads as **iambic trimeter**, three quick beats, the prosody of a man still walking through opposition.

Pair 17: *"This manic depressive, " / "Who walks in the rain, "*

- The repeated label loses power, as the song reclaims the insult and turns it into witness.

- **Form:** the closing image is a **palilogy** of Pair 6, the manic-depressive in the rain has been seen and named, the same picture now reads differently. Bradley's reading of repetition, the second hearing always carries the weight of the first.

10

"Madrigal"



Figure · Scale of D major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#	D
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Timestamps mentioned: 2:35

Shape note. The album's still center, a courtly love-song in two stanzas. The title genre matters, a **madrigal** in the Renaissance sense is a short polyphonic love lyric, often built on opposed images, traditionally addressed to a beloved. Peart honors the form, the song works in **paired conditional clauses** ("When, / I, ") that hand the speaker's interior weather to the beloved's eyes.

Music. Madrigal is the album's shortest track at 2:35 and the most musically restrained piece in the Rush catalog to that point. The key is D major and the tempo sits around 80 BPM. The harmonic palette is conventional D major with brief excursions to B minor

(vi) and G major (IV), the chord progression cycling through I, V, vi, IV in a pattern Stephenson would identify as a common rock loop. The arrangement features classical guitar leading throughout, with Geddy Lee on Minimoog providing sustained lead lines that float above the guitar, and Oberheim Polyphonic synthesizer pads coloring the second verse. The form is two-stanza strophic, the simplest structural form on the album. Allan Moore's sound-box reading places the classical guitar forward-center, the Minimoog upper-center, and the Oberheim pad far back as a wash. Drew Nobile's form-as-harmony reading would identify the song as operating in loop mode rather than progression mode, the same chord pattern cycling twice with minimal harmonic development, the two stanzas distinguished primarily by lyric content and by the gradual addition of textures rather than by harmonic motion.

Trio. Madrigal is the album's most intentionally reduced trio texture. Lifeson plays only classical guitar throughout, with no electric overdubs. Geddy plays Minimoog rather than electric bass for most of the song, with bass guitar entering only briefly in the second stanza. Peart's kit is largely absent. The song operates closer to a two-voice texture (classical guitar and synthesizer melody, with vocal on top) than to the three-voice prog texture of the suites. Piston's two-axis test still applies, every line carries its own melodic shape and contributes to the harmony, but the song's contrapuntal interest is at the level of the duet rather than the trio. The bass-vocal coordination Rush is known for is set aside here. The vocal-guitar coordination dominates, with Geddy's vocal melody shadowing the classical guitar's upper voice through much of the song. The Madrigal title is structurally appropriate, Renaissance madrigals were typically four-voice polyphonic settings, and the song's reduced texture echoes the chamber-music intimacy of the form rather than the larger ensemble of a

court-song.

Drums. Peart on *Madrigal* plays his quietest performance on the album. The first stanza has no drums. The second stanza brings brushes on a snare with a closed hi-hat for time, the kind of jazz-influenced texture that Riley's *The Art Of Bop Drumming* would identify as a brushed ballad approach. The kit's color palette is reduced to a single snare and a single hat. No cymbal crashes appear in the song. The choice is structural, the song requires the kit's near-absence to function as a still center between the two long compositional pieces. Bruford's autobiography names the disciplined absence of drumming as one of the harder professional skills, the ability to lay out and let the song breathe. Peart on *Madrigal* is operating at that discipline level. Cooper and Meyer's distinction between structural and foreground rhythmic events applies in reverse here, the song's principal structural event is the kit's silence.

Reception and context. *Madrigal* was never released as a single, never charted, and never became a setlist staple. The band rarely performed it live during the 1977 and 1978 tours. Geddy Lee mentioned the song in later interviews as one of his favorite lead vocal performances on the album, the upper-register material giving him room for a softer, more sustained singing style than the prog tracks allowed. The song's title invokes the Renaissance madrigal tradition (Monteverdi, Gesualdo, Wilbye) deliberately, and the lyric's paired-conditional structure ("When the dragons grow too mighty / I grow weary of the battle") mirrors the antithetical-image structure that Renaissance madrigals often used. The song is the album's deliberate quiet center, programmed between *Cinderella Man*'s mid-tempo rock and *Cygnus X-1*'s ten-minute prog suite. The placement is itself an album-design

choice, the still point before the longest, most ambitious track on the record.

Pair 1: *"When the dragons grow too mighty, " / "To slay with pen or sword, "*

- The dragons represent overwhelming conflict, reaching a scale where intellect and force both feel insufficient.

- **Figure: dragon-symbol** for unmanageable threat, plus the medieval **merism** of "pen or sword" (every available human tool). Fry would mark "pen or sword" as a **conventional doublet**, alive here because the dragon-image keeps it medieval.

- **Prosody:** the long opening **subordinate clause** ("When the dragons grow too mighty / To slay with pen or sword") delays the main verb, building suspense. The grammar holds its breath until the next pair.

Pair 2: *"I grow weary of the battle, " / "And the storm I'm headed toward, "*

- The speaker admits battle fatigue, sensing the pressure of conflict before it fully arrives.

- **Figure: first-person turn**, the abstract image of dragons becomes the personal "I grow weary." Bradley would mark the shift from third-person setting to first-person feeling as the lyric's emotional pivot.

Pair 3: *"When all around is madness, " / "And there's no safe port in view, "*

- The world feels unstable and exposed, with no harbor visible inside the chaos.

- **Figure: ship-and-harbor metaphor** picks up the "storm" from Pair 2, building a small extended metaphor (what Fry calls a **conceit** when sustained).

- **Sound: alliterative S** ("safe, ship, storm") runs through the song's whole first half.

Pair 4: *"I long to turn my path homeward, " / "To stop awhile with you, "*

- Love becomes refuge and restoration, giving the speaker somewhere human to return.

- **Figure:** the beloved is a **harbor**, implied rather than named. The trope is conventional, made fresh by its restraint, no extravagant declaration, only the wish to stop "awhile."

- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley's chapter on detail, the verb "to stop awhile" is the entire characterization of the speaker's exhaustion. One ordinary verb does the work.

Pair 5: *"When life becomes a winter, " / "And as the wind blows colder, "*

- The emotional weather turns barren, with winter skies showing depletion, coldness, and drained hope.

- **Figure: pathetic fallacy**, weather standing in for emotion. Fry treats this as one of the oldest and most permissible figures, provided the weather earns its keep.

- **Sound: alliterative W** ("winter, wind") binds the climate to itself.

Pair 6: *"There's a beacon in the sweet light, " / "In a distant pair of eyes, "*

- The beloved's eyes become guidance, offering warmth and direction across distance.

- **Figure:** the **lighthouse image** answers the harbor image, the conceit completes itself. The beloved is the beacon visible from the storm.

- **Sound:** the song's softest line, mostly liquid consonants (L, M, N) and long open vowels. Fry would point to the **euphonic** texture as a deliberate mood-shift after the cold-vowel palette of the prior pairs.

Pair 7: *"In vain I search for honor, " / "In vain I search for truth, "*

- Public virtue seems scarce, because honor and truth feel difficult to find in the wider world.

- **Figure: anaphora** ("In vain, In vain, ") plus the high-register abstractions ("honor / truth"). Peart often pairs anaphora with capitalized virtues to elevate the register.

Pair 8: *"But these things are given, " / "Your love to me is proof, "*

- Love gives proof through action, showing honor and truth as lived gifts between people.

- **Figure: reversal of the abstract**, the virtues the speaker could not find in the world are present in the beloved. The lyric does the move without saying it, the syntax does the work.

- **Form:** the song closes on the word "proof," a flat monosyllabic landing in a song that has otherwise leaned on polysyllabic abstractions. Fry teaches that a poem that ends on a short word usually ends on its strongest word.

11

"Cygnus X-1 Book One: The Voyage of the Rocinante"

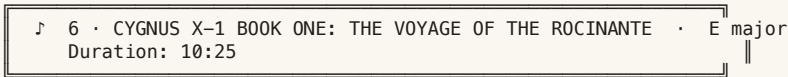


Figure · Scale of E major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#	E
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Timestamps mentioned: 10:25 · 11:08 · 1:30 · 2:54 · 37:26 · 5:51

Shape note. The album's closing suite, the listener's voyage into the black hole and the deliberate cliff-hanger for the next album. The lyric is **mythic and astronomical**, the meter is **freer** than the rest of the album (Peart matches the music's shifting time signatures), and the dominant rhetorical figure is **rhetorical question** (the speaker asking what the black hole is, asking what survival in it means) followed by **action verbs** (set sail, flew, sailed, headed). The song's voice is **explorer-narrator**, a Conrad or Melville delivered as space opera.

Music. Cygnus X-1 at 10:25 is the album's second-longest track and its closing statement. The song opens with a processed spoken-word prologue ("In the constellation of Cygnus, there lurks a mysterious invisible force") delivered through ring modulation or vocoder treatment, the voice processed past recognition, with sustained bass-pedal drone underneath. The prologue runs about 1:30 before the band enters with the main musical theme. The body of the song operates primarily in F# minor with substantial chromatic motion through the development sections. Time signatures shift across the song, with the verses in 4/4, the bridge passages in 7/8, and the climactic descent moving through 5/8 and back to 4/4. Tempos shift as well, the slower prologue (around 110 BPM) gives way to the body (around 140 BPM) and then accelerates in the descent. Stephenson's modal vocabulary applies, the F# minor body uses Aeolian harmony with frequent $\flat VII$ (E major) chords functioning as a structural cadence rather than a passing chord, and the chromatic descent in the climactic section moves through chord changes that Stephenson would identify as constant-structure chromatic passing (chords of the same quality sliding by half-step). Drew Nobile's structural-cadence concept applies, the song's central structural cadence is the arrival on F# minor after the descent, and the cliffhanger ending suspends the cadential resolution rather than confirming it. Macan's prog-suite reading treats the song as a fully realized example of the multi-section narrative form, with prologue, exposition, development, climactic descent, and unresolved coda functioning as the suite's named sections.

Trio. Cygnus X-1 is the album's most polyphonically dense track. The three voices operate in maximum independence across the song, with Lifeson's guitar carrying the main themes in the body sections, Geddy's bass playing both root-doubling and

counter-melodic figures across the song, and Peart's drums functioning as the third compositional voice. The body's main theme has the guitar and bass approaching unison on the principal riff, a deliberate parallel-motion gesture that Piston's principles would treat as the trio's united-voice statement. The verse sections see the bass and guitar move into contrary motion, with Geddy's bass playing high counter-figures while Lifeson's guitar voicings descend. The climactic descent has all three voices spiraling together, the guitar's chord pattern descending chromatically while the bass climbs and Peart's drums accelerate, the three voices converging into the song's most concentrated polyphonic moment. The Taurus bass pedals (operated by Geddy's feet while his hands play bass guitar) add a fourth low-frequency layer beneath the trio in the descent section, the album's only four-layer polyphony. Piston's two-axis test rates every voice high here, each line works as melody and as harmonic contribution, and Kennan's motion-type analysis registers the song's range from unison to parallel to contrary to oblique across its ten minutes.

Drums. Peart's playing on *Cygnus X-1* is his most virtuosic performance on the album. The prologue uses woodblock, temple block, and a single sustained crash cymbal under the processed spoken word. The main body uses kick, snare, hi-hat, ride, china, and the full tom rack in active rotation. The verses lock to the odd-meter groupings with kick patterns that follow the 7/8 (2+2+3) and 5/8 (3+2 or 2+3) groupings rather than imposing a 4/4 pulse on them, the prog-genre profile's protocol for odd-meter drum analysis. The bridge sections introduce multi-bar tom cascades that descend across the kit's tuned pitches, the Bruford-influenced melodic-tom approach. The climactic descent uses double-pedal kick work alongside tom rolls, the kit accelerating into the song's peak. The final section before the

cliffhanger reduces to a single sustained crash and tubular bell, the orchestral palette returning for the song's closure. Cooper and Meyer's foreground-and-structural distinction applies at maximum density here, every bar carries both foreground events (specific fills, ornaments) and contributes to structural events (the multiple meter changes, tempo shifts, dynamic arc).

Reception and context. Cygnus X-1 Book One was released alongside the rest of *A Farewell To Kings* in September 1977 and was followed eight months later by *Hemispheres* (October 1978), which opened with *Cygnus X-1 Book Two: Hemispheres*, completing the two-part composition. The deliberate cliffhanger ("To be continued...") was unusual for rock albums of the period, the closest precedent being *The Who's Tommy* and similar concept-album traditions. Cygnus X-1 (the astronomical object) is a real X-ray binary system in the constellation Cygnus, discovered in 1964, and was the first astronomical object to be considered a likely candidate for a black hole, a candidacy that was strongly supported in the early 1970s. Peart's choice of the actual astronomical name anchors the song's storyworld in real cosmology rather than in pure invention. The Rocinante reference is to Don Quixote's horse in Cervantes (1605, 1615), the deliberately broken-down nag of the idealist's quest. The song was a setlist regular through 1977 and 1978 and returned periodically across the band's career. *Macan in Rocking The Classics* treats the two-part Cygnus X-1 composition (Books One and Two) as one of prog's longest and most ambitious narrative works, alongside Yes's *Tales From Topographic Oceans* and Genesis's *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*.

Opening image: *"In the constellation of Cygnus, " / "There lurks a mysterious, invisible force, "*

- The song begins with cosmic danger, presenting the black hole as an unseen force with mythic pull.

- **Figure:** the verb "lurks" is the song's first **personification**, the black hole as a predator hiding inside the constellation.

- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley's chapter on story, the storyworld is set by a single sentence that names the place ("Cygnus"), the threat ("mysterious, invisible force"), and the relationship between them ("lurks"). The setup is almost a stage direction.

Pair 1: *"Six Stars of the Northern Cross, " / "In mourning for their sister's loss, "*

- The Northern Cross becomes a grieving witness, framing the lost star as a death in the heavens.

- **Figure: cosmic personification**, the constellation gains a family. The lost star is the "sister."

- **Sound: internal rhyme** on "Cross / loss" gives the couplet the closed-out feel of an epitaph.

Pair 2: *"In a final flash of glory, " / "Nevermore to grace the night, "*

- The vanished star receives tragic grandeur, burning brightly before leaving ordinary sight.

- **Figure:** "final flash of glory" is **kenning-style compression**, three words for the death-event of a star. "Nevermore" returns from Xanadu, **palilogy across the album**.

- **Sound: alliterative F** ("final flash") matches the percussive sense of the verb.

Pair 3: *"Invisible to telescopic eye, " / "Infinity, the star that would not die, "*

- The unseen object gains spiritual scale, because the star's disappearance becomes a question about endlessness.
- **Figure: paradox-as-image**, the star that "would not die" is the visible star's invisible afterlife. Fry would point out that Peart turns a scientific fact into a metaphysical line by capitalizing the abstraction ("Infinity") so it reads as a proper noun.
- **Sound: anaphoric I** ("Invisible, Infinity") braids the two ideas at the sound level.

Pair 4: *"All who dare to cross her course, " / "Are swallowed by a fearsome force, "*

- The black hole becomes absolute appetite, consuming anything bold enough to approach.
- **Figure:** "swallowed" extends the predator-personification, the black hole as throat.
- **Sound:** internal rhyme "course / force" inside a single couplet, plus **alliterative F** ("fearsome force"). Bradley calls these dense **rhythm-rhyme units**, the lyric so wound up with sound that meaning travels on the back of phonetics.

Pair 5: *"Through the void, to be destroyed, " / "Or is there something more?"*

- The speaker faces annihilation, weighing destruction as the first possible outcome.
- **Figure: rhetorical question** as plot-engine, the speaker poses an option that the rest of the song will test.
- **Sound:** internal rhyme "void / destroyed" tightens the line at the level of consonant texture.

Pair 6: *"Or is the void itself the door, " / "Atomized at the core?"*

- The question deepens into transformation, asking whether the self ends or changes at the center.

- **Figure: door metaphor** for the singularity, the most useful image in any cosmology lyric. Peart picks it up clean from physics popularizations of the period.

Pair 7: *"Or through some mystic worm, " / "To soar to a distant shore?"*

- The danger becomes a threshold, with death imagined as passage into another realm.

- **Figure: threshold image** at three levels (door, worm, shore), Peart stacks three competing metaphors for the same uncertainty. Fry would call this **synathroismus**, the heaping of figures around a single referent.

Pair 8: *"I set a course just east of Lyra, " / "And northwest of Pegasus, "*

- The voyage receives precise coordinates, making the mythic flight feel deliberate and navigational.

- **Figure: toponymy of the sky**, naming the constellations does what naming streets does in a story song, it anchors the storyworld. Bradley specifically marks "names of places" as the strongest single anchor a lyric has.

Pair 9: *"Flew into the light of Deneb, " / "Sailed across the Milky Way, "*

- The speaker moves through star-fields, giving the song a wide, cinematic sense of scale.

- **Figure: mixed-medium verbs** ("flew, sailed"), the speaker is part aviator, part sailor. The trope is Tennyson's "Ulysses" in space.

- **Prosody:** the line "Sailed across the Milky Way" lands on a **spondaic** "Milky Way," the strongest stress-pair in the song so far.

Pair 10: "*On my ship, the Rocinante, " / "Wheeling through the galaxies, "*

- The Rocinante links idealism with exploration, carrying a dreamer toward impossible territory.

- **Figure: Don Quixote allusion**, the ship is Cervantes' horse. Peart's most loaded **literary name-drop**, marking the protagonist as a hopeless idealist tilting at the cosmic windmill.

- **Pop-poetry frame:** Bradley would call this **storyworld-binding by allusion**, a single proper noun installs the protagonist's psychology without describing it.

Pair 11: "*Headed for the heart of Cygnus, " / "Headlong into mystery, "*

- The speaker chooses mystery directly, driving toward danger with full awareness.

- **Figure: anaphora** on "Head-" ("Headed, Headlong") plus the deliberate near-pun, the body-part "head" running into "mystery." Fry would mark this as **polyptoton**, the rhetorical figure of repeating a root in different forms.

- **Sound: alliterative H** plus internal rhyme on "Cygnus / mystery" weakly, this is one of the song's densest moments of sound-work.

Pair 12: "*The x-ray is her siren song, " / "My ship cannot resist her long, "*

- The black hole sings like temptation, pulling the ship through a force that feels almost personal.

- **Figure: siren-myth** layered on **astrophysics**. The Cygnus X-1 black hole emits X-ray radiation, Peart re-reads the emission as the call of a siren. Bradley's "story" lens, the science is recoded as myth, two storyworlds bound to a single image.

Pair 13: "*Nearer to my deadly goal,* " / "*Until the black hole,* "

- Approach becomes surrender, as the chosen goal begins taking control of the traveler.

- **Figure: enjambment** across the couplet break, the sentence runs over the line-edge with no end-stop. Fry teaches that a deliberately broken line at the moment of approach makes the reader fall into the next line the way the speaker falls into the hole.

Single line: "*Gains control*"

- Agency transfers to the force, and the speaker's will gives way to gravity.

- **Form: catalectic two-beat fragment**, deliberately short, deliberately sitting on its own line. The line's brevity enacts the loss of control it describes.

Pair 14: "*Spinning, whirling, still descending,* " / "*Like a spiral sea, unending,* "

- Motion becomes helpless descent, with the body and ship caught in accelerating collapse.

- **Figure: gerundive accumulation** ("spinning, whirling, still descending"), a Fry-named **synathroismus** of motion verbs. Three present participles in one line, the grammar of an event that will not stop.

- **Sound: end-rhyme** on "descending / unending" with the same -ending feminine cadence, the rhyme itself refuses to close.

Pair 15: *"Like a spiral sea, unending"* (carried)

- The spiral image makes terror feel infinite, turning the fall into a vast consuming pattern.

- **Figure: simile** ("Like a spiral sea"), Bradley's chapter opens with the exact observation that simile is pop's most overused figure, kept alive only by freshness of vehicle. "Spiral sea" gets there.

Pair 16: *"Sound and fury drowns my heart, " / "Drown the visions of my soul, "*

- The experience overwhelms the inner life, flooding courage, emotion, and perception.

- **Figure: Shakespearean tag** ("sound and fury") from Macbeth. The borrowed phrase carries its native context, the speech of a man losing his mind.

- **Sound: anadiplosis** in spirit, "drowns" at the end of the first line, "Drown" at the start of the second. Fry treats anadiplosis as one of the most musical of rhetorical repetitions.

Pair 17: *"Every nerve is torn apart, " / "Is torn apart, "*

- The ending becomes bodily rupture, leaving the listener inside the moment of total transformation.

- **Figure: epizeuxis**, the immediate phrase-repetition. The song's last full verbal gesture is itself a rupture, the line breaks on its own restatement.

Final marker: *"To be continued."*

- The album closes inside suspense, because Cygnus becomes a doorway into the next chapter rather than a resolved ending.

- **Form: deliberate non-ending**, the rhetorical figure of **aposiopesis** (a sentence cut off mid-flight), used at the album scale. Peart resolves the song with an opening rather than a closure, the trick Coleridge himself plays at the end of "Kubla Khan," which the album's second track has already taught the listener to recognize.

12

Closing Chapter: The Album as One Object

Read end-to-end with Fry, Bradley, Macan, Stephenson, Moore, Nobile, Piston, Kennan, and Riley together, **A Farewell To Kings** is a cycle of voices, not a setlist. The six tracks resolve into six personae carrying a single moral question through the album's forty-six-minute run.

1. **The civic preacher** (track 1) addresses posterity.
2. **The doomed seeker** (track 2) addresses himself, fails, becomes his own warning.
3. **The civic hymn** (track 3) answers the preacher with a moral compass.
4. **The character song** (track 4) gives the compass a human shape, a man.
5. **The lover** (track 5) lets the man rest with a beloved.
6. **The voyager** (track 6) leaves all of it for the open sky and falls.

Peart is doing what the medieval **dream-vision** poets did and what concept-album rock briefly perfected, threading a single moral

question through six personae. Fry's prosody catches the line-by-line craft, Bradley's pop-poetry frame catches the album-level architecture of voice, rhyme, refrain, and story.

Underneath the lyrical cycle the trio carries a parallel polyphonic argument. Macan reads the prog suite as the genre's signal compositional form, a multi-section narrative structure that absorbs classical-music ambitions of length and form. Stephenson reads rock harmony as modal-first, where $\flat VII$ is a structural cadence rather than a passing chord. Moore reads the rock recording as a three-dimensional sound-box where each voice occupies a specific spatial position. Nobile reads form-as-harmony, where each section's harmonic function defines what it does in the song's larger architecture. Across the album's six tracks, the band deploys all four readings simultaneously, the longer tracks (Xanadu, Cygnus X-1) running the full Macan suite form while the shorter ones (Closer To The Heart, Cinderella Man, Madrigal) work inside Nobile's verse-chorus and strophic forms with Stephenson-modal harmony coloring them throughout.

The trio's contrapuntal density tracks the lyric's polyphonic claim. The album's two suites (tracks 2 and 6) are the most polyphonically dense, with three independent voices in maximum independence, and they carry the album's most ambitious lyric arguments (the doomed quest, the cosmic voyage). The album's two civic statements (tracks 1 and 3) carry medium polyphonic density, with the trio operating as a coordinated rock band rather than as three independent voices. The album's two human-scale ballads (tracks 4 and 5) carry the lowest polyphonic density, with the trio operating closer to a conventional rock-trio support of song. The pattern is structural, the trio's density rises and falls with the lyric's scale of address, and the album's architecture reads as a

coherent design from instrumental texture up through lyric form.

Peart's drumming functions as the album's third compositional voice and its principal structural-event marker. Across the six tracks, the kit deploys tubular bells, glockenspiel, temple blocks, woodblocks, china cymbals, brushes, and the full standard rock kit, each color appearing in service of a specific song's needs. Riley's principle of sensing the form applies across all six performances, with the kit's role calibrated to the song rather than imposed on it. Cooper and Meyer's foreground-and-structural distinction places Peart's fills as foreground events and his orchestral-percussion choices, his meter-lock patterns, and his color changes as structural events. The Bruford influence reads across the record, in the tuned tom melodies, the deliberate restraint of Madrigal, the orchestral percussion of Xanadu, and the multi-bar fills of Cygnus X-1. Peart in 1977 was twenty-five years old and on the third album of his Rush tenure, and the drumming on *A Farewell To Kings* is the work of a player who has fully internalized the prog-drumming tradition his predecessors built.

The album sits in 1977 as the prog tradition's deliberate counter-statement to punk's pressure. Punk had broken in the UK in 1976 and was the dominant press narrative of 1977. Christgau and the New York press took the punk side. The musicians' press, including Bruford's later autobiographical account and Romano's retrospective FAQ, read the prog statements of that year (Yes's *Going For The One*, Genesis's *Wind & Wuthering*, Rush's *A Farewell To Kings*) as serious craft statements from bands continuing their tradition rather than as embattled holdouts. The album's literary, pastoral, and orchestral textures, its classical-guitar openings, its Coleridge and Cervantes references, its 11-minute suite and 10-minute closing suite, its tubular bells

and bird sounds and Taurus bass pedals, all of it is the band's deliberate response to the punk-versus-prog discourse, a response that produces work the discourse could not absorb instead of engaging it directly.

The work survives multiple readings because it was written for multiple readings at once. Fry's prosody catches the lyric craft. Bradley's pop-poetry frame catches the album-level voice and story architecture. Macan, Stephenson, Moore, and Nobile catch the musical form, harmony, texture, and section-function. Piston and Kennan catch the trio's contrapuntal interaction. Riley and Cooper-Meyer catch Peart's drumming. Christgau catches the contemporary critical position. Bruford and Romano catch the musicians' position. The album rewards each of these readings, and the rewards converge on the same finding, that *A Farewell To Kings* is a literary album made by a polyphonic trio at a hinge moment in rock, and that the album's design at every level is coherent with itself.

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Appendix: Album Information

A Farewell To Kings, by Rush

- Released September 1, 1977
- Mercury Records (US), Anthem Records (Canada)
- Recorded summer 1977 at Rockfield Studios, Wales, and mixed at Advision Studios, London
- Produced by Rush and Terry Brown
- Total runtime: 37:26
- Chart placements: #11 UK, #33 US Billboard 200

Track listing:

1. A Farewell To Kings (5:51)
2. Xanadu (11:08)
3. Closer To The Heart (2:54)
4. Cinderella Man (4:21)
5. Madrigal (2:35)

6. Cygnus X-1 Book One: The Voyage of the Rocinante (10:25)

Personnel:

- Geddy Lee: lead vocals, bass guitar, Minimoog, Oberheim Polyphonic synthesizer, bass pedal synthesizer (Moog Taurus)
- Alex Lifeson: electric and acoustic guitars (12-string acoustic, classical, electric), bass pedals
- Neil Peart: drums, percussion (orchestral bells, tubular bells, wind chimes, bell tree, glockenspiel, temple blocks, vibra-slap, triangle, cowbells, plywood)

Singles:

- "Closer To The Heart" (October 1977): #45 US, #36 UK, #28 Canada
- "A Farewell To Kings" (1977): no charting in major territories

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