

Area of Study 2: Musical for Ensemble

Skid Row (Downtown) – Student Sheet

Taken from the musical Little Shop of Horrors

Words by Howard Ashman / Music by Alan Menken

INTRO

Alarm goes off at seven, and you start uptown,
You put in your eight hours for the powers that have always been,
(Sing it child) Till it's five PM. Then you go:

CHORUS 1

Downtown, where the folks are broke, you go
Downtown, where your life's a joke, you go
Downtown, where you buy a token, you go
Home to Skid Row (Home to Skid Row). Yes you go:

CHORUS 2

Downtown, where the cabs don't stop,
Downtown, where the food is slop,
Downtown, where the hopheads flop in the snow,
Down on Skid Row.

VERSE 1

Uptown you cater to a million jerks,
Uptown you're messengers and mailroom clerks,
Eating all your lunches at the hot dog carts,
The bosses take your money and they break your hearts

VERSE 2

And uptown you cater to a million whores,
You disinfect terrazzo on their bathroom floors,
The jobs are really menial, you make no bread,
And then at five o'clock you head by subway:

CHORUS 3

Downtown, where the guys are drips,
Downtown, where they rip your slips,
Downtown, where relationships are no go,
Down on Skid Row (down on Skid Row).
Down on Skid Row (down on Skid Row).
Down on Skid Row (down on Skid Row).
Down on Skid Row.

VERSE 3

Poor, all my life I've always been poor,
I keep asking God what I'm for,
And he tells me 'Gee, I'm not sure,
Sweep that floor kid'.

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VERSE 4

Oh, I started life as an orphan,
A child of the street. Here on Skid Row,
He took me in gave me shelter, a bed, crust of bread and a job,
Treats me like dirt and calls me a slob, which I am. So I live:

CHORUS 4

Downtown, that's your home address, you live
Downtown, when your life's a mess, you live
Downtown, where depression's just status quo,
Down on Skid Row.

CHORUS 5

Someone show me a way to get outta here,
'Cos I constantly pray I'll get outta here,
Please won't somebody say I'll get outta here?
Someone gimme my shot, or I'll rot here.

CHORUS 6

Show me how and I will, I'll get outta here,
I'll start climbing uphill and get outta here,
Someone tell me I still could get outta here,
Someone tell lady luck that I'm stuck here.

CHORUS 7

Gee' it sure would be swell to get outta here,
Bid the gutter farewell and get outta here,
I'd move heaven and hell to get outta Skid,
I'd do I don't know what to get outta Skid,
But a hell of a lot to get outta Skid,
People tell me there's not a way outta Skid,
But believe me I gotta get out of Skid Row.

Little Shop of Horrors is a horror comedy rock musical about a hapless florist shop worker who raises a plant that feeds on human blood and flesh. The music is composed in the style of early 1960's rock and roll, incorporating elements of doo-wop and early Motown. Because of its small cast and relatively simple orchestrations it has become popular with community theatre, school and other amateur groups. The musical was made into a 1986 film of the same name, directed by Frank Oz.

Skid Row (Downtown) is the second song in the musical. It introduces the audience to the main characters of Seymour and Audrey and to the fact that they both aspire to leave their extremely humble surroundings and miserable circumstances.

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1) During the Intro, most of the words are set syllabically (each syllable of text is matched to a single note). However, there are occurrences where words are set melismatically (a single syllable moves between different notes). Identify a word that is set melismatically.

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2) The main pulse is established during Chorus 1. What is the time signature of this song? (Underline one).

4/4 (four crotchet beats per bar) 12/8 (twelve quaver beats per bar)
3/4 (three crotchet beats per bar) 9/8 (nine quaver beats per bar)

3) How would you describe the tempo which is established during Chorus 1?

Allegro (Quick) Andante (Walking Pace) Adagio (Slow)

4) Verses 1 and 2 are performed by three female singers. How do they perform them?

In harmony (different pitches) In unison (the same pitches)

5) And during the same Verses, which words of each line are the most syncopated (off-beat)?

The words at the start The words in the middle The words at the end

6) What type of voice sings the solo part in Chorus 3?

Soprano (high female) Alto (low female) Tenor (high male) Bass (low male)

7) And what type of voice sings the solo part from Verse 3 onwards?

Soprano (high female) Alto (low female) Tenor (high male) Bass (low male)

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8) There is a tempo change just before the start of Chorus 4. Which term best describes what happens?

Accelerando

(gradually speeding up)

Rallentando

(gradually slowing down)

9) During Chorus 4, identify the type of texture used to perform the word 'Downtown'.

Monophonic

(a single melody line)

Homophonic

(melody and chordal accompaniment)

Polyphonic

(independent melodies)

10) Each Chorus is harmonised in the same way. The first line is harmonised with chord I, the second line is harmonised with chord III, but what chord is the third line harmonised with?

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11) Identify the tonality of this piece.

Minor

Major

12) Identify the type of cadence (chord progression) used to end the piece.

Perfect

(V – I)

Plagal

(IV – I)

Imperfect

(I/ii/IV/vi – V)

Interrupted

(V – vi)

Total / 12