Is This The World We Created?

This month, Queen's Brian May gives Kit Morgan's ears a right royal bashing with the live version of this acoustic piece from 1984's The Works album.

It takes a band of Queen's gargantuan popularity to get away with playing a tender, quiet ballad using essentially just voice and acoustic guitar, right in the middle of a barnstorming pyrotechnic-laden rock set at Wembley stadium.

This is an arrangement for just one guitar, based upon live recordings of the tune rather than the studio version, which used a 12-string guitar as well as a classical (nylon strung). Brian May used a Gibson Chet Atkins model when performing the song live: being a solid-bodied classical guitar, it bypasses many of the problems associated with high volume acoustic performances whilst maintaining an incredibly natural sound.

THE TRANSCRIPTION

The arrangement is based on a 1986 live recording (from the Queen - Live Magic album) and I haven't made any alterations apart from the very first bar. Brian starts the tune on an atmospheric Bb/D chord at the 1st/3rd fret; my transcription of the intro borrows its fingerpicking from the D chord on the original album version.

Although I've marked the tempo as 1=80, this is very much a 'feel' piece, with enormous fluctuations in tempo and dynamics throughout. The guitar part follows the rubato vocal lines, so don't set your metronome when you're practising it from the transcription! For me, the main surprises as a transcriber came from Brian's unusual choice of chord inversions. Check out the strange versions of the four-string F#maj7 and Em7 chords which appear in the verse sections, and especially the D7sus4/A chord at bar 10: it's truly painful to play with an enormous stretch between the second finger on fret 3 of the 2nd string and the third finger on fret 5 of the 4th string - outrageous, but not (quite) impossible.

VARIATIONS

Since this is a fairly free tune, I've just put a repeat sign around the verse and the chorus - it's up to your own imagination if you want to change things along the way. For instance, on the original (and on my recorded version on this month's CD) the second time through the arrangement is a little more animated, especially in the choruses section where the initial delicate fingerstyle part develops more of a strummed rhythmic style. I've stuck to the transcription the first time through so as not to confuse anyone! ☺️

Brian May on stage with his Chet Atkins classical-solid-body.
QUEEN: Is This The World We Created?

**Intro:**

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D  D  A/D  D7  G/D

PP  Let ring throughout
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**Verse:**

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Bm  F#m7  Em7

Bm  F#m7  Em7

Dsus4/A  D/A  Esus4  Em
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