

Listening Guide



Donna Summer, “Bad Girls” Casablanca 988

Words and music by Donna Summer, Eddie Hokenson, Bruce Soldano, and Joe Esposito, produced by Giorgio Moroder and Pete Bellotte. Rose to #1 on both the *Billboard* “Hot 100” and “Best Selling Soul Singles” charts in 1979 (uk14).

FORM: Modified contrasting verse-chorus, but with the chorus preceding the verse. Each statement of the chorus is preceded by an instrumental interlude featuring a melody in the horns. The verses that follow the chorus are split into two 8-bar subsections. Note that again we see a song restart through a return to the introduction, as in “Purple Haze” and “Roundabout.”

TIME SIGNATURE: 4/4. Note the strong disco beat provided by emphasizing the regular groove and mixing the bass drum, high-hat, and snare forward throughout.

INSTRUMENTATION: The rhythm section is made up of drums, bass, guitar, and piano, with horns used in the traditional rhythm and blues manner. Summer’s lead vocal is supported by female backups, and miscellaneous percussion is used throughout (the whistles are the most noticeable of these).

0:00–0:32	Introduction , 16 mm.	Texture builds up gradually, with 8 bars of groove played by guitars and drums only. The next 8 bars add horns, whistles, and “toot, toot.”
0:32–0:40	Interlude , 4 mm.	Melody presented in the horns.
0:40–0:56	Chorus , 8 mm.	Lead vocal with rhythm section only. “Bad girls . . .”
0:56–1:11	Verse , pt. 1, 8 mm.	Girl-group style backup vocals are added at the ends of phrases, “See them out on the street . . .”

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1:11–1:28	Verse , pt. 2, 8 mm.	Horn hits are added in, “You ask yourself . . .”
1:28–1:36	Interlude , 4 mm.	Uses horn line from last 4 mm. of introduction.
1:36–1:52	Chorus , 8 mm.	This time backup vocals echo Summer, “Bad girls . . .”
1:52–2:08	Verse , pt. 1, 8 mm.	As before. “Friday night and the strip is hot . . .”
2:08–2:24	Verse , pt. 2, 8 mm.	As before. “Now don’t you ask yourself . . .”
2:24–2:32	Interlude , 4 mm.	As before.
2:32–2:48	Chorus , 8 mm.	Changed to include taunt from backup vocals. Note new guitar line in the background. “Bad girl, such a naughty bad girl . . .”
2:48–3:04	Verse , pt. 1, 8 mm.	As before, but guitar continues. “You and me, we’re both the same . . .”
3:04–3:19	Verse , pt. 2, 8 mm.	Guitar solo emerges from the background to take the melody previously handled by the lead vocals.
3:19–3:59	Reprise of Introduction , 20 mm.	Varied and expanded to encompass four 8-bar sections based on introduction material and Summer speaking and singing (“Hey mister . . .”) over groove.
3:59–4:14	Interlude , 8 mm.	Expanded to 8 bars and emerges directly out of reprised introduction, as “Hey mister . . .” in vocals returns.
4:14–4:54	Chorus and ending , 20 mm.	8-bar chorus is followed by 8-bar return to interlude material that immediately preceded it, though the horn melody continues throughout this section. The backup vocals add a 4-bar ending.