

Africa by Toto



- Africa is a song recorded by the American rock band Toto in 1981 for their fourth studio album entitled Toto IV. It is a soft-rock love song with features of African music.
- The song was written by band members David Paich (born June 25th 1954) and Jeff Porcaro (born April 1st 1954 and died August 5th 1992).
- Africa was released as the third single from the album on September 30th 1982 through Columbia Records. It reached number one in America for a single week on February 5th 1983. It also achieved a place in the top ten in the UK, Canada, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland.
- In 2012, Africa was listed by music magazine NME in 32nd place on its list of '50 Most Explosive Choruses'.



- Instrumentation: Rock Band: drum kit with additional percussion, lead and bass guitars, synthesizers, male lead vocals and male backing vocals.
- Tempo: Moderately fast.
- Dynamics: Most of the song is mezzo-forte whilst the choruses are forte.
- Form and Structure: Verse / Chorus Form
- Tonality: The majority of the song is in B major whilst the choruses are all in A major.
- Harmony: Diatonic throughout.
- Melody and Pitch: The melody is mostly conjunct (moving in step) and includes occasional use of the pentatonic scale. The pitch range of the vocal line is just less than two octaves on the printed score, but it is wider on the recording with the vocal improvisations towards the end of the song.
- Rhythm and Metre: Ostinato rhythms, consisting almost totally of quavers, with constant use of syncopation. The time signature is 2/2 (split common time) throughout.
- Texture: Homophonic (melody and accompaniment).



The introduction contains only three chords - ♮ VII, vi and ii (A, G#m and C#m) - and consists of two riffs, both of which last for two bars each.

The first (Riff a - bars 1 & 2) is a distinctive syncopated rhythm pattern mostly repeating chord ♮ VII and concluding with chords vi and ii:



The second (Riff b - bars 3 & 4 with an anacrusis) uses an ostinato pattern of five notes - based on the E major pentatonic scale - over a sustained chord ii:



With the exception of the Chorus, the first riff makes an appearance in every other section of the song whilst the second is developed in the instrumental section.

Both riffs have their origins in traditional African music with their use of syncopation, pentatonic scale and irregular ostinato groupings that cut across the 2/2 time signature. The instrumental sonorities used on the recording - including xylophones and marimbas - suggest the sounds of pitched percussion instruments which originate from the various countries of the African continent. The recording of the song also includes an additional eight-bar introduction, performed only by unpitched percussion instruments. This is heard before the vocal score begins and contains African influence in its use of layered rhythm parts and ostinatos.