

'MAGNUM OPUS' (Livgren, Walsh, Williams, Hope, Erhart, Steinhardt)

This is the final song on the album, and it is undoubtedly the most complex. It was constructed using sections of music the band created that didn't develop into complete songs, hence the title was originally going to be called 'Leftoverture', but Dave Hope proposed that it would make a good album title. The band's manager, Wally Gold then suggested 'Magnum Opus' as the name of this track.

The first section of the track - 'Father Pedulla Meets the Perfect Gnat' - opens with a very low-key timpani figure, joined after two bars by an almost medieval sounding keyboard. This ends with a short pause before the rest of the band enters with a heavier Em riff section at bar 10. At bar 17, the band mainly drops away, with only Phil Ehart's drum groove supporting Dave Hope's melodic bass solo. This solo is enhanced by overdrive and phaser effects, and contains some expressive use of slides, hammer-ons and harmonics. This leads into the next section 'Howling at the Moon' (bar 25), where a vibraphone solo takes over the lead, followed by a guitar solo at bar 32. The main vocal begins at bar 37, and the section eventually ends with a pause at bar 49. Dave Hope mainly plays root notes and chord tones in this section

'Man Overboard' moves the time signature into a more proggy 6/4, and Dave Hope joins in with the unison riff from bar 54 until bar 65. At bar 66 a more melodic unison riff appears for three bars, and then there are eight bars of 4/4 featuring some stop/start notes behind the violin figure. A return to 6/4 in bar 77 features some pedal note bass through the chord changes, until the time signature changes to 3/4 (this could be written in 6/4, but the phrasing suits 3/4 better) where the bass plays descending tone and major third melodic cells rising by a minor third each time. A tacet bar at 87 is followed by a long unison riff in 8/4 which utilises a three-note melisma over the quaver pattern, and this is followed by a more straightforward idea at bar 94 where Dave Hope mainly plays tied whole notes, although every other note is extended into a power chord.

The next section 'Industry On Parade' (bar 102), is more chromatic, but rhythmically broken up, with unison riffs separated by empty bars. At bar 130, another melismatic bass riff appears, similar to that at bar 88, but this time in 7/4. A short return to the chromaticism of the previous riff starts at bar 138, and a heavy ritardando slows the tempo to start the next section at bar 144 where the more dream-like 'Release the Beavers' begins. This section lasts until bar 164, where a 6/8 sequence begins, and this accelerates to meet the tempo of the heavier riff begins at bar 175, emphasising notes from the blues scale and some chromatic ideas also. This idea is then superseded by a 5/4 riff at bar 193, although the bass line is simpler, using roots and octaves.

At bar 201, the time signature alternates between 4/4 and 7/4, although the idea ends on four bars of 4/4 before returning to the riff previously seen at bar 177. This very changeable section is followed by a more stable idea where the bass plays root eighth notes for sixteen bars, before the entire piece ends on the riff first seen at bar 10.

[Link to 'Magnum Opus' Transcription](#)

['Magnum Opus' Helpful Hints and Playthrough](#)