

# Listening log



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Rock Report Listening Log Stairway to Heaven Album: Led Zeppelin IV Artist: Led Zeppelin Year of Release: 1971 Rock Style: Hard Rock Musical Characteristics. Stairway to Heaven is a hard rock ballad, perhaps one of the first of the genre of hard rock music that would be the example from which the 'rock ballad' was born. The nature of the music is that it is a slowed down version of the hard rock example, a slower steady beat with highly emotional lead guitar and bass. It is the emotions of the music that is the most important element as the sentimentality expresses something deep. With Stairway to Heaven, the lyrics are highly symbolic, so much so that it is possible that a great deal of the listeners really had no idea what all was being expressed. However, the music was so beautifully emotive that the lyrics came across on some level, making this song iconic in music history.

Title: Hotel California Album: Hotel California Artist: The Eagles Year of Release: 1976 Rock Style: Hard Rock Musical Characteristics: This piece of music is also a hard rock ballad, but it is less sentimental and more dangerously exciting. There was a fascination with Satanism and the occult in the 1970s that came through in the lyrics. The lyrics tell a more straight forward story in which death and the afterlife is explored. The music is intoxicating, the beat seeming to be in 2/4 time, rather than the more common 4/4. The lyrics are the center of this ballad, as the story is highlighted by the use of the lead guitar. Comparison The two ballads are similar in that they slow down the overall play list of each individual artist in order to become more sentimentally expressive. The vocalists are at the center of the songs, even though the music is designed to echo the emotional renditions of the work. Both songs have similar themes of life and death. However, they are different in that they explore different kinds of

sentiment. Hotel California tells a story of an event, where Stairway to Heaven creates a more symbolic scenario subject to a variety of interpretations. The music is slower in Stairway to Heaven, drawing the listener spell bound through the piece, where Hotel California intends to push the listener through the events, dragging them into the 'hell' that they have created. This is accomplished for Stairway to Heaven through the slowly rising music, that then drops back down, the tempo varying to give the listener time to experience what he or she is hearing through a deeper exploration. Hotel California is a steady beat, slower than many rock songs, but with the feel of a horror movie, one you cannot turn from because the pacing has pulled you into the storyline.