

ROXANNE

(*Outlandos D'Amour*, 1978)

Music and Lyrics by Sting

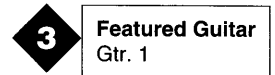
Figure 1 – Intro, Verse, Pre-Chorus, and Chorus

“Roxanne” is the first Police hit and an immortal classic rock number. The tune reflects one of the band’s primary credos: the synthesis of black and white musics—in this case, black reggae and white pop. Reggae, already a popular medium with British punk rockers, figured prominently in the early Police repertory. Casting the die for numerous future works, “Roxanne” presaged their future musical direction and Sting’s penchant for clever views of challenging subjects.

“Roxanne” personifies the new three-piece style pioneered by the Police. The guitar’s role in the song is intentionally sparse, coloristic, and restrained. Instead of the obligatory lead-guitar wailing of most rock trios, Andy’s playing is comprised entirely of percussive quarter-note chord strums in the intro, verses, and pre-chorus. Instead of thick distorted power chords in these sections, Andy opts for lighter mid-register voicings rendered with his bright, semi-clean Tele tone. Note his characteristic use of more sophisticated chords like F6, E♭maj7, Cm7, and particularly Fsus4 and Gsus4.

Andy saves the power chords for the chorus, which takes on a harder, punk-rock quality with an increased dynamic level and his driving eighth-note rhythm guitar part. Note the syncopation and accents on beats 3 and 4 in measures 36, 38, 40, 42, and 44. These simple rhythmic twists produce a more unusual oblong power-chord figure and add an arresting artistic quirkiness to an otherwise straightforward groove.

Fig. 1



Intro
Moderately fast ♩ = 131

(open hi-hat) × ♯
Gtr. 1 (clean)

Gm + h h

(bass enters) (7 5) ♯ | F6

Rhy. Fig. 1

E♭maj7

mf

6 Dm Cm7 Fsus4 Gsus4 BREAK

1. Rox -
End Rhy. Fig. 1

Verse
Gtr. 1: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1, 2 times

Gm + sn dr. 2 × 4

F6

E♭maj7

- anne, you ___ don't have to ___ put on the ___ red ___ light. ___

14 Dm Cm7 Fsus4 Gsus4

— Those days are o - ver, you don't have to —

17 *BREAK* Gm

— sell your bod - y to the night. — Rox - anne, —

20 F6 Ebmaj7 Dm Cm7

you don't have to wear that dress_ to - night, — walk the streets_ for_

24 Fsus4 Gsus4

— mon - ey, — you don't care — if it's wrong or if it's right. Rox -

Pre-Chorus

27 Cm7 Fsus4 G7sus4 Gsus4

- anne, — you don't have to put on the red — light. — Rox -

Gtr. 1

dr + tom + vial

31 Cm7 Fsus4 Gsus4 G5 G7(no3rd) C5 Bb5

- anne, — you don't have to put on the red — light. — You don't have to (Rox - anne. —

dr. bass

