

Sh-Boom (1954)

The Chords

LISTEN FOR

- Original fusion of musical sensibilities
 - Mainstream pop: AABA form, love ballad lyrics
 - Doo wop: 4-part vocals with varying timbres, rich harmonies, nonsense syllables
 - Jump blues: quick tempo, reduced swing band accompaniment, aggressive shuffle groove
 - Jazz: scat singing, final chord
- Flexible approach to song structure (phrase extensions, interlude)

CREATION

<i>Songwriters</i>	Jimmy Keyes, Carl Feaster, Claude Feaster, Floyd McRae, Ricky Edwards (music, lyrics)
<i>Label, Record</i>	Cat 104
<i>Musicians</i>	Carl Feaster (lead), Claude Feaster (baritone), Jimmy Keyes (first tenor), Floyd "Buddy" McRae (second tenor) and William Edwards (bass); guitar, string bass, drums, saxophone
<i>Recording</i>	[<i>Studio</i>], [<i>location</i>], 1954; mono
<i>Charts</i>	R&B 2, Pop 9

MUSIC

<i>Genre</i>	R&B [doo-wop + jump blues]/Pop/Jazz
<i>Form</i>	AABA with interlude and partial reprise
<i>Key</i>	C major
<i>Meter</i>	4/4

LISTENING GUIDE

Time	Form	Lyric Cue	Listen For
0:00	Intro (4)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A cappella (2 bars) then with instrumental accompaniment (2 bars).

Time	Form	Lyric Cue	Listen For
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on doo-wop progression (I–vi⁷–ii⁷–V⁷).
0:07 0:22	A1 (8+4)	"Life could be dream"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pop chord changes. 4-bar phrase extension with scat singing.
0:29	A2 (8)	"Life could be dream"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scat singing leads seamlessly into the new section. As above (without 4-bar extension)
0:43	B (8)	"Every time I look at you"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bass vocalist with prominent guitar accompaniment.
0:57 1:11	A3 (8+8)	"Life could be dream"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocals in higher register, adding intensity to repetition of music. 8-bar phrase extension with scat singing.
1:22	Interlude (16)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot tenor saxophone solo characteristic of jump blues, accompanied by nonsense doo-wop syllables.
1:53	A4 (8+8)	"Life could be dream"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial reprise. Vocals in higher register as in A3 8-bar phrase extension that ends on rich, jazzy harmony.

LYRICS

Life could be a dream
Life could be a dream, sh-boom

Life could be a dream, sh-boom
If I could take you up in paradise up above,
sh-boom
If you would tell me I'm the only one that
you love
Life could be a dream sweetheart
Hello hello again, sh-boom and hopin' we'll
meet again, boom

Oh, life could be a dream, sh-boom
If only all my precious plans would come
true, sh-boom
If you would let me spend my whole life
lovin' you
Life could be a dream sweetheart, sh-boom

Every time I look at you

Something is on my mind
If you do what I want you to
Baby, we'd be so fine
Oh, life could be a dream, sh-boom
If I could take you up in paradise up above,
sh-boom
If you'd tell me, darlin', I'm the only one that
you love
Life could be a dream sweetheart
Hello hello again, sh-boom and hopin' we'll
meet again, boom

Oh, life could be a dream, sh-boom
If I could take you up in paradise up above,
sh-boom
If you'd tell me, darlin', I'm the only one that
you love
Life could be a dream sweetheart
Hello hello again, sh-boom and hopin' we'll
meet again, boom

SOURCES

- Joseph Schloss, Larry Starr, and Christopher Waterman, *Rock: Music, Culture, and Business* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 41.
- Katherine Charlton, *Rock Music Styles: A History*, 6th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2011), 33–34.
- <http://www.songlyrics.com/the-chords/sh-boom-lyrics/>