Fast

1. Just a cast-a-way, an island lost at sea-
   A year has passed since I wrote my note,
   Walked out this morning I don't believe what I saw,
   But I should have known this right from the start,
   More hope seems like I'm not alone in being alone,
   Only man could bear any loneliness more than any man could bear

WORDS AND MUSIC BY STING

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Rescue the life, but love can break your heart.

I'll send an S.O.S. to the world, I'll send an S.O.S. to the world.
I hope that someone gets my message in a bottle, yeah.
message in a bottle
message in a bottle oh yeah.

I'm sending out an S.O.S.

Con 8ve

Repeat to fade
MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE
Words and Music by Sting

Figure 17—Intro, verse, pre-chorus, and chorus

Melding punk, reggae, R&B, 20th century modernism, and various divergent forms of rock, The Police forged an arresting new sound for the coming decade as the seventies drew to a close. Presaging the textural school, new wave, techno pop, and post-punk minimalism, the resourceful British trio brought some truly innovative musical tangents to the contemporary scene. Though the majority of their output was more rhythmically-based than riff-oriented, “Message in a Bottle,” from 1979’s Regatta De Blanc (literally translated: “white reggae”), is an exception, containing one of the most imaginative and intriguing melodic riffs in rock and pop. With Stewart Copeland’s unique rhythm feel, Sting’s inimitable vocal style, and Andy Summers’ strikingly brave new guitar approach, it is more than a message in a bottle—it is a blaring wake-up call for the eighties.

“Message in a Bottle” revolves around Summers’ strange but compelling intervallic riff. Harnessing his background in jazz and 20th century composition, he came up with one of the most exotic and immediately recognizable figures in rock history. The riff is based on quintal harmony (chords built on fifth intervals). Quintal is derived from “quintas,” meaning five in Latin. The four chord shapes in the riff are arpeggiated forms of Csus2, Asus2, Bsus2, and F$sus2, and each of these voicings is made of two consecutive fifths. These stacked fifth chords give the riff its unusual, open, intervallic sound. It is heard throughout the song: in the intro, verses, and outro, and is harmonized with a second guitar (Gr. 2) playing a similar intervallic melody a third or fifth above. Two other notable riffs include the driving, clean power-chord rhythm figure in the pre-chorus and the sustaining C$ to A progression of the chorus. Both were virtual prototypes for the minimalist “new wave” guitar approach of the early eighties.

Featured Guitars:
Gr. 1  meas. 1-46
Gr. 2  meas. 1-2

Slow Demos:
Gr. 1  meas. 1-2

Fig. 17

Intro
Fast Rock 1 = 152
Gr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fill 1, 2 times
Gr. 1 (clean) C$sus2 Asus2 Bsus2 F$sus2
Gr. 2 (clean) C$sus2 Asus2 Bsus2 F$sus2

Verse
1. Oh! Just a cast away, an island
2. A year has passed, since I
Gr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fill 1, 1st time, (7half times)
Gr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fill 1, 2nd time, (7 1/2 times)

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51