Within a Verse/Chorus structure this piece has multiple sections which are defined by tempo, contrasting moods and melodic material.

Defying Gravity is a duet for the characters Elphaba and Glinda with some spoken dialogue in addition to the singing. The two characters either deliver their text spoken, half sung/spoken with music notated on the stave with crosses instead of note heads or entirely sung (recitative-like).

Vocal part sings in a free manner.

Chord progressions are often unrelated and in the opening we can see shifts downwards in parallel semitones.

3/2 triple time
2/2 duple time

D chord

C# minor chord

C chord

Melody starts in a conjunct/stepwise manner, but then uses sequence (including a leap) at bar 6 -

Dissonance

Orchestral stabs/accented and attacked (sf)

Strong loud chords reflect anger between 2 characters

Monophonic texture here = voice only

Text setting is syllabic throughout with rhythms moving in a speech-like manner (opposite is mellismatic = 2+ syllables per note)

The 2 witches tend to sing in different keys - D = Glinda; Db = Elphaba

BARS 1 - 19 = Duet between Glinda and Elphaba with a combination of spoken dialogue and singing. Orchestral chord stabs at start with sparse monophonic moments, accompaniment becomes chordal and sustained. It has the same effect as recitative - fast moving dialogue to move the story on.
Homophonic chordal opening moving through different major keys. Legato, conjunct melody. The verse contains tremolo strings with dissonant harmony for accompaniment.

At bar 32 it arrives in the tonic key of D major for the verse. Stays in D major until bar 88 when it moves to G major.

Verse
- rising perfect fifth
- melody only uses 5 pitches from 34 - 42
- bare 5ths in accompaniment - sparseness and/or freedom implied
- motifs B and C used again

B maj for 2 bars
- motif C = same pitches as unlim. (interval 5th then 4th)

Motif B = Elphaba’s theme related to X
- melody and accompaniment or melody-dominated homophony
- texture where the singer is accompanied by chords in the orchestra

C# changes to C (b5th of chord)

Verse:
- wide angular leaps
- dissonance

walking pace

F major key
- a tempo
- rall.

Elphaba: I know
- mp colla voce

You can have all you e-ver wanted...
But I don’t want it, No I can’t want it a-ny

Guitar and strings

You can still be with the wi-zard, What you’ve worked and wait-ed for...

Just say you’re sorry...
- mp
- conjunct

How... I hope you’re happy right now!

Glinda: Elphie, listen to me:

Andante

Homophonic chordal music in an almost fanfare-like manner

Motif B = Elphaba’s theme related to X
compound perfect fourth = wide interval
compound = octave PLUS interval
(octave + 4th in this case)

melody only uses NEW 5 pitches G F# D A

common to these sets of 5 notes are D and A reinforcing key of D maj

The title hook leaping melody is sung over broken chord accompaniment and driving hi-hat rhythms

Dotted rhythms are used throughout

motif D = bars 49 -50

2nd 3rd and 4th notes of motif C are used with the A in reverse to make title hook; this also uses metrical shifting - look at the different beats that the C# falls on: quaver 2,5 and 8 - 3,6 - 1,4,7 etc
The orchestra is used to good dramatic effect. The brass section plays homophonic chordal music in an almost fanfare-like manner (e.g. bar 20).
Strings use tremolo effect to add tension (e.g. bar 34).
The closed hi-hat of the drum kit plays constant crotchet rhythms in bar 51 to add rhythmic momentum.
There is a cymbal roll to add excitement as the piece moves into a key change (e.g. bar 122).
The full band plays at the climax of the song at bar 135. Synthesisers and glockenspiel are used to good effect with the high magical-sounding repeated quaver accompaniment to the chorus. Tubular bells give an ethereal sonority at bar 147.
71 - 79 melody is hexatonic (6 degrees of major scale) - D E F# G A B. Chords below are avoiding C# - see there are lots of C naturals; C# is saved for the hook of the chorus

Too long I've been afraid of losing love, I guess I've lost... Well, if that's love...

Rests are often used to break up phrases

Chorus

it comes at much too high a cost...

I'd sooner try...

interrupted cadence V (A) - VI (B)

Synthesizers and glockenspiel are used to good effect with the high magical-sounding repeated quaver accompaniment to the chorus

84

G major now
A contrasting section in the new key of G major with both characters singing a new melody in unison over semiquaver ostinato accompaniment.

Bitonal - C major in bass against G major (F# and D and G strong in treble)

Leitmotif - the 'unlimited' theme/motif (motif X - 7 notes of 'somewhere over the rainbow')

First Bridge 93 - 103

There are numerous tempo changes through this song and they are important to the overall structure.

Motif X has the notes DEF# G = interval of 4th (cipher for DEFying Gravity)

Auxiliary notes used in sequential phrase

Quaver triplets
**Chorus:** Return to D major for the chorus sung by both characters, opening in unison with strong piano accompaniment then harmonizing in 5ths, 4ths, and 3rds.

*Homophonic chordal music from earlier which leads into the recitative-like music of the opening.*

*At bar 115 it returns to the chromatic melody of the opening.*

2/2 duple time
Elphaba: You too.

now that you're choos- ing this... I hope it brings... you bliss...

Verse

real- ly hope you get it and you don't live to re- gret it. I hope you're hap-

Guitar with overdrive

Cymbal roll to add excitement as the piece moves into a key change

harmonies in 3rds now adds warmth

- py in the end, I hope you're hap - py, my

Climax of the song with full orchestra and loud dynamic. Opens with the homophonic chordal music which leads into an extended version of the verse at a higher register and with developed melodic and rhythmic ideas. There is a reprise of the chorus

stage production allows for harness to be fitted for flight

voices in harmony (thirds)

homophonic chordal texture
2nd bridge section 135 - 151

So if you care to find me, look to the full band. The full band plays at the climax of the song at bar 135.

Plagal cadence IV- I in D

Western sky. As some one told me lately: Everyone deserves the chance to fly! And if I'm flying solo at least I'm flying free.

A tempo

To those who'd ground me, take a message back from me...

Tubular bells give an ethereal sonority at bar 147.
Tell them how I am defying gravity.

Chorus: Synth and Glock.

I’m flying high, defying gravity, and soon I’ll

match them in renown. And nobody in

all of Oz, no wizard that there is or was is ever gonna bring me

flattened submediant chord of D major

extremely powerful chest voice note - very top of range

build up to full tutti finale, in B minor at bar 168 with Elphaba, Glinda, ensemble chorus and orchestra in counterpoint with different musical lines and lyrics.

6 bar link 3 at 62

V - VI (interrupted cadence)
Maestoso

contrapuntal texture with three different musical ideas with different lyrics

pedal at bar 168 - end (D = tonic pedal)

168 it is in B minor until we finish on a chord of D

vocalisation at the end in bar 175 to the word ‘aah

sops = octatonic scale = alt tones and semitones

polytonal chords Bm against G; F against C etc

D major chord ends the 1st half of the show

Pause marks or fermatas are used to lengthen and give freedom to longer rhythms