

'Pinball Wizard' - Performance Notes (1)

'Pinball Wizard' features a unique combination of classical and rock influences. Beginning with a semi-classical acoustic section, the momentum gradually builds and segues into an all-out 'electric' rock song. The following sections will focus on the acoustic Intro and Verse sections.

Intro

Strumming with a pick, establish a *steady eight-beat tempo* ('1-2-3-4-1-2-3-4'), with the opening 'Bm/F#' chord using all downstrokes. The initial '1' count will be the four-string strum, and while the top three strings are still ringing, maintain a steady pulse or tempo with the fourth-string bass notes for the remaining seven beats. This strum pattern will remain consistent throughout the first six measures.

For the 'F#m7' chord, the first finger should slightly lean and mute the second string while the open first string should be sounded. An alternative could be to strum (not mute) the open second string.

The third finger remains 'anchored' on the fourth string/fourth fret throughout the first six sections, producing a *pedal-tone* effect. The third finger then simply slides up a half-step to fret the 'F#sus4' chord, then back down to the fourth fret to fret the 'F#' chord.

For 'F#', the thumb frets the sixth string. During this sequence, the steady rhythm of all downstrokes shifts to a more 'rocked-out' staccato-like rhythm with combined up and down strokes. A suggested strum pattern for each measure of the 'F#' chord would be: '*down-down-down down-up-down-up down*', or a count of: '1-2-3 - 1-2-3-4 - 1'. The last chord (*all open strings*) is strummed lightly just once while the fretting hand shifts up to the seventh fret position to play the 'Bsus4' chord that begins the Verse section.

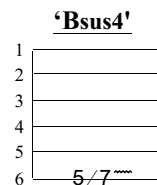
Verse (0:32)

The strum pattern for the Verse is played very fast with variations. A suggested strum pattern and count for each measure is shown right. Underlined strums and counts indicate a heavier accent or strum of each chord emphasizing the higher strings. The number of strings played isn't as important as maintaining an energized staccato rhythm.

Verse Strum Pattern

strum:	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓
count:	<u>1</u>	1	2	3	<u>1</u>	1	2	3	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

For the 'Bsus4' chord, 'anchor' the second finger on the third string/eighth fret (*one fret below the fourth finger*) then just lift the fourth finger off the ninth fret to play the following 'B' chord. The same chord shapes and strum patterns simply shift down two frets for the 'Asus4-A' sections, then down another two frets for the 'Gsus4-G' sections.



A second overdubbed electric guitar riff is added (0:25) with a simple single-note slide up to the 'B' root note (*seventh fret*). This note harmonizes with the corresponding 'Bsus4' chord, producing the '*da... dun*' effect. This single-note riff repeats to harmonize with the 'A', 'G', and 'F#' sections of the progression.

As the right hand strums across the Verse chords, the 'thumbed' sixth string simultaneously provides a steady bass-note rhythm while the 'sus4-major' chord shift occurs with the higher strings (*The fifth string is muted*). The first finger can lean across the top two strings and so that occasionally the first string can be sounded while all the 'sus4' chords are played.

The Verse concludes with the classic power chord riff which features the electric guitar 'doubled up' with an acoustic guitar. While the final 'E' chord strum is sustained on the electric guitar, the acoustic guitar maintains a rhythm by continuing to strum the 'E' chord.

The Who - 'Pinball Wizard' (2)

'E5' 'F#5' 'B5' 'G' 'Dsus4' 'Cadd2' 'G'

Chorus (1:19, 2:02)

	E5 F#5 B5	E5 F#5 B5	E5 F#5 B5	G	D	D Dsus4 D
1				3	2	2 2 [~] 3 3 2
2				3	3	3 3 3 3 3
3		4 4	4	0	2	2 2 2 2 2
4	2 4 4 4	2 4 2	2 4 4 4	0	0	
5	2 4 2 2	2 4 2	2 4 2 2	x		
6	0 2	0 2	0 2	3		

He's a pin-ball wiz-ard there has to be a twist A pin-ball wiz-ard's got such a supple wrist

Bridge (1:30)

	D	Csus2	G	D	Csus2	D
1	2 2			2 2		2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
2	3 3	3 3	3 3	3 3	3 3	3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
3	2 2	0 0	0 0	2 2	0 0	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
4	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
5		3 3	x x		3 3	
6			3 3			

How do you think he does it? (I don't know) What makes him so good?

Last Verse (2:14)

'Dsus4' 'D' 'Csus4' 'C' 'B^b sus4' 'B^b' 'A'

(play four times) Electric Guitar Riff (2:17)

	Dsus4	D
1		
2	10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10
3	12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12	11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11
4	12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12	12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12
5		
6	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10

	Dsus4	D	Csus4	C
1				
2	10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10	8 8 8 8	8 8 8 8
3	12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12	11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9
4	12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12	12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10
5				
6	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8	8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8

Even on... He can ... His disciples... And he...

	B ^b sus4	B ^b	A	D D C F B ^b (Coda)
1				
2	6 6 6 6	6 6 6 6	5 5 5 5	3 3 1 1
3	8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6	2 2 0 2 3
4	8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8	8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	0 0 2 3 3
5				3 3 1
6	6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6	6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6	5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5	

Crazy flipper... Never seen... That deaf... Sure plays a mean pin-ball

'Pinball Wizard' - Performance Notes (2)

Chorus (1:19, 2:02)

For the entire 'E5-F#5-B5-B5' sequence, the first finger remains aligned along the second fret, shifting to different strings based on the power chord ('5') being played. The *timing* of certain chord changes matches the vocal phrasing. For example, the four-chord 'E5-F#5-B5-B5' progression matches or 'syncs-up' with the four syllables of 'Pin-ball Wiz-ard'.

The Chorus resolves with sustained open chords, but when played without accompaniment (*bass, drums, etc.*), should be strummed more to maintain a steady rhythm. The suggested 'G' chord shape provides a full and brighter tone to match the 'Dsus4' chord that follows.

Bridge (1:30)

With many instruments being heard simultaneously, a suggested rhythm pattern for one guitarist would be to 'land' chord changes with the corresponding vocal lines ('How' = 'D', 'think' = 'Csus2', 'does' = 'G').

Keep the third finger 'anchored' on the second string/third fret in order to keep the fretting hand in position throughout the entire Bridge section.

Last Verse (2:14)

For the Last Verse, the initial Verse progression is played three frets higher (*starting with 'Dsus4' at the tenth fret*). This shift changes the initial key and is a songwriting technique called *modulation*. This modulation also changes the original power chord ending of the Verse to a 'D-D-C-F-B \flat ' sequence.

For the Coda (2:46) the song fades with an electric guitar solo played over a repeated 'B \flat ' chord strummed on an acoustic. The solo consists of various riffs from played from the 'B \flat ' Major scale, which can all be played along the sixth fret position. (*see above right*)

Lyrics

Ever since I was a young boy
I've played the silver ball
From Soho down to Brighton
I must have played them all
But I ain't seen nothing like him
In any amusement hall
That deaf, dumb, and blind kid
Sure plays a mean pinball
He stands like a statue
Becomes part of the machine
Feeling all the bumpers
Always playing clean
Plays by intuition
The digit counters fall
That deaf, dumb, and blind kid
Sure plays a mean pinball

He's a pinball wizard
There has to be a twist
A pinball wizard's
Got such a supple wrist
How do you think he does it?
(I don't know)
What makes him so good?
Ain't got no distractions
Can't hear no buzzers and bells
Don't see no lights a flashin'
Plays by sense of smell
Always gets a replay
Never seen him fall
That deaf, dumb, and blind kid
Sure plays a mean pinball

I thought I was
The Bally table king
But I just handed
My pinball crown to him
Even on my favorite table
He can beat my best
His disciples lead him in
And he just does the rest
He's got crazy flipper fingers
Never seen him fall
That deaf dumb and blind kid
Sure plays a mean pinball.

Arrangement

Intro
Verse 1
Verse 2
Chorus
Bridge
Verse 3
Chorus
Verse 4
Coda

'B \flat ' Major Scale

