

Cover Story: Lzzy Hale and Halestorm Keep Rock in the Family

National Standards: 29-31

Lzzy Hale and Halestorm have been making music together since 1997, and today, they're one of the biggest modern rock bands in the U.S. The band features Lzzy on vocals and guitar along with her brother, Arejay, on drums, so it's a family affair. Lzzy says her parents' support has been crucial to Halestorm's success. Most recently, the band released a new single, "Back from the Dead." Following time off the road due to COVID-19, Halestorm has a tour with Evanescence on tap for this winter.

Prepare

Have students watch some live performance footage of Halestorm from their early days and now.

Key points in the article:

- Music education was an important part of Lzzy Hale's development. She started singing in school choir.
- As a Gibson Ambassador, Lzzy is able to advise some of the Gibson heavyweights on a variety of topics and projects, plus work with the company's charities.
- Lzzy grew up taking music lessons, but she's mainly self-taught on guitar. She says she would put herself in situation where she would meet different guitarists and ask them to show her something on the instrument, so she picked it up over the years.

Begin

Review vocabulary words from the article:

- AMBASSADOR: one who serves as a promoter or representative.
- ALTO: originally the highest male voice; now low women's or high men's voices.
- TONE: a steady sound, made unique by its timbre.
- SOLVENT: able to pay and keep up with one's financial obligations.
- POSITIVITY: being optimistic.

Discuss

How did Lzzy learn to sing and play guitar? She started singing in choir in school and was told she had a good "tone." She later took vocal lessons and says she wouldn't be the power singer today without that experience.

Also, what are some of the obstacles musicians are facing due to COVID-19, even as touring resumes? Lzzy says COVID has been difficult for musicians, not just for lack of work, but from a mental standpoint. How can musicians look out for each other going forward when faced with any kind of adversity?

Halestorm brings together family members. What other famous bands consist of family members? The Jonas Brothers come to mind. Have students enjoy thinking of different ones.

Ask

- How did vocal lessons help Lzzy develop her voice and enable her to sing and speak without ruining her instrument?
- How did Lzzy become a self-taught guitarist?
- How has COVID-19 taken a mental toll on musicians around the world?

Questions

1. What city is Halestorm from?
2. When did Halestorm perform their first show?
3. Who are the siblings in Halestorm?
4. Where did Lzzy Hale get her start in music education?
5. At what age did Lzzy start taking voice lessons?
6. Who was Lzzy's voice teacher?
7. What's the name of Halestorm's latest single, released in summer 2021?
8. Who is Halestorm touring with in winter 2021?
9. What's the name of Halestorm's signature guitar?
10. Lzzy is an ambassador for which guitar brand?

Answers

1. Red Lion, Pennsylvania
2. August 9th, 1997
3. Lzzy and Arejay Hale
4. Lzzy started singing in choir in school.
5. 17
6. Steve Whiteman of Kix, (the “glam metal” and hard rock band)
7. "Back from the Dead”
8. Evanescence
9. The Lzzy Hale Epiphone Explorer
10. Gibson

Expand

Ask students to discuss the role of the guitar in popular music today. Is the guitar still the central instrument it was during the heyday of rock and metal music in the '70s and '80s?

- While the guitar has been absent from some modern alternative music, there's no denying its popularity in popular music and pop culture. Songs from bands such as Guns N' Roses, Led Zeppelin and Nirvana are etched in popular music and still played on radio stations around the world. What modern rock bands take from the classics? Greta Van Fleet is one of them.

Feature Story: How to Play 'Save Your Tears'

National Standards: 32-35

Duets are a significant part of popular music. Tackling one of today's most popular duets, The Weeknd and Ariana Grande's "Save Your Tears," will take some practice, but with the right groove, relaxed delivery and dreamy vocal tones, it's sure to please the audience. Although the track was likely recorded mostly with synthesizers, it lends itself to a live performance by an ensemble.

Prepare

Have students listen to the recording "Save Your Tears" featuring The Weeknd and Ariana Grande, as well as The Weeknd's original, solo version of the track. Ask students to listen to how The Weeknd and Grande's voices work together to tell the story. Isolate the vocals, and then isolate the instrumentals. How important are feel and rhythm to this song? Very!

Key points in the article:

- Duets are a major part of pop music, as artists and their record labels use collaborations to stretch their creative wings and share audiences.
- On The Weeknd and Ariana Grande's "Save Your Tears," the key for vocals is to avoid having the singers shout. The band should stay contained and allow the singers to sing in a moody, dreamy way.
- The song's groove is key to its vibe, with its trademark hypnotic eighth note pulse played by the bass and one of the synths. It's a soft but tense groove, presenting tension without release.
- Dreaminess is created by having each instrument and vocal have some kind of reverb or echo- but don't overdo it with the effect.

Begin

Review vocabulary words from the article below:

- DUET: A musical composition in which two performers have equal importance to the piece. Duets are often popular between two singers or two pianists.
- ARPEGGIO: the notes of a chord played in succession, either ascending or descending.
- HARMONY: musical notes combining simultaneously to create pleasing chords and chord progressions.
- REVERB: an effect in which the sound from an amplified instrument reverberates.
- MONOTONE: a sound that doesn't change in pitch and is without intonation.

Discuss

Are there certain styles or genres of music that employ the use of duets more than others? Pop music is a big one. What are some examples of duets that bring together artists in different genres together on one track? Find popular examples from the past to today, or ask students to find some.

Questions

1. Who originally sang "Save Your Tears," and which artists appeared on the remix of the song?
2. Who produced "Save Your Tears?"
3. What effect is applied to the vocals and instruments in this song to give it a dreamy vibe?
4. Where should singers be in relation to the mic to create the intimate sound on "Save Your Tears?"
5. How can players create the song's hypnotic groove?
6. What's key to getting the song's feel right?

Answers

1. "Save Your Tears" was originally sung solo by The Weeknd. Ariana Grande appeared with The Weeknd on the remix of the song.
2. Songwriter/producer Max Martin.
3. Reverb and echo.
4. The singers should get right up on the mics and let the lyrics tell the story.
5. By utilizing simple bass and drums. The bass and drums are basic and should lock in and play the groove.
6. Tension without release.

Expand:

Ask students to think of some artists that have never collaborated together and would bring together two different audiences with a potential duet. Also, ask students to think of ways to make a "cover" song their own, if they choose to perform "Save Your Tears" or another popular song.

Feature Story: Improvising in Keys

National Standards: 22-27

Improvising adds color and excitement to a musical piece. While improvising can happen in any kind of western music, but jazz and rock music are perhaps best-known for their imaginative improvised solos. This lesson shows how improvising single-note lines can help tell a story.

Prepare

Isolate the three elements of the lesson: playing over the chords of a scale; taking a solo; and minor keys and leading tones.

Spark a conversation with students about how improvising solos can significantly change the sound and feel of a song and add momentum and emotion.

Key points in the article:

- A key is a collection of notes that form a scale and have relationships to one another of tension and release inside that scale. When improvising, you're making up music as you go along in keys.
- Improvising a solo with an ensemble is not only fun, it can generate passion and drive in a song.
- When improvising in a minor key, we borrow the leading tone to make the tonic of the minor scale feel like home.

Begin

Using the first portion of the lesson, ask students to play different notes over the tonic or I chord and then over the chords up and down the scale. Then, have them make up their own lines and see where their imagination takes them.

- Before the students start, show them how to do it. Use a metronome and play a scale in a given key.
- Then, play the scale again and start "noodling" and improvising in that same key.

Review vocabulary words from the article below:

- **IMPROVISING:** making music up on the spot in keys.
- **TONIC:** The first scale degree of the diatonic scale and the tonal center that is used in the final cadence in tonal music.
- **LEADING TONE:** The tone a half step below the tonic.
- **RELATIVE KEY:** Major and minor scales that have identical key signatures. They have the same notes but are arranged in a different order.
- **MODULATE:** To change keys, from one tonality to another.

Discuss

While improvising is common in jazz and rock music, what are some other musical genres that regularly employ the improvised solo? What about country or classical? As mentioned in this lesson, J.S. Bach and Ludwig Van Beethoven were considered master improvisers in their era. Find other famous examples, or ask students to try.

Questions

1. What is a key?
2. What band recorded the song "Jessica" featured in this lesson?
3. What is a tritone?
4. In a major key, which degrees form the interval of a tritone?
5. No matter the genre of music you're playing, almost all of the music you play will have been written in what two keys?

Answers

1. A key is a collection of notes that form a scale and have relationships to one another of tension and release inside that scale.
2. The Allman Brothers Band. They recorded it in 1973.
3. A dissonant or unstable interval.
4. The fourth and seventh degrees.
5. Major or minor.

Expand:

Ask students to name some of their favorite improvised solos. What bands are known for "jamming" onstage? Phish and the Grateful Dead are some of the masters.

Feature Story: Finding the Right College Music Program

National Standards:

American colleges and universities are vastly different now than they were decades ago, and that change is apparent in their music programs. Higher education has created new courses and majors to stay relevant and viable amid the significant changes in the music industry. These long-term changes, as well as the post-COVID "new normal," are important factors when choosing a school. Finding the right teacher should also be part of your college search, as the right personality will inspire you to take your talent to the next level.

Prepare

Discuss what factors students should consider when choosing a college or university to attend. What degree and advanced degree programs interest them? What do they look for in an excellent music educator? Do they want a traditional or alternative education program- or a mix of both?

Key points in the article:

- Technology is evolving every aspect of the music business, including music creation, recording, performance and distribution. New, modern forms of educational institutions - such as Berklee's current model of "a conservatory for popular music" - have emerged to create opportunities that match this new-norm.
- COVID-19 introduced challenges for all forms of education reliant on in-person learning and large groups of students gathering, so many educators had to get creative and come up with imaginative educational solutions. This presented some unexpected, positive opportunities, such as Zoom, enabling guest speakers from around the world to speak in front of a class or remote collaborations with students in different areas to coming together in a virtual music festival.
- When looking for a music educator, credentials and reputation are key. Also look for a teacher who simply cares about your music education.

Begin

What should you look for in a college and university music education program and instructor?

- Decide if you want a traditional or modern music education program- or a blend of both. Technology is a significant part of the music business in 2021, so even in a traditional program, look for studies that remain relevant and viable in today's climate.
- Look at how the schools that spark your interest dealt with COVID-19. Did they use the opportunity to try new ways of learning and music performance, such as via Zoom and other online platforms? How has COVID-19 permanently changed their programs, if at all?
- In a music educator, look for good credentials and professional reputation, as well as a mentor who will offer longstanding guidance, instruction and inspiration. Don't underestimate the importance of an instructor who simply cares about your music education.

Review vocabulary words from the article below:

- SENSEI: The Japanese word for teacher. Someone who "lives ahead" and has traveled a path in life and shares that experience with students.
- MENTOR: an advisor who is experienced and trusted.
- CURRICULUM: The subjects making up a course of study in an educational program.
- MASTER CLASS: A class given by an expert in a particular field to skilled and talented students.
- HYBRID LEARNING: A mixed learning approach to education that utilizes both online educational materials and traditional, in-person classroom instruction.

Discuss

Which is better: a school that focuses on a conservatory or modern model of learning, or one that operates both? How can the old and new be brought together in music education to offer the best of both worlds, so to speak?

Questions

1. Who is Shelly Peiken, and how is she involved with music education?
2. What school is the largest degree-granting music institution in the country?
3. What year saw the establishment of the first singing school in the American colonies?
4. Who said the following quote? "A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself."
5. Who published the first music textbook?
6. What was the first school of higher musical education?

Answers

1. Shelly Peiken is a GRAMMY-nominated, No. 1 hit pop songwriter, author, speaker, and founding member of Songwriters of North America (SONA). She is teaching Middle Tennessee State University's (MTSU) 'Pop/Rock Songwriting Workshop' from L.A., virtually.
2. The Berklee School of Music
3. 1712. The first singing school was created to help improve the quality of choral music in churches.
4. Oprah Winfrey
5. John Tufts published the first music textbook, his 'Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes.'
6. The Boston Academy of Music. IT was established in 1833 by Lowell Mason and George James Webb.

Expand

What are some examples of online music learning opportunities that you've embraced and enjoyed?