

## **How to Play “I Hope You Dance”**

National Standards: 1-9

“I Hope You Dance” is widely regarded as Lee Ann Womack’s signature song. Written by Mark D. Sanders and Tia Sillers, the track is also Womack's only No. 1 hit. The song can also be covered by both male and female singers without alteration. Womack’s recording of “I Hope You Dance” is in the key of Bb Major at 76 BPM.

### **Prepare**

Lee Ann Womack’s “I Hope You Dance” was released in 2000, in different musical era for country music. Have students listen to Womack's version of the song her ([“I Hope You Dance”](#)) and have them listen to other country songs from that time. What makes this song stand out? Why do students think this song went to No. 1 on the charts?

*Key points in the article:*

- The vocals are at the heart of this song. The track has a simple but memorable melody and features a truly great lyric. The “story of the song,” has universal appeal that gives voice to the things that many, if not most people would want to say but perhaps couldn’t find the words. When it comes to the vocals, don't try to fancy it up, or that might break the spell for the audience. The song’s uncomplicated production allows the vocal to take center stage.
- When it comes to rhythm, the kick drumbeat is the "Charleston" with backbeats on 2 and 4 on the snare drum and eighth notes on the hi-hat. The drummer is also playing some “ghost notes” on the snare drum. That means he or she is playing soft accent notes in between the backbeats that propel the groove along without making it too busy. Overall, the percussion is sparse but powerful.
- The song has a number of guitar parts: The one that plays the introductory melody uses a clean sound, which then becomes a tight, muted, single-note part in the verses with a delay doing sixteenth-note repeats. This is actually an R&B ballad device that been adapted for country music in songs like this one.

### **Begin**

- Have students listen to Womack's [“I Hope You Dance”](#), as well as other versions including Chris Stapleton’s. Assign students different parts in the songs: vocals, guitar, bass, keyboard and drums. For the singers, have both male and females sing the track. Does a male voice bring a different character to the melody and different perspective to the lyrics? Have students try to cover the song close to the original and then switch it up by making it entirely their own.

*Review vocabulary words from the article below:*

- **BREAKDOWN:** Part of a song in which various instruments or singers have solo parts (and others take breaks)
- **RUSHING:** An inadvertent quickening by musicians causing the tempo of a performance to increase.

- DRAGGING: The opposite of rushing, when musicians inadvertently fall behind a starting tempo causing it to decrease.
- GHOST NOTES: Soft accent notes played in between the backbeats that propel the groove without making it too busy.

### **Discuss**

What makes "I Hope You Dance" Lee Ann Womack's only No. 1 hit? Have students listen to the rest of her discography. Why does this song stand above the rest? Why were none of her other songs able to reach that No. 1 status? Also, where does "I Hope You Dance" sit in the timeline of Womack's discography? Are there other songs in her catalog that students actually like more or as well but that didn't chart as well?

### **Q&A**

1. Who wrote "I Hope You Dance?"
2. Where was Lee Ann Womack born, and where did she later move for college?
3. "I Hope You Dance" garnered which GRAMMY Awards for Womack?
4. Womack's recording of "I Hope You Dance" is in what key?
5. In what year did Womack release her first full-length album?

### **Answers**

1. Mark D. Sanders and Tia Sillers.
2. Lee Ann Womack was born in Texas and moved to Nashville for college.
3. Best Country Female Vocal Performance and Best Country Album.
4. Bb Major at 76 BPM.
5. 1997

### **Expand:**

Have students pick another Lee Ann Womack song to cover. How can they enhance the track to give it more appeal and perhaps turn it into a potential No. 1 hit? Would some added guitar help? Perhaps a cool bass line? Have students get creative and try to make one of Womack's lesser songs soar.

## **The Rhythm Section on PASIC**

National Standards: 1, 4-6, 11

PASIC is the largest percussion event in the world. The acronym stands for the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, and the event attracts thousands of students, teachers, and percussionists each year from across the globe. It's a four-day "drumming wonderland" that takes place in the late fall, and this year's convention was held on November 9-12 in Indianapolis, Indiana. For those with a passion for percussion, attending PASIC is a must, at least once in a lifetime.

### **Prepare**

PASIC is a broad percussion event offering many different facets. Have students study its schedule of events, including the different clinics, panel discussions, contests, and concerts. The event also features the International Drum and Percussion Expo, where percussion instruments and equipment are on display. It's a chance for companies to demonstrate their products and for attendees to test out and buy gear. Have students research some of the gear that was on display at PASIC this year. What stands out?

*Key points in the article:*

- The Percussive Arts Society's stated mission is "to inspire, educate, and support percussionists and drummers throughout the world and their vision is to be the global leader in percussion and drumming by providing unparalleled and interactive resources and experiences in percussion education, performance, and research." The organization also seeks "to promote friendships and camaraderie amongst percussionists, drummers, and the music industry, while building bonds with our local and global communities" and "inspire current and future generations by providing the opportunity to experience music making and music appreciation."
- Some PASIC 2022 highlights included educational sessions, performances by soloists, small ensembles, orchestras and marching bands, and exhibits. There were also "events within the event" like "The World's Fastest Drummer" contest, the "Solo Artist Drum Set Competition Finals" and the "Hit Like A Girl" showcase along with drum circles and celebrity appearances.
- As the world's largest percussion organization, The Percussive Arts Society has over 5000 members, with more than 40 chapters located across the United States, and an additional 28 chapters abroad.

### **Discuss**

After reading the article, have students discuss why it's important to have an event such as this dedicated to percussion. What sets PASIC above other events similar in nature? What would students like to see at PASIC that isn't already part of its lineup? Also, which aspect of PASIC - would students be most interested in experiencing, and why?

## **Questions**

1. When and where did PASIC take place this year?
2. How many members does the Percussive Arts Society have?
3. In what year was the Percussive Arts Society established?
4. The Percussive Arts Society awards how much money annually in scholarships and grants?
5. Define the Rhythm! Discovery Center.

## **Answers**

1. This year's convention was held on November 9-12 in Indianapolis, Indiana
2. The Percussive Arts Society has over 5,000 members, with over 40 chapters located across the United States and an additional 28 chapters abroad.
3. 1961
4. The Percussive Arts Society awards over \$60,000 annually in scholarships and grants.
5. Founded by PAS in 2009, Rhythm! Discovery Center is a physical space within its headquarters facility where the history of percussion is displayed, preserved, celebrated, and shared.

## **Expand**

At this year's PASIC event, Drum Corps International honored five decades of drums and bugle corps history with two exhibits that were also presented and viewed during DCI's Championship Week in Indianapolis this past August. One exhibit focused on marching was housed in the PAS Rhythm! Discovery Center, with the other featuring many past and present drum and bugle corps involved in DCI over the last 50 years and staged in an exhibit hall at the Indianapolis Convention Center.

Have students discuss what they already know about drum and bugle corps history, then have them research that history online and then conduct a class discussion about drum and bugle corps origins and their development into today's marching arts. This site can start their investigations:

<https://www.drumcorps.marines.mil/>

## **How Phoenix Rose, And The Story of Its Four Fast Friends**

National Standards: 7-8, 10-11

Phoenix is a famed French alternative band from Versailles, a village outside of Paris, consisting of members Thomas Mars, Laurent Brancowitz, Deck d'Arcy, and Christian Mazzalai (the last two are brothers) who recorded their latest album inside the Louvre, one of the most famous museums in the world. They've been together since the mid-1990s and still consistently release hit music, most recently on their seventh studio album, 2022's *Alpha Zulu*. This In Tune story gives students a look at the band's history and the making of *Alpha Zulu*.

### **Prepare**

Have students listen to Phoenix's songs from 2022's *Alpha Zulu* and compare them to those on the band's breakout album *Riot!*. Has the music evolved over time? Has Phoenix maintained the same voice and character in their songs, or have they changed? (The article discusses how the band's sound has evolved, so encourage students to explore that.) Also, have students find live performances of the songs on YouTube. Which songs and performances stand out and why?

*Key points in the article:*

- For many years, Phoenix has recorded and performed together, and their fluid process has never been anchored to one sound or style. That variety has helped them find great success. That same process has again been employed for the making of their latest album, *Alpha Zulu*.
- The band's musical influences reflect many different eras. As teenagers in France, they would all visit record stores, and buy vinyl albums because of the visual artwork on the sleeve rather than the music, which led to purchases of everything from The Beatles to Kraftwerk, to Italo Disco and R&B...and their musical adventurousness.
- The members of Phoenix are the best of friends. Their bond is solid, unshakable, and an outlier in an industry where internal division has been attached to even the most influential bands in history, and they cite this as a reason for both their longevity and success.

### **Begin**

Review vocabulary words from the article:

- **OSTENTATION**: Pretentious display meant to overly impress or attract notice.
- **CONSERVATISM**: commitment to traditional values and ideas as opposed to embracing change or innovation.
- **RECEPTIVITY**: willingness to consider or take in new suggestions and ideas.

### **Discuss**

Have students choose and listen to one of Phoenix' albums: 2000's *United*, 2004's *Alphabetical*, 2006's *It's Never Been Like That*, 2009's *Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix*, 2013's *Bankrupt!*, 2017's

*Ti Amo* and 2022's *Alpha Zulu* and then select a song that wasn't released as a single, or isn't considered a hit, and explain why they think it wasn't. Considering instrumentation or production, tempo and/or lyrics, what might have made it a hit?

### **Questions**

1. What are the names of Phoenix's first and most recent albums?
2. Name the two brothers in Phoenix.
3. Name the GRAMMY Award that Phoenix received in 2010.
4. Where did the members of Phoenix grow up?
5. What's the name of the alternative electronic duo that the members of Phoenix have admired since their early days?
6. Name the guest vocalist who appears on the band's track, "Tonight."

### **Answers**

1. 2000's *United* and 2022's *Alpha Zulu*.
2. Deck d'Arcy and Christian Mazzalai.
3. Best Alternative Music Album for *Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix*.
4. In an upscale commune in France called Versailles.
5. One band that the members of Phoenix have admired since their early years is the alternative electronic duo of Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoît Dunckel, known as Air.
6. Ezra Koenig of Vampire Weekend sings a duet with Thomas Mars on "Tonight."

### **Expand**

Have students pick the Phoenix song that means something to them and explain why they picked it. For extra credit, have them perform the song for other students. How can students take these songs and make them their "own?" Also, have students look up cover versions of Phoenix songs and discuss their thoughts on how the artists' made those songs their own.

## **A Bird's-eye View of...Bebop!**

National Standards: 1, 4-6, 11

You've probably heard of the musical genre bebop, often called just "bop," but what is it all about? Bebop is a style of jazz that came into existence in the 1940s and radically changed the course of music in ways that are still felt today. Bebop changed the perception of jazz music, taking it out of the dance hall and into more intimate jazz clubs, where individual musicians could experiment with new sounds and ways of playing music with others. This feature teaches students how bebop approaches a few fundamental aspects of music.

### **Prepare**

Have students discuss what they already know about bebop. When they think of the term "bebop," what comes to mind? Are there any famed bebop songs or artists that they immediately think of? What aspects of bebop music do they like? Does the music sound "old" to them, or does it still sound fresh?

*Key points in the article:*

- Bebop brought many rhythmic innovations to the table. One of the most important was the way drummers played time. In the swing era and before, drummers mostly played the bass drum on each beat and a tight swing on the snare drum or the high hat. Bebop drummer Kenny Clarke is credited with creating a new style that moved the swing pattern to the ride cymbal and left the bass and snare to interact with the melody and solos more freely.
- New scales introduced by bebop included the bebop major scale and bebop dominant scale. These new variations on the major scale included chromatic passing tones between certain notes, which add new colors and new rhythmic possibilities.
- Bebop musicians also on harmonies. They started using patterns and structures made of upper chord extensions. Upper extensions form their own sounds which bebop musicians imposed on top of common chord progressions.

### **Begin**

Review vocabulary words from the article:

- **UPPER CHORD EXTENSIONS:** Notes found by going further up a chord in 3rds from the root, 3rd, 5th, and even 7th.
- **IMPROVISATIONS:** the act of improvisation, where something is created without preparation.
- **PENTATONIC SCALE:** a musical scale with five notes per octave.
- **HEPTATONIC SCALE:** a musical scale with seven notes per octave.

## **Discuss**

Read through and discuss the three sections of the plan that help students better understand bebop and how to play it. Those include 1) Getting into bebop's reimagining of jazz's swing rhythms, 2) learning the fresh approaches to scales and melodies explored by the bebop masters, and 3) digging the expanded color palette that bebop harmony and improvisation brought to jazz. Also, have students explore the bebop major scale and the bebop dominant scale. How do the scales feel different from most scales students have performed? Also, see how adding these scales and other chromatic passing tones creates new melodic and rhythmic possibilities.

## **Questions**

1. Our story's title incorporates the phrase "A Bird's Eye View..." What is its double meaning?
2. In what years did the American Federation of Musicians (aka "the musicians' union) go on strike against the major record companies due to disagreements over royalty payments and instituted a ban on instrumental recordings?
3. Which Kansas City musician was known for introducing the bebop sound and becoming a bebop icon?
4. Who said the following: "Where I come from, we say that rhythm is the soul of life, because the whole universe revolves around rhythm. And, when we get out of rhythm, that's when we get into trouble."
5. In what decade did bebop come into existence?
6. Bebop is a style of \_\_\_\_\_ music.

## **Answers**

1. A bird's eye view is a comprehensive or overview of a subject or thing; Bebop saxophonist and jazz icon Charlie Parker was nicknamed "Bird," short for yardbird, because he was once on a tour bus full of fellow musicians that hit and killed a chicken. Parker stopped the bus, collected the bird, and had it served for dinner later that night.
2. 1942-44
3. Charlie Parker
4. Nigerian drummer Babatunde Olatunji
5. The 1940s.
6. Jazz.

## **Expand**

In the article, it points out that when the first bebop records arrived in the Kansas City, bebop icon Charlie Parker's hometown, it was said: "On Friday every saxophonist in town wanted to sound like Lester Young (who starred in Count Basie's big band and played with a relaxed, cool

tone and used sophisticated harmonies,) but by Monday, everyone wanted to sound like Charlie Parker.” Have students look up Charlie Parker's work on YouTube and listen to his bebop style. What makes it stand out? Why do students think Parker and his bebop sounds became so popular so quickly?