

Multi-Track Recording Melody Activity Video Script

This video investigates multi-track recording, the work of Les Paul, information about current practices in recording, and an opportunity to create a music track to accompany a song.

What is multi-track recording? Multi-track recording is taking sound, music, or images and storing them on a record, CD, computer, or another source so that they can be heard or seen again on many tracks at the same time or as recorded.

A person responsible for recording the first multi-track recording is Les Paul. Les Paul was born in Waukesha, WI. His inventions include not only the design of the solid body guitar, but also many recording innovations such as close miking, reverb, sound on sound, and multi-track recording.

Many of his inventions and innovations have helped to make the sound of Rock–n–Roll possible.

Before multi-track recording, musicians would gather in a studio, play their part, record and play at the same time. If someone made a mistake, the group had to record the song again, until everyone got the perfect take or at least close to it.

Le Paul started with experimenting with recording so that he could play multiple parts at in the same song.

The song Lover was released in 1948 as the first multi-track recording. Lover uses eight tracks, guitars all played by one person, Les Paul.

In multi-track recording, audio engineers and musicians lay down each music track and modify sound as technology allows.

Here is a song that Les Paul and Mary Ford recorded using multi-track recording.

SONG EXCERPT– *(Guitar introduction) Somewhere there's music, how faint the tune.
Somewhere there's heaven, how high the moon.
There is no moon where love is far away too...*

We're going to use an excerpt, a different arrangement of that song to create our own version.

Here we go. We'll listen to part 3 and follow along with the music on the screen. When you are ready to sing along, rewind this section of the video and press play.

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PART 3 – I hear the music, the music, the music, the music it's tune fills the air.
Heaven's away, far away, far away, from the moon, but it's close, close to you.

We'll listen to part 2 and rewind this section of the video and sing along.

PART 2 – Music, music, tune air. Heaven, heaven, moon, you.

Let's follow and listen to the melody. When you are ready rewind this section of the video and press play.

*MELODY – Somewhere there's music, how faint the tune.
Somewhere there's heaven, how high the moon.*

What about a new part? Listen to the three parts being played at the same time. What would you add to the three parts? A few volunteers will be asked to share their ideas or sing their examples.

SONG – (All three parts played together.)

Here are all of the tracks being played at the same time. This is multi-track recording where each part is recorded and then layered together.

Consider how Les Paul and Mary Ford created "How High the Moon." How is their recording different than our class activity today?

Congratulations you have listened to, created, performed, and discussed ideas about multi-track recording.

This video is part of the Les Paul Study Units, a collaborative project between the Les Paul Foundation, the Wisconsin School Music Association, and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.