

'Come As You Are' | Nirvana

'Come as You Are' was the second single to be released from Nirvana's second studio album, *Nevermind*. Following the success of the album's debut single, 'Smells Like Teen Spirit', there was some uncertainty as to which song should follow it, but with 'Come as You Are' making it to the UK's top 10 it would seem the right decision was made.

On its release songwriter and frontman Cobain had concerns over similarities between his composition and that of Killing Joke's earlier release 'Eighties'. On hearing both songs Nirvana's producer, Butch Vig, felt confident that they should go ahead with the release of 'Come as You Are' as it was the most commercially appealing and so Cobain was convinced. Killing Joke guitarist Geordie Walker was reportedly angry about the release and felt a lawsuit should be taken against Cobain. However, no lawsuit ever materialised and so many now dispute the likeness between the two songs.

'Come as You Are' talks about how society expects people to act, with the lyrics often being contradictory and mimicking that of common opinions on how we should behave. Cobain was known for his struggle with acceptance, often feeling judged for his opinions and appearance, so this song tells the story of a world big enough for everyone. Looking back after Cobain's passing, many of the lyrics seem much more sinister than they may have originally appeared and many believe his true mental state was evident in some of his writing.

Nirvana were an American grunge band who formed in 1987, originally consisting of frontman Kurt Cobain and bassist Krist Novoselic. Having gone through several drummers and never quite settling, the duo finally became a solid trio when drummer Dave Grohl joined them in 1990. After making themselves known in the popular Seattle Grunge scene of the late 1980s the band finally found themselves being signed to a major label in 1991 and released their album *Nevermind*. The album achieved huge global success and sold over 30 million copies worldwide, seeing Nirvana described as the "flagship band" of Generation X and Cobain being branded the "spokesman of a generation". Nobody could have foreseen the success that Nirvana would achieve, but their use of a strong dynamic shift between verse and chorus drew the listeners in. Many believe them responsible for bringing Grunge to the mass market. Sadly, the band disbanded in 1994 following Cobain's untimely death. Their music continues to influence musicians to this day and remains popular with many generations.

With over 75 million record sales worldwide, Nirvana are hailed as one of the best-selling rock bands of all time. Prior to their mainstream recognition, alternative music was often confined to speciality sections within record stores and many believe the success of *Nevermind* changed this forever.

Nirvana's success has resulted in an impressive number of award nominations and wins, and with six Grammy nominations and a win for 'Best Alternative Music Performance', they really did bring Grunge to the masses. The band were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at their earliest eligibility in 2014.

Song Info

Song Title: Come as You Are
Album: *Nevermind*
Released: 1992
Label: Geffen Records
Genre: Grunge
By: Kurt Cobain
Produced by: Butch Vig
UK Chart Peak: 9

∞ Acoustic Guitar Grade 1

Nirvana

♩=118 *Grunge*

Intro

mp

F#m

E

TAB

0 0 1 2 0 2 0 2 2 1 0 2 0 0 2 0 1

Musical score for "I Want You to Be" by The Beatles. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a vocal melody with lyrics and a guitar accompaniment. The guitar part includes a double bar line with a repeat sign and a "2" above it, indicating a second ending. The bass line is shown at the bottom with fret numbers.

Chords indicated above the staff: F#m, E, F#m, E.

Lyrics: Come as you are, as you were, as I want you to be,

Bass line fret numbers: 2 0 2 0 2 2 1 | 0 2 0 0 2 0 1 |

F#5 A5 F#5 A5
 Mem - o - ry. Mem - o - ry.

4 4 4 4 4
 2 2 2 2 2

2 2 2 2 2
 0 0 0 0 0

[11]

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[15]

Bridge

[19]

[23]

[27]

Come As You Are | Technical Guidance

This arrangement has a predominantly *mezzo piano* (*mp*) approach with the bridge becoming briefly louder *forte* (*f*). Control over dynamics is a skill that is well worth practicing for later grades with pieces containing more challenging, subtle and frequent dynamic changes. This will be a priority in the choruses, where evenness of pick attack will be paramount.

Rhythmic control and synchronisation are two vital elements to master when performing this song. This is not to understate the importance of technical execution, but the following hints should help to significantly elevate your performance:

Rhythmic control is demonstrated through both the anacrusis (pickup) in bar 1 (meaning that the song starts on beat '3 &', as opposed to the standard '1'), and through the regular use of ties, which break up the constant eighth note-based rhythm (bar 4 for example). Really getting to grips with both of these will help the performance sound more confident and natural.

Synchronisation to the backing track is critical in bringing through one of the primary features of this song, in that it has a much stronger groove than may be anticipated from just looking at the score. When the guitar really locks in with the drums and bass, the entire song develops a very solid rhythmic feel.

During bar 10, try to keep all notes found in the larger open E chord clear. Make sure also to move smoothly through the chromatic parts of the main riff. You should then be well on your way to a strong performance in the exam.