



ILL MIND OF HOPSIN  
**SEVEN**  
Music Review  
Koen Leenaars 4VD

*“We are you, and you’re us, stop playing games  
My life’s all I got, and heaven is all in my brain  
And when I feel I am in hell, my ideas are what get  
me through pain  
Do as you please, and I’ll just do me  
I’m a human, I’ll stay in my lane”*

# Introduction

The song (*Ill mind of Hopsin 7*) is from a series of songs called *Ill mind of Hopsin*, which all have a confronting, controversial or questioning message dug into them. The genre of the song is **Hip-Hop**, moreover referred to as **rap**. Both the lyrics and the beat of Ill mind of Hopsin 7 are composed by **Hopsin (Marcus Jamal Hopson)** himself. This is very rare in today's music industries, as most artists write their lyrics on beats they got from third-party beat-producers. Some artists don't even write their own lyrics anymore, a good example of such artists is the boyband **One Direction**.

This composing and writing of his own songs is mostly due to the fact that Hopsin has his own record label, called Funk Volume. Because of the latter Hopsin is granted more artistic freedom than the average artist, resulting in songs like the ones from the Ill Mind of Hopsin series.

The song was published on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 2014. In the modern time we live in, people are finding more and more answers to previously thought impossible questions. This causes loads of men and women questioning their faith and ultimately, god. I'll get back to this issue in the segment **Background information**.

Considering that I am a fan of Hopsin and that I do listen to his music often, this review might sometimes come across as subjective. However I do try my best to take up an objective point of view.

# Description

***Please note: I am aware of the fact that I sometimes describe things using words such as 'aggressive' and I point out whether his frustration is obvious or not. I chose to blend in some of my own interpretations as this is not classical music and lyrics are the main instrument of the song. I hope thou can relate to this choice, and will not mark me down for it.***

## First Impressions:

- Serene
- Furious
- Rhythmic
- Deep meaning
- Why?

The piece starts with a female choir, chanting a melody with a varying pitch at an irregular pace in harmony with another men choir preaching the sounds 'he' and 'ha' at a regular interval. Eleven seconds in the song the percussion comes in, starting with regularly paced drumbeat. About five seconds later the harsh, though soothing, sound of a violin comes in, followed by a drumbeat more varied and with a more complex contour than the simple rhythm preceding drumbeat. The latter mentioned sequence of instruments forms a bridge to the hook, in which we hear Hopsin expressing several unfinished sentences. He explains his statements in the hook further in his verse.



Going from the hook to the verse the same bridge is used as the one from the intro to the hook. This bridge is also used as a transition between his different statements in his verse and from the verse to the hook in the end.

The first part of the verse starts calmly. Hopsin is rapping with a very questioning yet serene tone of voice, resulting in an interesting contrast of speech. In the background it is apparent that the timbre of the regular drumbeat has gotten a much deeper tone. The drumbeat no more sounds like the beat of a drum, but rather like one of a bass. The choir of men voices exclaiming 'he' and 'ha' is present, though the choir of women voices is not. A sound which has not been heard in the song up until the verse is the sound of a synthesizer, with a slight divergence in tone ranging from a lower one to a slightly higher one.

The second part of the verse Hopsin's way of speech starts to get a little more aggressive and his frustration towards the subject of his song unravels itself slightly. In the background the choir of women voices is now present too, in addition to the men choir. It can also be heard that the regular drumbeat with its original timbre has returned, nevertheless the bass rhythm is still there too which creates a fugue effect.

Towards the end of this section of the verse, Hopsin's frustration is evidently extant, creating an interesting addition to the bridge towards the next section of the verse.

If I were to assign a metaphor to the first and second part of the verse, it would be that they were a teaser building up the tension towards the third part of the verse.

In this part, Hopsin bursts open and flushes out his objections against religions and his frustration is now vary overt.

The texture is thickened by the addition of another instrument, the xylophone. The high pitch of the instrument results in a beautiful contrast to the other instruments and Hopsin's voice, which have a very low pitch.

The next part of the verse Hopsin relaxes, which is noticeable in his voice. The volume of the xylophone is also turned down, emphasizing the decrease in frustration.

Now we arrive at the fifth part of the verse, halfway of the full duration of the song. Here Hopsin starts to yell as in the third part of the verse, shouting out objections packed with frustration and doubt. To make his statements more powerful, the drumbeat and bass rhythm are muted.

From this part of the verse on, his frustration and doubt are shown off at a constant level, keeping his intonation at almost shouting levels. He suppresses his shouting in some parts and sometimes even raps like he did in the first part of the verse, all to create contrast.



In the final two parts of the verse before the final part, Hopsin is speaking calmly again, asking rhetorical questions rather than objecting government and religion. These questions all build up to the climax of the song, which is the final part of the verse.

In this final segment Hopsin shouts out that he is done with all the indistinctness of all his questions posed in his song. He gives his own answers for the questions he posed and slowly goes from his shouting chest voice, back to his normal voice. This last part only has the synthesizers and a violin with a different tone than the one in the bridge playing in the background, to let his voice and his message emerge from the rest of the song.

The bridge plays again and Hopsin sings the hook. The drumbeat, the bass, the violin, synthesizers and the men choir slowly fade out. The bridge plays one more time, and the song ends.

## *Analysis*

***Please note: I already analysed some parts of the song in the description. I chose to do so because of the reasons I stated in the forewords of the description.***

The song starts slow paced, both the instruments and the vocals. Throughout the song there is only one long verse with tons of variety, which you might not expect from one long single verse. It's because Hopsin separates his arguments and statements very well from each other and because the slow paced start, deliberately speeds up and intensifies throughout the song building up tension towards a certain climax. This is done by playing with the texture of the beat, thickening when Hopsin is questioning; thinning when he is trying to prove a point. Doing so empowers Hopsin's voice, because there are less instruments playing, the focus is on his voice and what he is talking about.

## *Interpretation*

Although I have listened to this song at least a hundred times, I still find myself enjoying it as much as I did when I first heard it. I ask myself these questions frequently, and to know someone that shares these questions and puts them in a magical song too, is just magnificent. His objections in the song sparks a lot of controversy and discussion, especially between theist and atheist people. Me being an agnostic person (Hopsin is also agnostic), I enjoy finding myself in between the two contrary groups.

I always feel myself being enraged during the song, and satisfied when the song is over. I emphasize with Hopsin's frustration, and when he concludes the song I feel like I have wrapped up the spiritual problem too.

So long for the associative and sensory levels.



In respect to the musical level of the song, I find myself perplexed again and again after listening to the song. Especially after having written this review. Now that I have focused more on the harmony, tonality, fugue, texture and other musical appliances used, I've come to admire more of the song than I ever did before.

I never heard a violin, choir nor a xylophone in the song before I started paying attention more on the musical level. I always found myself tapping my feet on the beat, and I never knew it was on the strike of a bass.

So I am yet again overwhelmed by the surprise of being enlightened by a school project.

## *Background information*

Hopsin being raised in a catholic family in our modern-day world in which more and more people step over to the theist side, causes confusion for him. Why would there be a god? Why would the big bang have happened? Why do we live?

This formed the structure for the song ***Ill mind of Hopsin 7***.

Hopsin's main inspiration is Eminem (Also known as Slim Shady). This can be heard in his way of rapping. Eminem and Hopsin both have the same animosity in their voice, though still seem to control their feelings and get to the point.

Another interesting song from the ***Ill mind of Hopsin*** saga is ***Ill mind of Hopsin 5***. In this song Hopsin barrages the lifestyle of the typical mainstream teen, trying to motivate them to step away from excessive drug use and stop being lazy all day; partake in society and be productive.

## *Conclusion*

Hopsin does an amazing job formulating those questions we are all so keen to know the answer too; is there a god? This powerful message, packed in an amazing musical composition of instruments creates an exceptionally phenomenal song. I think that the message conveyed and speculated in this song can be found interesting by anyone, and therefore I strongly recommend you giving it a go.

You might be surprised by the *deity* of the song!



# *Afterword*

Thank you Jantien for giving me the second chance. As you can see, this review is way more thorough than the initial one that I send you.

I know 1853 words is lengthy for a music review, but I found myself enjoying the assignment so much, that I took the assignment a bit to serious.

Thank you Jantien for this assignment!

***The making of the title page can be found on my GLC site after the Christmas break.***

