

Gotye: “Eyes Wide Open”

Grade Suitability:

Junior High School through to High School

Lesson Outcomes:

This lesson allows students an insight into the creative process of Australian Singer/ Songwriter Gotye, and they learn really interesting insights into how the sounds are produced in one of his hit songs.

Resources:

1) Student Worksheet

2) Presentation with embedded Youtube videos and powerpoint presentation:

<http://www.funmusiccoimages.com/sublessons/lesson7>

Password: funmusicsub1

OR use the offline powerpoint file & this direct Youtube link:

https://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=b_iuE_L2wys

and then: <https://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=oyVJsg0XIIk>

Method:

Watch the Youtube video “Gotye - The Making of Eyes Wide Open”. You may want to first ask the students “Who has heard of the artist Gotye?” (pronounced “go-tee-ay”). Gotye has had a song reach #1 on the Billboard hot 100, won 3 ARIA awards, and won a Grammy award in 2013, so is a very established musician and songwriter, so you may want to make sure that the students are aware of this before watching the video.

You may also want to ask them if they are familiar with the song ‘Eyes wide open’. If they are not, it’s probably a better thing, as they will be able to hear it with an open mind.

Answers to comprehension:

Samples from “the musical *fence*” in outback Australia, formed the basis of the *bass* line for the song ‘Eyes Wide Open’.

The song was then written on the *piano*, and that is still in the track, but a little bit buried in the mix.

The pedal *steel guitar* helped capture the sense of a lonely wasteland in the track.

Gotye “Eyes wide open” Lesson Plan, Page 2.

Then, after they have watched the video, if you have plenty of time, play the track with audio only. You can still play it from Youtube, just switch the screen off. That way, the students will focus on the sounds they are hearing, and not the visuals in the film clip.

You can then have them answer these questions:

Do you like the song? Why, or why not?

What instruments do you hear in the track?

Then switch on the screen again, and watch the film clip along with the music this time. You can then have them discuss and write down what difference the film clip made to their experience of the song.

Discuss and have the students write their answers to these questions:

Did watching the film clip make you like the song more or less? Why, or why not?

What meaning do you think this song is trying to convey?

Does the use of sampled sounds help or hinder the message of the song?

Listen to some more of Gotye’s music. What other musicians are similar to him in their approach to music and song-writing?