

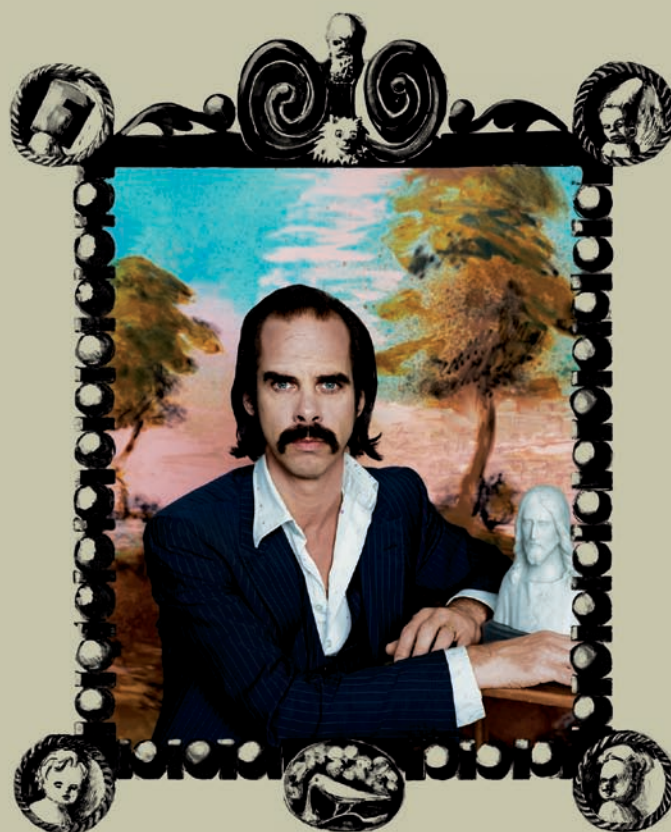
Western Australian Museum - Perth and the Arts Centre, Melbourne present

Arts

Music

NICK CAVE

THE EXHIBITION



Photograph by Polly Borland / original painting by Tony Clark. Commissioned by the Arts Centre, 2007

EDUCATION RESOURCE

Iconic Australian musician, songwriter and author Nick Cave is now the subject of his own exhibition.

Go behind the music and into Nick's imagination and the sources of his unique vision through original lyrics, notebooks, artwork, photography and books. There will also be objects from the musician's own library and office, and rare and previously unavailable video and documentary footage.

INTRODUCTION

Nick Cave is an iconic Australian musician who has had an eclectic career for the past three decades. The Exhibition will highlight the various creative processes and evolution of this artist.

The music package provides teacher resources in the form of activities and tasks relating to the areas of music analysis, investigation, composition and performance. The resources aims to promote accessibility to the enigmatic and multi-talented Nick Cave.

The resources are aimed at years 10, 11 and 12, and may be used to compliment programs for IA-1D courses in Contemporary Music.

Activities will provide insight into the creative song writing process of Nick Cave and seek to re-create a similar experience for student composition writing. Background information on Cave's process of song evolution from diaries, unusual words, storyboarding, listing making, as well as his fascination with saints and collecting oddities will be made with reference to items from the Exhibition.

Analysis and arrangement activities will be constructed from specific songs featured in the Exhibition with links to performance tasks.

These activities may be useful for students in reflecting on their own styles of song writing and a different way of using objects around them to stimulate compositional process as well as gaining a deeper insight to the music of Nick Cave.

USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/exhibitions/NickCave>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ew4tll-wRc>

<http://www.nick-cave.com/>

This education resource has been developed by
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INVESTIGATION & APPRECIATION

Investigation (COS) Appreciation (MIS)

Outcomes:

Outcome 3: Listening and Responding. Outcome 4: Culture and Society.

Content:

Harmony, tonality, form/ structure, tempo, texture, instrumentation

Context:

Contemporary Music

Task 1:

Discuss the importance of how Nick Cave uses his notebooks as a resource for developing his song writing, outlining their early development to the introduction and use of the typewriter and computer.

You should include reference to:

- Discussion on major notebooks, e.g. Sacred and Profane, The Weather Diaries, Dictionary of Words
- Reference to songs which emerged from his notebook writing
- Explanation of characteristics of musical examples mentioned including harmony, tonality, tempo, form, structure, texture, instrumentation etc

* Teacher note; songs of reference could include *From Her To Eternity (1984)* *The Firstborn is Dead (1985)* *Red Right Hand*, *Mutiny In Heaven*, *Happy Birthday*, *Wild World (1982)* *No More Shall We Part*, *Mercy Seat (1987)* – which could be used in class analysis of songs

Alternatively

Task 2:

Outline the importance of how Nick Cave uses his observations of his surrounding environment and the absence of things within it for creation of song lyrics, using specific musical references. You should also discuss how the music reflects the lyrics content.

You should include reference to:

- Reference to notebooks such as The Weather Diaries, Dictionary of Words, 'Alwych' notebook
- Analysis of specific songs you have identified that have grown from notebook construction, including their treatment of musical elements and how these reflect the lyrics

* Teacher note, Songs to use as a reference could include *Red Right Hand (1993)*, *Mutiny in Heaven*, *Where the Wild Roses Grow*

Alternatively:

Task 3:

Discuss the influence that religion has played within the song writing of Nick Cave and his treatment of religious concepts with reference to specific songs.

You should include reference to:

- Cave's upbringing in terms of religion, his fascination with Saints and their symbolic meaning and juxtaposition of these icons within the Sacred and Profane notebook
- At least three contrasting songs with religious reference, describing the use of musical elements (harmony, tonality, tempo, form, texture etc)
- Comment on the way in which he has used his reference to religion (e.g. reverently, light-heartedly etc)

* Teacher note; songs to listen to in class could include *Wild World*, *Into My Arms*, *Dig!!! Lazarus, Dig!!!*

INVESTIGATION & APPRECIATION

Nick Cave Notebooks

While students are able to research the Investigation tasks and report their findings, below are some associated activities that allow students to explore the actual processes that Nick Cave goes through in his search for inspiration for song writing. This is important for the students to truly understand the painstaking lengths that Cave goes to, revealing that song writing comes through scrawled notes, thoughts, observations on things such as objects, the weather, pictures, and that it is a constantly evolving, developing and editing process. The notebooks of Cave are essential in understanding this process.

Sacred and Profane Notebook (1985)

“Well I made many of these ‘picture’ books. I am not entirely sure why, except that I would become uncommonly attached to objects and pictures and liked to systemise them in some kind of way – order them, date them, file them away. This particular book was one of my favourite books because there was a rather delightful synchronicity of ‘finds’ down the old Flohmarkt in West Berlin. I found a bunch of the most wonderful pornographic drawings in one stall and a little further on, found a children’s book of Saints. I found that an extremely pleasing relationship existed between these two things and compiled them in a rather beautiful photo album. I nailed a small brass Christ onto the cover for good measure.”

Barrand, Janine and Fox, James, “Nick Cave Stories”, Victorian Arts Centre Trust: Melbourne, 2007, p. 34

During his time in Berlin, Cave frequented the flea markets collecting items of interest to him (bird bones, hair, postcards, etc). Much of this material became the basis of his exploration of the great paradoxes of our world. With the Sacred and Profane notebook of which he created over several months, the book contrasts images of erotic postcards of the 1950s to images of female Saints from a children’s book. He identifies symbolic links between the two such as the use of crowns and water, the sacred vs. the taboo.

Activity: to be used in conjunction with Investigation and Composition tasks

- Students could explore juxtaposition of images and compile a visual notebook of their own, accenting symbolic links between contrasting images of our own times.
For example: An eagle and a dove; both birds – one is a symbol of a predator and one is of peace.

The Weather Diaries (2000 – 2001)

“One late spring/early summer morning I woke up in the flat that I lived in, in Chelsea...and looked up at the enormous skylight over the living room and saw that, once again, it was grey skies and rain. And I remember standing there screaming at it, something along the lines of, ‘What have I done to deserve this!’....Later that day I bought a lovely up market notebook and a new rubber date stamp and began to note down the fluctuations in the weather. This weather diary began to become increasingly important and as any weatherman will tell you, ‘bad’ weather is much more interesting than ‘good’ weather...” Ibid.

An example of how Nick Cave draws inspiration from the environment for song writing, the Weather Diaries were a day by day record of his surroundings, interactions and thoughts.

Activity: to be used in conjunction with Investigation and Composition tasks

- Have students create their own 'weather diary' over the course of a week, or choose a place to visit each day and describe it; how it appears in the light, the shadows, the people in it or surrounding it, the differences it may have each day, their thoughts and feelings they may have in the successive days when viewing that environment. This can become the basis of lyrics for the composition tasks.

The Dictionary of Words (1984)

The Dictionary is an example of Nick Cave's interest in collecting words which were unusual, again forming the development of his lyric writing. From the scrawlings of this notebook became the songs *From Her To Eternity* (1984) and *The Firstborn is Dead* (1985).

Activity: to be used in conjunction with Investigation and Composition tasks

- Have students create a short dictionary of unusual or unfamiliar words themselves with an explanation of their meanings. Students should use this in their original works in composition tasks.

Object Inspirations

Collecting oddities and objects of interest has always been a trait of Nick Cave and another source of inspiration in his song writing. Items he has collected have included (and are present in the Exhibition) the Jesus Bust, the Kylie Bag, Art (Louis Wain Cat pictures) hair, rubber date stamps, and the Gibraltar Monkey souvenir.

Activity: to be used in conjunction with Investigation and Composition tasks

- Bring in an assortment of different and unusual objects for students to look at and touch. They should be of different textures, sizes, (e.g. old photo, a statue, textured paper, beaded necklace, different fabrics, old spoons, the possibilities are endless). Have them write down the feelings associated with them, the textures of what they feel like, the symbolism they may contain, how the colours of the items could be described etc. Have students then use this as the basis of lyrics in their composition tasks.
- Alternatively – As a class group, have each student bring in an item of interest to them in some way. Have students pass around the objects, again describing how they feel, look, the feelings they evoke etc. These notes can be used later in lyric writing.

ANALYSIS

Analysis

Outcomes:

Outcome 3: Listening and Responding. Outcome 4: Culture and Society.

Content:

Harmony, tonality, form/ structure, tempo, texture, instrumentation, metre, rhythm, melody and harmony

Context:

Contemporary Music

Task:

Students are to aurally analyse several Nick Cave works as featured in the Exhibition.

Note: As there are a number of songs mentioned in the Exhibition, some of which may be inappropriate for students or difficult to find recordings, the ones analysed and mentioned below may be used. Alternatively, you may wish to explore other Cave songs not mentioned here.

The following songs can be downloaded from itunes and piano/vocal arrangements can be downloaded from www.sheetmusicdirect.com for further reference. It is assumed that teachers will provide students with recordings, lyrics, condensed scores etc, to study in class.

Task 1:

Students are to aurally analyse *From Her To Eternity*. Students must describe the use of the following musical elements:

- Instrumentation:
- Tempo
- Tonality
- Melodic and Rhythmic elements
- Metre
- Texture
- Form
- Dynamics

Answers could include

Instrumentation: electric guitar, bass, vibes, keyboard, assorted percussion and sound effects

Metre: 4/4 with one bar of 3/4

Tempo: Moderate

Texture: sparse, growing thicker with the use of sound effects and rise in dynamics

Tonality: C minor and chromatic elements

Form: no real definition between sections, other than spoken and sung elements

Melodic and Rhythmic elements: Repetitive syncopated piano line, chromatic elements, entire song based over C minor, driving bass line in quaver movement

Dynamics: moderate, growing louder with sound effects and use of alternative percussion at end

Examples of further questions:

- Describe the structure of the song?

Answers could include:

Due to its alternative structure, the song is better to be labelled in ABC sections rather than standard contemporary verse/ chorus etc. A (spoken text) B sung line of From Her to Eternity, A1 (spoken text 2) etc).

- Describe the relationship between the lyrics and music.

Answers could include:

The lyrics are about his desire for a girl upstairs and his unresolved torn desire for her. The music reflects this by the underlying constant bass movement, giving a restless motion accompanied by the syncopated piano putting it off balance – both are constant and conflicting of each other. The gradual increase of textures with jarring sound effects and percussion reflect the ebb and flow of desire and inner turmoil as he describes ‘the desire to possess her is a wound’. The song ends with a C and Gb, dissonant and unresolved like his desire.

Note: *Red Right Hand* (1993) is an important work in the Nick Cave notebooks as it clearly outlines its development lyrically. From the descriptions of the environment setting (e.g. brewery, tannery, black trees, solid winter smoke from the factories) to handwritten drafts of the verses, to finally two typed versions with an indication of the chords and notes. This may or may not be included in the Perth exhibition, but as it is a more accessible Cave song it would be useful as a comparative and ‘unfamiliar’ work.

Task 2:

Students are to aurally analyse *Red Right Hand*. Students must describe the use of the following musical elements:

- Instrumentation:
- Tempo
- Tonality
- Melodic and Rhythmic elements
- Metre
- Texture
- Form
- Dynamics

Answers could include:

Instrumentation: organ, sound effects, assorted percussion, electric guitar, bass, voice, drums, bell

Metre: 4/4

Tempo: moderate

Texture: mostly sparse, accented after the lyric ‘red right hand’ with bell and percussion

Tonality: B minor (sounds mostly like fifth chords however)

Form: intro/ verse/ break/verse 2/ break/ verse 3/ break/ organ solo/verse 4/ break/ organ solo

Melodic and Rhythmic elements: organ solo, syncopated rhythms in bass and organ.

Dynamics: Moderate with accented forte on the repetitive lyric phrase of ‘Red Right Hand’

Examples of further questions:

- Describe any unifying elements in the song.
- Answers could include: The bell used at the beginning and end of the piece, accents the repetitive phrase of ‘*Red Right Hand*’. Syncopated rhythms in bass and organ.
- Describe the unusual textures with instrumentation and how they create drama in the song.

Answers could include:

The use of sound effects create a haunting howl at the songs conclusion combined with the clashing dissonant chords of the organ which is repetitive and syncopated. The unifying element of the bell to end the piece silencing this crescendo of texture gives a sense of finality almost like a death knell. The dark lyrics, combined with this repetitive bell tolling add to the central character an eerie sense of evil and no escape.

ANALYSIS/AURAL EXERCISES

Analysis/Aural Exercises

Outcomes:

Outcome 3: Listening and Responding. Outcome 4: Culture and Society.

Content:

Harmony, tonality, form/ structure, tempo, texture, instrumentation, metre, rhythm, melody and harmony

Context:

Contemporary Music

Task 1:

Students are to aurally analyse *Where The Wild Roses Grow*. Students must describe the use of the following musical elements:

- Instrumentation:
- Tempo
- Tonality
- Melodic and Rhythmic elements
- Metre
- Texture
- Form
- Dynamics

Possible answers:

Instrumentation: keyboard, male and female vocals, bass, guitar, strings, drums, bell

Metre: 6/8

Tempo: moderately slow.

Texture: Thin textures in verses to highlight lyrics, growing in the choruses with the addition of strings.

Tonality: G minor

Form: intro/chorus/verse/chorus/verse 2/chorus/verse 3/chorus/outro

Melodic and Rhythmic elements: Slow 6/8, simple chord progression

Dynamics: Moderate with crescendos to the choruses. Decrescendo and thinning of texture at the end of the piece

These exercises can be an extension of aural analysis or simply aural exercises. It would probably be beneficial to obtain the condensed score so students could analyse marked parts and answer questions to them.

1. Have students notate the rhythm of the bass line in the first four bars of the verse. Supply the notes.
2. Have students outline the remaining chords missing from the chord progression given of the chorus:

I | IV I | I | iii | ? | ? |

Answer:

I | IV I | I | iii | V | I |

Task 2:

Students are to aurally analyse *Do You Love Me?* Students must describe the use of the following musical elements:

- Instrumentation:
- Tempo
- Tonality
- Melodic and Rhythmic elements
- Metre
- Texture
- Form
- Dynamics

Possible answers:

Instrumentation: keyboard, organ, bass, lead vocals, backing vocals, electric guitar

Metre: 4/4

Tempo: Moderate

Texture: Thin texture in verses interspersed with solo licks by the guitar. Building up of tension and texture to choruses, accented by the chromatic movement over the lyrics 'jingle jangle'.

Tonality: G minor

Form: intro/ keyboard solo, verse 1/ chorus/ bass solo/ keyboard solo/ verse 2/ chorus/ bass riff/ verse 3/ chorus/ keyboard solo/ verse/ chorus repeat x 3 finishing with the unresolved question of the chorus and unresolved chord.

Melodic and Rhythmic elements: Call and response chorus in the vocal lines, repetitive syncopated keyboard riff with sustained chords in the organ. Chromatic movement before chorus on words 'jingle jangle' creating jarring sound and anticipation to the chorus.

Dynamics: Moderate, crescendo to choruses, immediately drawing back in texture and dynamics when returning to the verses.

These exercises can be an extension of aural analysis or simply aural exercises. It would probably be beneficial to obtain the condensed score so students could analyse marked parts and answer questions to them.

1. Have students notate the rhythm of the opening 4 bars of the bass line. Notes are supplied.
2. Have students fill in missing notes and rhythms of the four bar keyboard riff.
3. Have students fill in the missing chords from the chord progression of the chorus (8 bars
I | III IV | I | III ? | ? | ? IV | V | V |

Answer:

I | III IV | I | III IV | I | III IV | V | V |

COMPOSITION & CREATIVITY

Composition (COS) Creativity (MIS)

Outcomes:

Outcome 2: Composing and Arranging

Content:

Harmony, tonality, form, structure, metre, melody, texture, instrumentation

Context:

Contemporary Music

Task 1:

Using the 'notebooks' from the activities in the investigation tasks, students are to compose an original work in Nick Cave 'style'.

Your piece should include:

- Syncopation, repetition
- Thoughtful lyrics which tell a story (with reference to earlier tasks)
- Unusual use of instrumentation (assorted percussion, sound effects as appropriate) to reflect lyric content
- Chords as appropriate to lyrics (e.g. minor chords/ 5th chords and sus4/ sus2 chords used to create drama in Red Right Hand and Where the Wild Roses Grow, whereas From Her To Eternity is based over one chord in C minor.)
- Keep chord progressions simple.
- Clearly mark guitar chord boxes, vocal lines with lyrics underneath notes, any special effects on guitar as well as other instruments
- Make sure all instruments are within their range
- Handwrite or use notation software to print out your work.

Task 2:

Students are to arrange a Nick Cave song studied in class or one of the following:

- *The Ship Song*
- *Dig!!! Lazarus, Dig!!!*
- *Into My Arms*

Songs can be condensed to smaller instrumental group (e.g. *Dig Lazarus Dig* from full rock outfit to keys and vocals) or broadened to a full instrumental outfit (e.g. *Into My Arms* from keys, bass and vocals to full rock band).

Your piece should reflect the original but still demonstrate creativity in the arrangement in Nick Cave style. It may be of benefit to obtain recordings as needed and scores of original material to assist in your arrangement. Apply background knowledge from Investigation tasks, and Analysis tasks to help you with your interpretation of your arrangement.

- Clearly mark guitar chord boxes, vocal lines with lyrics underneath notes, any special effects on guitar as well as other instruments.
- Make sure all instruments are within their range
- Handwrite or use notation software to print out your work
- Remember to make full use of textures and instrumentation

PERFORMANCE

Performance (COS and MIS)

Outcomes:

Outcome 1: Performing

Content:

harmony, tonality, form, structure, instrumentation, tempo, dynamics, texture.

Context:

Contemporary Music

Task 1:

Students are to perform their original composition in the style of Nick Cave

Task 2:

Students are to perform their arrangement of a Nick Cave song

Task 3:

Students are to choose and perform a cover of a Nick Cave song of their choice

Students will need to:

- Rehearse with appropriate instrumentalists as required by their arrangements/originals or covers.
- Use stylistic appropriateness in keeping with the 'sound' of Nick Cave
- Design a rehearsal schedule with rehearsal notes and reflect on your performance.

References:

Barrand, Janine and Fox, James, "Nick Cave Stories", Victorian Arts Centre Trust: Melbourne, 2007

Nick Cave Biography, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Cave

Nick Cave talks about song-writing and film wrenching.

<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,23328806-5006024,00.html>

Dig Podcast: Nick Cave – Stories, <http://www.abc.net.au/dig/stories/s2165858.htm>

The Ship Song guitar/piano/vocal score, words and music by Nick Cave, www.sheetmusicdirect.com

Red Right Hand /piano/vocal score, words by Nick Cave, music by Nick Cave, Mick Harvey and Thomas Wydler
www.sheetmusicdirect.com

Where The Wild Roses grow guitar/piano/vocal score, words and music by Nick Cave, www.sheetmusicdirect.com

Do You Love Me guitar/piano/vocal score, words and music by Nick Cave and Martyn P.Casey www.sheetmusicdirect.com

From Her To Eternity guitar/piano/vocal score, words by Nick Cave and Anita Lane, music by Nick Cave, Barry Adamson, Blixa Bargeld, Mick Harvey and Hugo Race www.sheetmusicdirect.com

Into My Arms lyric transcription, <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/nickcavethebadseeds/intomyarms.html>

<http://www.azchords.com/n/nickcavethebadseeds/-tabs-19710/intomyarms.html>

All songs mentioned available for download from itunes.