

Oral Communication – Independent Study Report Form

(example)

Family name: Suzuki

First name: Taro

This is my 1st report this semester (circle one of these)

Student number: A15N9999

Day of class: Friday

Time of class: 13:00

E-mail address: a15n9999@y.seijo.ac.jp

Date: 2015/05/30

Sources:

David Bowie, *Sound and Vision*, from the album *Low*, 1977

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0SWJ6kGjnE>

Beck, *Sound and Vision*, directed by Chris Milk, 2013

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyO5MRTbL2s>

Topic: A new interpretation of a classic pop music song by David Bowie

Type of Exercise: listening, reading, vocabulary study

Description:

Sound and Vision

*Don't you wonder sometimes
About sound and vision?*

*Blue, blue, electric blue
That's the color of my room
Where I will live
Blue, blue*

*Pale blinds drawn all day
Nothing to do, nothing to say
Blue, blue*

*I will sit right down, waiting for the gift of sound and vision
And I will sing, waiting for the gift of sound and vision
Drifting into my solitude, over my head*

*Don't you wonder sometimes
About sound and vision?*

Summary

For this report I decided to write about an interesting song that I found recently. It is an interpretation of a famous classic pop song of the 1970s. The song called *Sound and Vision* was written and performed by David Bowie in 1977. David Bowie was one of the top rock stars of the 1970s, and he performed and recorded music at a wild pace for many years. In 1977, he was tired after living such a busy life for so long. He went to Berlin to live quietly and recover his energy. It was during this time that he recorded *Sound and Vision*.

When I read the lyrics of the song (above), I started to understand Bowie's feeling of tiredness, or emptiness. The words describe a tired person alone in a room, doing nothing but waiting for the inspiration for a new song to come. He may be depressed. One part of his life is over and he is waiting for the next one to begin. It is a simple, short song, but its message is very interesting and philosophical. It asks the simple question "Don't you wonder sometimes about sound and vision?" At first this doesn't seem like an interesting question, but it is actually a very philosophical question about how our senses (sound, vision, touch, taste, smell) create human consciousness. Or we could say it is about how a person becomes connected, through the senses, to the environment and to other people in the world. The writer of the song was tired and alone, and it seems like he was waiting to find a way to reconnect to other people when he sang "I will sit right down, waiting for the gift of sound and vision."

In the recent version of the song, Beck, and all the other musicians involved in it, did a wonderful job of expressing this simple message of *Sound and Vision*. The performance was sponsored by a large company, so they were able to spend a lot of money on a very high-quality production. They used the newest recording technology and an orchestra of hundreds of musicians. David Bowie wrote this song in solitude 36 years ago, and now with this modern production, it is no longer a song about loneliness and waiting. Now it is a song that is alive and connected to the world by the musicians who brought it to a new audience. The gift of sound and vision that David Bowie was waiting for has been delivered.

Comments

I enjoyed learning about the music of David Bowie and the influence he had on popular culture. It was interesting to learn that a short, simple song could be the inspiration for my report. I didn't need to study something long and complicated in order to write a good report. After I found the original version of *Sound and Vision*, I discovered the recent version by Beck, and then I was truly amazed to see how a simple pop song could be arranged into a complex production performed by a large orchestra. The recent version was recorded with a new kind of technology which greatly expressed the theme of the song. The song asks, "Don't you wonder sometimes about sound and vision?" and if you listen to this performance with high quality headphones and watch it in high definition video, you really will be amazed by the miracle of being able to hear (sound) and see (vision).

Beck's performance is interesting in another way. In recent years, we have had high-speed internet access and digital media, and this new technology has changed the way music is sold. Artists can no longer make money easily by selling CDs. The music industry is in a state of collapse and restructuring. This performance of *Sound and Vision* might be an example of how music and other entertainment will be made from now on. In this case, a large corporation (Ford Motor Company) sponsored the production and distribution of the video. In this way, the artists are financially supported by the corporation while the public receives the entertainment for free via the internet.

Vocabulary list

solitude (n.)

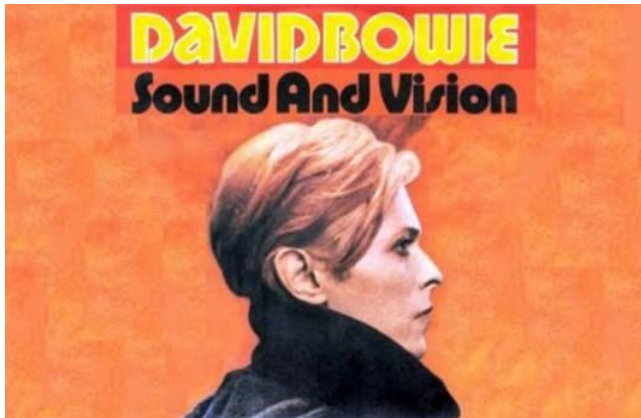
draw (v.) curtains

draw (v.) blinds

pale (adj.) color

sponsor (n.), (v.)

inspire (v.) , inspiration (n.)



from the album
Low (1977)



Beck – Live performance of
Sound and Vision (2013)

*Don't you wonder sometimes
About sound and vision?*

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That's the color of my room
Where I will live
Blue, blue*

*Pale blinds drawn all day
Nothing to do, nothing to say
Blue, blue*

*I will sit right down, waiting for the gift of sound and vision
And I will sing, waiting for the gift of sound and vision
Drifting into my solitude, over my head*

*Don't you wonder sometimes
About sound and vision?*

[1977 original version by David Bowie](#)

[2013 version by Beck and an orchestra of hundreds of musicians](#)