

Wide Awake Deconstructed



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Artist: Katy Perry

Song/Album: Wide Awake / Teenage Dream: The Complete Confection

Songwriters: Bonnie McKee, Henry Walter, Katy Perry, Lukasz Gottwald, Max Martin

Genre: Pop

Sub Genre: Electro Pop Ballad

Length: 3:40

Structure: A-B-A-B-C-B

Tempo: Mid (80 bpm)

First Chorus: 0:48 (22% into the song)

Intro Length: 0:12

Outro Length: 0:24

Electric vs. Acoustic: Electric

Primary Instrumentation: Synth

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Lyrical Theme: Love/Relationships / Inspirational

Title Occurrences: "Wide Awake" occurs 21 times within the song in 6 individual sections

Primary Lyrical P.O.V: 1st & 2nd

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It's a rare occurrence when a song comes along that is **equally strong on all fronts**. Katy Perry's *Wide Awake* is one of those rare songs.

Crafted by an all-star team of hitmakers including Bonnie McKee, Cirkut, Dr. Luke, Max Martin and of course Katy Perry, *Wide Awake* combines ultra-infectious, memorable melodies, emotionally charged/imagery laden lyrics and an outstanding vocal performance to provide Katy's audience with an evocative listening experience that connects on a deep level.

As you'll see throughout the report, there were many factors that went into making *Wide Awake* both a domestic and international #1 hit. Highlights include:

Emotion

The core factor that enables *Wide Awake* to deeply connect and resonate inside the listener's soul is its **great use of emotion**. Every aspect of the song is evocative, most specifically:

- The lyrics
- Katy's lead vocal delivery
- The secondary vocals (i.e. "I'm wide awake")
- The chord progression used throughout the entire song
- The nature of the instrumentation

The Lyrics

The mark of a great lyricist is to use **few words to convey many**, all the while utilizing copious amounts of **imagery, action** and **emotion** to engage the listener with the goal of holding their attention from one section to the next. Additionally, you want the lyrics to be **applicable to the artist** who's singing them AND **universal** enough so that they can connect with the largest possible audience. *Wide Awake* achieves this on all fronts while combining **two lyrical themes** under one roof (Love/Relationships and Inspirational).

Additionally, the manner in which the lyrics and phrases were **assembled** is exceptionally clever. For example, take the chorus. She could have easily ended the section on a high via "I'm letting go tonight." This would have tied perfectly into the meaning of the title phrase "I'm wide awake." Instead, that line is followed once again by "falling from cloud nine." By repeating just that one line, it puts a whole other spin on the context of the story. Yes, she's moving on and she's "wide awake," but you learn that she's still DEEPLY HURT.

This fact is further reinforced when you listen to the manner in which she sings the "I'm wide awake" phrase throughout the entire song. She's NOT singing it in a jubilant "I'm free" fashion. Conversely, it sounds like she's in a semi-melancholic daze coupled with feelings of relief. Together, they sum up the entire gist of the story: Going through the demise of a

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relationship is very difficult. You're going to get through it, but it's still going to HURT for a while – even after you're “wide awake.”

Katy's Vocal Delivery

To say that Katy **sings it like she means it** is an understatement. Whether she's conveying anger, sadness, relief or confidence, she does it with conviction, bringing each phrase and section of the song to life. The result – it resonates with the listener on a deep level.

Magic Moments

Speaking of Katy's vocal delivery, she provides the song with two “magic moments” where she takes the emotional nature of the lyrics to the next level:

- **“On the concrete”**: When Katy first sang this phrase during the first pre-chorus, she wasn't yet fully “awake,” so she sang it in a manner that didn't possess a lot of emotion. The second time around, when she WAS “wide awake,” she let us know the scope of how PISSED OFF she was regarding how the relationship ended by belting out “on the concrete!!!”
- **“You know I'm letting go tonight”**: It's the third (and final) occurrence of this “inspirational” phrase in the last chorus where Katy finally belts out that she's moving on with her life. She sings it like she means it, and you feel it.

It's Strong On All Fronts

Each section of the song is **equally** as infectious, engaging and memorable as the next. There is absolutely no filler here.

Structure & Flow

Composed in the most popular, and arguably the most effective form in Pop music (**A-B-A-B-C-B**), each section of the song builds off of and flows seamlessly in and out of one another, utilizing fluctuations in **momentum**, **tension** and **intensity** to help accentuate the nature of the lyrics and overall vibe throughout the song.

It Breaks Mainstream Pop “Rules”

Wide Awake stands out from the pack of most other top charting hit Pop songs in the sense that first, it's a **ballad** (the vast majority of Pop hits are NOT ballads), and second, the **song's title DOES NOT appear in the chorus** (or the pre-chorus, for that matter). It DOES appear in six other sections, occurring 21 times within the song, and that definitely is not the case with most other hit Pop songs. Additionally, the title doesn't appear in the lead narrative. Instead, it functions as a background “secondary lead.”

Song Title

The title “*Wide Awake*” occurs **21 times** within the song, appearing in **six individual sections**.

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The result is that it takes the memorability factor of the song to the next level. Additionally, the title acts as the “**anchor**” phrase throughout the song – both in its meaning and the in manner in which Katy sings it.

Repetition

Vast amounts of **phrase to phrase** and **section to section** repetition are used throughout the song, both in the vocal melody as well as the progression within the music itself, resulting in an exceptionally infectious, engaging, and most of all memorable listening experience.

Simplicity

You've heard of the **K.I.S.S. principal** (keep it simple, stupid), and the K.I.S.S. principal is most definitely in effect here – both in the vocal melody as well as the backing music. The listener doesn't need to “work” to get engaged in the song. The melody in *Wide Awake* instantly connects, is easy to follow, easy to sing along to, and above all, easy to remember.

Payoff

Wide Awake provides the listener with **two key payoffs** within the song, both in the chorus and the bridge. This is brought about via the power of the music, the lyrics, and most of all in Katy's soaring, evocative vocal delivery. She's the one that really makes the payoffs come to life.

The Katy Perry Factor

As with the Britney factor, the Rihanna factor and Gaga factor, whatever song Katy Perry touches **she makes all her own**, and this most definitely was the case with *Wide Awake*. The second you hear it, you KNOW it's Katy Perry.

The Songwriters

If you've been reading our report “Who's Writing The Hits,” by now you've noticed that the vast majority of top-charting songs are written by “teams” of hitmakers. Rarely does anyone go it alone. The “team” that was assembled to co-write *Wide Awake* is the **crème de la crème of hit Pop songwriting**, including Bonnie McKee, Cirkut, Dr. Luke, Max Martin and of course Katy Perry. To say that they know what they're doing is an understatement, and it showed in the final product.

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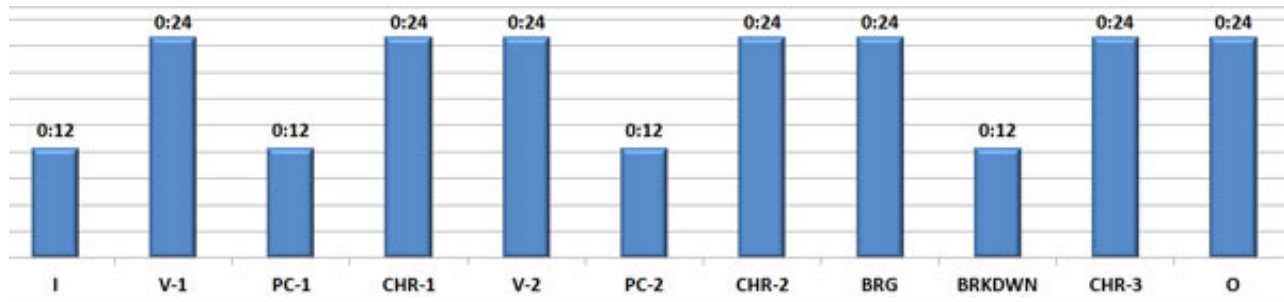
At-a-Glance

	Intro	Verse	Pre-Chorus	Chorus	Bridge	Brkdwn	Outro
# Of Occurrences	1	2	2	3	1	1	1
Length by Section	0:12	0:24	0:12	0:24	0:24	0:12	0:24
Section % to Total Song	6%	22%	11%	33%	11%	6%	11%

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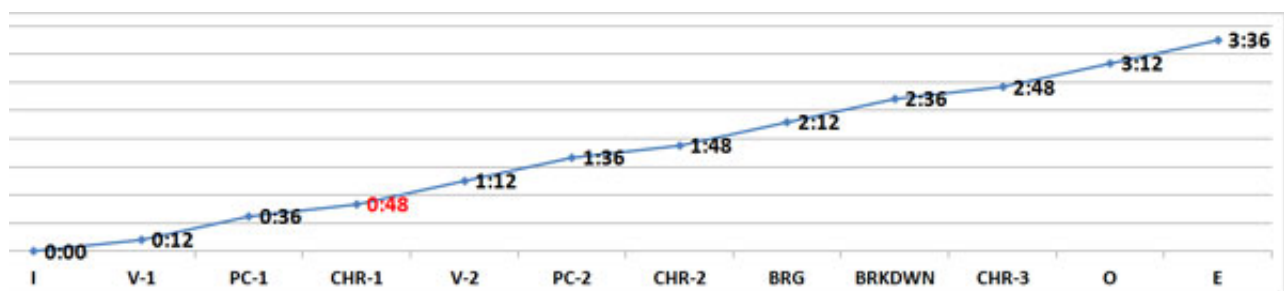
Section Length (Length of each individual section within the song)



Wide Awake contains **eleven individual sections** within its framework, all of which are short to moderate in length. The verse, chorus, bridge and outro sections all land at **0:24**, while the intro, pre-chorus and breakdown sections are exactly half that, each landing at **0:12**. All in all, the sectional timing is quite effective on the following levels:

- The sections that possess the longest length are the **“meat” sections** of the song, so to speak (verse, chorus, bridge and outro). As a result, it makes sense to keep the listener in there for the longest amount of time.
- The sections with the shortest length can be characterized as **“transitional” sections** (though they’re not any less engaging or effective than the “meat” sections). Their purpose is to quickly hook the listener in and establish the mood (**intro**), further develop the story and build up the MTI (momentum/tension/intensity) level between the verse and chorus (**pre-chorus**), and to give the listener a quick “breather” after the MTI peak in the bridge coupled with accentuating the “punch” of the chorus that follows (**breakdown**).

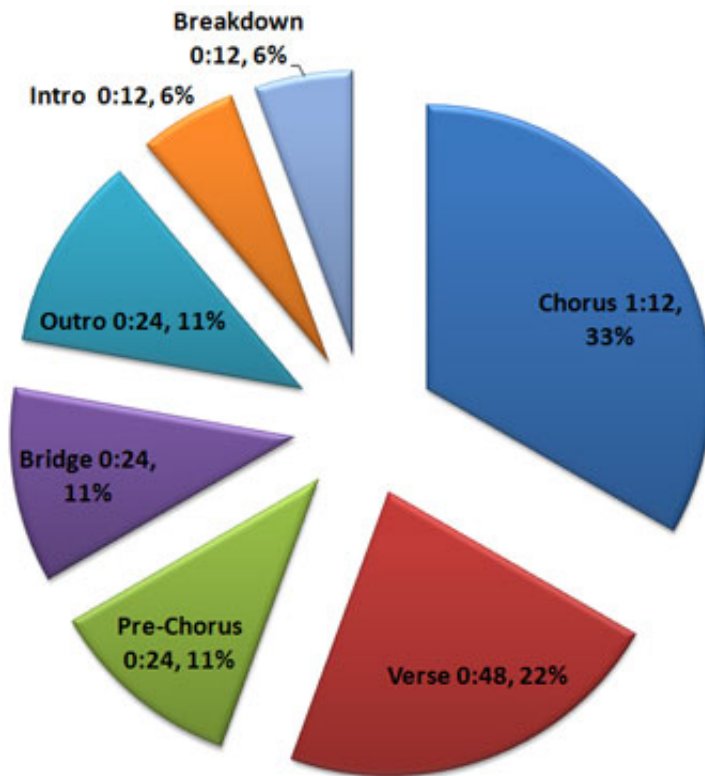
Timeline (Shows when each section hits within the timeline of the song)



Total Section Analysis (Total time consumed by each section and its percentage of the total song)

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As you can see in the graph above, the total amount of time allocated to each individual section within the song is pretty well dispersed:

- As you would expect, the majority of time is devoted to the **chorus** (33%), followed by the **verse** (22%).
- The **pre-chorus**, **bridge** and **outro** each carry equal weight within the song's framework, accounting for 11% of the total composition.
- The **intro** and **breakdown** sections were allocated the least amount of time, each comprising 6% of the song.

What's most interesting about the total dissemination of time within the song is the fact that only **33%** of it is devoted to the **chorus**. In comparison, last quarter (Q2-2012), based on the 23 songs that landed in the Billboard Pop Songs top 10, the average percentage of time allocated to the chorus was **44%**.

So – why the low number? Wouldn't it make sense to keep the listener in the “**payoff**” of the song as long as possible?

The answer to that question is simple. *Wide Awake* is exceptionally well crafted in EACH SECTION OF THE SONG. They're all equally infectious, engaging and memorable, and there's absolutely no “filler.” So – even though less time is allocated to *Wide Awake's* chorus than the average top 10 hit Pop song, the listener is still getting his or her “money's worth” in

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EVERY SECTION OF THE SONG.

Additionally, with the exception of the chorus, the total amount of time allocated to key sections within *Wide Awake* is right in-line with the average for the 23 top 10 hit Pop songs that landed in the Billboard Pop Songs top 10 during Q2-2012:

Intro

- *Wide Awake*: **6%** of the total song.
- Q2-2012 Average: **4%** of the total song.

Pre-Chorus

- *Wide Awake*: **11%** of the total song.
- Q2-2012 Average: **12%** of the total song.

Chorus

- *Wide Awake*: **33%** of the total song.
- Q2-2012 Average: **44%** of the total song.

Bridge

- *Wide Awake*: **11%** of the total song.
- Q2-2012 Average: **13%** of the total song.

Outro

- *Wide Awake*: **11%** of the total song.
- Q2-2012 Average: **9%** of the total song.

The Katy Perry Hit Comparison:

As a side note, it's interesting to take a look at how *Wide Awake*'s compositional breakdown compares to six of Katy's other top 10 hits from *Teenage Dream* (*The One That Got Away*, *E.T.*, *Last Friday Night*, *Firework*, *Teenage Dream* and *California Gurls*):

- *Wide Awake*'s **intro** is longer than all of her other top 10 hits.
- The total time devoted **to the verse** sections equate to the average of the aforementioned hits.

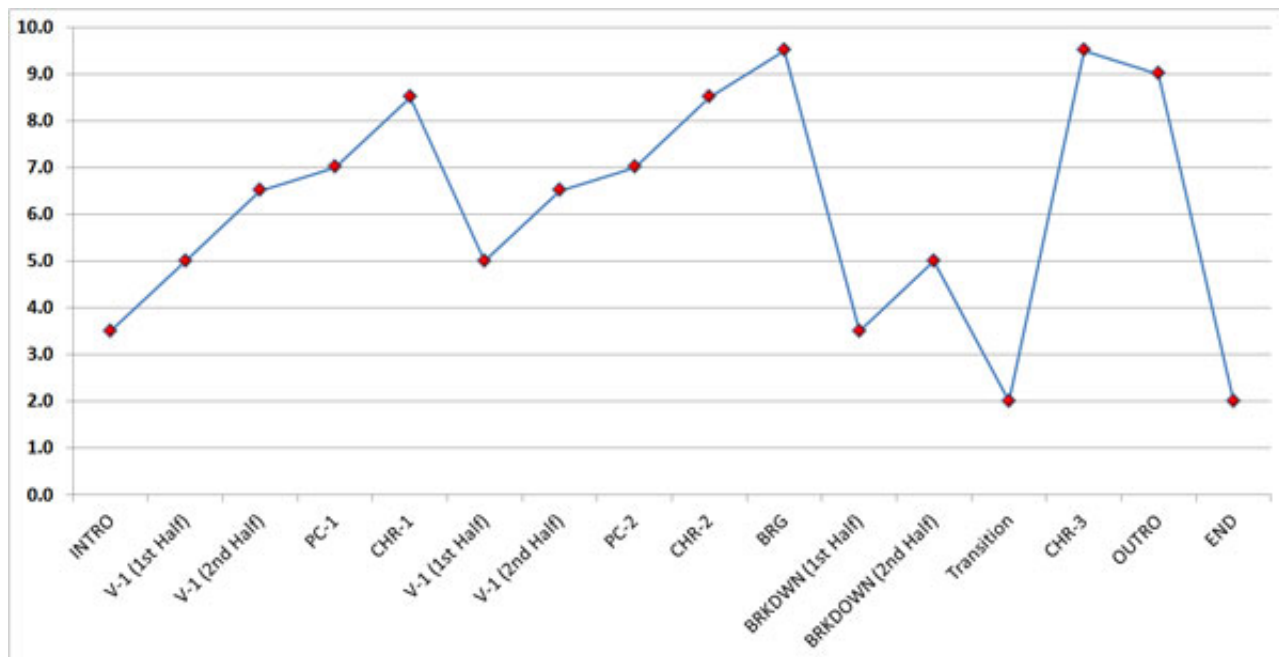
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- The total time devoted to the **pre-chorus** is in line with her other top 10 hits.
- *Wide Awake* allocates the least amount of time to the **chorus** than any of her other hits.
- Aside from *Firework*, *Wide Awake* allocates the least amount of time to the **bridge**.

Momentum/Tension/Intensity (MTI) & Vibe [Back to Top](#)

(Evaluation of the intensity of each section within the song timeline on a scale of 1 – 10, 10 being the most intense)



Overview:

Wide Awake makes great use of shifts in momentum, tension and intensity levels throughout the song, helping to keep the listener engaged as well as accentuating the vibe of each section within the song.

Intro (0:01 – 0:12)

Wide Awake kicks off in a mellow fashion with a warm / introspective vibe characterized by the synth and Katy's delay processed "wide awake" vocals.

Transition Point– Intro into Verse 1: Seamless – turns on a dime.

Verse-1 (0:12 – 0:36) – MTI LEVEL INCREASE

Here in the first verse we initially see the MTI level kicked up a notch over the intro due the addition of Katy's vocals, the synth "bloop" and low-level electronic drums into the mix.

Once the second stanza hits, the MTI level is then further increased via the up-front bright snare and booming kick. Also notice that the main synth morphs from the bass to the treble end of the spectrum as the section progresses, all the while subtly increasing in level. This helps to increase the underlying tension as we move toward the pre-chorus.

Transition Point – Verse 1 into Pre-Chorus 1: Seamless – turns on a dime.

Pre-Chorus-1 (0:36 – 0:48) – MTI LEVEL INCREASE

The MTI level of the pre-chorus is basically on par to slightly above that of the preceding verse (considering that the backing music remains virtually the same in both sections). The slight increase can primarily be attributed to the change-up in Katy's vocal delivery (it's a bit more driving in nature coupled with the increased tension brought about in the lyrics), coupled with the synth swell that enters the mix toward the tail end of the section. One you hear that swell, you KNOW the chorus is right around the corner. The result – increased tension.

Transition Point – Pre-Chorus 1 into Chorus 1: The synth swell enters into the mix at the tail end of the pre-chorus (starting to become audible on the lyric “up”), peaks at the very onset of the chorus (on the lyric “Falling”), and then dissipates soon after the lyric “nine.”

Chorus-1 (0:48 – 1:12) – MTI LEVEL INCREASE

As soon as we hit the first chorus, the MTI level peaks for the first time within the song. The difference in level between the preceding pre-chorus and the chorus isn't anything “grand” in nature, having more in common with fun.'s “We Are Young” than Kelly Clarkson's “Stronger,” for example. It's more of a subtle build. The overall power of the section is primarily derived from the up-front synth bass entering the mix, coupled with the soaring nature of Katy's vocal delivery.

Transition Point – Chorus 1 into Verse 2: Turns on a dime. Notice that the nature of the chorus continues through the first syllable in “a-wake” and then immediately reverts back to the music and vibe that defined the first verse on the second syllable, “wake.”

Verse-2 (1:12 – 1:36) – MTI LEVEL DECREASE

The second we hit the second verse coming out of the chorus, the overall MTI level drops off significantly. This is due to the reversion back to the same general vibe that defined the first verse of the song. Notice that there's some additional instrumentation in the mix (synth and guitar) and backing vocals, but it doesn't do a whole lot in increasing the overall MTI level of the section in relation to the first verse occurrence within the song.

Transition Point – Verse 2 into Pre-Chorus 2: Seamless – turns on a dime.

Pre-Chorus-2 (1:36 – 1:48) – MTI LEVEL INCREASE

As was the case with verse 2, the overall MTI level of the second pre-chorus and the nature of its progression out the preceding verse is basically on par with that of its first occurrence within the song. Once again there's additional instrumentation in the mix (synth and guitar) coupled backing vocals that subtly provide the section with increased tension, but not much.

Transition Point – Pre-Chorus 2 into Chorus 2: This time around the synth swell enters into the mix a bit later than it did during the first transition into the chorus, with the emphasis being put on Katy's intense delivery on the lyrics "on, on the concrete!" Notice that the drums are pulled from the mix under the lyrics "*on the concrete.*" This gives the chorus increased "punch" when it hits.

Chorus-2 (1:48 – 2:12) – MTI LEVEL INCREASE

The MTI level of the second chorus is basically on par with that of the first.

Transition Point – Chorus 2 into the Bridge: Seamless – turns on a dime. The bridge is ushered in by the backing vocals "*I'm wide awake.*"

Bridge (2:12 – 2:36) – MTI LEVEL INCREASE

Here in the bridge the song reaches its MTI level peak. That being said, it's not that much more intense than the preceding chorus. There's some additional instrumentation that enters the mix providing it with subtly increased power and drive, but it's the nature of Katy's vocals that puts the section over the top. She's reaching her highest vocal register within the song, and singing with heightened emotion.

Transition Point – Bridge into Breakdown: The MTI level drops off instantly into "breakdown mode" once we hit the second syllable in "*a-wake.*"

Breakdown (2:36 – 2:48) – MTI LEVEL DECREASE

Once we hit the breakdown, the MTI level instantly drops to that which defined the intro of the song. Initially we have the main synth that's filtered on the bass end of the spectrum coupled with Katy's trail-off delay vocals. As the section progresses, however, the MTI level starts to subtly increase, specifically brought about by the main synth morphing over to the treble end of the spectrum coupled with the increase in level and the synth swell that enters the mix toward the tail end.

Transition Point – Breakdown into Chorus 3: The transition revolves around Katy's "*yeah I'm*" vocal. Initially the MTI level peaks at the end of the breakdown (on the lyric "*yeah*"), but then takes an instant dive when the music is pulled out from under the "*I'm*" vocal. Once again, this dive in MTI provides the chorus with much greater "punch" when it slams back in.

Chorus-3 (2:48 – 3:12) – MTI LEVEL INCREASE

After slamming in from the breakdown, the MTI level that defines the final chorus of the song is greater than the two preceding choruses specifically due to some additional instrumentation and backing vocals that had been added to the mix coupled with Katy's more intense, soaring vocal delivery (specifically on the lyrics "*you know I'm letting go tonight*" – which takes the emotion of the section to a rousing peak).

Transition Point – Chorus 3 into Outro: Seamless – turns on a dime.

Outro (3:12 – 3:36) – MTI LEVEL REMAINS BASICALLY THE SAME

The MTI level of the outro basically keeps the MTI level of the preceding chorus up there

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(specifically due to the nature of the backing music and vocals), but is slightly less intense due to the omission of Katy's lead vocal. It's still driving, though.

End (3:36 – 3:40) – MTI LEVEL DECREASE

The song ends abruptly (i.e incorporating a “false” ending”) where the backing music is pulled out from under Katy's vocal on the syllable “wake” in “awake.” This is followed by a brief trail-off delay on her vocal.

VIBE BY SECTION

Here we see how the nature of the music and vocal delivery jibe with the nature of the lyrics in creating the vibe that defines each section of the song.

Intro

Wide Awake kicks off with a **mellow, warm, semi-somber vibe** accentuated by the nature of the synth coupled with the “*wide awake*” vocals. It perfectly sets the tone for the nature of the story that follows.

Verse-1

Here the overall vibe continues with the **mellow, introspective, semi-somber tone** of the intro during the first stanza of the section, reflecting the naivety, sadness and hurt in the lyrics. This is followed by a **more vibrant vibe** in the second stanza, brought about by the addition of the drums and the nature of Katy's vocals. This reflects the more “**awakened**” nature of the lyrics.

Pre-Chorus

Here we have a continuation of the “**awakened**” **vibe** that was established in the second stanza of the first verse, accentuating both the “realization” and “hurt” nature of the lyrics.

Chorus

Once we hit the chorus, the overall vibe changes over to **soaring and powerful**, brought about by the nature of the music and Katy's vocal delivery. This accentuates the strong emotional nature of the lyrics (i.e. “falling,” “*crashing*,” and “*letting go*”).

Verse-2

Here the vibe is similar in nature to that of the first verse, but this time around the feeling is a bit “**brighter**” (accentuated by the bright electric guitar in the mix) coupled with Katy's more “assured” vocal delivery. This jibes perfectly with the confident, self-esteem natured lyrics.

Bridge

The bridge takes the **soaring, emotional nature** of the preceding chorus to the **next level** via the more powerful nature of the instrumentation coupled with Katy's more powerful, emotional delivery. This does a great job of accentuating the tumultuous nature of the lyrics (“thunder rumbling, castles crumbling, I am trying to hold on...”).

Breakdown

Directly following the powerful nature of the bridge (and the phrase “*I'm not blind anymore*”), the breakdown instantly changes the vibe over to one of **peace and tranquility**.

Outro

Continuing with the backing music of the preceding chorus plus additional instrumentation and background vocals, the outro rides the listener out with a vibe that exudes “**positivity**” and “**freedom**,” accentuated by the lyrics “*wide awake*” that repeat throughout the section.

Lyrics & Harmonic Progression [Back to Top](#)

Song Title:

If you want to see an example of a song that makes incredibly effective use of its title, then look no further than “*Wide Awake*.”

- The title “*Wide Awake*” occurs **21 times** within the song, appearing in SIX INDIVIDUAL SECTIONS. To say that it gets engrained in your head is an understatement.
- Take note of **how Katy sings the title** throughout the song. It’s not jubilant. Conversely, she sounds like she’s in a semi-melancholic daze coupled with feelings of relief. This leads us to believe that even though she’s “*wide awake*,” she’s still reeling from the fallout of the relationship.
- It acts as the “**anchor**” phrase throughout the entire song. No matter what Katy is singing about (whether it’s about getting hurt or moving on), the phrase “*I’m wide awake*” encompasses the premise of the entire story, jibing perfectly with the nature of the section in which it appears.
- Note that the title does not appear in the **main narrative** of the song.
- Notice how the title is **strategically placed** throughout the song – occurring at the onset of full sections, stanzas and in-between stanzas as well.

What’s most interesting, however, is where the title DOES NOT appear. If you’ve been reading our reports for a while, you know by now that the vast majority of songs have their title appearing in the **chorus**, as well as in additional sections from time to time.

“*Wide Awake*” goes against the grain of most other Pop songs in the sense that that the title **DOES NOT APPEAR in the chorus**. Additionally, it also doesn’t show up in the pre-chorus. Here’s where it DOES appear:

- Twice in the **intro** (Katy’s *Wide Awake* vocal immediately kicks the song off)
- Four times in the **first verse** (at the onset of the first and second stanzas as well in the middle of each stanza)
- Four times in the **second verse** (at the onset of the first and second stanzas as well in the middle of each stanza)

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- Four times in the **bridge** (at the beginning and middle of both stanzas)
- Twice in the **breakdown** (at the beginning and middle of the section)
- Five times in the **outro** (at the beginning of the section, throughout the body of the section and concluding the song).

Lyrics / Harmonic Progression / Word & Syllable Count:

Key

(*): Indicates a chord that occurs BEFORE the beginning of the line

(**): Indicates a chord that occurs AFTER the end of the line

Blue Font On Lyric: Indicates where the chord change takes place

(Parenthesis): Indicates a chord that carries over from the previous line

Verse 1

1st Stanza

Gm7 (7 words / 7 syllables)

I'm wide awake

B-flat (6 words / 6 syllables)

Yeah, I was in the dark

F (4 words / 5 syllables)

I was falling hard

Csus4 (4 words / 5 syllables)

With an open heart

Gm7 (3 words / 4 syllables)

I'm wide awake

B-flat / F / **Csus4 (8 words / 8 syllables)

How did I read the stars so wrong

2nd Stanza

-

Gm7 (3 words / 4 syllables)

I'm wide awake

B-flat (6 words / 6 syllables)

And now it's clear to me

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F (4 words / 6 syllables)

That every*thing* you see

Csus4 (5 words / 6 syllables)

Ain't always *what* it seems

Gm7 (3 words / 4 syllables)

I'm wide *awake*

B-flat / F (7 words / 8 syllables)

Yeah, I was *dreaming* for so *long*

Pre-Chorus

***Csus4 / Gm7 (5 words / 5 syllables)**

I wish I knew *then*

B-flat (4 words / 4 syllables)

What I know *now*

F (3 words / 4 syllables)

Wouldn't dive *in*

Csus4 (3 words / 4 syllables)

Wouldn't bow *down*

Gm7 (2 words / 4 syllables)

Gravity *hurts*

B-flat (5 words / 5 syllables)

You made it so *sweet*

F (5 words / 5 syllables)

'Till I woke *up* on

Csus4 (3 words / 4 syllables)

On the concrete

Chorus

Gm7 / B-flat / F / Csus4 (4 words / 5 syllables)

Falling from *cloud* *ni-ne*

Gm7 / B-flat / F / Csus4 (4 words / 5 syllables)

Crashing from *the* *hi-gh*

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Gm7 / B-flat / F / Csus4 (4 words / 6 syllables)

I'm *letting go* **toni-ght**

Gm7 / B-flat / F / Csus4 (6 words / 7 syllables)

Yeah I'm *falling from* cloud **ni-ne**

Verse 2

1st Stanza

Gm7 (3 words / 4 syllables)

I'm wide *a***wake**

B-flat (4 words / 6 syllables)

Not losing *any* sleep

F (5 words / 6 syllables)

I picked up *ev*ery piece

Csus4 (5 words / 6 syllables)

And landed *on* my feet

Gm7 (3 words / 4 syllables)

I'm wide *a***wake**

B-flat / F / Csus4 (6 words / 10 syllables)

Need nothing *to* complete my*self*, no-**oh**

2nd Stanza

Gm7 (3 words / 4 syllables)

I'm wide *a***wake**

B-flat (5 words / 6 syllables)

Yeah I am *born* again

F (5 words / 6 syllables)

Out of the *lion's* den

Csus4 (5 words / 6 syllables)

I don't have *to* pretend

Gm7 (4 words / 4 syllables)

And it's too **late**

B-flat / F / **Csus4 (6 words / 7 syllables)

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The story's **over** now, the **end**

Bridge

Gm7 (2 words / 5 syllables)

I'm wide a**wake**

***B-flat(2 words / 5 syllables)**

Thunder **r**umbl**ing**

***F / Csus4 (2 words / 5 syllables)**

Castles **cr**umbl**ing**

***Gm7 / B-flat / F / Csus4 (6 words / 7 syllables)**

I am **try**ing to hold **o-n**

Gm7 (2 words / 5 syllables)

I'm wide a**wake**

B-flat (5 words / 5 syllables)

God knows **that** I tried

***F / Csus4 (4 words / 5 syllables)**

Seeing **the** bright side

***Gm7 / B-flat / F / Csus4 (5 words / 6 syllables)**

But I'm not **blind** any**mo-re**

Rhyming Lyrics

The following lyrics "tie" lines together in certain sections of the song. The **highlighted** letters are the "rhymers."

Verse 1 (1st Stanza)

The last lyric on each of the first three lines. (**ar**)

- **Dark**
- **Hard**
- **Heart**

Verse 1 (2nd Stanza)

The last lyric on each of the first three lines. (**e**)

- **Me**
- **See**
- **Seems**

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Verse 2 (1st Stanza)

The last lyric on each of the first three lines. (e)

- *Sleep*
- *Piece*
- *Feet*

Verse 2 (2nd Stanza)

The last lyric on each of the first three lines. (en/ain)

- *Again*
- *Den*
- *Pretend*

Pre-Chorus (1st Stanza)

The last lyric on the second line plus the last two lyrics on the fourth line (ow)

- *Now*
- *Bow*
- *Down*

Pre-Chorus (2nd Stanza)

The first lyric on the first line plus the last two lyrics on the second and fourth lines (y/e)

- *Gravity*
- *Sweet*
- *Concrete*

Chorus

The last lyric on each line of the section. (i)

- *Nine*
- *High*
- *Tonight*
- *Nine*

Bridge (1st Stanza)

The last lyric on the first two lines. (umbling)

- *Rumbling*
- *Crumbling*

Bridge (2nd Stanza)

The last lyric on the first two lines. (ide)

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- *Tried*
- *Side*

LYRIC TYPES

This section highlights the types of lyrics and phrases used throughout each section of the song. Note that some of the lyrics and phrases appear in more than one category. The **highlighted** lyrics and phrases indicate the category focus.

Imagery, Place & Time Based Lyrics & Phrases:

(These lyrics "paint a picture" in your head and establish the time & place within the story)

Verse 1

- I was **in the dark** (PLACE)
- How did I read the **stars** so wrong (IMAGERY)

Pre-Chorus

- I wish I knew **then** (TIME)
- What I know **now** (TIME)
- On the **concrete** (IMAGERY/PLACE)

Chorus

- Falling from **cloud nine** (PLACE)
- I'm letting go **tonight** (TIME)

Verse 2

- Landed on my **feet** (IMAGERY)
- Out of the lion's **den** (PLACE)

Bridge

- **Thunder rumbling** (IMAGERY)
- **Castles crumbling** (IMAGERY)

Emotional Based Lyrics and Phrases:

(These lyrics & phrases convey emotion – either directly or indirectly – enabling you to connect with what the characters are feeling or going through on an emotional level within the story)

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*Notice that virtually every line within the song is emotional in nature. Katy doesn't need to come right out and say "I'm happy" or "I'm sad" – it's inferred in the lyrics and phrases as a whole.

Verse 1

- I'm **wide awake** (Keep in mind that this phrase reoccurs throughout the entire song)
- I was **in the dark**
- I was **falling hard**
- With an **open heart**
- How did I **read the stars so wrong**
- And now it's **clear to me**
- **Ain't always what it seems**
- I was **dreaming for too long**

Pre-Chorus

- Gravity **hurts**
- You made it so **sweet**

Chorus

- **Falling from cloud nine**
- **Crashing from the high**
- **Letting go tonight**

Verse 2

- **Not losing any sleep**
- **Picked up every piece**
- **Landed on my feet**
- **Need nothing to complete myself**

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- **I am born again**
- **Out of the lion's den**
- **I don't have to pretend**
- **The story's over now, the end**

Bridge

- **Thunder rumbling**
- **Castles crumbling**
- **I am trying to hold on**
- **Seeing the bright side**
- **I'm not blind anymore**

Action Based Lyrics & Phrases:

(These lyrics get you into what the characters within the story have done, are doing or will do)

Verse 1

- I was **falling hard**
- How did I **read** the stars so wrong
- I was **dreaming** for so long

Pre-Chorus

- Wouldn't **dive in**
- Wouldn't **bow down**
- 'Till I **woke up**

Chorus

- **Falling** from cloud 9
- **Crashing** from the high
- I'm **letting go** tonight

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Verse 2

- **Picked up** every piece
- And **landed** on my feet

Bridge

- Thunder **rumbling**
- Castles **crumbling**
- I am **trying to hold on**
- **Seeing** the bright side

Character/Person Based Lyrics & Phrases (Including Pronouns):

(These lyrics show how all of the characters within the story are defined)

*Notice that the majority of the song is all about HER. The only time that she refers to HIM (via "you") occurs in the first verse and pre-chorus.

Verse 1

I'm, I, Me, You

Pre-Chorus

I, You

Chorus

I'm

Verse 2

My, Myself, I

Bridge

I, I'm

STORY FLOW & MEANING:

Verse 1

1st Stanza

(THE PAST)

Here we get the **history** of the story/situation at hand. In a nutshell, she had "love blinders" on throughout the relationship (i.e she was "*in the dark*"). She was totally in love with this guy and she let that "blinding love" mask the fact that there were significant issues with the relationship. The scope of her love for him is made apparent in the lyrics "*falling hard with an open heart.*"

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The last line of the stanza, "*how did I read the stars so wrong,*" provides us our first look that this relationship didn't pan out.

***Notice that even though the entire first stanza is in the past, the two occurrences of the phrase "*I'm Wide Awake*" within the section keeps us in the present as well.

2nd Stanza

_ (THE PRESENT)

Back in the present, we now see that Katy has "**woken up.**" The blinders are off and she's back to reality (i.e. "*and now it's clear to me that everything you see ain't always what it seems*").

Notice that the aforementioned line ties right into the jist of the first stanza, meaning that pursuing love with blinders on precludes you from seeing things as they really are. She sums it all up with a nod back to the past, where she states that she was "*dreaming for so long*" – i.e. she WASN'T wide awake and able to see what was actually going on within the relationship.

Pre-Chorus

(THE PAST & PRESENT)

In the first part of the section, Katy reflects on **what she learned** from the relationship and how she would have done things differently if she knew better (i.e. "*I wish I knew then, what I know now, wouldn't dive in, wouldn't bow down*"). Basically she's saying that she wouldn't have rushed into the relationship with "blinders" on and not have given in to all of his "wants" that were most likely problematic (i.e. "*bow down*").

In the second part of the section, we find out for the first time that **Katy was really hurt** by how the relationship panned out (i.e. "*gravity hurts*"). This is followed by the biting sarcastic line – "*you made it so sweet, till I woke up on the concrete*" – meaning - everything seemed fine and happy – all were smiles – until one day it was all over, and she was out (i.e. "on the concrete"). Since she was so in love, she probably didn't see it coming (or chose not to). The wake-up call was when it was all over.

Additionally, notice that one lyric ("*concrete*") paints the picture now of how deeply she was hurt. She could have said "street," but it wouldn't have had nearly as much brutal impact.

Chorus:

(PAST AND PRESENT)

It's really quite brilliant how the lyrics were structured in the chorus. It just goes to show that a great lyricist can convey a story's worth of meaning in just a handful of words. **Each line plays a significant role** in conveying the scope of the emotional turmoil that the dissolve of the relationship caused, and the "payoff" line, "*I'm letting go tonight,*" counters the hurt by letting us know that she's moving on.

Summed up:

- We know that Katy was exceptionally happy and in love in this relationship ("*cloud nine,*"

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“high”)

- We know that the circumstances that led up to and eventually ended the relationship hit her VERY hard (“falling,” “crashing”)
- We know that she’s ready to move on with her life (“*I’m letting go tonight*”)

Now, notice that the chorus DOES NOT END on the lyrics “*I’m letting go tonight.*” There’s one line that follows, and it’s **exceptionally important** not only in the section, but in the song as a whole. It’s the repeat of the line “*I’m falling from cloud nine.*”

What that leads us to believe is that even though she’s ready to move on, SHE’S STILL VERY HURT. Additionally, this line ties right in to the nature of the secondary “*I’m wide awake*” vocal that occurs throughout the entire song. As mentioned earlier, notice that she doesn’t sing that phrase with immense jubilation. It almost sounds like she’s in a semi-melancholy daze coupled with relief. Yes, she’s “*wide awake*,” but she’s still reeling from the tumultuous end of the relationship.

Additionally, take note of the backing vocal phrase that enters during the second and third occurrence of the chorus: “*It was out of the blue.*” This line reinforces the fact that the relationship came to an abrupt end.

Verse 2

1st Stanza

(PAST AND PRESENT)

Here in the first stanza we see that **Katy’s ok**. She’s not letting all of this get to her (“*not losing any sleep*”), that she “*picked up every piece*” of her bruised psyche and that she’s “stable” (i.e. “*landed on my feet*”). The last line of the stanza, though, is the most important. She’s got her **confidence** and **self esteem** back (“*need nothing to complete myself*”).

2nd Stanza

(PRESENT)

The second stanza takes the premise of the first stanza to the next level. First, the powerful first line “*yeah I’m born again*” conveys in a strong, absolute manner the fact that she’s **back to being herself**. The next two lines convey WHY she’s born again (she’s “*out of the lion’s den*,” and she doesn’t have “*to pretend*” anymore).

The last two lines of the section bring the overall story to a conclusion. First, notice that for the first and only time within the story the secondary vocal “*I’m wide awake*” changes over to “*and it’s too late.*” What that leads us to believe is that he tried to reconcile with her, but she already moved on. The last line, “*the story’s over now, the end*” lets us know for a fact that that chapter of her life is totally over. It’s the lyrics “*the end*” that convey it in a powerful, absolute manner.

Bridge:

(PAST AND PRESENT)

Coming after the second chorus, we’re thrust back into the **tumultuous conditions** that led to

the final dissolve of their relationship.

The first half of the section provides us with fantastic combination of imagery and action that lets us know that despite all of the intense turmoil the fact that she really wanted to make the relationship work (“*thunder rumbling, castles crumbling, I am trying to hold on*”). You can't help but have that scene play out like a movie in your head while you listen to it.

The first two lines in the second half of the section (“*God knows I tried, seeing the bright side*”) lets us know that despite all of the negativity and chaos the fact that she really tried to see the positive in it all – specifically the love that brought them together in the first place. This is exemplified by just one lyric – “*God.*” By putting “*God*” in there, we really get to know exactly HOW HARD she tried to save this relationship.

The last line of the section (“*but I'm not blind anymore*”) lets us know that the blinders are off and that she's “wide awake.”

Breakdown

PRESENT

The repetition of the line “*I'm wide awake*” reinforces the fact that after everything that she's been through, **SHE IS “wide awake.”** Remember, though, that the manner in which she sings it conveys the fact that she's still hurt and dazed.

Summed Up

The overall gist of the story is this: Going through the demise of a relationship is very difficult. You're going to get through it and move on, **but it's still going to hurt** for a while.

The Vocal Melody [Back to Top](#)

Wide Awake is one of those rare songs that possesses an ultra-infectious , memorable vocal melody in EACH SECTION OF THE SONG. There are three key attributes that made it so effective:

Simplicity

As you'll see in the vocal melody graphs below, for the most part there aren't any “vocal acrobatics” going on in *Wide Awake*. The progressions are easy to follow, easy to sing and as a result are exceptionally infectious and memorable. Katy DOES provide variation on certain phrases in certain sections of the song, however, most notably in the second pre-chorus and third chorus in order to provide those sections with heightened emotion.

Repetition

More than any other factor, the vast amount of repetition that's used throughout the song is what gets the melody totally engrained in your head. Not only are individual phrases repetitive within each section, but sections as a whole repeat throughout the song as well. Additionally, the “repetitive glue” that ties the entire song together is the “*I'm wide awake*” and it's

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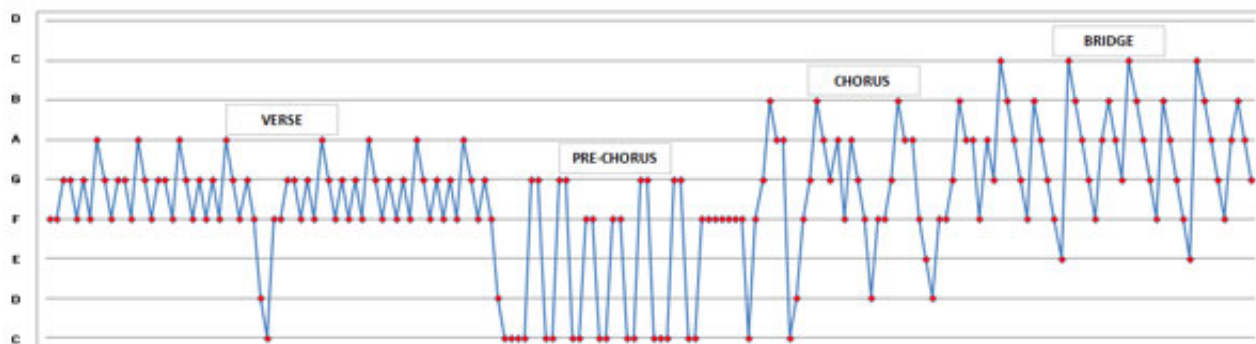
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variation, “*and it's too late*” vocal. This melody never deviates, and provides that infectious, memorable anchor throughout the entire song (except in the pre-chorus and chorus).

It Fits Katy's Vocal Style Like A Glove

The mark of an exceptionally well crafted vocal melody is how well it fits the artist who's singing it. When the two perfectly jibe, it gives the song a “magic” quality that goes beyond craft. It provides the song with its **vibe** and **character**, and there is definitely a lot of vibe and character in *Wide Awake*. It enabled Katy to stay in her “comfort range” throughout the majority of the song (without sacrificing its emotional impact), and let her really let loose when she wanted to take the emotion to a crescendo (i.e. the “magic moments” in the song as discussed earlier).

Vocal Melody At-A-Glance



Verse

Starts on **F** and ends on **C**.

Pre-Chorus

Starts on **C** and ends on **F**.

Chorus

Starts on **C** and ends on **G**.

Bridge

Starts on **C** (an octave up from pre-chorus and chorus) and ends on **G**.

KEY

Blue Line: Vocal Melody

Green Diamond: Eighth Note

Blue Diamond: Dotted Eighth or a Quarter Note

Black Diamond: Dotted Quarter Note & Up

Red Diamond: Rest

Flats: A-flat & B-flat

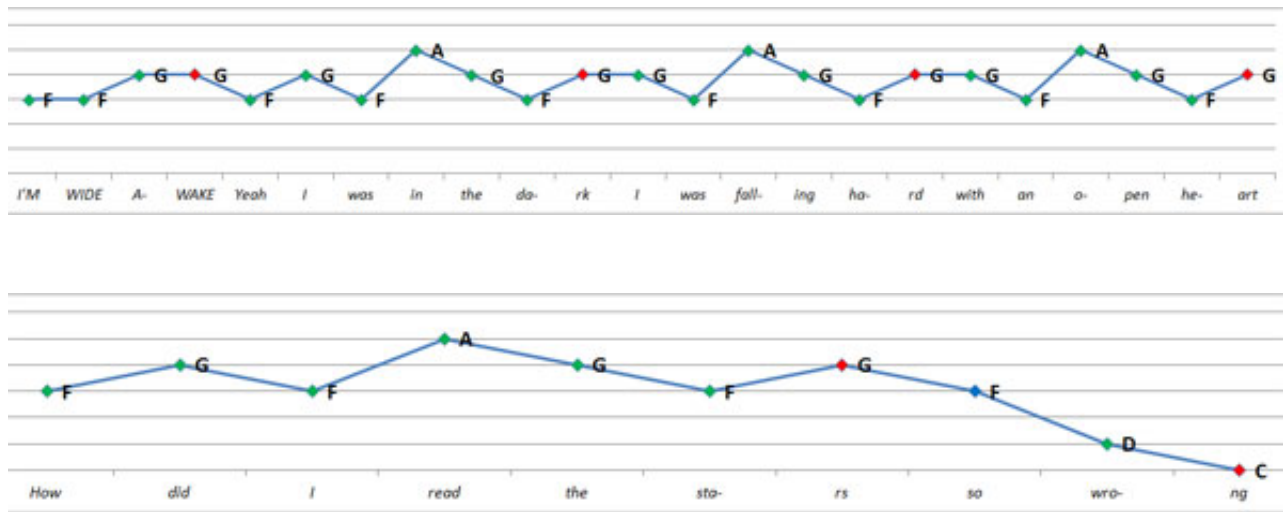
Verse-1:

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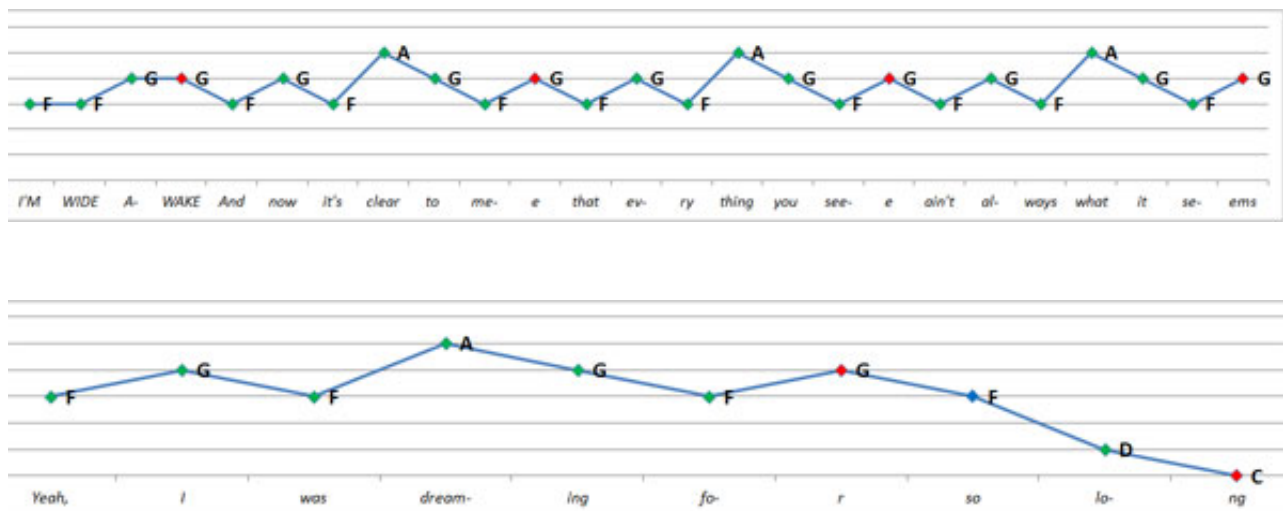
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1st Stanza



2nd Stanza



Line Reference

- **Line 1 (three phrases):** *Yeah I was in the dark, I was falling hard, with an open heart*
- **Line 2 (one phrase):** *How did I read the stars so wrong*
- **Line 3 (three phrases):** *And now it's clear to me, that everything you see, ain't always what it seems*
- **Line 4 (one phrase):** *Yeah I was dreaming for so long*

Progression

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Notice that each line within the verse follows **virtually the same melodic progression** with the key exception being the last two lyrics on lines two and four.

- The phrase *"I'm wide awake"* follows a **F-F-G-G** progression each time Katy sings it throughout the entire song.
- Each of the three phrases on line 1 of the first stanza follows a **G-F-A-G-F-G** progression (with the exception of the lyric *"yeah"* at the beginning of the line).
- Line two initially follows the **G-F-A-G-F-G** progression as well, but then deviates at the tail end, following an **F-D-C** progression on the lyrics *"so wrong"* to conclude the stanza.
- Notice that the second stanza (lines three and four) is virtually a carbon copy of the first. The primary difference is that each individual phrase on the first line of the second stanza follows an **F-G-F-A-G-F-G** progression, as opposed to the **F-G-A-G-F-G** utilized in the first stanza (six syllables vs. seven). Line two in each stanza is exactly the same from a melodic progression standpoint.

Repetition

Considering that each phrase is **virtually identical** from a melodic progression standpoint, you can't help but have it get stuck in your head.

Simplicity

Notice that the entire section with the exception of the tail end fluctuates between just three notes – **F**, **G** and **A** and utilizes virtually an identical pattern between phrases as mentioned above. Broken down even further, notice that with the exception of **A** and the **D-C** progression that concludes lines two and four, the entire vocal melody basically consists of two notes, **G** & **F**. The result is that it's easy to follow and sing along to, making it exceptionally memorable in nature.

Note Duration

Each lyric and syllable on lines one and three consist of an **eighth note** delivery, with each phrase broken up by a **quarter rest**. Lines two and four also consist of an **eighth note** delivery, except toward the tail end. The lyric *"stars"* on the second line and *"for"* on the fourth line are followed by an **eighth rest**, and the lyric *"so"* on both lines possesses a **quarter note** value.

The **rest** coupled with the prolonged lyric provides the line with increased emotional emphasis, and also helps to bring it to a natural conclusion by slowing it down from the **eighth note** delivery that dominated the section.

Vocal Twist

Notice how Katy sings the last lyric of each phrase. She basically **splits single syllable words into two**, with her inflection going up on the latter (**F** to **G**). This provides her phrasing with an interesting but subtle twist.

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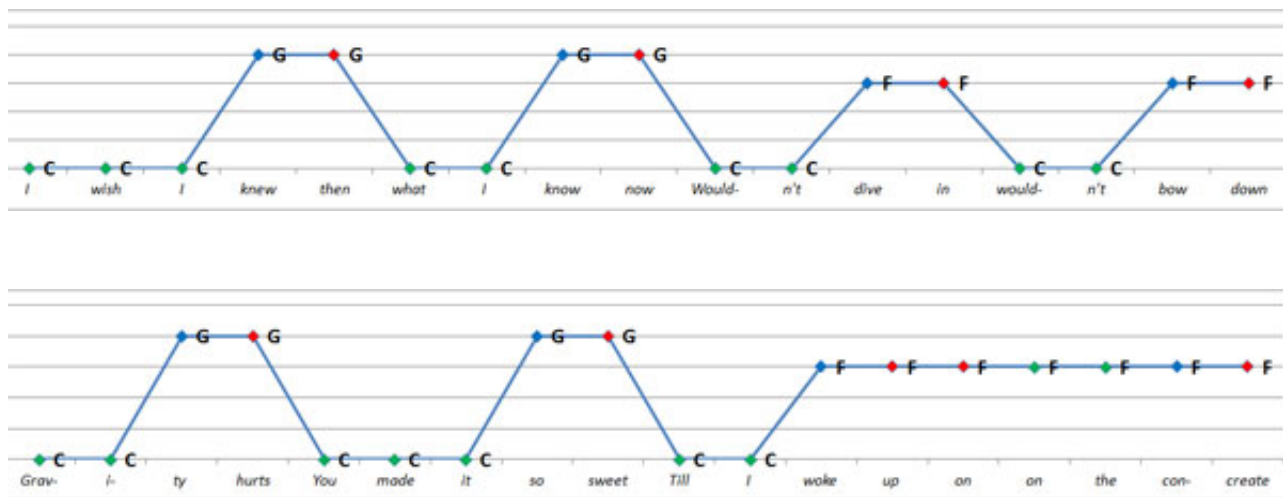
1st Stanza

- Da-rk
- Ha-rd
- He-art
- Sta-rs

2nd Stanza:

- Me-e
- Se-e
- Se-ems
- Fo-r

Pre-Chorus:



Line Reference

- **Line 1 (two phrases):** *I wish I knew then, what I know now*
- **Line 2 (two phrases):** *Wouldn't dive in, wouldn't bow down*
- **Line 3 (two phrases):** *Gravity hurts, you made it so sweet*
- **Line 4 (two phrases with an additional "on"):** *'Till I woke up, on, on the concrete*

Progression

As was the case with the preceding verse (and the bridge as well, as you'll soon see), the melodic progression that defines each phrase within the pre-chorus is virtually identical in nature, with the exception being line 4.

- Each of the two phrases on line 1 ("*I wish I knew then, what I know now*") follow

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a **C-C-G-G** progression, except at the very beginning where an extra **C** syllable/lyric is thrown in (“*I*”).

- Each of the two phrases on line 2 (“*Wouldn’t dive in, wouldn’t bow down*”) follow the same general pattern as line 1, with the exception being that the top note is hitting **F** as opposed to **G** (**C-C-F-F** vs. **C-C-G-G**). As is the case within other sections within the song, this subtle variation prevents the melody from becoming overly monotonous.
- The two phrases on line 3 (“*Gravity hurts, you made it so sweet*”) basically mirror the two phrases on line one, with the exception being that there are only two syllables (in the key of **C**) at the beginning of the line as opposed to the three that kicked off line 1.
- Line 4 is where things get changed up (“*Till I woke up, on, on the concrete*”). In the first occurrence of the pre-chorus, instead of following the **C-C-G-G** or **C-C-F-F** progression, it’s sung in a **monotone F** delivery. In the second occurrence of the pre-chorus, Katy provides the line with much more emotion and power, now singing it via a **C-C-A-C-A** progression. In both occurrences, this change-up is used to set-up the chorus that follows.

Repetition

As is the case all throughout this song, the repetitive nature of each line within this section gets the vocal melody completely stuck in your head.

Simplicity

Notice that the entire section consists of just three simplistic progressions:

- C-C-C-G-G
- C-C-G-G
- C-C-F-F
- F-F-F-F-F (line 4, first pre-chorus occurrence)
- C-C-A-C-A (line 4, second pre-chorus occurrence)

Note Duration

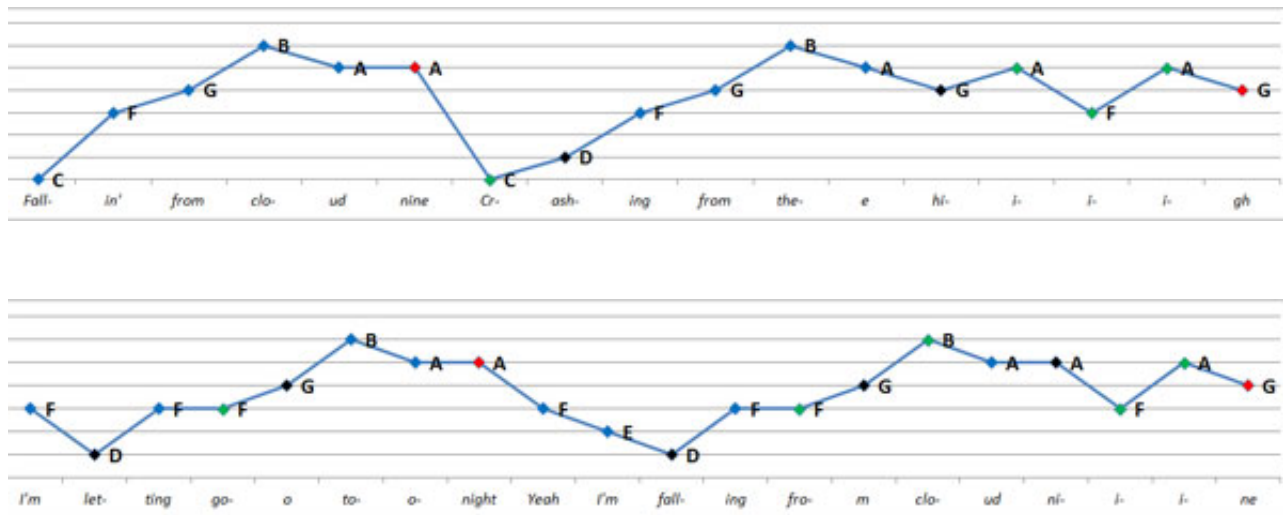
For the most part, each phrase consists of the same timing pattern: **Eighth – Eighth – Quarter – Rest** or **Eighth – Eighth – Eighth – Quarter – Rest**. The result is that the **consistency** accentuates the infectious nature and memorability factor of the section.

Note that the only variation occurs on line 4, where after initially following the same **Eighth – Eighth – Quarter – Rest** pattern on the phrase “*till I woke up,*” it’s followed by a **rest** after the first of the two “*on*’s,” which then continues on with the main pattern (**Eighth – Eighth – Quarter – Rest**) to conclude the line (“*on the concrete*”).

Chorus:

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Line Reference

- **Line 1 (one phrase):** *Falling from cloud nine*
- **Line 2 (one phrase):** *Crashing from the high*
- **Line 3 (one phrase):** *I'm letting go tonight*
- **Line 4 (one phrase):** *I'm falling from cloud nine*

Progression

Notice that each line within the chorus follows virtually the same melodic progression (starting out on **C** or **D** and ending on **A** or **G**). The only real difference between the first two lines and the last two reside in how each line kicks off. Lines one and two **immediately ascend**. Lines three and four add some additional lyrics before the ascent, where the vocal melody first **drops**:

- “*I’m letting*” on line three starts off on **F**, then drops to **D** before embarking on the vocal ascent.
- “*Yeah I’m falling*” on line four starts off with a descending **F-E-D** progression before starting on the ascent.

This subtle variation from the progression on lines one and two once again does a great job of changing things up just enough so that the overall section doesn’t become too monotonous, where it could jeopardize the overall effectiveness and engagement level of the section.

Additionally, note the nature of the lyrics where the progression descends – specifically “*yeah I’m falling.*” These lyrics convey **downward motion** and are accentuated with the **downward** nature of the progression.

Repetition

As mentioned above, each line follows virtually the same vocal pattern with some minor differences. The result is that once again the melody gets totally engrained in your head.

Simplicity

Though the vocal melody in the chorus is a little more “artsy” in nature than the other sections within the song (i.e. where Katy stretches out her vocals a bit more), the overall premise is relatively simple in nature, easy to follow and sing along to.

Note Duration

Notice that Katy’s delivery in the chorus is **slowed down** from her overall delivery in verse and pre-chorus sections of the song. This is what provides the section with its “**soaring**” vibe. The two aforementioned sections are primarily sung with an **eighth note** delivery with some **quarter notes** mixed in. In the chorus, we’re looking at mostly **quarter notes, dotted quarter** and **half notes**.

Also notice how individual lyrics within the chorus are **prolonged beyond their normal syllable count** as opposed to most other sections of the song. The result is that these lyrics are provided with increased emphasis, further accentuating the overall “soaring” vibe of the section in relation to the other sections. For example:

- The lyric “*high*” on line two and “*nine*” on line four are extended over a **G-A-F-A-G** and a **A-F-A-G** progression, respectively. Again, like the pattern variation mentioned earlier, this does a great job of breaking the section up a bit, staying within the overall framework but mixing it up just enough where it doesn’t become redundant. For example, imagine if the last lyric on lines two and four were sung in the exact same manner as they were sung on lines one and three (i.e. just in the key of **A** – held over a whole note). There wouldn’t be any variation, and as a result the section wouldn’t have as much impact or engagement value.
- Another example, though not as prominent as above, is the progression of the lyrics “*cloud nine*” on line one and “*tonight*” on line two. In order to keep the general melody pattern the same between lines, “*clo-ud nine*” is spread out over a **B-A-A** progression, while “*to-o-night*” is spread out over a **B-A-A** progression as well. Sometimes you need to get creative in order to preserve progression uniformity.

Emotional Variation – The “Magic Moment”

There’s one primary spot within the song where Katy deviates from the general progression that defined the previous two chorus occurrences.

- **Third Chorus:** “You know I’m letting go tonight.”

In chorus one and two “*I’m letting go tonight*” follows a **F-D-F-F-G-B-A-A** progression.

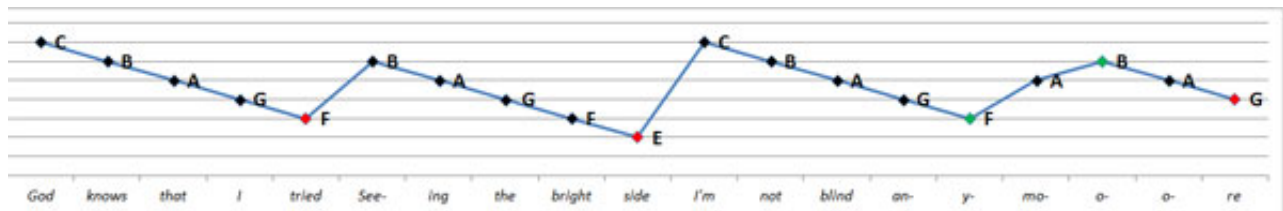
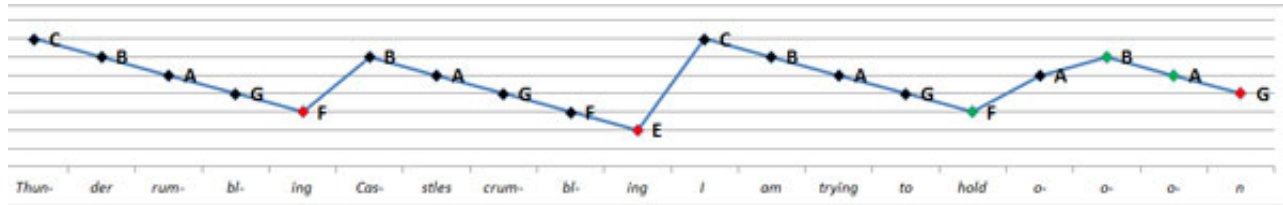
In the third chorus, Katy adds “*You know*” before “*I’m letting go tonight*,” and follows a **C-C-C-C-B-B-A-C-A-G-A** progression.

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This is the “**magic moment**” within the song where Katy really lets it go and soars with emotion. Pay attention to how the nature of her delivery really accentuates the meaning of the lyrics. She proclaims “**You know I’m letting go tonight!**” This sums up the jist of the entire story.

Bridge:



Line Reference

- **Line 1 (three phrases):** Thunder rumbling, castles crumbling, I am trying to hold on.
- **Line 2 (three phrases):** God knows that I tried, seeing the bright side, I’m not blind anymore.

Progression

The first thing that you’ll notice when you look at the graphs above is that lines one and two follow the same general melodic progression:

- The first two phrases on each line follow a descending progression that’s almost identical in nature. The first phrase follows a **C-B-A-G-F** progression while the second phrase drops down to follow a **B-A-G-F-E** progression. Again, as was the case in other sections of the song, this subtle variation prevents the section from becoming overly monotonous.
- The third phrase on each line starts out following a **C-B-A-G-F** progression (same as the first phrase), but then deviates on the last lyric/syllable (“on” – line 1 and “more” from “anymore” – line 2), following a **F-A-B-A-G** progression to conclude the line. Notice how once again single syllables are stretched out over many, as was the case in the chorus.

Repetition

All you need to do is look at the graphs above to see the ultra repetitive nature of the section. As previously mentioned, the first two phrases on each line are virtually identical in nature

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except that one starts on **C** and the other starts on **B**. The third phrase starts off in the same manner (starting on **C**), and then follows the **F-A-B-A-G** progression to conclude the line.

Simplicity

When you take into account the flow of the progression coupled with pretty much the same note values from one syllable to the next, you wind up with a section that is both simplistic and uniform in its construction and as a result very infectious and memorable in nature.

Note Duration

As with the chorus, here in the bridge Katy's delivery is slowed down in relation to the verse and pre-chorus sections. Each syllable possesses a dotted quarter note value, with the exception being toward the end of each line, where some eighth notes are mixed in.

Emotional Variation

As mentioned earlier, Katy changes up how she sings the last lyric/syllable on each of the two lines (i.e. following the **F-A-B-A-G** progression). The result is that those two lyrics/syllables ("on" and "more" are given increased emphasis, taking the emotional nature of the section to the next level.

Primary Instrumentation/Tone/Mix [Back to Top](#)

INTRO	DESCRIPTION	PAN
Vocal	Katy Perry's "Wide Awake" vocal. They're up front, initially enveloping the entire mix, with the prominent delay hitting around 12:00 & trailing off around 9:00	9:00-3:00
Synth (Main)	Mellow, pulsing warm Synth – mid/up in the mix. Primary placement is around 11:00 / 12:00	11:00-12:00

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VERSE	DESCRIPTION	PAN
Primary Vocal	Katy Perry – up front in the mix. Some reverb and delay, but nowhere near the extent used in the “Wide Awake” vocal	11:00-12:00
Secondary Vocal	“Wide Awake” vocal – up front in the mix. Starts down the middle but delays left and right in the mix. Same nature as the “Wide Awake” vocal in the intro	9:00-3:00
Synth (Main)	Mellow, pulsing warm Synth – mid level in the mix. Primary placement is around 11:00 / 12:00, but bleeds throughout the mix. Becomes more trebly and prominent in nature as the section progresses	9:00-3:00
Synth	Synth “blip” – mid-level in the mix. Sounds to be heavy on the reverb with an abrupt cut-off (i.e. not a long trail-off)	12:00
Synth Drone	Single note that flows throughout the entire section – low level in the mix. Bleeds throughout – primary placement around 11:00	11:00
Synth (Effect)	“Airy” synth swell. Starts out low and grows to low/mid level in the mix. Occurs during the transition between the first and second stanzas in the first verse	2:00-3:00
Electronic Drums	Kick – low level in the mix. Works in conjunction with the synth “blip” in providing the rhythm during the first half of the first verse.	12:00
Electronic Drums	Kick and snare – up front in the mix. The kick is “booming” in nature, while the snare is very bright.	11:00-12:00
Electric Guitar (2 nd Verse)	Bright and low level in the mix	10:00

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PRE-CHORUS	DESCRIPTION	PAN
Primary Vocal	Katy Perry – up front in the mix. Some reverb and delay.	11:00-12:00
Electronic Drums	Kick and snare – up front in the mix. The kick is “booming” in nature, while the snare is very bright.	11:00-12:00
Synth (Main)	Continuation of the synth that was defining the second half of the first verse	9:00-3:00
Synth (Main) – 2	Sounds to be a second synth mirroring the main synth in the mix. The difference is that it’s more prominent in the mix and is slightly more trebly in nature. Bleeds throughout the mix, but the primary placement is around 11:00 – 2:00	11:00-2:00
Synth (Effect)	“Airy” synth swell transitions from the pre-chorus into the chorus. Low/mid level in the mix	9:00-3:00
Background Vocal (2 nd Pre-Chorus)	Harmony - Low level in the mix	12:00

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CHORUS	DESCRIPTION	PAN
Primary Vocal	Katy Perry – up front in the mix. Some reverb and delay	11:00-12:00
Electronic Drums	Kick and snare – mid/up in the mix. Same general drums that defined the pre-chorus	12:00
Perc	Tambourine – low level in the mix – most audible during the second half of the section	9:00-10:00
Synth (Main)	Basically the same as what defined the intro and pre-chorus, but much lower in the mix	9:00-3:00
Synth Bass	Low and big – mid/up in the mix (this is what gives the section its powerful nature)	12:00
Synth (Accentuation)	Fuzz synth – low/mid level in the mix – helps to provide the section with its dense nature	12:00
Synth (Effect)	“Airy” synth swell. Seems to be present throughout the entire section (low in the mix, adding texture), and peaks after the lyric “high” Pans right to left	3:00 - 12:00
Secondary Vocal (2 nd Chorus)	Up front in the mix. Primary placement is around 9:00/3:00 but bleeds throughout the mix. Moderate reverb	9:00 / 3:00
Background Vocal (3 rd Chorus)	These are the “prolonged” background vocals. Low/mid level in the mix, primarily panned left and right in the mix but bleeds throughout	9:00-3:00

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BRIDGE	DESCRIPTION	PAN
Primary Vocal	Katy Perry – multi-tracked and up front in the mix. Some reverb and delay	11:00-12:00
Secondary Vocal	"Wide Awake" vocal – mid/up front in the mix.	9:00-3:00
Electronic Drums	Kick and snare – mid/up in the mix. Same general drums that defined the preceding chorus	12:00
Synth (Main)	Basically the same as what defined the preceding chorus	9:00-3:00
Synth Bass	Same as what defined the preceding chorus	12:00
Synth (Accentuation)	Fuzz synth – Same basically the same as the preceding chorus	12:00
Synth (Effect)	"Airy" synth swell. Peaks during the vocal "wide awake" that comes after "I am trying to hold on")	3:00 - 12:00
Acoustic Guitar	Bright strumming – low/mid level in the mix	3:00

BREAKDOWN	DESCRIPTION	PAN
Vocal	Katy Perry's "Wide Awake" vocals. Basically the same as what defined the intro section of the song, with the primary difference being that there's more bouncing around of the delay trail-off after the first "wide awake"	9:00-3:00
Synth (Main)	Starts off on the bass end of the spectrum - mellow and warm and morphs to the treble end as the section progresses, increasing in level as it does. Abruptly cuts off on Perry's "I'm" lyric	11:00-12:00
Synth (Effect)	"Airy" synth swell. Primary placement is left/right in the mix but bleeds throughout. Abruptly cuts off on Perry's "I'm" lyric	9:00-3:00

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OUTRO	DESCRIPTION	PAN
All Elements	Same as the preceding chorus plus the following to make it more intense and "Grand" in nature:	See Chorus
Background Vocals	These are the same prolonged background vocals as in the preceding chorus except that they're more prominent in the mix	9:00-3:00
Synth (Main)-3	Treble in nature – mid/up in the mix	11:00
Acoustic Guitar	Further up front in the mix than in the preceding chorus (though not by much)	3:00

Compositional Assessment [Back to Top](#)

Benchmark Analysis

Compares Wide Awake to the 23 songs that landed in the Billboard Pop Songs top 10 during Q2-2012.

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CATEGORY	Wide Awake	Q2-2012 Top 10 Pop Songs	Comparison
Form	A-B-A-B-C-B	A-B-A-B-C-B (43% of Songs)	In-Line
Song Length	3:40	3:43 (Avg)	-0:03
Intro Length	0:12	0:10 (Avg)	+0:02
Outro Length	0:24	0:16 (Avg)	+0:08
Songs That Contain an Intro	Yes	78% of Songs	In-Line
Songs That Contain an Outro	Yes	35% of Songs	Not In-Line
Time Where 1 st Chorus Hits	0:48	0:34 into the Song (Avg)	+0:14
% Into Song Where 1 st Chorus Hits	22%	16% into the Song (Avg)	+6%
Tempo	Mid	Mid to Mid/Up	Not In-Line
Acoustic vs. Electric	Electric	Electric (70% of Songs)	In-Line
Primary Instrumentation	Synth	Combo (Synth + Other)	Not In-Line
Primary Vocal Gender	Female	Female (43% of Songs)	In-Line
Pre-Chorus	Yes	65% of Songs	In-Line
Solo	No	0% of Songs	In-Line
Bridge	Yes	78% of Songs	In-Line
Lyrical Theme	Love/Relationships & Inspirational	Love/Relationships	In-Line
Primary Sub-Genre Influence	Electro Pop Ballad	Mix of Primary Influences	Not In-Line

All of the compositional characteristics and attributes present in *Wide Awake* are in line with Q2-2012 top 10 Pop hits EXCEPT:

- *Wide Awake* contains an **outro** section in its framework where the vast majority of top 10 hit Pop songs don't.
- The **first chorus** occurs 0:14 (6%) farther into the song than the average top 10 Pop hit.

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- *Wide Awake* features a synth as the **primary instrument** where the majority of hit Pop songs feature a synth plus additional primary instrumentation (i.e. electric guitar).
- The **tempo** is mid in nature where the vast majority of top 10 Pop hits are mid to mid/up.
- *Wide Awake* is primarily an Electro Pop Ballad where the majority of top 10 Pop hits incorporate a mix of **primary sub-genre influences** to help shape their sound (i.e. a Pop/Rock verse fused with a Dance chorus).

Structure and Flow: 10/10

Does the song flow in a cohesive manner and keep the listener engaged?

One of the strongest aspects of *Wide Awake* is the manner in which it's "put together" and how all of the sections flow in and out of one another.

First, *Wide Awake* utilizes the most popular (and arguably the most effective) **form** in songwriting: **A-B-A-B-C-B** (verse – chorus – verse – chorus – bridge – chorus). Add in the rest of the sections and the entire structure looks like this: Intro – verse – pre-chorus – chorus – verse – pre-chorus – chorus – bridge – breakdown – chorus – outro.

Translated, that means:

- The listener is hooked into the song (**Intro**)
- The story begins (**Verse-1**)
- The story develops (**Pre-Chorus-1**)
- Culmination of the story (**Chorus/Payoff**)
- The story continues (**Verse-2**)
- Revisit 1st pre-chorus premise (**Pre-Chorus-2**)
- Revisit culmination of the story (**Chorus/Payoff**)
- Variation/further development in the story (**Bridge**)
- "Breather" for the listener (**Breakdown**)
- Revisit culmination of the story (**Chorus/Payoff**)
- Ride the listener out on a high (**Outro**)

Second, the writers made great use of fluctuations in **MTI levels** (momentum/tension/intensity) throughout the song, achieving the following:

It made for a very engaging listening experience

Having MTI peaks and valleys is an imperative ingredient in keeping the listener engaged throughout the song – from a sonic perspective. The general MTI flow of *Wide Awake* went like this:

- **MTI Build** from the intro through the 1st chorus
- **MTI Drop** in the 2nd verse
- **MTI Build** from the 2nd verse through the 2nd chorus
- **MTI Peak** in the bridge
- **MTI Drop** in the instrumental break
- **MTI Slamming back up** in the 3rd chorus
- **MTI Pretty much level** through the outro

*Remember - if the MTI levels were linear throughout the song, the engagement factor for the listener would suffer tremendously.

It also jibed with and accentuated the lyrical content in each section of the song

For example:

- **Starting out “mellow”** to accentuate the reflective nature of the first stanza of the first verse.
- **Building** in the second stanza via the addition of the drums to “liven” things up as she starts to become “awake”
- **Subtly building** once again in the pre-chorus (specifically via the change-up in Katy's vocals) to reflect the “realization” vibe present in the lyrics.
- **Peaking** for the first time in the first chorus, brought about by the power of the instrumentation (specifically the synth bass) and the nature of Katy's vocals. This accentuated the “*Falling*,” “*Crashing*,” and “*Letting go*” lyrics.
- **Repeating the flow** above through the second verse, pre-chorus and chorus.
- **Reaching a crescendo** in the bridge (once again both instrumentally and vocally) to accentuate the powerful imagery/action filled nature of the lyrics (“*thunder rumbling, castles, crumbling, I am trying to hold on...*”)

Last, but certainly not least, the **frequent change-over of sections** (once every 0:12 to 0:24) always provides the listener with something new entering the mix. They never have a chance to

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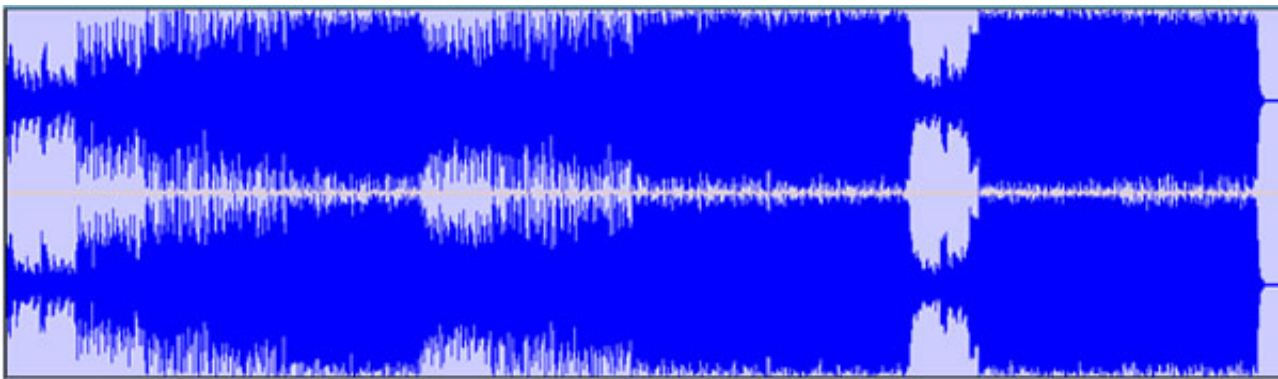
get bored.

Production: 9/10

How does the production stand up in maximizing the songs impact?

Another aspect that makes *Wide Awake* such an over-the-top song is the nature of its production – specifically the manner in which Katy's vocals and the instrumentation are tied together to create an exceptionally effective and evocative sonic landscape that accentuates the emotional nature of the lyrics.

Waveform



In the age of the “loudness wars,” *Wide Awake* DOES provide some **sonic variation** between sections, ultimately making for a more engaging listening experience.

Looking at the waveform above, you can very easily see how the overall sonic levels throughout each section of the song jibe with the MTI levels that were discussed earlier in the report.

The intro and breakdown sections have the lowest levels, and you can see how they gradually increase through the verse and pre-chorus sections, peaking in the chorus and bridge where the levels are pushed to the max for maximum sonic impact.

Lyrics: 10/10

Are the lyrics strong, fresh and original? Do they serve the song and jibe with the vibe of the music?

Wide Awake's lyrics are exceptionally effective on a number of key levels:

The Title

“*Wide Awake*” occurs 21 times within the song, appearing in six individual sections. The result is that it gets totally engrained within your head. Additionally, it acts as an “anchor phrase” throughout the entire song, as discussed earlier in the report.

Less Is More

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One of the most brilliant aspects of the lyrics is that a lot of meaning is conveyed in very few words. Additionally, the scope of the story is conveyed in a manner that strikes the perfect medium between obvious simplicity and symbolism. For example, take the second stanza of the pre-chorus:

- “*Gravity hurts, you made it so sweet, ‘till I woke up on, on the concrete*”

In just this one line, you learn that she was basically blindsided by the tumultuous ending of the relationship. Everything seemed to be going great (at least in her mind, because she was blinded by pure love, which was established earlier in the song), and he wasn't showing any signs that the end was inevitable (i.e. “*you made it so sweet*”). This is followed by the phrase “*‘till I woke up on the concrete,*” which both lets us know that the relationship came to an abrupt end and the scope of which it hurt her.

Imagery

Wide Awake is filled with it, enabling the listener to connect on a much deeper level by getting a “picture” of the emotion within the song. For example:

- “*Lion’s den*” (second verse): These two lyrics instantly let you know what the nature of the relationship felt like for Katy toward the end.
- “*Thunder rumbling, castles crumbling*” (bridge): Just four words sock you with the tumultuous nature toward the end of the relationship. It just wouldn't have been the same if she just came out and said “the relationship was falling apart for me.” These lyrics are evocative, and you can see the “movie” in your head.

Action

A lot of action is utilized throughout the song in order to accentuate the scope of the emotion that Katy was feeling. For example:

- *I was **falling** hard.*
- ***Crashing** from the high*
- ***Picked up** every piece*
- *Thunder **rumbling**, castles **crumbling***

Emotion

Virtually every line within the song, whether utilizing imagery or action, contains a great amount of emotion. It's the action and imagery that's used to accentuate the emotion. Bottom line – **you feel what she feels** throughout the entire song.

Two Lyrical Themes Under One Roof

Another very strong aspect of *Wide Awake* is that it provides the listener with two lyrical themes that work hand in hand with one another, taking the engagement factor and emotional depth of

the story to the next level:

Love/Relationships and Inspirational

The **love/relationship** aspect of the song pertains to the dissolve of their marriage. The **inspirational** aspect of the song relates to getting through it and landing firmly “on your feet” – ultimately becoming “**wide awake**” (i.e. getting back to reality). Additionally, it's the inspirational aspect that serves as the **lyrical payoff** within the chorus and bridge sections the song.

Bottom line – not only does the listener get an engaging story about a relationship in *Wide Awake*, but they also receive an inspirational message that they can apply to their own lives when need be.

Vocal Delivery: 9.5/10

Does the tonality and phrasing of the vocals maximize the songs impact?

Katy Perry is the core factor that brings *Wide Awake* to life. It's the nature of her vocals that enables the lyrics to connect with the listener on a deep level. She treats each phrase with care, making sure that the proper delivery accentuates the lyrical meaning as much as possible. For example:

Sadness: “*How did I read the stars so wrong?*”

Anger: “*On the concrete.*” (the first time that she sings the line in the pre-chorus she's not yet fully *wide awake*, and doesn't convey it with a lot of emotion. The second time around however, when she IS wide awake, she's PISSED OFF – and sings it as such!)

Freedom: “*I'm letting go tonight.*” (specifically when she “really goes for it” in the third chorus)

Confidence: “*Yeah I am born again.*”

Finality & Relief: “*The story's over now, the end.*”

Additionally, it's the brilliant nature in which she sings the title phrase “***I'm wide awake***” that sums up the jist of the entire song. As mentioned throughout the report, she doesn't sing it in an overtly jubilant fashion. Conversely, she conveys the phrase in a semi-melancholic manner coupled with relief. Take that phrase and tie it together with the repeat of the “*I'm falling from cloud nine*” line that concludes the chorus and you are left with this: Relationships end, you get through it, but it still HURTS for a while.

Bottom line – Katy sings it like she means it, enabling you, the listener, to FEEL it on a deep level. THAT is what takes a song from great to **exceptional**.

Hit Factor Assessment [Back to Top](#)

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Craft: 10/10

How strong is the song as a whole (lyrics, melody, music, vocals, etc..)??

Bonnie McKee + Cirkut + Dr. Luke + Katy Perry + Max Martin = a #1 hit. This all-star team of songwriters are at the top of their game in the current Pop genre. They know how to **CRAFT** hits, and they certainly delivered for all the reasons stated throughout this report.

Memorability: 10/10

How easy is it to remember this song after you hear it once?

I'll say it again – rarely does a song come along that is equally infectious, engaging and memorable in EACH SECTION OF THE SONG. *Wide Awake* is one of those rare songs. The verse, pre-chorus, chorus and bridge are all exceptionally well crafted, and each stands on its own when it comes to getting engrained in the listener's head. The key ingredients to *Wide Awake*'s memorability are:

Simplicity: As mentioned earlier in the report, there aren't any real "acrobatics" going on within the vocal melody. The writers kept it simple and in a singable range that the average person can at least hum. The result – it connects – and people remember.

Repetition: *Wide Awake* incorporates a lot of repetition in its framework, but it's not like some other songs where the same thing is repeated over and over again, getting engrained in your head like some military "brainwashing" technique. This is craft at its best:

- **The title** "*I'm Wide Awake*" act as the repetitive anchor throughout the entire song. It repeats 21 times, in every section EXCEPT for the pre-chorus and chorus.
- **Vocal "phrase to phrase"** repetition is utilized in the vocal melody within each section of the song.
- **Section to section** repetition is utilized throughout the entire song (i.e. the similar nature of verse 1 and 2, pre-chorus 1 and 2, etc..).
- The entire song follows a **Gm7 / B-flat / F / Csus4** progression.

Flow: As mentioned in the Structure section of the report, all of the sections flow perfectly in and out of one another, creating a seamless, engaging listening experience.

Originality: 7/10

Does this song have its own unique vibe when compared to other songs/artists in the genre?

There are two primary factors that need to be considered when evaluating the originality of *Wide Awake*:

- The song itself (vocal melody, backing music, instrumentation, etc...)

- The “Katy Perry Factor”

The Song

In regard to the song itself, there isn't anything that's overtly original about it. There's a huge “familiarity” factor present in the nature of the vocal melody, the sounds of the synths, the progressions, the structure, etc.. You've heard it all before – maybe not in the same song, but it all sounds FAMILIAR.

There is one aspect, however, that goes against the grain of most of the songs that you hear in today's Pop mainstream. It's the fact that the title “*Wide Awake*” DOES NOT appear in the chorus. It appears in every other section of the song, save for the pre-chorus. Additionally, the manner in which it's used (i.e. placement within sections as discussed earlier in the report) is also clever and unique.

As a side note– remember that familiarity isn't necessarily a bad thing. Conversely, it's exceptionally important especially in mainstream Pop. You want the listener to be provided with a “comfort” level when they hear the song for the first time on the radio or in another medium. You want them to easily get engaged within the song, without having to work at it.

The Katy Perry Factor

Now, on the other hand we have the “Katy Perry” factor. What is the Katy Perry factor? It's the same as the Rihanna factor, the Britney factor, the Gaga factor and so on. These are performing artists who can take a song that is FAMILIAR in nature and make it **all their own** – exuding their own unique vocal style and vibe to make it 100% theirs. That's exactly what Katy Perry did for *Wide Awake* (especially considering that she was also a co-writer). It may not be the most original song in the world, but it's unmistakably Katy Perry.

So – end the end – just how original is *Wide Awake*? I think you would have to agree that the Katy Perry factor coupled with how the title is used throughout the song makes it lean more toward the original side as opposed to being “just one of the bunch.”

Payoff: 9/10

Does the song provide the listener with a strong payoff (i.e. a hot chorus)?

When we refer to a song's “payoff,” we're talking about the crux of the song – the portion that everything before it had been building up to. Strong, effective payoffs provide the listener with both a musical, vocal and lyrical highpoint.

Wide Awake provides the listener with two key payoffs – the **chorus** and the **bridge**.

Chorus

The first thing that you'll notice when the chorus hits is that it's not an “explosive” type of chorus. As mentioned earlier, it has more in common with fun.'s “*We Are Young*” than Kelly Clarkson's “*Stronger*.” The chorus derives its powerful nature in relation to other sections within the song via the backing instrumentation (specifically the addition of the synth bass) coupled

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with the soaring nature of Katy's vocals. Combine those two factors with the "uplifting lyrical payoff phrase" that hits after the two "negative" phrases ("*falling from cloud nine, crashing from the high*") followed by "*I'm letting go tonight*") and the listener is provided with the first payoff within the song.

As a side note, I must admit the first time that I heard the chorus I was expecting to hear more of a soaring **lift** from Katy coming out of the pre-chorus than the **vocal melody dropping** from **F** in the pre-chorus down to a **C** to kick off the chorus. It's basically like an anti-lift from a vocal perspective. But think about what the vocal melody needed to do in order to **jibe with the nature of the lyrics**:

- "**Falling** from cloud nine"
- "**Crashing** from the high"

Imagine for a moment if instead of dropping down from an **F** to a **C** after the pre-chorus she jumped from **F** to a **higher note value**. IT WOULDN'T have made any sense. "*Falling*" and "*crashing*" are **downward movements**. So in that sense, dropping down in pitch worked perfectly.

Now, take the last lyrics on both lines – "*cloud nine*" and "*high*." Here she goes **up in register**, which makes perfect sense considering the meaning of the lyrics – they're **UP**.

Bottom line – not all choruses need to provide an immediate vocal lift to be effective from a payoff standpoint. *Wide Awake* is a perfect case-in-point.

Bridge

The bridge in *Wide Awake* functions more as a continuation of the chorus than a real "departure" natured bridge. That being said, it takes the emotion that was established in the preceding chorus to the next level – primarily via Katy's vocal delivery, which is now even more emotionally charged. As with the chorus, there's one phrase that serves as the lyrical payoff – "*I'm not blind anymore*." After the "*thundering*," "*crumbling*," "*trying to hold on*" and "*seeing the bright side*," she's finally clear – **She's Wide Awake**.

Longevity: 10/10 (Katy Perry), 8/10 (Overall Pop Genre)

Does this song have what it takes to stand the test of time? Will it become a staple of the artist's repertoire?

When it comes to Katy Perry's catalog of hits, *Wide Awake* stands on its own within the bunch. Each one, be it *E.T.*, *California Gurls*, *Firework*, *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)*, etc... has its own unique vibe, as does *Wide Awake*. First, it's more "mature" and emotionally charged than the others, and second, it's a ballad. All in all, *Wide Awake* is and will continue to be considered a real highlight in her catalog of current and future hits for the duration of her career.

As for the Pop genre as a whole, I would like to think that *Wide Awake* will be held in high regard in relation to other Pop songs that have stood the test of time. Why? It's that good. As

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mentioned throughout the report, it's strong on all fronts. It gets inside your soul, and it resonates.

Why It's a Hit [Back to Top](#)

There were a couple of primary factors that worked hand in hand in making *Wide Awake* a global hit:

1. **The Song:** So as not to be overly redundant, and assuming you read the report, YOU KNOW WHY this song is a hit.
2. **The Katy Perry Factor:** Besides the song, we have Katy Perry and the star power that she brings to the table. When Katy releases a single, it's almost destined to land in the top 10. Why? She has an immense loyal group of fans that are ready to eat up anything she puts out. The fact that her songs are generally great certainly helps. The REALLY great ones reach the very top of the charts. *Wide Awake* is one of the REALLY great ones.

Songwriter/Producer Take Aways [Back to Top](#)

Make Each Section Count!

All too often I'm approached by songwriters wanting me to listen to one of their songs, and before listening they hit me with the following caveat: "just hang on through the xxxx section because when you get to the yyyyy section you'll be floored!" Unfortunately, the vast majority of people out there, ESPECIALLY those who can make a difference in your career, will not keep listening with the hopes that a really great part may be right around the corner.

That being said, make sure that EVERY SECTION of your song is equally engaging, infectious and memorable! If you want to see a perfect example, look no further than Katy Perry's *Wide Awake*.

Know The Rules To Break The Rules

There is nothing worse than hearing the same type of song over and over again from artist to artist. It's rampant in every genre out there in today's mainstream music scene, and it should be a prerequisite for songwriters to push the envelope when it comes to creativity and putting their own unique stamp on their music. That being said, **you need to know the rules to break the rules.**

A perfect case in point is *Wide Awake*. The song abides by tried and true rules throughout much of the song, but it BREAKS THE RULES in the sense of how the **title** is utilized within the song's structure. Remember, the title "*wide awake*" is the focal point of the entire song, occurring 21 times in 6 individual sections. It DOESN'T, however, occur in the chorus (as most titles do), and it's NOT part of the lead narrative of the song (where most titles are). The manner in which it's used provides the song with it's own unique vibe in relation to all of the other songs that are currently topping the charts.

So – by all means, BREAK THE RULES. Just make sure you break them in a methodical, well

thought out manner.

Fluctuate MTI Levels Throughout Your Song

Nothing will start to bore the listener more and cause them to lose interest than a linear listening experience. You need to take them on a sonic journey, and this is achieved through varying momentum, tension and intensity levels throughout the song (i.e. MTI). This is something that *Wide Awake* excelled at. It builds from the intro through the chorus, is brought back down in the second verse, builds once again through the second chorus, peaks in the bridge, provides the listener with a “breather” in the breakdown, slams back in during the final chorus and rides the listener out on a high via the outro. The result – the listener is kept ENGAGED throughout the entire song.

Choose Your Collaborators Wisely

As I'm sure you know by now, rarely do songwriters go it alone in the world of Pop (or Rock and Country for that matter). The most successful songwriters in the world work as part of teams, with each person bringing a core strength to the table. So – COLLABORATE. Yes, it's tough in the sense that you're protective of your song and wary of any outside influences. Believe me, I completely understand. However, if you put the right “team” together, it can do wonders for both your song and career. Just remember to choose your collaborators wisely. For example, if you're great at writing melodies but not so hot in the lyric department, find someone that is. Katy assembled an all-star team of hitmakers to help her craft *Wide Awake*, and the result was a #1 hit. You're probably not going to get Bonnie McKee, Dr. Luke, Max Martin and Henry Walter to work on your song, but trust me – there are future hitmakers out there who are just waiting to be discovered.

Sing It Like You Mean It!

If you don't fully commit to communicating each individual lyric and phrase in the most effective, evocative manner possible, you'll be doing your song a grave injustice because no matter how great the rest of the song is, you won't be CONNECTING with the listener so that the song gets truly embedded in their soul. If it doesn't get embedded in their soul, you can kiss repeat listens and longevity goodbye. Listen to how Katy sings each section in *Wide Awake* to see how it's done, and what the results are if it's done right.

Effective, Engaging Lyrics

The mark of a great lyricist is to use few words to convey many, all the while utilizing copious amounts of imagery, action and emotion to engage the listener with the goal of holding their attention from one section to the next. Additionally, you want the lyrics to be applicable to the artist who's singing them AND universal enough so that they can connect with the largest possible audience. *Wide Awake* achieves this on all fronts while combining two lyrical themes under one roof (Love/Relationships and Inspirational).

Lyrical Meaning

Adding or subtracting a lyrical phrase from a section coupled with “tying” it to how another phrase is sung in another section can provide your song with tremendously increased depth and

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non-obvious additional meaning. Take the chorus of *Wide Awake*, for example:

- *Falling from cloud nine*
- *Crashing from the high*
- *I'm letting go tonight*
- *Yeah I'm falling from cloud nine*

The first two lines are “negative” phrases. The third line is the positive, inspirational “payoff phrase.” If the section ended on the “payoff” phrase, it would have tied perfectly into the concept of “*wide awake*,” meaning you’re letting go and moving on with your life. The fact that the fourth line reverts back to “*falling from cloud nine*” indicates that even though she’s moving on, **she’s still deeply hurt**. This ties into HOW the title lyric is sung. Notice that when Katy sings “*I’m wide awake*,” she seems far less than jubilant. There’s still hurt in her voice.

So – there are many clever ways that you can add additional meaning to the overall premise of your lyrics. Just be creative!