

GOTYE and the MUSICAL FENCE, February 2013

by Graeme Leak

I first came across Wally de Backer (AKA Gotye) in 2009. He had returned to Melbourne from an outback tour with his band The Basics and he had discovered the Musical Fence in Winton. He was very taken by the instrument and had spent a lot of time making recordings of it. He rang me to ask permission to use the recordings, or samples, in his latest song that he was writing called 'Eyes Wide Open'. Well, I said, it's a public musical instrument; you are free to do what you like with it! (But I was chuffed that he asked).

The fence sound became the bass line in the song, and in the following months he mentioned the Fence, and Winton, and me, quite a bit in the media. It is an interesting angle for journalists and the public.

By 2010 Wally was a rapidly rising star. He invited me to his studio in Mornington to discuss the idea of making a version of the fence to use live on stage! We tossed around some possibilities but in the end decided it would be best to stick to triggering the recorded samples.

In July 2011 he released 'Somebody That I Used To Know' which has become his most successful signature song and a global monster. It has reached staggering heights and this week won not one but two prestigious Grammy awards: best pop/duo performance and record of the year. He won a third Grammy for best alternate album, Making Mirrors.

Gotye continues to mention the Fence and Winton and myself in the press. He is a very generous and warm person, and seems to be handling the international success with ease. I went to his most recent show in Melbourne and was one of the 15,000 other fans at the Myer Music Bowl. It was an awesome show. I think one day you'll have to invite him to Winton and see how good he is at Roo Poo Shooting....

LINKS:

The making of Eyes Wide Open (opening and closing credits use the bush drum kit and winton fence)

http://youtu.be/b_iuE_L2wys

Gotye Wins Grammys:

<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/now-he-really-is-somebody-gotye-wins-grammys-20130211-2e8xi.html#ixzz2Kjs84GVW>

Wikipedia – Somebody that I Used to Know

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somebody_That_I_Used_to_Know