**Denial ain’t just a river in Egypt; it’s alive and well in Pompeii and Bastille**

by Holly Soboroff, journalism teacher

“Pompeii” by Bastille is deep. It is a song about Pompeii, apparently, or maybe Pompeii as a metaphor for bad things happening. While the music is uplifting, the lyrics are about the hopelessness of optimism when noxious clouds of gas are suffocating everyone.

The song opens with a chorus of men singing “A-E-O-A-O” because nonsense lyrics are vaguely tribal and tribal is deep. Other signs of Incredibly Deep Music involve a military sounding snare drum later in the song and music that generally stirs and uplifts. The singer, a man with hair taller than I would personally recommend, has a pretty decent tenor voice and some sort of accent, I think, or that may just be the extra layer of DEPTH to the song.

The lyrics combine images of Pompeii on its final day (“And the walls kept tumbling down/ In the city that we love/ Grey clouds roll over the hills/Bringing darkness from above”) with the suggestion that last night’s party was not a hit (“We were caught up and lost in all of our vices/In your pose as the dust settled around us.”) The volcano was the Pompeii's fault? Should they have heeded the warnings of Ptolemy and skipped town? The song says that instead of escaping, people close their eyes to the horrors around them and pretend nothing happens, and the general idea is that doesn’t work. I can get behind that message.

The same way the song couldn’t make up it’s mind if it was uplifting, or disheartening (answer: So disheartening it’s uplifting, which is DEEP) the video to it can’t quite figure out if it’s supposed to be depressing or scary. The singer wanders around town and freaks out when all the people around him have black eyes - not bruises, but the inside of their eyes are black. It makes no sense, the song’s refrain repeats “If you closed your eyes…” wouldn’t it be freakier and more appropriate if they didn’t have eyelids, just skin? Maybe black eye technology is cheaper. Eventually the guy runs away to Adair, Iowa (you can tell by the windmills) and his eyes turn black, too, which bothers him. However, while all this freaky stuff is going on, we have the “A-E-O-A-O” chorus singing, and the lighting and sets that seem more run-down than sinister. I never feel frightened out, just oddly inspired to close my eyes.

All of these mixed moods make for a moody song and moodier video. Actually, no, Counting Crows is moody, Smashing Pumpkins is moody. These guys are sort of up-beat. “Pompeii” is harmless enough, but too grandiose for my taste. I guess I don’t like historical allusions in my pop music.