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Tuning the Hemispheres: Music and the Brain

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Six Song Reflective Essay: Comfort Song

While putting a song to words is always seemingly difficult, my comfort song selection, *Get Well Soon* by Ariana Grande feels harder than most. There are no specific words you can use to describe the song (I'm not even sure what genre it falls into) but when I think of it, the first thing that comes to my mind is that "head in the clouds", "floating", sort of feeling. There are three reasons that I feel this song is the best personal choice for my comfort song. The first reason is the instrumental fixedness. From my experience, a song always feels more comforting when the background is easy to follow, and the depth is added through vocal accompaniments. This leads directly into the second factor, which is vocal ability. Though it is entirely subjective and may not be the case for all, I believe that Ariana has one of the best voices of this time. This is only enhanced by her ability to layer music in a way that it almost blends with the instrumentals (so much so that I had to play the song back to recall the sounds of the instruments, despite having listened to it no less than 100 times). Finally, I believe that this was a clear choice for my comfort song because of the effect of familiarity. I grew up equating the artist's voice to positive things and have developed a sense of comfort in what is known.

Like with the joy song, this was difficult to define based on Levitin's description because it was not given in a straightforward way but rather through a series of stories which you draw

from. My assumption, based on these stories, is that a comfort song is one that aids you in whichever emotion you are trying to pull through, dwell in, or separate yourself from entirely. Using this definition, *Get Well Soon* classifies as a comfort song because it gets me out of whatever mental state I am in and calms me down.