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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 1 Music RAS 2023

**91950 Demonstrate understanding of music in  
relation to contexts**

# EXEMPLAR

**Merit**

**TOTAL 06**

## 1.3 Context

**Ambush On Ten Sides** *transcribed by Liu Dehai (刘德海)*

**Tangaroa Whakamautai** *written and performed by Maisey Rika*

### **Ambush On Ten Sides Other Context :**

“Ambush On Ten Sides” transcribed by Liu Dehai (刘德海) is a piece of music from the battle of Gaixia the composer of this piece is unknown. The battle of Gaixia was a battle between the two armies of Chu and Han in December 203 BC Liu Bang led the Han army and Xiang Yu led the Chu army. The battle concluded with Liu Bang being the victor. “Ambush on Ten Sides” describes the battle from Liu Bang’s perspective. “The King Doffs His Armor” (霸王卸甲) was written from Xiang Yu's perspective.

This piece was originally composed for a Chinese Classical instrument (Pipa) the composer of this piece is unknown. This is a combination of Classical Chinese musical style and Traditional Chinese battle music including :

- Musical narration
- Fierce strumming
- Large melodic range
- Dissonance and consonance ( to differentiate sad and joyful emotions)
- Repetition
- Layering (to build emotion)
- Structure and form

The **structure** of this piece is typical of the classical Chinese style with multiple sections each section is named after a certain time in the war. There are 3 main sections:

- Setting up camp, gathering the army, and preparing for the battle.
- The ambush.
- The battle.

The piece begins with small **melodic** motifs that are forceful and lively. This creates a dramatic entry to the music imitating drums, while the soldiers line up.

The repetitive rhythmic patterns symbolise a military drum beat, the setting up of the camp and the assembly of the Han army. Percussive sounds (produced by the pipa) add timbral variety to imitate drums and horns. The **beat** gradually gets faster and fiercer to portray the tense atmosphere at the onset of the battle. The section which describes the battle (the climax) is played rapidly and has flexible tempos which gradually accelerate using a range of Pipa techniques including:

- Flipping (6:33 also used to imitate the sound of drums 1:35)
- Circular fingering Lun Zhi (sounds like a tremolo 2:12)
- Rolling ( 2:00)

These techniques are used to imitate the sound of a battle with swords clashing against each other and horses running. (Small battle 5:53-7:26)

The relaxed **melodies** ( line up and rehearse 2:12-3:29) represent the resting of the troops, replacing the wild atmosphere of the war. This provides a contrast between the other percussive sections. These lyrical sections are played by a **Pipa technique** known as **Lun Zhi** which makes the notes sound like a tremolo (4:41 beginning of Ambush section).

Dissonance is used to build tension (Scream section 7:26-8:29) which also features sudden accented notes(Chase 8:24).

In conclusion, this piece was composed in classical Chinese-style. to describe the war, using a range of musical techniques on the pipa, to portray the story of a historical battle.

## Tangaroa Whakamautai Māori Context:

“Tangaroa Whakamautai” is written and performed by Maisey Rika a Māori singer /songwriter. Tangaroa Whakamautai was to send a **social message** about Mother Earth being hurt. This is significant because it’s a current issue and the song raises awareness to alert more people about the issue.

This waiata features stylistic features of both soul and traditional Māori songs including:

- Poetry
- Social message
- Large dynamic range
- *Taonga Pūoro*
- *Layering ( the string instruments behind the acoustic percussion and fretless bass)*
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It tells the story of a Māori myth and legend and pays respect to Tangaroa (God of the sea).

The Te Reo Māori lyrics in this song are in the form of **Kōrero pūrākau** (Māori myth or legend) including direct references to whales and tides. These are all symbols that represent the ocean, thus linked to the Māori God Tangaroa.

The waiata has a **large dynamic range**. Crescendo and diminuendo are used to emphasise keywords related to the context of the song. Rika uses diminuendo to show that a verse is ending (1:47-1:50) crescendo is used at the beginning of verses to signal a new beginning (3:00-4) and (1:25). This allows her melody to sound like waves (the dynamic of the music going up and down). Which relates to her concept of the song.

**Repetitive lyrics** reinforce the main concept of the song e.g. “The cry of the whale signals a warning” (2:15) these lyrics were included to relate to the purpose of the song. It symbolises mankind taking too much from the waters, and the whales are crying. “Tangaroa, commander of the tides” and “The various waterways of Tangaroa flow back into its voluminous source” (2:37-2:55). It has been repeated multiple times throughout the song to emphasise Tangaroa (God of the sea).

The song features **taonga pūoro (played by percussive river stones)**, which builds **texture** when accompanied by the string quartet (1.27). The river stones are connected to the ocean, and incorporating river stones deepens the connection to **historical concepts**. The string quartet playing by itself, sounds like water drops dripping into the sea (0.36). This **layering** makes the piece of music sound calm, like waves splashing softly against the shore, and winds blowing delicately.

This piece of music doesn't follow a particular structure. **Structure** is non-repetitive which sets it apart from other popular songs. Each verse brings in new information about Tangaroa and the vast ocean. This is because she wants to raise awareness about mankind taking everything out of the ground and causing an imbalance. Tangaroa Whakamautai, specifically talks about looking after our resources, especially in the waterways. Constantly repeating and emphasising “A precious treasure”.

In summary, this song uses Kōrero pūrākau to send a social message. Māori instruments, myths and legends, have directly formed the lyrics, melody, and instrumentation.

## Merit

**Subject:** Music

**Standard:** 91950

**Total score:** 06

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
One	M6	<p><i>For Merit candidates are required to explain the relationships between the music and the context.</i></p> <p><b>Tangaroa Whakamautai</b> by Maisey Rika</p> <p>The candidate has established the context as a statement on Man’s treatment of the environment (Mother Earth) to raise awareness of the issue. The focus of the piece is on Tangaroa (God of the sea).</p> <p>The candidate explains the relationship of the dynamic changes in the vocal melody to the waves of the sea giving timestamps to examples. Similarly, the candidate discussed instrumentation, explaining the significance of using river stone as they link to the sea and the use of the string part creating the effect of water dripping into the sea.</p> <p><b>Ambush on Ten Sides</b> by Liu Dehai</p> <p>The candidate has outlined the context as the battle of Gaxia in 203BC.</p> <p>The candidate has explained how the composer has used the music to tell the story – “short melodic motifs that are forceful and lively” to represent soldiers lining up; “repetitive rhythmic patterns” representing military drums along with timbral variety to imitate horns and drums; explaining various techniques the performer plays and giving time-stamp examples.</p> <p>The candidate explains the relationship between the tempo and the intensity through the battle as well as how the composer has created contrasting sections using “relaxed melodies” to convey the idea troops resting.</p> <p>To improve the grade, the candidate could have included conclusion statements for each of the examples they have discussed, that evaluate the significance and / or effectiveness of the music concepts in communicating contextual themes and ideas.</p>