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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 1 Music 2024

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

EXEMPLAR

Merit

Whetu by IA is a Maori waiata centred on lead vocals, Reti Hedley. The song is incorporated with various musical elements to help listeners link with the song and ancestral roots. The song's message is focused on young ones carrying on their ancestors' legacy. This message is important as it helps in being connected with culture, and reminds you that your ancestors are a source of strength and wisdom.

The song starts with the koauau (bone flute) and a beat and bass to guide the song at 0:08, to then be overlapped with the putorino (wooden flute) at 0:20 which plays in harmony with the koauau. This provides a clear focus of harmonic support and creates variety and a combination of the two sounds. At 0:30, a beat follows along with the instruments to create a complex and more layered effect to add depth, and creates a steady rhythm that tends to be straightforward. Adding on, a similar melody starts to be played by the koauau to add a thicker texture, this produces a dense sound with melodies and harmonies being intertwined. At 1:11, Reti starts singing in Te Reo, reinforcing the message of the song, as well as encouraging others to learn and use the language, helping preserve the culture. At 1:49, the repetitive lyric "nga whetu ki tua" enhances memorability to help emphasise the message, whilst also creating familiarity and togetherness.

At 2:13, Reti sings at a lower pitch to add heaviness to his voice, this creates a warmer sound to add a sense of darkness. The repetitive lyric with a deep pitch is heard as a calling for his ancestors, it's exemplified when he says "pou puoro pou noa, pou tapu". As well as adding a different harmony each time he says these words to provide a homophonic texture that creates a fuller sound to enhance a more immersive experience that lifts the communal aspect of the music. At 2:35, the percussive cymbal and bass plays every 4 beats as it overlaps the background lyrics "pou puoro pou noa, pou tapu". This creates colour and effect to the song by creating a lively atmosphere. The fewer layers in this particular part of the song enhances a clear and open sound to create simplicity and space, this thin texture supports attention to the lyrics.

At 2:54 he continues singing as the beat returns back to a normal pace. The fast chord change in the bass between two chords predominantly changes every two beats, this gives the verse a nice flow by guiding the lyrics. When he sings "whakanui kau ana nga puoro" he drags out the word puoro, this gives off an expressive effect to the performance. He also does this when he says "ki a koutou ki runga rawa", by dragging out the word "rawa". At 3:11, he continues to repetitively sing the lyrics "nga whetu ki tua", this initiates the end of the song whilst also creating memorability and familiarity amongst the listeners. As he repeatedly sings "nga whetu ki tua", the bass begins to change chords every 4 beats instead, this subtle change puts emphasis on the lyrics to provide a clear understanding of the message incorporated in the song. At 3:36, the song's outro consists of the koauau's beautiful melody, this foreshadows the introduction of the song whilst also reinforcing Maori values and expressing Maori identity. This strong use of taonga puoro enhances the connection to ancestry and land by preserving the history of these instruments, and adds an ethereal quality to the song.

The controversial song 'Pumped Up Kicks' by Foster the People is a famous song based on school shooting, where the listeners get a full audible experience of the shooter's perspective. The artists' message was to spread awareness on gun violence affecting young ones and allow the listeners to be informed by school shootings. The musical elements incorporated within the song helps listeners understand the message the artists' are trying to portray.

At the very beginning of the song (0:00), a drum kit intro sets the forward momentum of the song to give the listeners something to bop their heads to. At 0:04 the bass guitar line produces a memorable melody. Additionally, the synthesisers fade in and outside of the stereo field at 0:18 to create ambient textures in the background, whilst also manipulating the sound to add to the song's current and optimistic feeling. At 0:33 he then starts to sing with a mic effect added on the vocals, and a thinner texture to remain focused on the singer's voice, and to openly portray the message. The verses contain this effect to replicate a school speaker, linking back to the overall message of the song. At 0:59, he says "he's coming for you" twice as a repetitive effect to emphasise the importance of being aware.

The repeating lyrics in the chorus "all the other kids with the pumped up kicks" at 1:03 enhances memorability and familiarity, whilst also referring to the expensive Reebok Pumps his classmates wore in this scenario. The texture then begins to thicken again (at 1:03) which includes a louder bass line and synthesisers. This provides a more recognisable sound and adds to the catchy beat. The chorus also uses an echo effect on the vocals to create an empty school hallway type of atmosphere, reinforcing the message of the song. The echo effect in the vocals also adds depth and space to the recordings. At 1:31, the outstanding lyrics "faster than my bullet" effectively displays how the delivery of the lyrics blinds the audience from the literal meaning of the words.

At 1:34, the second verse begins and the thin texture is restored, as well as the mic effect on the vocals. The verse advances the song's narrative whilst the instrumentation throughout the verse is different to other sections of the song. The song then continues towards the chorus at 2:03, including the repetitive lyrics to emphasise the overall message of the song to evoke remembrance from the audience and add to the catchy beat. At 2:32, the constant "run, run, run" lyrics are muffled, this creates a quieter effect to symbolise a more immersive experience for the listeners, and creates a contemplative effect for the listeners. At 2:48, the whistling at this specific part reflects the singers' mood, and the echo plays an extra role at this part to replicate whistling through the school halls.

At 3:03, the texture is very thin at this particular section of the song to help the listeners focus on the lyrics, with only a clapping beat and bass guitar in the background. The song then continues with the repeating lyrics to lead the listeners to a state of familiarity and to clearly reinforce the message of the song to add a simplicity effect. The ending chorus has a thicker texture displaying multiple overlapping parts including whistling, this creates a fuller auditory experience as well as being portrayed as a finale. This conveys how simple it is for shooters to ease their way towards a school shooting.

Merit

Subject: Music

Standard: 91950

Marker commentary

Whetu – In this script the candidate has clearly stated the context as “The songs message is focussed on young ones carrying on their ancestors’ legacy. This message is important as it helps in being connected with culture and reminds you that your ancestors are a source of strength and wisdom.”

The candidate provides a timestamp as evidence to back up the following statement “Reti (Composer) starts singing in Te Reo, reinforcing the message of the song, as well as encouraging others to learn and use the language, helping to preserve the culture.”

With this statement the candidate has linked the composer’s choice to use Te Reo to the stated context of being connected with culture.

The candidate has also made a **music- based** link, once again providing a timestamp to support their statement that the use of taonga puoro links to their stated context of carrying on their ancestor’s legacy. “At 3.36, the song’s outro consists of the koauau’s beautiful melody, this foreshadows the introduction of the song whilst also reinforcing Maori values and expressing Maori identity. This strong use of taonga puoro enhances the connection to ancestry and land by preserving the history of these instruments...”

Pumped Up Kicks - In this script the candidate has clearly stated the context as “based on a school shooting, where the listener gets a full audible experience of the shooter’s perspective. The artists’ message was to spread awareness on gun violence affecting young ones and allow the listens to be informed.”

Providing timestamps as supporting evidence the candidate explains how the use of effects on the vocal during the verses of the song, link to the context of a school shooting “At 0.33 he then starts to sing with a mic effect added on the vocals... . The verses contain this effect to replicate the school speaker, linking back to the overall message of the song. At 0.59, he says “he’s coming for you” twice as a repetitive effect to emphasise the importance of being aware. link to the context they outlined.

Providing timestamps the candidate also explains how the use of effects during the choruses link to the context.

“The chorus also uses an echo effect on the vocals to create an empty school hallway type of atmosphere, reinforcing the message of the song.