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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 1 Music 2025

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

EXEMPLAR

Excellence

TOTAL 08

Piece: Rū Ana Te Whenua

Artist: Alien Weaponry

Alien Weaponry is a three piece thrash metal band from New Zealand that formed in 2010. The majority of their songs are in Te Reo and they believe that their music has the same aggressive spirit as haka. Their songs are often based around New Zealand historical events and Maori culture, and focus on themes of conflict, identity, and heritage for example one of their early releases was 'Rū Ana Te Whenua' focussed on conflict. It was written about the events that happened "On 29 April 1864, some 230 Māori defenders dug themselves into the hilltop at Pukehinahina (Gate Pā, Tauranga) awaiting the heaviest artillery bombardment the British army has ever delivered. The ensuing battle would see a crushing defeat for the 1700-strong British forces and would change the course of history. This song is dedicated to our great great great grandfather who fought and died defending the hill at Pukehinahina. (Gate Pā). His name was Te Ahoaho." <https://www.audioculture.co.nz/profile/alien-weaponry>

The idea of conflict, in this case battle, is evident throughout the piece that starts with the call "Whakarongo mai rā ... Whakarongo mai rā!

Whakarongo mai rā ... Whakarongo mai rā!

Whakarongo mai ki te tangi o nga pū i runga i te taumata a Pukehinahina"

Listen to me ... Listen to me

Listen to me ... Listen to me

Listen to the sound of the guns on Pukehinahina

Followed by four heavily distorted, palm muted, staccato semiquavers on the guitar, bass and kick, snare and low tom drum giving the effect of artillery shells hitting the hill. This is repeated four times before a guitar riff also comes in. The use of this motif in the context of Gate Pa in 1864 demonstrates conflict through war sounds and represents what the Maori would have experienced when they were being fired on by the British troops.

Dr.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Voice

[

Another way that Alien Weaponry shows conflict and the idea of war is in the halftime feel section at 3min 2second mark. In this section when the music changes to a half time feel the texture thins out and we hear cries of mourning as the lyrics detail the carnage.

Aue ... nga roimata ē
Aue ... kua mate nga tangata
Aue ... e reringa roimata ē
Aue ... e reringa toto ē
I runga i te wai ū o Papa-tū-ā-nuku

Oh...the tears Oh...the dead people Oh... tears flowed Oh... the blood flows onto Papa-tū-ā-nuku
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Musically the singer changes to singing higher than the previous low haka / metal angry screaming. The singer pitch-slides into notes and his voice is unstable which mimics crying as you would expect if you were looking around as seeing your friends and family dead and dying.

The guitars have cut back allowing more room for the crying to take the focus, however the drums continue with short sharp fills showing that the battle isn't over, it's just happening in the background.

The lyrics, the half-time, the wailing vocal delivery and the space created by the guitars with the drummer in the background paint a picture that shows the effect of conflict and war.

In 'Rū Ana Te Whenua' Alien Weaponry has used rhythm, texture and vocal delivery to show the idea of conflict and war, with the use of repeated guitar and drum motifs representing artillery fire, and the wailing vocal section showing the emotional impact of the battle on the people experiencing it.

Piece: One

Artist: Metallica

Metallica is the most successful metal band in the world. They formed in 1981 and are still touring world wide. Their songs have been described as a dark mirror that they hold up to the world to show the parts that are not pretty. Metallica's songs range from internal struggles like addiction (Master of Puppets) inspired by personal experience, to the real cost of war (For whom the Bell Tolls) inspired by the book For Whom the Bell Tolls by Earnest Hemmingway.

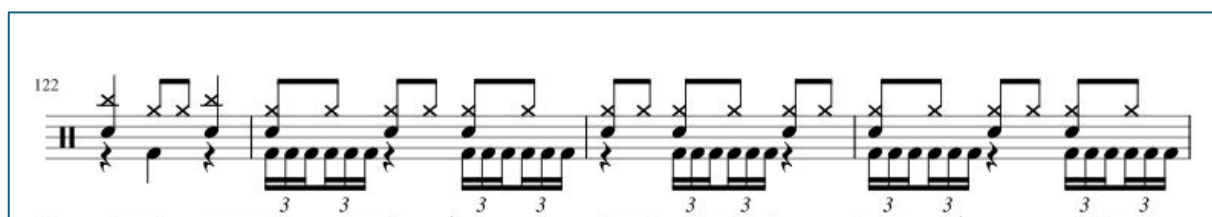
The piece 'One' by Metallica was also directly inspired by a book, "Johnny Got His Gun" by Dalton Trumbo and, like "For Whom the Bell Tolls" is a commentary on the real cost of war . In this case the cost is a soldier who has lost all his senses and ability to communicate with anyone and it slowly drives him.

Metallica represents the idea of both war and the fall into insanity musically throughout the piece.

The opening of the piece (0.00) starts with an audio sample of gunfire and soldiers yelling and it sounds like there is a helicopter in the background coming to pick them up. This opening audio clearly sets the scene for the idea of a war zone.

The movements throughout the piece reflect the soldiers fall into insanity. At 0.18 the opening riff begins on a single clean guitar sound and for the first 40 bars slowly adds another guitar playing a melodic solo before both bass and drums come in supporting the two guitars. At 1.27 there is a key change, no sharps before moving back to B minor for the verse. This whole introduction symbolises a dream state where the injured soldier is in a peaceful place, away from war. The movement back into B minor for the verse is when he wakes up and tries to figure out what's going on and becomes angry (bar 56, 2.11). His anger is represented by the distorted guitars and growling vocal delivery. He then fades off to sleep again, represented by the key change section (E minor) in bar 58, a small bit of piece.

Verse two (bar 66) starts again with the drop back to B minor where he is awake again and has fully realised his situation. The same progression happens – anger followed by sleep. However, in verse 3 he wakes angry. The growling vocal delivery and distorted guitars are present throughout the verse. This leads into a distorted angry sleep before the final verse where only anger is present as he is fully aware that he will always be like this. The war is now inside him and this is reflected in consecutive triplets on beats creating a machinegun like sound, first on the kick as in bar 123 and then a similar machine gun effect on the snare bar like in bar 160.





In 'One' Metallica has used structure, rhythm and timbre to show war and its effects, with the build in texture and timbre and vocal deliver representing the soldier's mental state, and the repeated triplet rhythms creating a machine gun effect that reflects the violence and chaos of war.

Excellence

Subject: Music

Standard: 91950

Total score: 08

Marker commentary
This response demonstrates perceptive and insightful understanding by integrating detailed, specific context directly into the analysis, showing a deep engagement with meaning and purpose. The candidate consistently selects and analyses multiple relevant musical concepts (e.g., rhythm, texture, timbre, structure, vocal delivery) and explains them with precision and sophistication, often incorporating technical vocabulary and accurate musical detail (timestamps, bar numbers, instrumentation, and effects). Crucially, the response moves beyond description to provide perceptive explanations of how combinations of musical elements work together to convey complex ideas, demonstrating an integrated understanding of music as expressive communication. There is also evidence of interpretive insight, such as linking musical changes to emotional states, narrative development, and symbolic meaning. Overall, the answer shows consistent, convincing links between musical evidence and deeper thematic meaning, with well-supported, insightful justification.