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## Mansfield State High School

### *Wrath of Steel*

#### Statement of Compositional Intent

Inspired by Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* Suite, I decided to base my composition on a friend's artwork of shipping containers to explore the bridge between the visual arts and music.

From preliminary research, the overall impression most people had were based around the rigid structure of the containers, followed by a dark, daunting association. Taking this into consideration, my composition aimed to convey the treacherous journey of shipping containers across the sea.

Thus, my composition titled "*Wrath of Steel*", satisfied this impression through the use of music elements such as pitch, expressive devices and timbre.

A percussion ensemble arrangement was most suitable for my composition since the metallic timbre of metallic instruments would sound authentic to shipping containers. More specifically, unusual, metal instruments (brake drums, steel pipes, metal springs) and techniques (cymbal/tam-tam scrapes) were used to enhance the authenticity of the piece, particularly in the heavy, drumming sections.

In the introduction, sparse rhythms including feathered beams were distributed amongst the auxiliary instruments to allow the listener to settle into an uneasy mood. The contrast between the piano dynamic rolls in the marimbas against the bold entries of the auxiliary section act as a drone underlying the scattered havoc. This was to further emphasise the unsettling feeling in the beginning of the piece.

As shipping containers are rigid in structure, musical uniformity was key to express this concept. This was evident in the marimba 2 and bongo parts at section A where the pulse was uniform, despite being on opposing ends of the ensemble. This technique was also used between the general mallet section and the auxiliary section.

In terms of pitch, I decided to compose in a minor key as it will reflect the dark association of shipping containers. I chose D minor specifically as this was the same key John Williams composed in for *Pirates of the Caribbean* and I'd like my shipping container piece to follow a similar melodic journey. To further enhance the dark and mysterious timbre of my

composition, dissonance, particularly minor seconds, were used throughout my piece. This clash in interval also seeks to represent the clashes of shipping containers against one another and with the sea.

As a result, music elements and concepts were manipulated to achieve my treacherous story of shipping containers. This involved manipulating elements including pitch, expressive devices and timbre.

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