Critical Listening

Song Title: Dreadnought

Album: The War to End All Wars

Artist: Sabaton

Date: 2022, March 4th

Key: F# Minor, Notes: F#, G# A, B, C#, D, E

**Beats**

1. How do the drums change in different sections of the song

* 1st 8 bars, shuffle beat, shifts afterward to steady rock 4 back beat. It is absolutely in synch with the vocal in the verses.
* Rolls signal changes (as is to be expected.
* Drums are forward in the mix;
* More fills in the prechorus, less obviously on the back beat bcz the fills are more forward
* Drums are double tracked in the prechorus
* Definitely double tracked through the entire chorus.

2. Do any additional kick drums, snares or drum loops feature in the chorus

* Oh glory be, YES. We have very fat drums in the chorus. Playing different patterns. Lots more cymbal, too.

3. How does the percussion change in different sections of the song

* I don’t think there is any percussion

4. What sort of effects, such as compression, reverb and delay are used on the beats and where are the effects used

* Hmm, that’s a very good question. I don’t think they are using effects on the drums at all. They ring too clear.

**Instrumentation**

1. What musical instruments are used and where do they feature
   * Bass, Rhythm Guitar, Lead Guitar, synthesizer,
2. Do any instruments feature throughout the entire song
   * Drums, bass, and rhythm guitar
3. If you hear a keyboard, what type of keyboard is it e.g. Grand Piano/Upright Piano/ Fender Rhodes/Clavinet/Hammond Organ etc.
   * There are 2, a synthesizer, and an electric piano, don’t know what kind.
4. What’s the highest instrument you can hear in the song and where does it feature
   * Electric piano in the chorus
5. What’s the deepest instrument you can hear in the song and where does it feature
   * Kick, and its everywhere
6. What effects are used on the instruments
7. What type of guitars, if any, are used in the song e.g. Acoustic/Electric and what effects are used on them
   * These are all electric. Distortion & compression on the rhythm guitar, reverb and sustain on the lead

**Vocals**

1. What effects are used on the vocals and how do the effects change during the song
   * Heavy distortion on the vocal and possibly autotune
2. Where are the lead vocals ‘doubled’ i.e. an additional vocal sung in unison with the lead vocal to ‘fatten’ the sound
   * Everywhere
3. Where are vocals used to harmonise along with the lead vocal
   * Chorus
4. Where are vocals used that provide a background for the lead vocal
   * Nowhere
5. How many vocal tracks can you hear
   * Basically 2, but the lead vocal has definitely been double and probably triple tracked because his voice is not this rich in live performance.
   * There is also delay on the 2nd and 3rd tracks to create a rich, far sound. Very cool. I like it.
6. Have the vocals been chopped up and used as samples?
   * No, I don’t think so

**Pan**

Where is everything panned in the mix? This is easiest to determine by using headphones.

* No observable panning

**Levels**

Notice how loud different instruments are in relation to other instruments and particularly the lead vocal.

* Lead vocal is definitely in the front but the rhythm section is just about as loud. Somehow, the vocal doesn’t get buried.

**Effects**

Listen carefully for any of the following

1. Reverbs

2. Delays

3. Compression

4. Distortion

5. Phase/flange/chorus

6. Side-chain: where an instrument, or a whole track, sounds as if the level is pumping up and down/in and out

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**My Song**: Snows of Vancouver

Although Dreadnought is one of my favorite songs, I don’t really write anything, at least not yet, that would benefit for a heavy metal production style.

If we had been able to pick an older song, I would have chosen *The One*, by Elton John, because that’s much closer to how Snows of Vancouver wants to sound.

*Snows of Vancouver* wants to sound wistful. It wants the sound of the ocean, waves lapping, seagulls crying. It wants the rain and the soft sounds of snow falling. It wants tears coursing down, but I don’t know how to get this sound since tears are so quiet. They are quiet tears, not loud, gushing crying.

I would use acoustic guitar, open tuning, possibly B, and my soundstone to get the ethereal quality. The 6-string bass would carry the melody, but very softly. The “solo" would be both the 6-string and the electric, I would use a Les Paul, would be both guitars playing exactly the same pattern, creating a space between the two layers.

I haven’t figured out the rhythm. I want something that sounds like waves, always there, always pushing ahead, gently relentless, like the softly falling snow. Snow actually makes a sound when it lands.

TThere’s a lot of action in this song so the bass line carries the action. There is no rhythm guitar, so the lead guitar carries the melody but in a style where it plays the same riff on the melodic notes. It’s reflecting both parts of the story, the song, and the relentless movement of the waves and snow.

There are some beautiful drum lines on Steve Postell’s Travelin' Man. I want something reminiscent of that.

Keys are not my strong suit, so I will just have to experiment and see what works to enhance the wistfulness.

Effects: I don’t know. I think this is pretty fat already, given what the song is.

Here’s the song as it stands today.

Title: Snows of Vancouver

The story: a man is in Vancouver, recording an album he will never get to hear

Like what Elton John did with those 2 Bb bars:

Whispered?: **World-class drummer, your touch is like no other.**Damnif I wouldn’t use brushes here, and they haven’t been used in forever…

Verse 1: the Setting

You’re the first band thru new doors

Cathedral rooms so great for drums

The Bay, the Park, the splendid views

The soaring gulls, the lapping waves.

REST

**World-class drummer, your touch is like no other.**

REST

Amidst the beauty of the purple mountains

Peaks covered in white snow

Alone with you snuggled on soft pillows

Heads together hands touching

Surrounded by the Golden streams of the glorious sunset

The cold gray space surrounds my heart

As we face the truth we both know

….and can’t deny.

REST

**World-class drummer, your touch is like no other.**

**Verse 2**: the beginnings of the catastrophe ( this is essential to the story but I wonder if it’s essential to the song.) But, it also has short words, so we can put a lit if information here. There is a new, somewhat subtle rhythm layer that reminds the listener of Nirvana and Pearl Jam, the bands that changed the nature of the search for “the next big one.”

The Rhapsody is 39,

And Billboard says its so

Elton John’s at 43 The One

Plays sounds of what's outside

This is like a backstory: **World-class drummer, your touch is like no other.**

**PreChorus**:

Did you ever hear it?

Did you hear the Masters then?

Did you hear the music that you made?

World-class drummer, your touch is like no other.

**Chorus**:

It’s a rare day in Vancouver

Snow is Falling. Falling, falling.

Time is Closing. Closing, closing.

And the Snows of Vancouver don’t stop.

**Bridge**:

Snow falls heavy on the New York City streets

The legend of Vancouver walks along with thoughts of home

He wonders if he’ll make it up to share the feasting there

He wonders what he’s left behind; he wonders who'll be there.

REST

Whispered: **World-class drummer, your touch is like no other.**

PreChorus, Chorus same as above

**Verse 3**: He dies and the Universe cries

Beware the Ides of March

The winds rise up; Slow tears begin

The legend now has died

The tears of rain fall…

to freeze upon the earth in pain.

**Interlude**: like in The One with the Bb riff; we could put this in a couple of places.

Repeat and fade….

Whispered**: World-class drummer, your touch is like no other.**