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## Can songs represent a learning aid to study ?

Clémence Dubrez

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Mention 2nd degré, Professeur des Lycées et Collèges



Can songs represent a learning aid to study?  
Examples from the latest album of Sabaton – *The Great War*  
– and its didactic significance.

OR HOW SONGS CAN HELP MEMORIZING KEY ELEMENTS

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## DECLARATION DE NON-PLAGIAT

Je soussignée, Clémence Dubrez déclare que ce mémoire est le fruit d'un travail de recherche personnel et que personne d'autre que moi ne peut s'en approprier tout ou partie.

J'ai conscience que les propos empruntés à d'autres auteurs ou autrices doivent être obligatoirement cités, figurer entre guillemets, et être référencés dans une note de bas de page.

J'étaye mon travail de recherche par des écrits systématiquement référencés selon une bibliographie précise, présente dans ce mémoire.

J'ai connaissance du fait que prétendre être l'auteur - l'autrice de l'écrit de quelqu'un d'autre enfreint les règles liées à la propriété intellectuelle.

A Besançon le 23/05/2021

Clémence Dubrez

Signature :

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Clémence Dubrez', written over a horizontal line.

## Acknowledgements

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In addition, I would like to thank my partner Dylan Lombardot for making me discover metal music, and without whom I probably wouldn't have raised any interest in this particular musical style and its world.

## 1. Who are Sabaton?

Sabaton are a Swedish Heavy Metal band, famous all around the globe for singing about “real-life wars and the people who played a part in them”<sup>1</sup>. They are very famous, and therefore very influential. They won 11 awards between 2011 and 2018, especially in Britain and Sweden, but also in Germany. I calculated an average of 608,800 fans on their social media accounts<sup>2</sup>, which says a lot about their social influence. Sabaton are students of history and they draw their inspiration from the past (not from current events and even less from current political affairs). Sabaton’s fascination with history and with Heavy Metal, which may sound discordant at first, led them to create several other pieces of media in order to pass down their knowledge in a way as objective as possible, a detailed way. I personally did learn a lot thanks to Sabaton: I got to discover the ancient Chinese military treatise *The Art of War*, by general Sun Tzu and the story of the battle of the Osowiec Fortress. Their song “Night witches” encouraged me into making some research and finding out that “night witches” (“Nachthexen”) was actually the nickname of Russian female pilots during WWII. Some of their songs also helped me studying for my end-of-term examinations, for instance, “Blood of Bannockburn” helped me memorize the location of Bannockburn (Stirling), the site of a critical battle during the First Scottish War of Independence. Furthermore, it taught me that following William Wallace’s death, Robert the Bruce took command of the rebellion. This is the reason why I believe that songs can truly be a learning aid, and I chose to consider Sabaton’s case (especially their latest album) because they really insist on the instructive dimension around all their songs.

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<sup>1</sup> Sabaton Official Website; ABOUT, BAND <https://www.sabaton.net/band/>

<sup>2</sup> I averaged the number of subscribers the band has on YouTube (1.2M + 271k), Facebook (995k), Twitter (124k) and Instagram (454k) on May, 23 2021.



## 1.1. CONCEPT ALBUMS

Sabatons like to write “**concept albums**”, meaning that each track follows **one leading theme** which is common to the whole album. The tracks are **tied together** either lyrically or musically. Concept albums appeared in the 1940s and were popularized by **Frank Sinatra**, with *The Voice of Frank Sinatra*, which is considered by many to be the first concept album ever. Indeed, it can be compared to Musicals or Operas, as Sinatra created a narrative. We can talk about a “flow” from track to track, laying in the lyrics and music of the songs, which he sequenced to create a certain mood and atmosphere. *The Voice of Sinatra* was the first concept album but certainly not the last.<sup>3</sup> However, concept albums are very often associated with the **sixties** and the **seventies**, and with **Rock and Roll music**. The genre of **Rock Opera**, developed in the sixties, is the most extreme type of concept album as it really relates stories: *The Wall* by Pink Floyd is a Rock Opera, discussing isolation and its consequences on mental health. The Who’s *Quadrophenia* tells the story of a boy with relationship issues (with his family, his friends, and himself). The tracks follow a storyline, and the music is full of leitmotifs (quadriphonic sounds). The name of the album is a mix between both ties: quadriphonic and schizophrenia<sup>4</sup>. *Quadrophenia* and *The Wall* were so smoothly arranged that they were both adapted into **movies**. *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (a concept album which inspired the French musical *Starmania*) by David Bowie was also tuned into a movie. Bowie tells the story of Ziggy Stardust, an invented bisexual character in a “dystopian alternate reality”, and, in doing so, initiates reflection on sexuality and the social unsaid<sup>5</sup>.

Sabatons bring the notion of concept album to another level. In addition to tying the songs together with a specific music genre, moods and historical narrative

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.jazziz.com/sinatra100-frank-sinatra-the-originator-of-concept-albums/>  
<https://indianapublicmedia.org/afterglow/voice-grows-sinatrass-early-capitol-concept-albums.php>

<https://theindustryobserver.thebrag.com/frank-sinatra-the-godfather-of-the-concept-album/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quadrophenia\\_\(album\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quadrophenia_(album)), Structure et concept

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bowiebible.com/albums/the-rise-and-fall-of-ziggy-stardust-and-the-spiders-from-mars/>

themes, Sabaton also add a **didactic purpose** to their albums, which is even more conspicuous with their last one. Sabaton have a total of nine released albums, eight of them being concept albums about the military world. To give some examples, *Primo Victoria*, released in 2005 follows the Allied invasion of Normandy during World War II. *The Art of War* (2008) is based on the ancient Chinese military treatise, *The Art of War* written by General Sun Tzu in the 6th Century BC. Each track refers to one specific chapter of the treatise: the lyrics deal with famous battles or wars where Sun Tzu's tactics were applied, like the Battle of Wizna (part of the invasion of Poland in 1939) and the Gallipoli campaign (First World War). *Carolus Rex* (2012) is about the rise and fall of the Swedish Empire under Gustaphus Asolphus. *The Last Stand* (2016) relates last stand military battles, like the Battle of Thermopylae (Greco-Persian Wars, 480 BC), the Battle of Bannockburn and the Battle of Shiroyama (part of the Satsuma Rebellion, 1877), while *Attero Dominatus* (2006) is about attacks seen as tyrannical or barbaric, for instance religious terrorist attacks, the Yugoslav and Falklands wars or the atomic bombing during WW2.

Nevertheless, they did release some songs that aren't about war or history: their album *Metalizer* (recorded in 2002, released in 2007) was written before the band adopted the theme of war and includes a song about the movie *The Lord of the Rings* and a lot of songs about their love of Heavy Metal. They also released some song about Heavy Metal at the end their albums, for exemple, "Metal Machine" and "Metal Crüe" are part of *Attero Dominatus*, and "Metal Ripper" is part of *Coat of Arms*. Their song "The Hammer Has Fallen", from the album *Fist for Fight* (2001) deals with suicide. Moreover, at the beginning of their career, they covered some songs for instance, "In the Army Now" (originally by Bolland), "Jawbreaker" (originally by Judas Priest), "For Whom the Bell Tolls" (originally by Metallica) and "Twilight of the Thunder God" (originally by Amon Amarth).

### 1.1.1. The Great war

*The Great War* is their ninth and latest album to date, released in July 2019. Once again, it is a concept album: it only deals with World War One, also called the Great War. This album is different from the others in that it has a deeper instructive

purpose. Indeed, Sabaton created two additional editions of the album, both aiming at giving more information about the subject of each song. The **History Edition** includes audio historical comments before each song. The third edition contains a **booklet** in which you can read even more about the background of the songs. Sabaton chose to focus both on people (famous or *common* soldiers) and events (surprising battles or key moments during the Great War). By listening to their album, **Lawrence of Arabia** (a British liaison to the Arab forces rebelling against the Ottoman Empire), **Alvin York** (an American sergeant famous for killing and capturing 25 and 132 Germans respectively in 1918), **Manfred von Richthofen** (a.k.a. *The Red Baron*) and even **Francis Pegahmagabow** (“one of Canada’s most decorated soldiers and the deadliest sniper of World War I”<sup>6</sup>) and their stories are introduced to you. You get to discover or know better or from another approach these notable figures from the 1914-1918 period. Sabaton also relate the stories of groups of soldiers like the US Marine Corps – nicknamed the “**Devil Dogs**” – or **soldiers** in general. You can also sense their **divided feeling towards the reality of war** (I will especially get through that when I discuss their song *Great War*). Sabaton also decided to sing about some battles that they consider key moments in WW1: the Battle of **Verdun** and the unexpected French victory ; the battle of **Osewiec Fortress** and its illegal<sup>7</sup> use of chlorine **gas** by the Germans, which didn’t stop the Russians fighting back ; and the battles of Flers-Courcelette and Villers-Bretonneux where **tanks** were used for the first time ever. Furthermore, you get to listen to a direct and authentic reaction of the time thanks to their last track, which is a musical adaptation of a poem written in 1915 by Lieutenant-Colonel **John McCrae**.

## 1.2. THEIR DIDACTIC APPROACH

Sabatons feel that we all have a duty of remembrance and that their songs are a means not to forget: “There are so many fantastic stories in our past that are being **forgotten**, so

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sabaton.net/discography/the-great-war/a-ghost-in-the-trenches/>  
14/12/2020

<sup>7</sup> It violated the 1899 Hague Declaration Concerning Asphyxiating Gases and the 1907 Hague Convention on Land Warfare.

**why should we make up new ones?**<sup>8</sup>. They claim that knowing the past can be a way to “avoid that the same [disasters] happen in the future.”<sup>9</sup> Sabaton make it a point of honor to deliver checked and attested **historical facts** to fit with their aim of educating. Therefore, in-depth work is a prerequisite to the writing of a song. Moreover, they never try to represent their own thinking, or their own ‘side’. Joakim Brodén (the singer) declared that even if their songs – being about military history – could sound controversial, they always stick to facts and tell the stories from “**the most interesting way**” or point of view.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, this question of point of view is sometimes debatable. If you don’t take what the band say at face value, if you don’t really believe in their neutrality or if you simply are not aware of their statements, you would for sure find it extremely frowned upon for a band to sing from the point of view the German Panzer divisions (“Ghost Division” from *The Art of War*). It is true that this song is controversial, and its meaning can (understandably) be mistaken as it sounds like a celebration of this German division. Though, among the 103 songs that the band released, “Ghost Division” is the only one for which the lyrics are questionable, especially the use of the word “elite” (“They are the Panzer elite”), and it is linked to Sabaton’s idea that soldiers are separate from the armies they fight in. Nonetheless, as I said, it is one song over a hundred, and even though it sounds like it is taking the wrong perspective, it did help me remember that the Ghost Division was the name given to a German division which was led by tanks that drove forward, top speed, never stopping, and that passed through the Maginot line (which wasn’t conceivable at the time), causing a lot a casualty for the French army. The song picked my curiosity, and the way it is written helps me remember the background. The band’s “The Final Solution” (form *Coat of Arms*) was also criticized and even ban in Germany because it was mistaken for Nazi propaganda. Though, when you take the time to read the lyrics, it is the absolute opposite:

*[...] Wicked propaganda / Turning neighbors into foes  
[.] Times of prosecutions has begun / Ever since it started / On  
Kristallnacht '38 / When liberty died / And truth was denied /  
Sent away on train on a one-way trip to hell/ Enter the gates,*

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<sup>8</sup> “Joakim Brodén / SABATON answering The Most Asked Questions on The Internet”, YouTube, <http://youtu.be/vc8svpf05do>

<sup>9</sup> Nota Bonus, ‘[Interview Sabaton - Histoire et Métal Hellfest 2017](#)’ YouTube, 20 nov. 2017

<sup>10</sup> “SABATON Interview / Joakim about THE GREAT WAR / metalpower.blog”, YouTube

*Auschwitz awaits / When freedom burns / The final solution /  
Dreams fade away and all hope turns to dust*

“Rise of Evil” (from *Attero Dominatus*) was also very controversial when it was released, while you just have to read the title to get that they’re comparing the Third Reich to evil. The two following lines speak of themselves: “Burning books to spread anti-Semite propaganda / Who will stop the madman's reign?”. There is nothing controversial about this. Moreover, a huge portion of their songs are sung from the point of view of the Allies. I think the controversy comes from people who don’t understand their message. On the contrary, perhaps if more people started really *listening* to Sabaton, they might have a better understanding of the cost of war.

Now that we discussed the pseudo-controversy that surrounds the band, let’s go back to the notion of didactics. Sabaton, as I said, tell stories from different perspectives, but try to stay accurate, detailed. To do so, they mostly stay in modern warfare in order to have enough well-documented materials and testimonies to base their songs on. Sabaton really try to share history with their listeners, using all the information and data that they can find. Nevertheless, sometimes a fact that is set to be unerring at a certain moment in time can later (with new archeological finds) turn out to be incorrect<sup>11</sup>. Plus, sometimes, they do make mistakes: their song “82<sup>nd</sup> All the Way” (from *The Great War*) mistakenly attribute Sgt. Alvin York to the 338<sup>th</sup> Regiment instead of the 328<sup>th</sup> infantry Regiment for example. The band corrects the lyrics whenever they sing live, but the album and the booklet were released with the mistake.

Sabaton wish to pass on pieces of history to their listeners, and this is **teaching**. Yet, keep in min that they are musician above all, and that their didactic ambition, comes in addition to that.<sup>12</sup> Sabaton don’t hand down their historical knowledge only thanks to the lyrics and atmosphere of their songs. They must go beyond the possible **barrier** of the song style. As songs are **poetry**, they give the expression of feelings and ideas in a **stylized** way:

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<sup>11</sup> [‘Interview Sabaton - Histoire et Métal Hellfest 2017’](#) YouTube

<sup>12</sup> Joakim Brodén in an interview: “If anyone has learned about history along the way, that makes me happy. But we’re not history teachers, we are hard-rockers first and foremost.”

<https://www.expressen.se/noje/sabatons-musik-stals-av-hogerextremt-parti/>

the use of **implicit**, **images** and the need – sometimes – to choose a certain **point of view** make the songs a **risky** material to understand history. Therefore, the band created other media to make sure that their listeners do **understand** what the subject of the song is about and **why** it is important to know about it. Firstly, they created their **Official Website** (*Sabaton.net*) on which you can find “*Historical facts*” for almost each song of each album. The themes of the albums are highlighted, and **detailed** explanations are given.

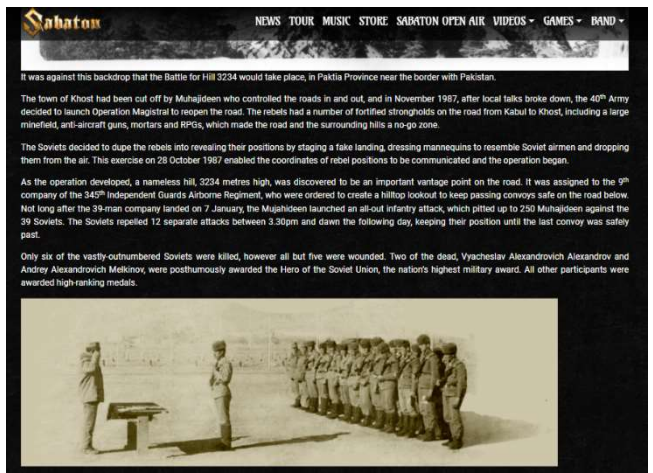
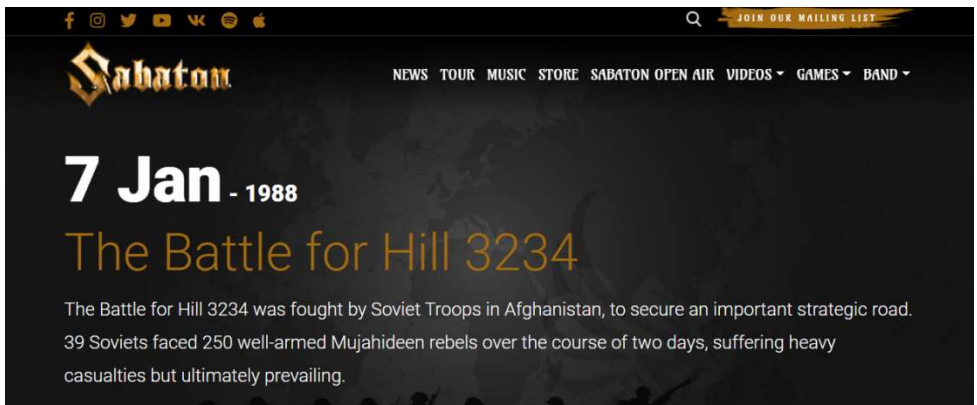
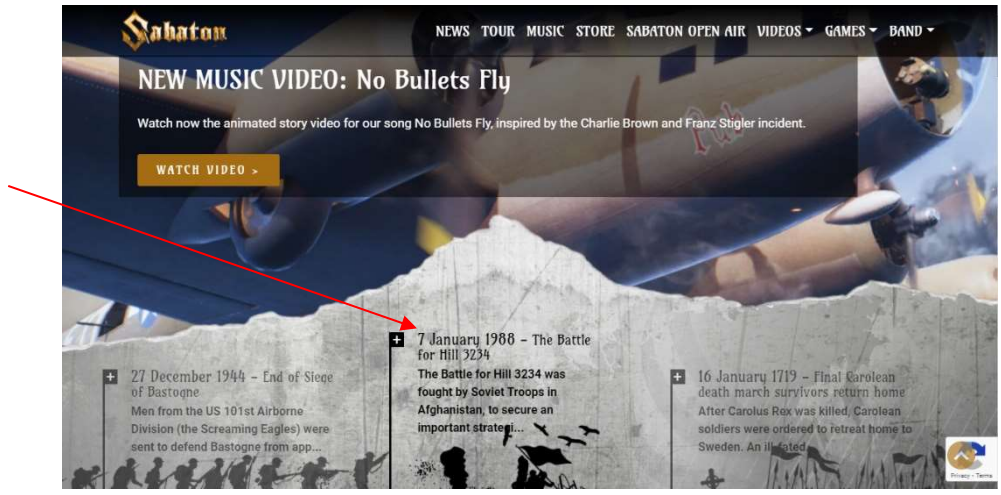
Example: “Historical fact” for the song “Seven Pillars of Wisdom” from *The Great War*:



Yet this “Historical fact” here is a proof that their didactic intention is limited. Their only mentioned source is Lawrence of Arabia’s memoirs, which are a primary source and cannot be considered as an objective source (memoirs are subjective by nature). All the ‘Historical facts’ on their website are that short, which implies that their intention is not to tell the background in detail but to gives enough elements to the readers to understand the general context and raise an interest. Furthermore, their YouTube Channel Sabaton History does provide more detailed explanations and does involve more sources each time.

Moreover, they have set a historical calendar on their website, and the first thing that you see when you access it is a *reminder* of a special event (linked to one of their songs) that happened years ago around the same date.

Example: Website last accessed on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2020<sup>13</sup>



The difference between the kind of article published via the historical calendar and the “Historical fact” is conspicuous: the explanation given is longer and more details. However,

<sup>13</sup> Sabaton, *The battle of Hill 3234*, <https://www.sabaton.net/historical-facts/the-battle-for-hill/>

no source is quoted, and the name of the author(s) is not given. Once again, we have no choice but to recognize the limitation of their didactic content.

Finally, from their website, you can gain access to their YouTube channel: *Sabaton History*, which aims at bringing the historical background to all Sabaton songs. These media are a proof that Sabaton do have a didactic intention behind their indisputable passion for Heavy Metal. The question now is: how useful and accurate are these videos?

### 1.2.1. Sabaton History

Sabaton History is a collaboration between the band and Indy Neidell (a historian who studied history at Wesleyan University, Connecticut<sup>14</sup>), aiming at explaining the stories behind Sabaton's songs. Hence, each episode is about a precise story, which is researched by historians, using exclusive footage from the websites *PA Archives* and *Screenocean*, and original graphics. This medium is – I think – **the most efficient means to engage didactically with the band's work**. The videos are more complete than the small historical comments available both on their Official website and on the history edition of the *The Great War*. The videos are approximately fifteen minutes long, which gives Neidell the time go into details without going too far and giving an impression of overbearingness. These kinds of videos are **popularization**. Here again, the limitations of their approach are undeniable. However, popularization is not necessarily a bad thing. While the videos are presented as a starting point, a step to let people discover what happened in the past, the facts contained in them are not distorted or oversimplified, allowing for them to be easily digestible.

### 1.2.2. Arousing interest

Sabaton are not historians, but they do love history and want to share it with their audience. One of the aims of Sabaton's songs is to **make people interested in**

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<sup>14</sup> Brown, Steven (September 4, 2014). "Houstonian hosted 'The Great War' series on Youtube". *Houston Chronicle*. Retrieved December 31 2020 <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/article/Houstonian-hosts-Great-War-series-on-Youtube-5733786.php>



**history**, to make them discover the past. So, listening to the songs is a first step, that might create an interest for the listeners. The videos on their YouTube channel are a second step: the information given in the videos is enough to understand the story that is told in the song, and to understand history better – even if it is in a casual sense. Obviously, it does not replace the knowledge that you would gain by fully immersing yourself in history books. You will not become an expert in history by watching Sabaton History or listening to Sabaton's songs. But you will have a **significant insight into military history**, which isn't negligible – it is always a good thing to know and understand what happened in the past. The fact that the band's didactic approach is limited isn't a problem for me: the importance is to make their listeners curious.

At this point we could wonder why they do not take a deeper advantage of their influence to spread a wider part of history – and not just its military dimension.

## 2. Military history

### 2.1. METAL MUSIC

Why don't Sabaton sing about social life or other historical aspects? The answer is directly linked to the Heavy Metal genre. According to Andrew L. Cope, Heavy Metal has a “**finger print**” and can be recognized thanks to a “collocation of key intervals [...], modal riffs and melodies, down-tuned guitars, sequences of power-chords and lyrics about [...] **suffering** and death, the horror of war, good versus evil, nightmares and fantastic monsters/creature.”<sup>15</sup> Heavy Metal is also described as “**tribal** in nature”, having “everything to do with rhythm and **aggression** and desire and conquest and physical release and death”<sup>16</sup>, yet it doesn't prevent the bands from telling stories. Heavy Metal is in a way what we could call “traditional” Metal, whose roots come from Blues, Rock, and Rock and Roll. Its golden age was the eighties with, for instance, Iron Maiden, and Judas Priest. Heavy Metal has a “**sheer heaviness**”, a great “**density**” which is linked with the overall sound being weighty. This sound goes together with the lyrical approach, mostly targeting **war, violence and death**.<sup>17</sup> Metal music also has a **strong connection with history**. For instance, Black Sabbath's catalogue contains songs about the neopagan Walpurgis Night, as well as the Vietnam War (“War Pigs”). Similarly, Iron Maiden have in the past released songs about topics ranging from Western colonialism and its crimes against humanity (“Run to the Hill”), to the 1940 Battle of Britain (“Aces High”), to Alexander the Great (“Alexander the Great”). Saxon sang about the Crusades and WW2 and Slayer dared singing about Joseph Mengele<sup>18</sup>. Many Metal bands have been inspired by history, using a variety of themes and moments in time: Nordic and Celtic culture, mythology, modern history, and others. Therefore Sabaton's appetite for singing about history is not something revolutionary,

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<sup>15</sup> COPE, Andrew, *Black Sabbath and the Rise of Heavy Metal Music*, pp. 82-83

<sup>16</sup> ALMOND, Steve, “How Heavy Metal Music Will Save Your Life”, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (SUMMER 2005), p. 271

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.williammerrillgallery.com/the-main-differences-between-heavy-metal-and-hard-rock-music/>

<sup>18</sup> BENARD, Nicolas, « Les Images De Guerre Dans La Musique Metal. Entre Fascination Et Dénonciation », *Sociétés*, De Boeck Supérieur, 2012/3 n°117, pp. 113- 128

though the Swedish band do take their role very seriously, claiming a duty of remembrance<sup>19</sup>. Before even listening to or understanding the lyrics of their songs – and like numerous Metal bands do – this confrontation with war culture starts with your eyes: their album covers and video clips are clearly war-oriented. Along the same lines, their costumes and their stage props are undoubtedly linked with the sphere of war.

Examples: some album covers

(a) *The Great War*, 2019: about World War One

(b) *The Last Stand*, 2016: about last-stand military battles from different wars

(c) *Heroes*, 2014: about “individuals who went beyond their call of duty”<sup>20</sup>

(d) *The Art of War*, 2008

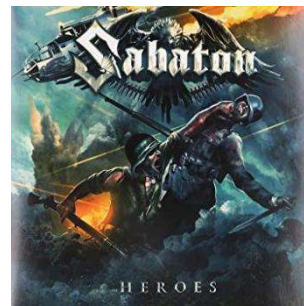
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



Examples: pictures of the band on stage

(a) Their stage costumes: combat pants and Joakim's diamond-plate Metal cyber bodice

(b) Their stage props: a tank as a drum kit riser

(c) Their stage pyrotechnics: flames

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<sup>19</sup> BENARD, Nicolas, « Les Images De Guerre Dans La Musique Metal. Entre Fascination Et Dénonciation », *Sociétés*, De Boeck Supérieur, 2012/3 n°117, p. 117

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Pär Sundström, by Grande-Rock.com on 13 June 2014  
<https://www.grande-rock.com/sabaton-2014>

(a)



(b)



(c)



Even though genre is subjective and generally more relevant for a song or sometimes for an album than for a band itself, Sabaton are a **Heavy Metal band**, for all the reasons that I mentioned, both musically and lyrically. And as a Heavy Metal band wanting to sing about history only, they had to sing about its military side. About that, Joakim Brodén, the band's lead singer, declared that Heavy Metal is "a pretty aggressive music genre, and it doesn't really fit with all kind of themes from history"<sup>21</sup> and "[...] everything in the **emotional spectrum** that is in [their] music is already in military conflicts: there is aggression, depression, sadness... all of that spectrum linked to happiness, pride or power. They **match together** very well."<sup>22</sup>

Yet, watching the hereinabove pictures, one word comes to mind: the **epic**. This is for me the greatest **limitation** of their approach. The whole **aesthetic** (the music, and the visual elements) of the band lays on the epic less than the horror of war (a theme that is present in the lyrics even though they do not actually describe the horrors strictly speaking). When you listen to Sabaton (and when you don't specifically have a learning ambition), you do it to have a good time, not to feel depressed or traumatized by the atmosphere that it draws. This is what **their fans expect** to hear: epic music. And it is not to forget that Sabaton are music players above all, and that they play what they want and what their fans like – namely, epic Heavy Metal music. I cannot say that their music is just epic – that would be reductive. But that it the overall impression. So there is a bit of a gap between the gravity of the story they tell and the epic of the way

<sup>21</sup> [‘Interview Sabaton - Histoire et Métal Hellfest 2017’](#) YouTube

<sup>22</sup> "SABATON Interview / Joakim about THE GREAT WAR / metalpower.blog", YouTube, 16:16

it is told. This gap, though, has never been an obstacle to express a feeling. “La chanson de Craonne”, sang for the first time in the trenches in 1915 uses the melody and the music of a pleasant love song. Yet the lyrics were written by WWI French soldiers and are about their weariness and about the death they are all facing. The gap is different with Sabaton because Heavy Metal is already linked with war. But it is mostly linked with its epic side. To be more precise and as the album covers attest, their songs are mostly centered on the soldier, his **heroism**. The epic of the music and of their aesthetic targets the soldiers, not war.

## 2.2. LIONIZATION

Sabaton don't glorify war, and they are not politically or religiously motivated.<sup>23</sup> On that matter, one of their songs was once used by a Polish far-right party for an election campaign, which really angered the band. Joakim Brodén reacted: “Our choice of topic, to sing about military history, is controversial enough as it is. The last thing we want is any kind of political or religious connection, be it direct or indirect.”<sup>24</sup> Their aim is to show a hyperbole in the association of a warmongering world to an aggressive music. It is more about denouncing what wars bring rather than showing a sordid attractiveness<sup>25</sup>. However, they do share a high regard towards the soldiers. Their song “Great War” (from *The Great War* album) successfully shows both the denunciation of war and the **lionization** of the soldier: their honor, their loyalty despite their fear and feeling of doubt or their **divided feelings towards war**:

*“Where dead men lie, I’m Paralyzed, my brothers’ eyes are gone / And he shall be buried here, nameless marks his grave / [...] Mud and blood, in foreign land, I’m trying to understand / Where is this greatness I’ve been told? / This is the lies that we’ve been sold / Is this a worthy sacrifice? / [...]”*

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<sup>23</sup> “Joakim Brodén / SABATON answering The Most Asked Questions on The Internet” YouTube, <http://youtu.be/vc8svpf05do>

<sup>24</sup> NÖJE, *Sabatons musik stals av högerextremt parti*, 26 July 2014, 13.13, <https://www.expressen.se/noje/sabatons-musik-stals-av-hogerextremt-parti/>

<sup>25</sup> BENARD, Nicolas, « Les Images De Guerre Dans La Musique Metal. Entre Fascination Et Dénonciation », *Sociétés*, De Boeck Supérieur, 2012/3 n°117, p. 115

*I do my duty, pay the price / I'll do the worthy sacrifice / I know my deeds  
are not in vain / [...] Though men are falling, we see Heroes rise / [...] Great  
War / The war to end all wars”*

This song is about suffering caused by the war, especially during the 3-month battle of Passchendaele, where both sides suffered massive losses under an extremely merciless weather. The battle of Passchendaele is the third battle of Ypres, Belgium, opposing the Allies to the German Empire. Ypres was an extremely dangerous area for British soldiers because it was surrounded by the Germans on three sides and overlooked by high ground. The battle took place during the winter 1917 (August-November), and the weather was exceptionally wet in August. The rain was so heavy that it prevented the soldiers from seeing their enemies properly and it also prevented the Allies from supplying the guns. Passchendaele ridge was eventually captured by the Allied on November 10 but the rate of casualties was enormous: 300,000 for the British and 260,000 for the Germans.<sup>26</sup> In the booklet, it is followed by a quote by Lloyd George, the British Prim Minister at the time: “Passchendaele was indeed one of the greatest disasters of the war... No soldier of any intelligence now defends this senseless campaign”<sup>27</sup>. With the lyrics and the weight of the melody, rhythm and sounds, you can truly feel the **doubts** of the soldiers towards the reason why they are fighting and falling, the **horror** of war and at the same time, you can see how **loyal** and **brave** they are to “keep on marching on”. This courage is to be linked with hope, as you can feel with the lyrics and famous expression “the war to end all wars”. Yet, I don’t feel this heroization or *glamorization* of the soldier disturbs their instructional ambition. Besides, and as Bethany Bryson highlights, “**music is an important cultural and communicative medium**”, and Sabaton, as professional musicians, chose to share their interest in history to their fans. B. Bryson also called Heavy Metal a “low-status culture” “whose fans have the least education”<sup>28</sup>. I feel like Sabaton’s didactic ambition comes as an objection.

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<sup>26</sup> “Battle of Passchendaele, *National Army Museum*,  
<https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/battle-passchendaele>, last accessed on 24/04/21

<sup>27</sup> Sabaton, *SABATON, The Great War*, Nuclear Blast GmbH, 2019, p.17

<sup>28</sup> Bryson, Bethany, “‘Anything but Heavy Metal’: Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislike”, *American Sociological Review*, p. 884

Music styles don't have anything to do with people's education (in the sense of "study"). As a matter of fact, a lot of "Metal heads" and Metal singers are well educated, the best examples being Bruce Dickinson, the singer of Iron Maiden, who graduated university with a degree in history (Queen Mary University of London), and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in music (Queen Mary University of London, 2011) and an Honorary Doctorate from the Faculty of Philosophy (University of Helsinki, 2019). He is a licensed airline pilot and a screenwriter. Music is about people's tastes, often influenced by what they listened to when they were children. Tastes can evolve and even change over time, following the interests of the listeners. Yet, Sabaton alone cannot change the view that a lot of people have on Metal music. This view is made of a lot of stereotypes, including the fact that there is no nice melody, that the singers always shout, and the lyrics are neither intelligible nor intelligent. As all stereotypes, they do fit with a minority of examples, but not with the majority. Style is a matter of habit and taste. Someone who is fond of Classical music is likely to like Metal music. Robert Walser wrote:

*The immense social and cultural distance that is normally assumed to separate classical music and heavy meatal music is in fact not a gap of musicality. [...] Heavy metal musicians recognise affinities between their work and the tonal sequences of Vivaldi, the melodic imagination of Bach, the virtuosity of Liszt and Paganini.*<sup>29</sup>

My personal experience as the violin player who attended general music training for twelve years in the conservatory of Montbéliard, allows me to make very strong connexions between heavy metal and classical music. As a teacher in a French "collège", I made my students discover some music styles, including Classical, Folk and Metal music. I was amazed to discover that a lot of them liked Metal and described it as "epic", not especially as "aggressive". Some of them loved the amazing and melodious voice of the singer of Nightwish (a symphonic metal band), Floor Jansen. She, for instance, also sings Opera, and covers some current English pop songs (like "Shallow" by Lady Gaga

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Walser, « Heavy metal appropriations of classical virtuosity », *Popular Music*, Volume 11/3, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.301

or “Let it go” from the movie *Frozen*). She – among others – could represent a bridge leading people to discover Metal as it really is.

### 2.3. *CONCEPT BAND*

I mentioned the term *concept band* earlier, which is an expression made from the notion of concept album. The aim is to point out the fact that for some bands, we can find a connection linking all their songs and all their albums together. These bands have **a world of their own**. In a superficial way, we can think about masked bands, who like to put special **makeup** on and eccentric **clothes**. For example: KISS, Twisted Sister, Slipknot, Ghost or Cradle of Filth. Some other bands also like this superficial link but add some other connections with the **themes** of their albums and songs – like Sabaton. Other examples are: Powerwolf (Power Metal band who sing about Transylvanian werewolf and vampire legends), Lordi (Heavy Metal band who sing about monsters) Corvux Corex (who play neo-Medieval Metal music, using authentic clothes and instruments); Viking Metal bands like Amon Amarth, Tyr, Turisas, ...; Pirate Metal bands like Alestorm, Running Wild or Swashbuckle for instance. Some of these *concept bands* are also bands using history as one of their connections: all the Viking Metal bands focus on Viking myths, as do Corvus Corex and Turisas – trying more or less to be faithful to history. Amon Amarth are not a historical band at all as they use Norse myths, while Turisas and Corvus Corex for example join Sabaton on the fact that in-depth work must be done ahead.

Sabaton lay their cards on the table with the name of their band: a *sabaton* (also called a *solleret*) is the part of a knight’s armor covering the foot. So, from the beginning, you know that they will sing about military history. But the thing that distinguishes Sabaton from other *concept bands* singing about history is their **didactic intention**. While Sabaton claim that you can learn history by listening to their music, but that this cannot replace a history book, they do have a wider vision. They mean that their songs can be a starting point (cf. part 1.2.2. Arousing interest). Songs can be a source of motivation for students as it is a “more interesting”<sup>30</sup> teaching aid. Besides,

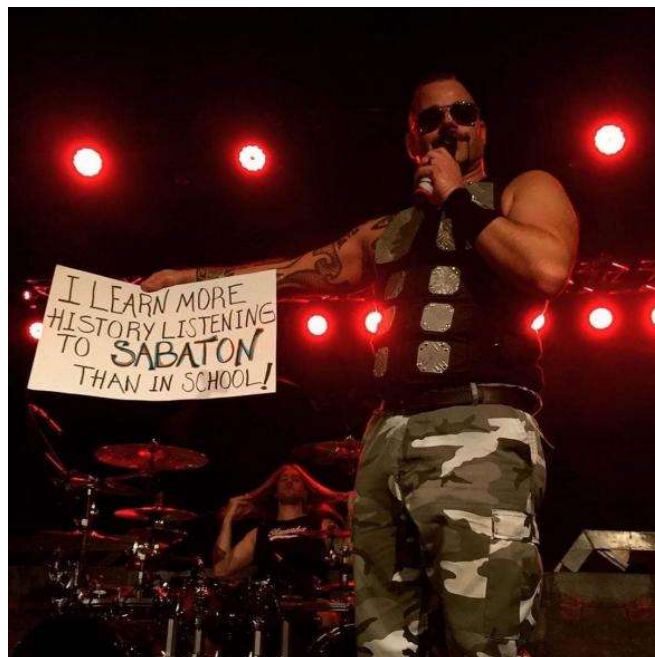
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<sup>30</sup> [‘Interview Sabaton - Histoire et Métal Hellfest 2017’](#) YouTube



songs can be used as a means of **memorizing** some key dates or names or events. This is what Simon, a French history teacher claimed during an interview<sup>31</sup>. Even if he insists upon the fact that a Metal concert isn't a history class, he bears witness that one of his students did remember the date of the Normandy landings – 6 of June 1944 – thanks to Sabaton's "Primo Victoria", in which the date is stated. This is why I would now like to discuss the memorizing power of songs.

Picture: Joakim Brodén holding a sign made by their fans for their concert.



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<sup>31</sup> Nota Bene, « HISTOIRE ET METAL (feat plein de barbus) », YouTube, 20 nov. 2017

### 3. The didactic power of songs

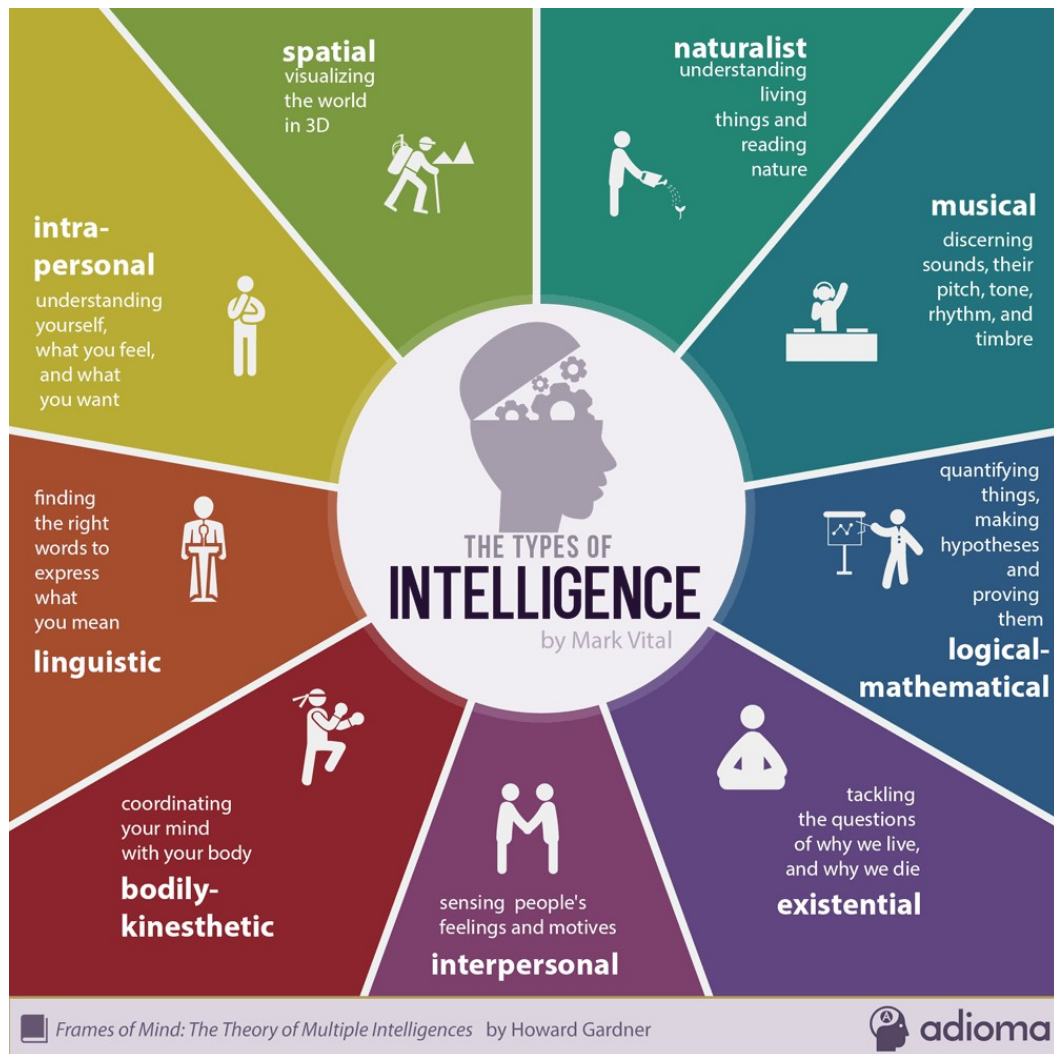
Socrates said, "Don't use force in training the children in the studies, but rather play. In that way you can better discern what each is naturally directed towards"<sup>32</sup>. His aim seemed to ensure that the transmission of knowledge wouldn't be experienced as an annoying moment for the learners, but rather as a joyful moment allowing individual fulfilment. He also already implied the importance of a differentiated instruction, which could take each individual in consideration. Socrates' pupil, Plato, in his *Republic*, already mentioned singing as an educational activity. Moreover, songs have been used to teach children from the youngest age: we all know our "ABC", or a version of « head, shoulders, knees and toes" or "let's count to twenty" in our target-language for example. So, the power of songs has proved to be effective as a teaching method: children have been able to recall the knowledge that they were passed down, and they had fun doing so. Then why would this method be limited to kids? Can adults and teenagers take advantage of this method?

#### 3.1. TYPES OF LEARNERS

Music can represent a more accessible means of learning for certain people. Indeed, it has been proved that there are **different "styles" of learners**, and this is the reason why **differentiated instruction** exists: because each student learns differently. According to the "**VARK model**" created by Neil D. Fleming, there are four types of learners and interconnections between them. It stands for **visual**, **auditory**, **reading/writing**, and **kinesthetic**. According to another theorist, Howard Gardner, there are also four – at least – additional styles: **verbal** learners, **logical** learners, **social** (interpersonal) learners and **solitary** (intrapersonal) learners.

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<sup>32</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 375 BC; taken from <https://www.scu.edu/character/resources/education-in-platos-republic/>



Though most people are a combination of many styles, they generally have one dominant learning style that can change over the years<sup>33</sup>. According to a research made by L. Cuban (2001), generally, people remember 10% of what they READ, 20% of what they HEAR, 30% of what they SEE, 50% of what they HEAR AND SEE, 70% of what they SAY, 90% of what they SAY AND DO<sup>34</sup>. Somebody with a musical memory is a **kinesthetic-auditory learner**. Moreover, reading lyrics or watching a video clip of a song can fit **visual-auditory learners**; and if they sing a song, **verbal learners** will be able to learn in an easier way. Songs also give the possibility

<sup>33</sup> Snejana, Dineva, *The importance of visualization in e-learning courses*, Conference Paper, ResearchGate, October 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Cuban, Larry, Oversold and Underused: *Computers in the Classroom*. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2001.

to fit social and solitary learners. Therefore, songs are a way to **diversify teaching and learning methods**, and to facilitate learning to many people (but not all).

### 3.2. MUSICAL MEMORY

We all have already had a song, or a jingle, stuck in our head. We all know songs by heart, in our native language or even in foreign languages and sometimes even in a language we don't speak. It is because we have a musical memory. Songs and jingles are very catchy. Their catchiness – and so their direct link with memory – has been tested, and it is now proven that “**music enhance[s] memory** for advertising slogan”<sup>35</sup> when it is sung. Besides, it appears that, in songs in general, “**the melody and text cue each other** even over very long-time **delays**”<sup>36</sup>, this is the subject I will be discussing in this part.

#### 3.2.1. Memory and neurosciences

Before talking about the impact of music on the learning process, I must first explain how this internal mechanism works, and thus, introduce some cognitive-psychology theories.

Richard C. Atkinson (professor of psychology and cognitive science) and Richard Shiffrin (professor of cognitive science) believe that there is a **short-** and a **long-term memory**. Whenever you want to learn something, the aim is to be able to find this information a long time after you learnt it. This means that you want this new information to enter your long-term memory. Yet, it is not something easy: most of the information that you get during a day go into your short-term memory, which is characterized by “a massive and very quick memory lapse” (Brown, 1958)<sup>37</sup>. Nevertheless, according to Atkinson and Shiffrin, there is a

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<sup>35</sup> Yalch, Richard F., “Memory in a Jingle Jungle: Music as a Mnemonic Device in Communicating Advertising Slogans”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 76, No. 2, American Psychological Association Inc. (1991) p. 273

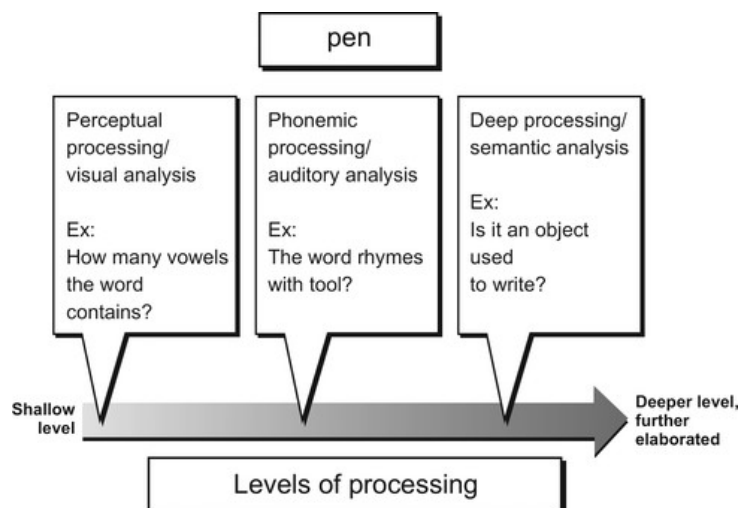
<sup>36</sup> Wallace, Wanda T., “Memory for Music: Effect of Melody on Recall of Text”, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, Vol. 20, No. 6, American Psychological Association Inc. (1994) p. 1471

<sup>37</sup> Gavard, Florian, *L'utilisation du chant comme support pédagogique*. Education. 2018, p. 10

way to pass a piece of information from the short to the long-term memory: repetition. About the long-term memory, scientists consider it has four types: **semantic**, **episodic**, **declarative** (“knowing that”) and **procedural** (“knowing how”).

Craik and Lockhart (two cognitive psychologists) invented the **levels of processing model**: for them, memory is a consequence of the depth of processing of information, and there is no clear distinction between short term and long-term memory. The information can be processed in a **shallow** (for physical or auditive qualities) or in a **deep** way: what is shallow concerns the short-term memory, but can be held in it with enough repetition effort; while a deep and meaningful processing “leads to better recall”<sup>38</sup> and thus access to long-term memory.

Diagram of levels of processing while encoding the written word “pen” (the subject can analyse it at various levels of processing).<sup>39</sup>



These two methods aren't that different, and they both count on **repetition** to turn a piece of information into durable knowledge. Yet, this sounds **tedious**, and some other methods (like listening to music or singing) can do the job. The **emotion** created by a music or a song can contribute to the **durability** of a

<sup>38</sup>Dr. Saul McLeod, “Levels of Processing”, *simplypsychology*, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/levelsofprocessing.html>

<sup>39</sup> Ekuni, R., Vaz, L. J., & Bueno, O. F. A., “Levels of processing: The evolution of a framework”, *Psychology & Neuroscience*, Volume 4(3), pp. 333-339 (2011). <http://dx.doi.org/10.3922/j.psns.2011.3.006>

memory. There is a link between the **voice, emotion and memory**. The link voice-emotion is witnessed everyday: when you get angry or ashamed, then the sound, the volume and the flow of your voice change<sup>40</sup>. If you can notice these changes on yourself, then you are able to feel them in the singer's voice if you listen to a song. Furthermore, an experiment made by Antonio Damasio showed that images provoking a **strong emotional reaction** (as can albums covers and video clips) caused a better recall than neutral images<sup>41</sup>. It is because strong emotions leave a mark in the **episodic long-term memory** – in addition to the declarative. It has been proven by neurobiologist Jean-Pierre Changeux that “for some people, listening to music provokes intensive emotions”<sup>42</sup>. It is these emotions, created by the music, that will pave the way to a long-lasting memory. When you recall this memory, the melody represents a pillar on which you can rest to retrieve the semantic content which goes with it.

### 3.2.2. The melody: an effective recall cue

There are very strong memory connections that link a **melody** with its **text**<sup>43</sup>: if you read the lyrics of a famous song without the melody (imagine “You're the one that I want” from Grease), the latter immediately comes to mind, and vice-versa. Wanda T. Wallace led four experiments to determine “whether music aids learning and recall of the text”<sup>44</sup>. The results proved that the melody facilitated recall of a text, given that the melody is **simple** and **repeated** (or repetitive). As a matter of fact, repetition is crucial in all kinds of learning: this is how you learn a language for instance: repetition of phonemes, of expressions or words are essential in order to store the information into the long-term memory. Otherwise, the fact that the song is already known or **familiar** to the learner replaces the need of repetition. Besides, the simplicity of the melody isn't necessary if the characteristics of the music match the message. In addition, the more **unique** the

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<sup>40</sup> Gavard, Florian, *L'utilisation du chant comme support pédagogique*. Education. 2018, p. 7

<sup>41</sup> Croisile, Bernard, *Approche neurocognitives de la mémoire*, Fond Nationale de gérontologie, 2009

<sup>42</sup> Changeux, Jean-Pierre, *La beauté dans le cerveau*, Editions Odile Jacob, 2016

<sup>43</sup> Gavard, Florian, *L'utilisation du chant comme support pédagogique*. Education. 2018, p. 14

<sup>44</sup> Wallace, Wanda T, “Memory for Music: Effect of Melody on Recall of Text”, p. 1471

match is, the more chances there are for the information to enter the long-term memory as an episodic element. Sabaton's didactic approach fits with this condition: the characteristics of Heavy Metal suit their messages (as mentioned in part 2.1. Metal Music), and their fans are accustomed to this style. Besides, they do have unique melodies and rhythm that facilitate the entry of the imagery into the episodic long-term memory: "82<sup>nd</sup> All the Way" sound a bit "disco-like", it is lighter than their usual songs; on the opposite, "Devil Dogs" is very fast and rhythmic, and "Red Baron" starts with Bach's *Little Fugue in G minor*, and the song is very dynamic and melodious. Finally, "In Flanders Fields" (a war poem written by Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae during WWI and put to music by Sabaton) is sung acapella by a choir of women. This is probably the most unique song of their album, and of all their songs released up to that point.

But even if the music is known and familiar, learners should listen to it several times, so that the information can be kept in the short-term memory. However, if there is a will to secure the knowledge in the long-term memory, then it is important that the learner **understand** the message: the information must go through a **deep processing**. The music would then represent a **learning consolidation**. Wallace explained that "focusing on the **deep-meaning structures** of a text facilitates recall more than focusing on the surface properties. However, when the surface properties are well structured, abundant, and interconnected, and when music or some other mechanism draws attention to the surface properties, then those same properties may facilitate recall"<sup>45</sup>. The meaning of this analysis lays on the levels of processing model: either you can keep the information in your short-term memory, or you can directly process it as an attained knowledge in your long-term memory. When she mentions "other mechanism", she refers – among others – to **imagery connection**. An image can provide an overall insight of the theme and additional spatial or even textual information. Wallace adds that "the stronger the interaction between a word to be recalled and the associated image, such as in the mnemonic techniques, the better recall becomes. If applied to music, the stronger the connection between the

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<sup>45</sup> Wallace, Wanda T, "Memory for Music: Effect of Melody on Recall of Text", p. 1482

melody and the text, the better the facilitation provided by the music.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, video clips can facilitate the learning process. Sabaton validate this criterion as they provide “Official Lyric Videos” and “Official Music Videos”, in which additional information are given.

In short, to facilitate the learning process, a song must have – at least – the following criteria:

- The overall melody must be simple OR familiar to the learner
- The emotion of the message and the music must match
- The emotion given by the music should be intense
- The melody must be repetitive OR the song must be unique

The rest is a matter of will, motivation and attention from the listener.

### 3.3. A NEW MOTIVATION

Succeeding in finding and keeping a motivation for academic matters isn't something easy. Could songs be seen as an **unusual** and **original** learning aid, and thus motivate the learners? Being motivated means starting to **behave in a certain manner because you are being attracted to a goal**. There are two kinds of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. The latter represents a motivation which doesn't emanate from the learner: it can be the wish to get a good grade or avoid parental reprimand for instance. On the opposite, intrinsic motivation is led by the learner himself/herself and his/her interest and ambition towards the matter<sup>47</sup>. Songs, used as a learning aid, aim at **intrinsic** motivation. Learning through songs will have the advantage of **changing from academic habits** and thus, **being more captivating** for learners. But it wouldn't fit with everybody's personality and way of learning. This is the reason why, if used as a teaching aid, it should be part of a **differentiated instruction**. And of course, the style of music used must varies each time so as to try to content the most student possible.

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<sup>46</sup> Wallace, Wanda T, “Memory for Music: Effect of Melody on Recall of Text”, p. 1483

<sup>47</sup> Gasquez, Charlotte, *La Chanson Francaise Et Francophone : Source De Motivation chez Les Apprenants De Français Langue Etrangere, Experimentation Aupres D'eleves En Espagne*, Mémoire de master 2 professionnel, 2019 pp. 25-27.



The choice of the song is very important and will define the learner's attention. In addition to the fact that the song should validate all the criteria mentioned in part 3.2.2., the song must be **appreciated** by the learners but, the **educational dimension must be conspicuous enough**. Indeed, if the song is only seen as a nice entertainment, there is no assurance that the didactic goal will be achieved<sup>48</sup>. So, somebody can listen to and appreciate Sabaton's songs just because he/she likes the aesthetic, and not have the will to understand the lyrics and what the story behind the words is. For some people, the step of arousing interest may not work. Besides, I feel that the **authenticity** of the song which is used has an impact. If the song is created for a didactic purpose as its most important purpose, then you will not use the same method as with a song which has an aesthetic ambition and an added didactic goal. If the first aim is aesthetic (like with Sabaton's songs), then it is crucial to process the information deeply before trying to recall the song. In doing so, the attention of the learners will be focused on the important knowledge.

### 3.4. INTERDISCIPLINARITY

“Interdisciplinary instruction entails the use and integration of methods and analytical frameworks from more than one academic discipline to examine a theme, issue, question or topic.”<sup>49</sup>

#### 3.4.1. All kinds of knowledge

Florian Gavard, in his mémoire (master MEEF premier degré), talks about the advantages of music and singing in class, and uses the example of learning **French** and **Mathematics**. Even though the source used to teach Mathematics was not efficient because of the length, the numbers and the childish and superficial side of the songs, it doesn't mean that songs cannot serve as a way to teach mathematics. It means that the source wasn't suitable for this purpose. All that has been said previously about the memorizing power of songs **concerns all kinds of**

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<sup>48</sup> Gavard, Florian, *L'utilisation du chant comme support pédagogique*. Education. 2018, p. 23

<sup>49</sup> <https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/interdisciplinary/what.html>

**knowledge**, as long as the songs respect the conditions that have been stated (familiarity with the melody – or its simplicity –; intensity of the associated emotion; depth of attention; motivation; and repetition or long-time listening). **If the songs stick to these conditions, any kinds of knowledge can be handed down to a person who is receptive to auditory learning.**

The French company *Studytracks*<sup>50</sup> understood the impact that a song can have on memory. They created a website and an application aiming at making academic learning easier. It especially addresses students about to take the Baccalauréat examination. They have composed a large range of songs whose lyrics are revision sheets' notes. It concerns **all courses**: Languages, Literature, Mathematics, History, Science, ... Famous French singers took part in this educational initiative – which is supported by l'Education Nationale – like Soprano, MB14, Joeystarr, Tibz and Cathy Guetta. Moreover, they provide actual **revision sheets** and **quizzes**. They believe that music is less tedious than actual lessons and that it is easier to listen to music in our everyday life than reading paper sheets.

As an English teacher, I must talk about the efficiency of songs to memorize syntactic constructions. I will list some songs whose lyrics can be very useful to an auditory learner:

- “Somebody that I used to know” by Gotye: the syntactic construction is already in the title and is repeated a lot of time in the song as it is part of the chorus. The expression “used to” isn't directly translatable into French and thus it is complicated for the learners remember it. This song can be a learning aid.
- “I want you to know” by Selena Gomez: once again the interesting form appears in the title – to want somebody to do something. Her song “I love you like a love song” also uses this syntactic construction a lot.
- “Can't stand losing you” by The Police: with this song, it is the idiomatic expression “can't stand” that is in the spotlight.

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<sup>50</sup> <http://www.studytracks.fr/qui-sommes-nous/>

- “I will always love you” by Whitney Houston: this song seems to be timeless; it is a classic. It can help the learners remember how future works in English.
- “Homeless” by Marina Kaye: this track can be very useful to teach the meaning of the suffix -less. This is the song that my teacher used when I was in high school: it worked for me.
- When + future, I + present: this syntactic structure is really complicated to assimilate. It sounds really unnatural to a French-speaking person. But the song “Will you still love me when I am 64” by The Beatles, or the more recent song “Thinking Out Loud” by Ed Sheeran (“And darling I will be loving you 'til we're 70”) can represent efficient learning aids.
- “Every Breath You Take” by The Police can help remember that “every” is always followed by a singular.

Nevertheless, a cautiousness is needed because songs often use informal structures, and it is not because they are written in English that the English is flawless. For example, in the song “This is Halloween” from the movie *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, the grammatically wrong sentence “Everybody \*scream” is repeated many times. I used this song in class, and I had to explain that sometimes, songs need to “cheat” so that their lines can rhyme. To give them a good example, I could have made them listen to The Blues Brothers’ song “Everybody needs somebody”.

### 3.4.2. What especially about history?

History is a course that requires the recalling of **dates**, **events**, **names** and **places**. And musical memory, as explained earlier, can help recall any kind of information. That’s why *Studytracks* create songs for all kind of courses including history. The **BBC**, for instance, didn’t miss the possibility of teaching history through music. Since 2009, they have broadcast a children’s historical series called ***Horrible Histories***, which is mostly **musical comedy** based on the books of the same name by Terry Deary. So, they too value the efficiency of music and songs regarding the learning process of history. Each episode contains at least one longer

comedy song centred around a historical figure or theme and performed by the cast in appropriate character. Besides, the show is no longer only addressing children, more **adults** watch it, and this is why the songs became more sophisticated and parody-like<sup>51</sup>. Therefore, it is possible to teach history to children and grown-ups using songs.

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<sup>51</sup> Preston, Richard, "Horrible Histories: 20 years of entertaining children", *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 Feb. 2013.

## 5. Lyrical analysis

Now that we have proved Sabaton's ambition of spreading historical knowledge, and the efficiency of songs as a learning aid, it is time to go a bit more into details and analyse the content of the album in question, as stated previously with the song "Great War" in part 2.2.

### 5.1. THE ATTACK OF THE DEAD MEN (#4)

The fourth song of the album was the one that intrigued me the most. The title and the narrative introduction push you to understand what the song is about: dead men who attack? Did Sabaton stopped singing about history and suddenly got inspired by horror fiction?

*[Narrative Intro]*

*Gas, the ultimate weapon of cruelty, a highly delivery system of a slow and painful death. This time a fortress and its few defenders would suffer its horrible consequences. Out of the poisonous cloud came an army of men who should already have been dead.*

*[Lyrics]*

*Turmoil at the front  
Wilhelm's forces on the hunt  
There's a thunder in the east  
It's an attack of the deceased  
They've been facing poison gas  
7000 charge en masse  
Turn the tide of the attack  
And force the enemy to turn back  
And that's when the dead men are  
marching again  
Osowiec then and again  
Attack of the dead, hundred men*

*Facing the led once again  
Hundred men  
Charge again  
Die again  
Two combatants spar  
Hindenburg against the Tsar  
Move in 12 battalions large  
Into a Russian counter-charge  
They'll be fighting for their lives  
As their enemy revives  
Russians won't surrender, no,  
Striking fear into their foe*

Sabatons are a Swedish band, singing in English. And as they are the one writing their lyrics, sometimes the grammar isn't quite right. Though, this song taught me an English expression: "to turn the tide" (figurative), meaning to change the course of something. It is also interesting to know that, if the singer sometimes rolls his "r"s, it is to hide his Swedish accent – the second verse of "The Attack of the Dead Men" is a great example because there is a nice consonance of rolled r: "spar", "Tsar", "Russian" "their enemy revives", "surrender", "fear".

After reading (or listening to) the lyrics, some historic elements appear – proving that Sabatons are still talking about the history of WW1: "Wilhelm" (the Emperor of the German Empire during the First World War – Wilhelm II), "Osowiec", "the front", "Hindenburg" (Paul von Hindenburg, an important German general during WW1), "the Tsar" (title of all Russian emperors until 1917). You can start to understand the story behind the lyrics: it is about a battle opposing the Germans and the Russians, taking place in the "east", in Osowiec. Apparently, the Germans (*Wilhelm's forces*) were attacked by "the deceased". Though, the Germans were in numeric superiority ("12 battalions", "7,000" soldiers against a "hundred" Russian soldiers). Moreover, the Germans had the advantage of the weapon: they used chlorine gas ("poison gas"). But apparently it didn't stop the Russians to "revive", "charge again", and make the Germans stop their offensive by fear.

The song already gives a lot of elements to understand the global situation, but it doesn't provide any information about the date of the battle for example. Nonetheless, their official website does:

*"During the Battle of Osowiec Fortress in 1915, German Field Marshal Paul Von Hindenburg ordered the bombardment of the fortress with an artillery barrage of chlorine gas to eradicate the 900 Russian defenders. After the bombardment 7,000 German soldiers advanced upon the fortress expecting little to no resistance when 100 disfigured Russians, coughing up blood and pieces of their own lungs, surprised the Germans with a counter-charge. The zombie-like Russians opened fire and attacked the Germans with affixed bayonets causing mass panic and forced the Germans to flee back into their*

*own traps inflicting more casualties. The remaining Russian defenders who survived the gas attacks seized the opportunity to raze the fortress and withdraw while the Germans hesitated.*”<sup>54</sup>

So, thanks to these additional pieces of information, you get to discover the incredible story of Osowiec Fortress. Moreover, you will probably easily remember the elements that are quoted in the song. The remembrance would be enhanced by the fact that the music, once again, is special and matches the message. Indeed, the band decided to use an electronic sound – which is extremely rare in metal songs. They use synthesizer “throughout the choruses and the intro”. Joakim Brodén declared: “and it’s such a nice addition – it’s something new that doesn’t belong, like poison gas itself, it doesn’t belong, so it gives the song a sort of uneasy feeling.”<sup>55</sup>. He went further in his explanation in another interview: “We are aware that our music is relatively **visual**. Then we also try **to arouse curiosity** through our project, whether it is music or lyrics. Why did you put there such a bass line, such a riff... For example, the song 'The Attack of The Dead Men' is a title that talks about the use of gas during battles and there are some electronic passages that some will say they have nothing to do on a Rock album, and it gives something that means something is going wrong there, **so we transpose this story into music.**”<sup>56</sup>

His declaration is a good conclusion here because it summarizes several things: their music is visual, it tells stories (and almost each of their songs has video clips); and remember part 3.2.2.: “**imagery connection facilitates recall**”. Moreover, as we saw with the two previous song analyses, they are careful to always make their music and the emotion of their message **match**, and they try to make their songs **unique** (which are the criteria to facilitate the learning process). So, at this point, it is impossible to deny the fact that Sabaton want to make their fans

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<sup>54</sup> Historic fact about “The Attack of the Dead Men”, Sabaton.net, <https://www.sabaton.net/discography/the-great-war/the-attack-of-the-dead-men/>

<sup>55</sup> Interview of Joakim Brodén, Planetmosh, July, 10 2019 <https://planetmosh.com/sabaton-the-great-war-interview/>

<sup>56</sup> Interview of Joakim Brodén, Musicwaves, July, 19 2019 <https://www.musicwaves.org/frmArticle.aspx?ID=2418&REF=SABATON-MAY-19&LANG=EN>

**interested** in history, that their songs are a way to arouse this interest and a way to **remember** key elements of history (all of this is in addition to their first desire: play Heavy Metal). So, as to conclude in a few words: taking in consideration that there are a lot of types of memories, and that everyone has their own musical tastes, Sabaton's album *The Great War* can represent a learning aid.

## 5.2. THE END OF WAR TO END ALL WARS (#10)

This song the last song in the album in which you can hear Heavy Metal. Yet, it ends with a choir of women singing instead of the band, creating a great link with the following song of the concept album, "In Flanders Fields", from which the band move aside a little bit.

[Narrative Intro]

All things have a beginning and an end. Four years have passed since the first shots were fired. Four empires are no more. The machine of war is resting for now, for this was not the war to end all wars.

[Lyrics]

Death, hard to ignore  
One million lost, five months into the war  
Pain, fell one by one  
Three years remained, it had only begun  
Unable to restore  
A map redrawn  
Unlike what came before  
The future of warfare has dawned

Do what must be done  
Send off your son, life cut short by a gun  
Gas, cover the fields  
Gone with the wind, reveal lethal ideals  
And as the end draws near  
November dawn  
With losses so severe  
Cease-fire, their forces withdrawn

Great war enter  
Front and centre  
Grand endeavour  
Lost forever  
Great war enter  
Front and centre  
Grand endeavour  
Lost forever

November 11th settling the score  
From 15 to 20 million  
Almost half of the dead civilian  
A new world will dawn from  
empires fallen  
The end of the war to end war



This song is a very good example to assert that Sabaton don't glorify war. The words that are put in the spotlight are "death", "pain", "do" and "gas": war is about sacrifice. But the sacrifice doesn't only concern the soldiers who enrolled the armies: The First World War was an all-out war and "almost half of the [...] civilian [died]." This song is very anxiety-inducing, either because of the lyrics which are more detailed than usually, or because of the music itself, which is special, and changing. The music perfectly follows their message. It starts calmly with a piano and a violin (or a viola?) – like the calm before the storm- and suddenly, the drums, the guitar and a choir arrive, like an unexpected attack. The singing is also changing a lot, together with the music and a lot of glissandos, it alternates between epic and disturbance, worrying. The song ends with the drums sounding like a sub-machine gun and a choir of women singing. They sing about the outcome of the war, the casualties (among soldiers and civilians), and the hope that all of this wasn't in vain ("the war to end all wars"). Though, when the music ends, we can still hear the sound of guns and bombing.

"War never ends" – this is the title of the historical comment under this song in the booklet. "It was supposed to be the war to end all wars, today we know that war never ends". In the Sabaton History episode about this song, I learned that the expression came from the English writer H.G. Wells. He wrote a book entitled *The War that will End War*, in which he predicted that lasting peace would be achieved, and, as the song is stating, "a new world will dawn from empires fallen". The German, the Austro-Hungarian, the Russian and the Ottoman Empires collapsed. At the time, this seems to be auspicious, but in fact, the war shattered the structure of Europe and the Great War wasn't the last.

The song adopts a Western point of view, but it is presenting a state of mind that certainly was shared by a lot of soldiers. I chose to analyze it because it summarizes many ideas that were previously stated by Sabaton: the horror of war and the future of warfare (tanks, gas and air fights), but it also introduces new elements: the end of the war ("a map redrawn", "cease-fire", "November dawn", and "the end of the war") but it is also the first time that Sabaton talk about the casualties in details: "one million lost", "From 15 to 20 million / Almost half of the

dead civilian”. The choking oxymoron “lethal ideals” aims at showing the vanity and danger of the war. A war that never ends.

### 5.1. “IN FLANDERS FIELDS” (#11)

I have already mentioned this song several times. It is the most unique in the album as it is an authentic poem of the time, written by a Canadian poet and soldier, Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. Sabaton (especially the singer Joakim Brodén and the bassist Pär Sundström) put it to music but decided not to play any instrument and let a choir of women (joined by men at the end) sing the poem in their place. This is a wise choice as it breaks with the style to attract the attention on the lyrics. The authenticity of the text is even more highlighted. It stands, once again, for a proof of a didactic ambition hidden behind their aesthetic goal. Moreover, this song is the very last of the album. It gives an impression of a quiet and solemn moment, like if the band was paying their respects to those who died for their nation. And even in the history edition of the album, there is no historical comments, just the song. It feels like a moment of privacy and solemnity.



*57In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*

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<sup>57</sup> William Notman and Son, photograph, Guelph Museums, Reference No. M968.354.1.2X

This poem is well chosen because it matches Sabaton's way of doing: it shows the horror of war, its fatality – the inevitability of death (in contrast with the beauty and the innocence of nature) and, at the same time, the extreme loyalty of the soldiers, their faith in their nation and their unity (“our quarrel”, “we”, “us”). You can also sense the fear of the soldiers to be dead in vain, the fear that nobody after them picks up the torch. The torch symbolises their hope.

Nonetheless, the fact that the poem attaches great importance to the loyalty of the soldier raises an interesting point around the idea of nationhood in war. This idea supplements the idea of lionization: an unshakably loyalty despite everything. But what about a soldier who wouldn't like to join the fight? Sabaton sang about Alvin York because he became the most decorated soldier in the US army for his efforts in the Great war. But he didn't want to join the war at all in the first place: he even wrote a letter explaining his religious beliefs that wouldn't allow him to join the war. But the draft board rejected his letter.<sup>58</sup> Men have no choice during the war but to enlist (except for physical exceptions). The poem spreads the same idea: the next generation will have to take “the torch”. But this kind of thinking led for instance Emmeline Pankhurst, the British woman behind the campaign for women's suffrage, to use her organisation during the war to publicly shame and harass the conscientious objectors –the men who didn't want to fight. Those men were loyal to their beliefs, yet, in war, you have to be loyal to your nation. This poem shows that men had no choice. Maybe the aim of Sabaton was to reveal the problem, or maybe it wasn't. The sarcastic lines “Do what must be done/ Send off your son, life cut short by a gun” from the previous song make me think that Sabaton implies that they should not go to war if they believe it is in vain, but nothing allows me to give a conclusive answer.

There are a lot of things to consider in this poem. The form of is a rondeau (fifteen lines that has two rhymes throughout. The first few words or phrases from

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<sup>58</sup> Sabaton History, “82nd All The Way – Alvin York – Sabaton History 029 [Official]”, YouTube, August 23 2019  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bT2tlq6noOk&ab\\_channel=SabatonHistorySabatonHistory](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bT2tlq6noOk&ab_channel=SabatonHistorySabatonHistory)

the first line are repeated twice in the poem as a refrain<sup>59</sup>) – this must be one of the reasons why it was often made into music. There are many rhymes, (the pattern is: AABBA, AABC, AABBAC) and it is written in iambic tetrameter. All of this is interesting because it is just like if the form was the message: as the lyrics, the form of the poem goes by the rules. It is very structured and “disciplined” in a way (as are the soldiers). And, as the song, the poem is very solemn too: I learnt, as I read the “historic fact” on their website, that John McCrae “wrote the poem the day after performing the burial service of his close friend, Alexis Helmer who was killed during the Second Battle of Ypres in Flanders, Belgium.” After some digging (because the band’s work aroused my curiosity), I learn that John McCrae died of pneumonia near the end of the war, and a collection of his poetry, including “In Flanders Fields”, was published in 1918 after his death.<sup>60</sup> So, the poem is a homage. This is what Sabaton tried to make us feel in their adaptation: no comment before, no instrument, no metal style, just the poem sung by a choir. Authenticity, solemnity.

Yet, there is one thing that changes in the song adaptation: the choice of the voices. The poem adopts an internal point of view, the one of the men soldiers, considering them as one entity, who lived, existed, and were meant to die in battle. In the song, for the first two stanzas, only women sing. They are joined by men in the last stanza. In my opinion (I couldn’t find anything online on that matter), it is a way to go further than McCrae. I explain: the poet talks about older soldiers, who died on the fields and the poet refers to himself and to his fellow countrymen as already dead. Sabaton’s adaptation was created 104 years after the poem, and for a need of detachment, they chose to give women the forefront. Symbolically, it shows that even more men died after the poem was written, and even if they are not all gone, a lot of women lost their husbands and their sons. The choir of men

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<sup>59</sup> Literary Devices, *In Flanders Fields*, <https://literarydevices.net/in-flanders-fields/>

<sup>60</sup> *English Poetry*, “Poems by John McCrae”  
<http://www.eng-poetry.ru/english/Poet.php?PoetId=525> (last accessed on May 24, 2021)

joins the choir of women in the last stanza, which makes sense because it is about heritage, and the “dead” (men) address the youth.

To conclude with my analysis of “In Flanders Fields” by Sabaton: it is a nice moment of delicacy that ends their album with a lighter touch. Nevertheless, it is not a digression as the theme of the poem, its story, and the adaptation fit with Sabaton’s didactic ambition. The song is based on an authentic document, written in 1915 by a soldier. The words show both the horror of war and the honour of the soldier. Finally, the song adaptation doesn’t distort the depth of the message, which can be easily remembered as the song is really unique. Ending the album with this song also has deeper meaning, especially as it arrives just after “The End of the War to End All Wars”. At the end of the previous song, even though the lyrics suggest that no more war will come to light, we can hear the sound of war going on. The poem is about succession, continuation. It was written during WWI in the context of WWI. But the choice of Sabaton to put it at the very end of their album has another meaning: WWI soldiers will need a succession, because it is not over.

## 7. My educational sequence

This year, as a teacher, I experimented a sequence of lessons about music with two classes of “cinquièmes” (seventh grade). The sequence was entitled “**The power of music**”. Their final task was to write about a song that represents an important moment of their lives. They had to indicate the style and explain what it was about and why they chose it.

### 7.1. OBJECTIVES

<b>1. Cultural objectives</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Music styles, especially those less known by the students (classical music, traditional music, and hard rock and metal music)</li> <li>- Great figures of classical, rock and metal music: Bach, Mozart, Vivaldi, Beethoven, Wagner, Tchaikovsky, John Williams, AC/DC, Bon Jovi, Van Halen, Judas Priest, Nightwish, Sabaton, ...</li> <li>- Musical instruments and their classification: strings, brass, woodwind, percussion</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Language objectives</b>	
<b>Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Simple present: definitions (a music is... / a song is ...)</li> <li>- The tastes: to hate, to dislike, to enjoy, to like, to love + idiomatic expressions: I can't stand / I can't bear / not my thing / not my cup of tea / (not) my jam / I don't mind</li> <li>- To give one's opinion: I think that..., I believe that ..., in my opinion, to my mind, in my view, as far as I'm concerned, I am convinced that</li> <li>- There is / There are</li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Musical instruments and music styles</li> <li>- Words and adjectives about music and lyrics: well-played, melodious, original, pleasant, beautiful, nice, emotional, saturated, loud, unpleasant, boring, strange, relaxing, calm, lively, fast, slow, interesting, well-written, emotional, nonsense, uninteresting, ...</li> <li>- Intensity adverbs: not ... at all, hardly, scarcely, quiet, particularly, fairly, ... a bit, ... a little, really, extremely, completely, ... very much / so much, ... a lot</li> </ul>
<b>Phonology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- -cal adjectival suffix</li> <li>- The names of the composers and the bands</li> <li>- rhythm /'rɪðəm/ and rhyme /raɪm/</li> </ul>
<b>3. Civic objective</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Express one's opinion and taste and respect the others'</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Methodological objective</b>	
<b>Learn / study with music on (aid to memorization, concentration, and motivation)</b>	

## 7.2. MAIN COURSE MATERIAL

- Video #1: Music Outlined, *Music Basics - What is Music?*, Jan. 4 2016<sup>61</sup>
- Video #2: cropped video: Stephanie Przybylek, Sasha Blakeley, *What is a Song? - Definition & Examples*, Study.com<sup>62</sup>

The rest of the documents used in class were worksheets that I made (see annexes). Two of them aimed at introducing musical instruments in English and their classification, while a third aimed at making them understand the plurality of the term “classical music”.

I also created a game: the students were sat by groups of four and each group was competing against another. It was like a music blind test, but each group had several pictures on their table (representing the artist or the country) and several labels (with the name of the song). For each audio, they had to find both the title of the song and the artist (or the country it comes from). Each time, a student had to make a sentence to give the answer and to give his opinion about the song. With this games, I wanted to check their knowledge of the sequence, but I also wanted to make them forget they were learning. I made them **play** (check Socrate’s quote p.19).

The goal of the sequence was mainly to let the students speak and express their tastes and thinking. I wanted them to realize what music was and what it could do. They really seemed to enjoy these listening moments. They were eager to give me back their final task: a lot of them wanted to know what I thought of the song they chose. At the end of the chapter, I asked them to tell me what music was for. Here is their answers:

What are the powers of songs?

What can a song produce?

- Songs can produce great emotions: sadness, happiness, ...
- Songs can motivate us to do hard tasks.
- Songs can give us serenity: it can help us relax and concentrate.
- Songs can help people memorize things.

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<sup>61</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftlUJ\\_e2HTM&ab\\_channel=MusicOutlined](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftlUJ_e2HTM&ab_channel=MusicOutlined)

<sup>62</sup> <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-a-song-definition-examples-video.htmlb>

I was really happy to hear that these answers had come very easily to their mind; and I thought that my sequence had been useful.

### 7.3. CONSEQUENCES

Now, every time I start a new chapter, I try to find a song that fits the main topic and in which the students will hear some of the vocabulary they need. The best example I can find is the song I found for their sequence entitled “Pirates’ life”. I anticipated the theme by playing some famous pirate music: the main theme of *Pirate of the Caribbean*, the main theme of the French animated TV show *La famille pirate* and the song of the animated TV show *Jake and the Neverland Pirates*. The large majority of students knew the songs. We worked deeper on the lyrics and the video clip of *Jake and the Neverland Pirates* and I came to realize, during a vocabulary test, that the vocabulary they memorized the most was the one contained in the song (pirate, crew, buccaneers, shores, ...). Moreover, when a student mispronounced one of these words – especially “pirate” – instead of directly correcting them, I sang the beginning of the chorus “Jake and the Neverland...” and the student finished my sentence with the correct pronunciation of the word “pirate”. Therefore, music does cue the lyrics.

Moreover, since we have finished the chapter “The power of music”, my students often ask for music in class: during their “¼ d’heure lecture” (reading time), during their revising moments and during their tests. They say it helps them concentrate and relax. I play a playlist of copyright-free songs. Though, I don’t put the volume loud, and I don’t do it every time because I know that it can have the opposite effect on some other students.



## Conclusion

Songs represent a source of motivation for some people as it unites learning and enjoyment. Using them as a teaching aid facilitate the learning process for people who memorize easily what they hear (auditory learner). For an even better efficiency, they can read the lyrics (reading learner), watch the video clips (visual learner) and sing the songs (verbal learner). In doing so, they learn thanks to what they see and what they do – in addition of what they hear, which increases their chances to memorize the content of the song in the long term. Songs provide the possibility to cue the text information thanks to the melody and vice-versa, which helps create a lasting memory of the whole message.

Therefore, listening to Sabaton can help somebody **who already appreciates their music** learn about military history, **on condition** of listening to their songs several times and **understanding** their background (cf. part 3.2.2.). The numerous media that Sabaton created serve that purpose: making sure that the aesthetics of the song doesn't distort its message; and giving more information about it. Moreover, reading the lyrics at the same time as listening to the songs can facilitate the learning process, especially if the reading comes with images and additional information, like in Sabaton's "Official Lyric Videos" and "Official Music Videos". So, Sabaton's songs can help consolidate military-historical knowledge. I use the modal "can" here because they help if and only if the person who listen likes this kind of music and developed the looked-for interest in the story behind the song. Somebody can absolutely listen to Sabaton just because they like the music. Everybody is different and everybody has different kinds of motivation and different point of interest. Sabaton's songs **can** provoke an interest in military history, and thus, they **can** help us learn better about it.

## ANNEX 1: (LYRICS)

### 1. The Future of Warfare

#### [Narrative Intro]

*1914. How peculiar that a single bullet can trigger a chain of events that would change the world forever. Nations will be torn apart, Empires will fall and an entire continent will be set ablaze in the wake of this event. Allies has a triggered in a chain reaction, resulting in a war that sweeps across Europe like a merciless plague. Armies will destroy the land, soldiers dig endless trenches and the shells will leave scars on earth for generations to come. We will also see the birth of some of the most devastating inventions mankind has ever conceived.*

*Born in factories, delivered by engineers, immune to the bullets of the regular soldier, unbothered by the burners of the land... the tank. The future of warfare.*

#### [Intro]

Standing in the line of fire  
32 will lead the way  
Coming over trench and wire  
Going through the endless grey

#### [Verse 1]

A desolate wasteland  
Infernal depiction of hell  
The birth of a new way  
September 15, 1916

#### [Pre-Chorus]

The first wave approaches  
At Flers-Courcelette  
Through fire and brimstone  
Breaking away, coming your way

#### [Chorus]

Standing in the line of fire  
32 will lead the way  
Coming over trench and wire  
Going through the endless grey  
Standing in the line of fire  
Moving on through the fray  
Coming over trench and wire  
Live to fight another day

#### [Verse 2]

The spell has been broken  
A new way to wage war has come  
The future of warfare  
For all to be seen, 1918

#### [Pre-Chorus] The new world approaches

Villers-Bretonneux  
Mechanized warfare  
Breaking away, coming your way

#### [Chorus]

#### [Guitar solo]

#### [Chorus]

## 2. Seven Pillars of Wisdom

### [Narrative Intro]

*Far from home and far away from the European fronts, one man joins forces with an unlikely ally with whom he conducts raid after raid and forces the enemy to redistribute his armies. The sun burns the desert sand as the legend in Arabia grows. The man is T.E. Lawrence. And these are the seven pillars of wisdom.*

### [Verse 1]

Far from home, a man with a mission  
In the heat of the glistening sun  
In the heart of ancient tradition  
This man's journey has only begun

### [Pre-Chorus]

Lead the charge  
A raider has entered the battlefield  
Sabotage  
The game is about to unfold

### [Chorus]

As the darkness falls and Arabia calls  
One man spreads his wings, as the battle begins  
May the land lay claim on to Lawrence name  
Seven pillars of wisdom lights the flame

### [Verse 2]

A revolt to gain independence  
Hide and seek, hunters hot on their trail  
Joined their ranks, obtained their acceptance  
Side by side raid the Ottoman rail

### [Pre-Chorus]

Lead the charge  
Tafilah, Medina, Damascus calls  
Sabotage  
Demolish the bridges to dust

### [Chorus]

### [Bridge]

After the war has been won, deception or treason?  
Who can tell?  
Who stood to gain?  
Who stood to lose?  
Who did the dying?  
Betrayal of trust from within or compelled?  
The pillars of wisdom can tell  
Back home where a new life awaits,  
whispers of past  
The sands of Arabia calling

### [Guitar solo]

### [Chorus] x2

### 3. 82nd All the Way

#### [Narrative Intro]

*All men are forged from a single mould but not all soldiers are equal. Sort them not by medals, not by rank. The difference lies in their actions under pressure. Some men crumble, some men go far, some men go all the way.*

#### [Verse 1]

In the draft of 1917, a man from Tennessee  
Overseas to the trenches he went, from the land of the free  
Into war he brought two things along, a rifle and his faith  
Joined the ranks as a private, assigned to 338th

#### [Pre-Chorus]

There on that day  
Alvin York entered the fray  
Saving the day  
82nd all the way

#### [Chorus]

Into the fires of hell, the Argonne, a hero to be  
Entered the war from over the sea  
Intervene, 1918, all the way from Tennessee  
Hill 223

#### [Verse 2]

When his faith has been put to the test,  
the call to arms he heeds

On the 8th of October he went, made a sergeant for his deeds  
Fearless, leading the raid of the war,  
machine gun on the hill  
Charge the enemy taking the prisoners  
by power of his will

#### [Pre-Chorus]

There on that day  
Sergeant York entered the fray  
Saving the day  
82nd all the way

#### [Chorus]

#### [Bridge]

What Sergeant York achieved that day  
Would echo to the U.S.A  
It's 82nd all the way  
Death from above, what they now say  
What Sergeant York achieved that day  
Echoes from France to the U.S.A  
It's 82nd all the way  
Death from above, what they now say

#### [Guitar solo]

#### [Chorus]

Hell, the Argonne, a hero to be  
Entered the war from over the sea  
Intervene, 1918, all the way from Tennessee  
Hill 223

## 4. The Attack of the Dead Man

### [Narrative Intro]

*Gas, the ultimate weapon of cruelty, a highly delivery system of a slow and painful death. This time a fortress and its few defenders would suffer its horrible consequences. Out of the poisonous cloud came an army of men who should already have been dead.*

### [Verse 1]

Turmoil at the front  
Wilhelm's forces on the hunt  
There's a thunder in the east  
It's an attack of the deceased  
They've been facing poison gas  
7,000 charge en masse  
Turn the tide of the attack  
And force the enemy to turn back

### [Pre-Chorus]

And that's when the dead men are  
marching again

### [Chorus] x2

Osowiec then and again  
Attack of the dead, hundred men  
Facing the lead once again  
Hundred men charge again, die again

### [Verse 2]

Two combatants spar  
Hindenburg against the Tsar  
Move in 12 battalions large  
Into a Russian counter-charge  
They'll be fighting for their lives  
As their enemy revives  
Russians won't surrender, no  
Striking fear into their foe

### [Pre-Chorus]

### [Chorus] x2

### [Guitar solo]

### [Pre-Chorus]

### [Chorus] x2

### [Outro]

Osowiec then and again  
(That's when the dead men are  
marching again and again)  
Attack of the dead, hundred men  
Facing the lead once again  
Hundred men charge again, die again  
Osowiec then and again  
Attack of the dead, hundred men  
(That's when the dead marched again)  
Facing the lead once again  
Hundred men charge again, die again

## 5. Devil Dogs

### [Narrative Intro]

*One combatant may have arrived late, but not too late to be able to change the outcome of the war. Unexpectedly, it seems that this unit is actually excited about entering the conflict. And where their allies are in retreat, Hell has just arrived.*

### [Chorus]

Kill, fight, die  
That's what a soldier should do  
Top of their game, earning their name  
They were the Devil dogs  
In a war machine  
They were the USA marines

### [Verse 1]

1918, USA intervene  
Until now they were mainly observing  
There in the wheat fields and a small  
piece of land  
It's a battle that'll write history  
Five times attacked, and then five times  
repelled  
And the sixth time, they managed to  
break the line  
Heart of the corps and a part of the lore  
The deadliest weapon on Earth

### [Chorus]

### [Verse 2]

Dogs lead ahead and attack through  
the lead  
Put to test at the battle of Belleau  
Clearing the forest and advance  
through the trees  
It's the end of the war that's in sight  
Hill 142, it's a final breakthrough  
It's the key to controlling the battlefield

Second to none, a marine and a gun  
And the foes run in fear of their name

### [Chorus]

### [Bridge]

In times they are needed, such times  
they appear  
When a leader has fallen, a hero arise  
And inspire the lost into glorious deeds  
that  
Would give them a name that live on to  
this day  
When in times they are needed, such  
times they appear  
When a leader has fallen, a hero arise  
And inspire the lost into glorious deeds  
that  
Would give them a name that live on to  
this day  
"Come on, you sons of bitches, do you  
wanna live forever?"

### [Guitar solo]

### [Verse 3]

Second to none, a marine and a gun  
Raising hell as they're fighting like dogs  
of war  
Heart of the corps and a part of the lore  
The deadliest weapon on Earth

### [Outro]

Kill, fight, die  
That's what a soldier should do  
Top of their game, earning their name  
They were the devil dogs  
In a war machine, they were the USA  
And since then, they are the devil dogs  
of war  
And then always are the USA marines

## 6. The Red Baron

### [Narrative Intro]

*High above all the blood and mud of the battlefields, there was another war going on. A war for superiority in the air between the daredevils of the sky, known as the aces. Among them, one man and his plane stand out: the Red Baron.*

### [Organ solo: Bach's Little Fugue in G minor]

#### [Verse 1]

Man and machine and nothing there in between  
The flying circus and a man from Prussia  
The sky and a plane, this man commands his domain  
The western front and all the way to Russia  
Death from above, you're under fire  
Stained red as blood, he's roaming higher  
Born a soldier from the horseback to the skies  
That's where the legend will arise

#### [Pre-Chorus]

And he's flying

#### [Chorus]

Higher, the king of the sky  
He's flying too fast and he's flying too high  
Higher, an eye for an eye

The legend will never die

#### [Verse 2]

First to the scene, he is a lethal machine  
It's bloody April and the tide is turning  
Fire at will, it is the thrill of the kill  
Four in a day, shot down with engines burning  
Embrace the fame, red squadron leader  
Call out his name, Rote Kampfflieger  
In the game to win, a gambler rolls the dice  
80 allies paid the price

#### [Pre-Chorus]

#### [Chorus]

#### [Bridge]

Higher  
Higher, the king of the sky  
He's flying too fast again, he's flying too high, he's flying  
Higher, an eye for an eye  
The legend will never die  
Higher

#### [Pre-Chorus]

Born a soldier, from the horseback to the skies  
And the legend never dies  
And he's flying  
And he's flying  
And he's flying

#### [Chorus] x2

## 7. Great War

### [Narrative Intro]

*Passchendaele, 1917 no-man's land.  
Not a great place to be. Upon  
command thousands of soldiers will  
march straight into the crossfire of  
thousands of guns while the endless  
rain keeps pouring down. Perhaps it will  
raise a question: what is so great about  
war?*

### [Verse 1]

Where dead men lies, I'm paralyzed,  
my brother's eyes are gone  
And he shall be buried here, nameless  
marks his grave  
Mother home, get a telegram and shed  
a tear of grief  
Mud and blood, in foreign land, trying  
to understand

### [Pre-Chorus]

Where is this greatness I've been told?  
This is the lies that we've been sold  
Is this a worthy sacrifice?

### [Chorus]

Great war, and I cannot take more  
Great war, I keep on marching on  
I play the great score, there will be no  
encore  
Great war, the war to end all wars

### [Verse 2]

I'm standing here, I'm full of fear, with  
bodies at my feet  
Over there in the other trench, bullets  
wear my name  
Lead ahead as the captain said and  
show them no remorse  
Who am I to understand what have I  
become?

### [Pre-Chorus]

I do my duties, pay the price  
I'll do the worthy sacrifice  
I know my deeds are not in vain

### [Chorus]

### [Bridge]

And feet by feet  
We pay the price of a mile here  
Though men are falling, we see heroes  
rise  
We face the heat  
As we are fighting until the dawn  
So follow me and we will write our own  
history

### [Guitar Solo]

### [Chorus]



## 8. A Ghost in the Trenches

### [Narrative Intro]

*Raid after raid, men charge straight into the fire laying their lives down for few feet of ground. It is a costly and destructive tactic. Some men have found out that a single shot can be more efficient than a hail of bullets when directed from a sniper's sight. Like ghost they sweep across the trenches with deadly precision.*

### [Intro]

Move between the lines, a soldier  
breaking the confines

### [Verse 1]

A force deployed from overseas  
A war in foreign land await the eager recruits  
And in their midst, among the men  
A soldier with a different past return to his roots

### [Pre-Chorus]

Into battle, the gas has them pinned  
Then this soldier invoke the spirits of the wind

### [Chorus]

Under fire, a ghost that roams the battlefield

Move between the lines, a soldier  
breaking the confines  
Just another man and rifle, a marksman  
and a scout revealed  
Makes his way from trench to trench  
alone, moving undetected

### [Verse 2]

And on the fields of Passchendaele  
A guiding light for reinforcements  
finding their way  
And in the Battle of the Scarpe  
Bring ammo over no man's land and  
fire away

### [Pre-Chorus]

In the battle, the gas had them pinned  
Pegahmagabow  
Invoked the spirits of the wind

### [Chorus]

### [Guitar solo]

### [Chorus]

### [Outro]

Francis stayed and fought throughout  
the war  
Made his way until the end alive

## 9. Fields of Verdun

### [Narrative Intro]

*This is Verdun, here they shall not pass!*

### [Verse 1]

As the drum roll started on that day  
Heard a hundred miles away  
A million shells were fired  
And the green fields turned to grey  
The bombardment lasted all day long  
Yet the forts were standing strong  
Heavily defended, now the trap's been  
sprung and the battle has begun

### [Pre-Chorus]

Descend into darkness  
303 days below the sun

### [Chorus]

Fields of Verdun, and the battle has  
begun  
Nowhere to run, father and son  
Fall one by one under the gun  
Thy will be done, and the judgement  
has begun  
Nowhere to run, father and son  
Fall one by one, fields of Verdun

### [Verse 2]

Though a million shells have scarred  
the land  
No one has the upper hand

From the ground above to trenches  
Where the soldiers make their stand  
As the trenches slowly turn to mud  
And then quickly start to flood  
Death awaits in every corner  
As they die in the mud, fill the trenches  
with blood

### [Pre-Chorus]

### [Chorus]

### [Bridge]

Fields of execution turned to wasteland  
from the grass  
Thou shalt go no further, it was said,  
"They shall not pass!"  
The spirit of resistance and the  
madness of the war  
So go ahead, face the lead, join the  
dead  
Though you die, where you lie, never  
asking why

### [Guitar Solo]

### [Pre-Chorus]

### [Chorus]

## 10. The End of the War to End All War

### [Narrative Intro]

*All things have a beginning and an end.  
Four years have passed since the first  
shots were fired. Four empires are no  
more. The machine of war is resting for  
now, for this was not the war to end all  
wars.*

### [piano and violin intro]

#### [Verse 1]

Death, hard to ignore  
One million lost five months into the  
war  
Pain, fell one by one  
Three years remained, it had only  
begun  
Unable to restore  
A map redrawn  
Unlike what came before  
The future of warfare has dawned

#### [Verse 2]

Do what must be done  
Send off your son, life cut short by a  
gun  
Gas, cover the fields  
Gone with the wind, reveal lethal ideals

#### [Refrain]

And as the end draws near  
November dawn  
With losses so severe  
Cease-fire, their forces withdrawn

#### [Chorus]

Great war enter  
Front and centre  
Grand endeavour  
Lost forever  
Great war enter  
Front and centre  
Grand endeavour  
Lost forever

#### [Refrain]

#### [Outro]

November 11th settling the score  
From 15 to 20 million  
Almost half of the dead civilian  
A new world will dawn from empires  
fallen  
The end of the war to end war

## 11. In Flanders Fields (poem adaptation)

In Flanders fields, the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That mark our place, and in the sky  
The larks still bravely singing fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below  
  
We are the dead, short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie



In Flanders fields, in Flanders fields  
  
Take up our quarrel with the foe  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch be yours to hold it high  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies  
grow  
In Flanders fields

## ANNEX 2: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

### Musical instruments

Match the instruments with the correct images

a guitar – a djembe – a violin – a keyboard (a synthesizer) – a French horn – a cello – a harp – a drum – a banjo – a double bass – a trumpet – a clarinet – a sampler – a tuba – a saxophone – a flute – the drums – a marimba (a big xylophone) – a triangle – an electric guitar

 1 _____	 2 _____	 3 _____	 4 _____	 5 _____
 6 _____	 7 _____	 8 _____	 9 _____	 10 _____
 11 _____	 12 _____	 13 _____	 14 _____	 15 _____
 16 _____	 17 _____	 18 _____	 19 _____	 20 _____

## ANNEX 3: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS CLASSIFICATION



### Musical instrument classification

#### String instruments

- They make sound when their strings vibrate.
- Examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Wind instruments

- They use air to make sound; generally, the musician blows air inside the instrument
- Examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Percussion instruments

- They make sound when they are hit, shaken or scraped.
- Examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Electronic instruments

- They make sound using electronic circuitry.
- Examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A string: une corde  
To hit: frapper  
To shake: secouer / agiter  
To scrape: gratter

## ANNEX 4: CLASSICAL MUSIC (PLURALITY)

### Classical music

Try to match the different types with the correct information

Type / era	Baroque ■	Classical ■	Romantic ■
definition	■ We can hear a continuous bass. Not a lot of orchestras. ■	■ The melody is important. It is very expressive and emotional. ■	■ The music follows very strict rules. A lot of orchestras. The piano is used very often. ■
period	■ 1730-1820 ■	■ 1600-1750 ■	■ 1800-1900 ■
Composers	■ Tchaikovsky, Chopin, Wagner, Schumann	■ Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn	■ Bach, Vivaldi, Rameau, Handel

## ANNEX 4: GAME



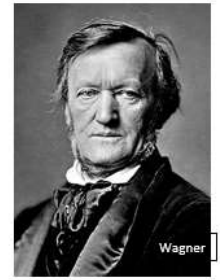
Bruno Mars



Ed Sheeran



Antonio Vivaldi



Wagner



Ireland



Van Halen



Sabaton



Beethoven



Giacchino



AC/DC



BON JOVI



Williams



Canada



England



Nightwish

'Spring' The Four Seasons	Harry Potter	The Ride of the Valkiries
Für Elise	The Incredibles	45 years
An England Scorned	Whiskey in the Jar	Elan
Living on a Prayer	Highway to hell	To Hell and Back
Jump	Perfect	Count on me

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Or how songs can help memorizing key elements.

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Fait à Besançon le 23/05/2021

Signature de l'auteur(e) : Clémence Dubrez

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Clémence Dubrez', written in a cursive style.



## **II. Autorisation du jury de soutenance (sauf HDR) :**

Le jury, représenté par le directeur de recherche / le responsable pédagogique :

Autorise

Autorise après corrections

Autorise après la période de confidentialité jusqu'à : ..... (Date

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La diffusion dudit travail universitaire, dans les conditions de diffusion définies ci-dessus par l'auteur.

Fait à ....., le .....

Signature, pour le jury, du directeur de recherche / du responsable :

Nom, Prénom :

## Résumé du mémoire :

Ce mémoire traite des liens entre les méthodes didactiques et la musique. J'ai analysé plus particulièrement le dernier album du groupe de heavy metal Sabaton. Leur album a été construit sur une base didactique – même si le but premier reste la musique. Des choses ont été mises en place afin d'assurer une bonne compréhension des faits historiques qui se cachent derrière leurs chansons. J'explique en quoi leurs chansons – ainsi que les chansons en générales – peuvent représenter un support non négligeable quant à nos apprentissages.

J'explique également quels procédés neurologiques sont impliqués dans le processus de mémorisation, et ce qu'il faut faire pour assurer au maximum le passage des éléments en question dans notre mémoire à long terme.

## Mots-clés :

Heavy Metal – Music – Song - Memory – Sabaton – Concept album - Motivation