

Approved for use in Grades 11-12

“This Hugo and Nebula Award finalist follows present-day events in which the fears concerning the nuclear annihilation of the world subsided after the Cold War and the fear of chemical warfare spilled over into the empty void it left behind. An amazing breakthrough in genetic engineering made by Vergil Ulam is considered too dangerous for further research, but rather than destroy his work, he injects himself with his creation and walks out of his lab, unaware of just how his actions will change the world. Author Greg Bear’s treatment of the traditional tale of scientific hubris is both suspenseful and a compelling portrait of a new intelligence emerging amongst us, irrevocably changing our world.”
(Amazon.com)

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

Dave Langford reviewed *Blood Music* for *White Dwarf* #79, and stated that "The finale is magnificent. The only problem is that it's nigglingly close to the conclusion reached by an author extrapolating from a different start-point: Arthur C. Clarke in *Childhood's End*. But Bear, I think does it better – and goes beyond even Clarke. Strongly recommended."

- * Resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any Teacher-Librarian to view the scholarly sources.
- * Scholarly reviews are also available online. Contact the Teacher-Librarian for guidance.

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

Blood Music explores genetic engineering and the ethical dilemmas connected to gene therapies in medicine, cloning, and nanotechnology. It’s a book that challenges readers to think deeply about scientific concepts by taking them to an extreme, and it will also connect intimately to students post-COVID due to the way Virgil’s “nanogenes” spread from his body to others’.

Rationale:

Blood Music is an oft-nominated novel in the Sci-Fi genre and an excellent example of “hard sci-fi,” a subgenre which focuses primarily on real-life scientific advancements and their potential implications. As such, the novel pairs well with non-fiction texts on scientific topics such as nanotech and genetics as well as with other sci-fi texts. Bear’s writing style is engaging and generally lauded for its scientific accuracy as well as its readability.

Noted Distinction:

- 1985 Nebula Nominated
- 1986 BSFA Nominated
- 1986 Campbell Nominated
- 1986 Hugo Nominated
- Easton Press Masterpieces of Science Fiction
- The Defining Science Fiction Books of the 1980s

Readability

- Lexile Score:
- Readability Level: 5.5

Learning Resources Guidelines

- The film meets the [Learning Resources Guidelines](#) and [Board Policy](#).

Approval:

Submitted to Committee: August 2023

Approved for Adoption:

Connection to the Curriculum:

Students studying science fiction will learn about how authors use contemporary scientific events to extrapolate and offer warnings to their readers about the direction humanity might be heading. This novel was inspired by the advancements in the 1980s with cloning and the genome, and students will explore how the author uses those events to write first a short story, and ultimately this novel, allowing both discussion about the novel’s science content and also an exploration of the writer’s style.

Standard Alignment: *(Type which standard number then link to specific standard document on OPI website.)*

[RL.11-12.2](#)

[RL.11-12.3](#)

[RL.11-12.4](#)

Title: Blood Music

by Greg Bear (Published in 1985)

[RL.11-12.10](#)

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)

This text is primarily used in the Science Fiction elective course.