

Lecture 10: "Oh What a Lovely War!" Songs of WW1

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Music Hall / Popular Songs

Your King and Country Want You

We've watched you playing cricket and every kind of game
 At football, golf and polo, you men have made your name,
 But now your country calls you to play your part in war,
 And no matter what befalls you, we shall love you all the more,
 So come and join the forces as your fathers did before.

Oh! we don't want to lose you but we think you ought to go
 For your King and your Country both need you so;
 We shall want you and miss you but with all our might and main
 We shall cheer you, thank you, kiss (bless) you when you come back again.

We want you from all quarters so, help us, South and North
 We want you in your thousands, from Falmouth to the Forth,
 You'll never find us fail you when you are in distress,
 So, answer when we hail you, and let your word be "Yes"
 And so your name, in years to come each mother's son shall bless.

Oh! we don't want to lose you but we think you ought to go
 ...

It's easy for us women to stay at home and shout,
 But remember there's a duty to the men who first went out.
 The odds against that handful were nearly four to one,
 And we cannot rest until it's man for man, and gun for gun!
 And every woman's duty is to see that duty done!

I'll Make Man Out Of You

The Army and the Navy need attention,
 The outlook isn't healthy you'll admit,
 But I've got a perfect dream of a new recruiting scheme,
 Which I think is absolutely it.
 If only other girls would do as I do
 I believe that we could manage it alone,
 For I turn all suitors from me
 but the sailor and the Tommy, [British Soldier]
 I've an army and a navy of my own.

On Sunday I walk out with a Soldier,
 On Monday I'm taken by a Tar, [sailor]
 On Tuesday I'm out with a baby Boy Scout,
 On Wednesday a Hussar;
 On Thursday a gang oot wi' a Scottie,
 On Friday, the Captain of the crew;
 But on Saturday I'm willing, if you'll only take the shilling,
 To make a man of any one of you.

I teach the tenderfoot to face the powder,
 That gives an added lustre to my skin,
 And I show the raw recruit how to give a chaste salute,
 So when I'm presenting arms he's falling in.
 It makes you almost proud to be a woman.
 When you make a strapping soldier of a kid.
 And he says 'You put me through it and I didn't want to do it
 But you went and made me love you so I did.'

On Sunday I walk out with a Bo'sun.
 On Monday a Rifleman in green,
 On Tuesday I choose a 'sub' in the 'Blues',
 On Wednesday a Marine;
 On Thursday a Terrier from Tooting,
 On Friday a Midshipman or two,
 But on Saturday I'm willing, if you'll only take the shilling,
 To make a man of any one of you.

Keep the Home Fires Burning

They were summoned from the hillside;
 They were called in from the glen,
 And the country found them ready,
 At the stirring call for men.
 Let no tears add to their hardship,
 As the soldiers pass along,
 And although your heart is breaking,
 Make it sing this cheery song:

Keep the home fires burning
 While your hearts are yearning.
 Though your lads are far away, they dream of home.

There's a silver lining
 Through the dark cloud shining.
 Turn the dark cloud inside out
 Till the boys come home.

Overseas there came a pleading:
 "Help a nation in distress!"
 And we gave our glorious laddies;
 Honour made us do no less.
 For no gallant son of freedom
 To a tyrant's yoke should bend,
 And a noble heart must answer
 To the sacred call of "Friend."

Keep the home fires burning

Good Bye

Brother Bertie went away to do his bit the other day
 With a smile on his lips and his Lieutenant's pips
 upon his shoulder bright and gay.
 As the train moved out he said, 'Remember me to all the birds.'
 Then he wagged his paw and went away to war
 Shouting out these pathetic words:

Goodbye-ee, goodbye-ee,
 Wipe the tear, baby dear, from your eye-ee,
 Tho' it's hard to part I know,
 I'll be tickled to death to go.
 Don't cry-ee, don't sigh-ee,
 there's a silver lining in the sky-ee,
 Bonsoir, old thing, cheer-i-o, chin, chin,
 Nah-poo, toodle-oo, Goodbye-ee.

At the hospital at Kew, the convalescents, dressed in blue,
 Had to hear Lady Lee, who had turned 83,
 Sing all the old, old songs she knew.
 Then she made a speech and said, "I look on you boys with pride,
 And to thank you all I'm going to kiss each one",
 Then they all grabbed a stick and cried,

Goodbye-ee, goodbye-ee,
 ...

The Rose of No Man's Land

I've seen some beautiful flowers,
 Grow in life's garden fair,
 I've spent some wonderful hours,
 Lost in their fragrance rare;
 But I have found another,
 Wondrous beyond compare.

There's a rose that grows on "No Man's Land"
 And it's wonderful to see,
 Tho' its spray'd with tears, it will live for years,
 In my garden of memory.
 It's the one red rose the soldier knows,
 It's the work of the Master's hand;
 Mid the War's great curse,
 Stands the Red Cross Nurse,
 She's the rose of "No Man's Land".

Out of the heavenly splendour,
 Down to the trail of woe,
 God in his mercy has sent her,
 Cheering the world below;
 We call her "Rose of Heaven",
 We've learned to love her so.

There's a rose that grows on "No Man's Land" ...

The Last Long Mile

Oh, they put us in the Army and they handed us a pack,
 They took away our nice new clothes and dressed us up in khak',
 They marched us twenty miles a day to fit us for the war,
 We didn't miss the first nineteen, but the last one made us sore.

Oh, it's not the pack that you carry on your back,
 Nor the gun upon your shoulder,
 Nor the five inch crust of France's dirty dust
 That makes you feel your limbs are growing older.
 And it's not the load on the hard straight road,
 That wipes away your smile;
 If the socks of sister raise a blisters,
 Blame it on the last long mile!

One day we had manoeuvres on dear old Salisbury Plain.
 We marched and marched and marched and marched
 And marched and marched again.
 I thought the Duke of York a fool but he wasn't in the van
 With us who marched and marched and marched
 And marched back home again.

Oh, it's not the pack that you carry on your back,
 Nor the gun upon your shoulder,
 If there's never any ham, there's plum and apple jam
 To make you feel your limbs are growing older.
 And it's not the camp or the echo of the tramp,
 That drives away your smile;
 It's the Sergeant-Major's little wager
 To break you on the last long mile!

Now we've been out in Flanders for many a weary day
A-marching and a-fighting in the good old British way
We don't complain of nothing but we'd dearly like to know
Before we are Napootaloo what for, where to we go.

Oh, it's not the packs that we carry on our backs,
Nor the gun upon our shoulders,
And we're glad we're o'er the foam from the stay-at-homes who roam,
Although we feel our limbs are growing older.
And it's not the fear of France's rotten beer,
That drives away our smile;
But if the British Workman beats the German
We'll stick it to the last long mile.

Oh What a Lovely War

Up to your waist in water, up to your eyes in slush,
using the kind of language that makes the sergeant blush,
Who wouldn't join the army? That's what we all enquire.
Don't we pity the poor civilian sitting by the fire.

Oh, oh, oh it's a lovely war.
Who wouldn't be a soldier, eh?
Oh it's a shame to take the pay.
As soon as reveille has gone we feel just as heavy as lead,
but we never get up till the sergeant brings our breakfast up to bed.
Oh, oh, oh, it's a lovely war.
what do we want with eggs and ham when we've got plum and apple jam?
Form fours. Right turn.
How shall we spend the money we earn?
Oh, oh, oh it's a lovely war.

When does a soldier grumble? When does he make a fuss?
No one is more contented in all the world than us.
Oh it's a cushy life, boys, really we love it so:
Once a fellow was sent on leave and simply refused to go.

Come to the cookhouse door, boys, sniff the lovely stew.
Who is it says the colonel gets better grub than you?
Any complaints this morning? Do we complain? Not we.
What's the matter with lumps of onion floating around the tea?

Soldiers' Songs

That's The Wrong Way To Tickle Mary

That's the wrong way to tickle Mary
 That's the wrong way to kiss
 Don't you know that over here, lad,
 They like it best like this?
 Houray pour le Français! Farewell Angleterre!
 We didn't know the way to tickle Mary,
 But we learnt how over here.

I Don't Want To Join The Army

I don't want to join the army,
 I don't want to go to war,
 I'd rather hang around Piccadilly underground,
 Livin' off the earnings of a high born lady/lady
 typist
 I don't want a bayonet up me a**e 'ole,
 I don't want me b****cks shot away,
 I'd rather stay in England, in merry, merry
 England,
 And fornicate me f***in'/bleedin' life away.
 or:
 ...
 I don't need no Froggy women
 London's full of girls I've never had.
 Dear Oh Gawd almighty
 I want to stay in Blighty
 And follow in the footsteps of me dad.

Keep Your Head Down, Fritzy Boy

Keep your head down Fritzy boy (2x)
 Last night in the pale moon light
 We saw you – we saw you
 You were mending your broken wire
 And we opened rapid fire
 If you want to see your mother
 And your fatherland
 Keep your head down Fritzy boy.

Hold your hands up Fritzy boy (2x)
 Just tonight in the pale moonlight
 We saw you -we saw you
 We were laying some more wire
 And we nearly opened fire.
 If you want to see your mother
 And your fatherland
 Keep your hands up Fritzy boy.

Kaiser Bill

Kaiser Bill was feeling ill,
 The Crown Prinz has gone barmy
 I don't give a f**k for old von Fluck
 and all his bleedin' army

Living In A Trench

To live with any luck inside a trench
 Your nose must be accustomed to the stench
 of the rotten Boche that lie
 On the parapet and die
 'cause they make a smell
 that hell itself can't quench

The Bells Of Hell

The Bells of Hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling,
 for you but not for me.
 The little devils (angels) have a sing-a-ling-a-
 ling,
 For you but not for me.
 Oh death where is thy sting-a-ling-a-ling,
 oh grave thy victory?
 The Bells of Hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling,
 For you but not for me.

Bombed Last Night

Bombed last night, and bombed the night
 before.
 Going to get bombed tonight if we never get
 bombed anymore.
 When we're bombed, we're scared as we can
 be.
 God damn the bombs from old Higher
 Germany.
 They're warning us, they're warning us.
 One shell hole for just the four of us.
 Glory be to God there are no more of us.
 So one of us can fill it all alone.

Gassed last night, and gassed the night before.
 Going to get gassed tonight if we never get
 gassed anymore.
 When we're gassed, we're sick as we can be.
 For phosgene and mustard gas is much too
 much for me.

They're killing us, they're killing us.
 One respirator for the four of us.
 Thank your lucky stars that we can all
 run fast.
 So one of us can take it all alone.

We're Here Because

We're here because we're here because
 We're here because we're here.
 We're here because we're here because
 We're here because we're here.

Holy Moses I am dying,

Just one word before I go,
 If you see a German soldier,
 stick a baynet up his
 Holy Moses

The Old Battalion / Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire

If you want to find the lance-jack,
 I know where he is (3x)
 If you want to find the lance-jack, I know
 where he is
 He's scrounging round the cookhouse door.
 I've seen him, I've seen him
 Scrounging round the cookhouse door (2x)

The sergeant-major
 Thieving all the squaddies' (soldiers) rum.

...Company sergeant
 Lying drunk on the latrine floor

...Quarter Master
 Miles and miles behind the lines

...C.O. (Commanding officer)
 Down in the deep dugout

... the brasshats [commanders]
 Drinking Claret at the Brigade HQ.

...the politicians
 Drinking Brandy in the House of Commons
 Bar.

...the buckshee Private
 buried in a deep shell hole

...Tom Driscoll
 On the firestep with half his head blown away

...the Old Battalion
 Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire

Never Mind

If the sergeant drinks your rum, never mind
 And your face may lose its smile, never mind
 He's entitled to a tot but not the bleeding lot
 If the sergeant drinks your rum, never mind

When old Jerry shells your trench, never mind
 And your face may lose its smile, never mind
 Though the sandbags bust and fly, you have
 only once to die,
 If old Jerry shells the trench, never mind

If you get stuck on the wire, never mind
 And your face may lose its smile, never mind
 Though you're stuck there all the day, they
 count you dead and stop your pay
 If you get stuck on the wire, never mind

If your mate just lost his sight, never mind
 And he screamed the whole damned night,
 never mind
 'though they'll send him home it's tough, He'll
 be great for blind-man's bluff
 So if your mate just lost his sight, never mind

If the sergeant says your mad, never mind
 Perhaps you are a little bit, never mind
 Just be calm don't answer back, 'cause the
 sergeant stands no slack
 So if he says you're mad, well - you are.

Hush Here Comes A Whizzbang

Hush, here comes a Whizzbang.
 Hush, here comes a Whizzbang.
 Now you soldiermen get down those stairs,
 Down in your dugouts and say your prayers.
 Hush, here comes a Whizzbang,
 And it's making right for you.
 And you'll see all the wonders of No-Man's-
 Land,
 If a Whizzbang [BANG!], hits you.

Forward Joe Soap's Army

Forward Joe Soap's army marching without
fear
With our brave commander safely in the rear.
He boasts and skites from morn till night
And thinks he's very brave
But the men who really did the job
Are dead and in their grave.
Forward Joe Soap's army marching without
fear
With our brave commander safely in the rear.

Forward Fred Karno's Army

We are Fred Karno's Army, we are the ragtime
infantry.
We cannot fight, we cannot shoot / f**k, what
bleeding use are we?
And when we get to Berlin we'll hear the
Kaiser say,
'Hoch, hoch! Mein Gott, what a bloody rotten
lot,
are the ragtime infantry!'

Raining

Raining, raining, raining,
Always bloody well raining
Raining all the morning
Raining all the night
Grousing, grousing, grousing,
Always bloody well grousing
Grousing at the rations,
Grousing at the pay.

Marching, marching marching,
Always bloody well marching
Marching in the morning
Marching in the night.
Marching, marching, marching,
Always bloody well marching
When this war is over
We'll bloody well march no more.

Soldier's Lullaby (Far Far From Wipers)

Far, far from Wipers I long to be.
Where German snipers can't get at me.
Dark is my dugout, cold are my feet.
Waiting for Whizzbangs to send me to sleep.

When This Bloody War Is Over

When this bloody war is over,
Oh how happy I shall be!
When I get my civvy clothes on,
No more soldiering for me.
No more church parades on Sunday,
No more asking for a pass.
I shall tell the Sergeant-Major
To stick his passes up his arse.

When this bloody war is over,
Oh how happy I shall be!
When I get my civvy clothes on,
No more soldiering for me.
I shall sound my own reveille,
I shall make my own tattoo:
No more N.C.O.s to curse me,
No more bleeding Army stew.

N.C.O.s will all be navvies,
Privates ride in motor cars;
N.C.O.s will smoke their woodbines,
Privates puff their big cigars.
No more standing-to in trenches,
Only one more church-parade;
No more shivering on the firestep,
No more Tickler's Marmalade.

I Want To Go Home

I want to go home, I want to go home.
I don't want to go in the trenches no more,
Where whizzbangs and shrapnel
They whistle and roar.
Take me over the sea,
Where the Alleyman can't get at me.
Oh my, I don't want to die,
I want to go home.

I want to go home, I want to go home.
I don't want to visit la Belle France no more,
For oh the Jack Johnsons
They make such a roar.
Take me over the sea,
Where the snipers they can't get at me.
Oh my, I don't want to die,
I want to go home.