

WWI Performance Pack: Music Resources

3: Can you, can you remember?

Nigel: Between 1914 and 1918, in a war lasting four years and four months, at least nine million soldiers died, many of them lost in unknown graves in the muddy fields of France, Belgium and other many other countries. And another 20 million from all sides were wounded.

Sophie: Here they were, stuck in the middle, a long way from home, in a world of mud, rats, barbed wire, bullets and exploding shells.

Nigel: In addition, it's been calculated that in total as many as 21 million people – men, women and children - lost their lives as a direct consequence of World War 1.

Today's 'Medley' later will begin with the 'Auld Lang Syne' tune we've sung already, so let's remember the simple words that the soldiers often sang to it:

Both:

*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
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...*



Nigel: For three long years, Britain and Britain's allies were locked in a 'stalemate' against Germany and its allies. Then, in 1917, America also declared war on Germany and began to send troops to the battlefields of Europe. To motivate their soldiers, here's a patriotic American song of the time. Listen to Sophie and copy two lines at a time with me:

Sophie: *Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word over there*

Nigel: *Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word over there*

Sophie: *That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming
The drums rum-tumming everywhere.*

Nigel: *That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming
The drums rum-tumming everywhere.*

Sophie: *So prepare, say a prayer,
Send the word, send the word to beware -*

Nigel: *So prepare, say a prayer,
Send the word, send the word to beware -*

Sophie: *We'll be over, we're coming over,
And we won't come back till it's over, over there.*

Nigel: *We'll be over, we're coming over,
And we won't come back till it's over, over there.*



Sophie: So, that'll be the second song in today's 'medley'. The third tune you may already know, from an old, sentimental song called 'Home! Sweet home', expressing the hope so many longed for, that perhaps one day soon the War would be over and the soldiers would be able to return home. Make sure you can see the words - join in humming, then be ready to sing the 'Home! Sweet home' words that come at the end.

Both: *Hmm hmm hm hm hm hm,
 Hmm hmm hm hm hm hm,
 Hmm hmm hm hm hm hm,
 Hmm hmm hm hm hm hm,*

*There's no place like home
 There's no place like home.
 Home! Home! Home, sweet home!
 There's no place like home
 There's no place like home.*

Sophie: As usual, we'll put the songs in that medley together a little later...

Nigel: World War 1 ended in 1918, at 11 am on the 11th of November - so that's the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month - the day we now call Remembrance Day. A key feature of Remembrance Day is a two-minute silence...and at bigger Remembrance ceremonies the silence is followed by a bugle-call that you'll probably recognize. It's called the 'Last Post' and here's how it begins...

[BUGLE: 'LAST POST']

Nigel: Those simple notes are a chance to reflect on all the lost lives of the First World War - and other conflicts since. They give a space to think and to remember..



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Sophie: And so to our last song, 'Can you, can you remember?', which is quiet and reflective. In its first line, you begin by singing the first two notes from the 'Last Post'. Listen and copy...

Nigel: *Can you, can you remember?*

Sophie: *Can you, can you remember?*

Nigel: Next, the same pattern is shifted 'up in pitch', for another memory. Listen and copy again...

Nigel: *A time, a time of wheatfields?*

Sophie: *A time, a time of wheatfields?*

Sing all those notes now to the next two lines of words, but you need to hold on to the words 'singing' and 'ringing' for an extra bar each time. Have a go...straight through...

Both: *Think back, to skylarks singing,
To when the bells were ringing...*

Nigel: The next part of the tune is a kind of chorus, and it has a pattern that falls and rises - down and up - a bit like a peal of bells. Listen and copy again...

Nigel: *And ask the questions - who, what, how, and why,*

Sophie: *And ask the questions - who, what, how, and why,*

Nigel: *And where, and when so many had to die?*

Sophie: *And where, and when so many had to die?*



- Sophie: Let's put the tune together, by singing the words of verse 2, then going onto the chorus. Verse 2 is about anger, so you need some controlled 'emotion' in your voice, to suit the words. Ready, after 4? A-1, 2, 3, 4...
- Both: *Can you, can you remember
A time, a time of anger?
Think back, to pain and fear
Young lives cut short each year...
And ask the questions - who, what, how, and why,
And where, and when so many had to die?*
- Nigel: Verse 3 needs more warmth and softness in the voice - it's about friendship, peace and helping each other. Try those words gently now...
- Both: *Can you, can you remember
A time, a time of friendship?
In peace, can we recover
And learn to help each other?
And ask the questions - who, what, how, and why,
And where, and when so many had to die?*
- Nigel: We'll try verse 4 in a moment. It's about sharing memories across the generations. But after it, you need to add a 'coda', an extra bit, which has the first line again, singing the 'Last Post' notes, fading slowly into the distance - 'Can you, can you remember..?'
- Sophie: So, are you ready to sing verse 4 and a final chorus and coda? Gently and thoughtfully...



Both: *Can you, can you remember
Across the generations?
Think back, and share each memory
Reach hands across a century...
And ask the questions - who, what, how, and why,
And where, and when so many had to die?
Can you, can you remember?*

Nigel: The song asks if, in peacetime, we can recover hope and learn to help each other, rather than resolving our differences with aggression and wars. Time to put today's medley together. We begin by singing 'We're here because we're here' to the tune 'Auld Lang Syne', then you'll lighten-up for 'Over there' - in an American accent if you like! - and finally hum sweetly and sentimentally in 'Home! Sweet home'. Ready?

Both: *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
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...*

*Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word over there
That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming
The drums rum-tumming everywhere.
So prepare, say a prayer,
Send the word, send the word to beware -
We'll be over, we're coming over,
And we won't come back till it's over, over there.*



Both:

*Hmm hmm hm hm hm hm,
 Hmm hmm hm hm hm hm,
 Hmm hmm hm hm hm hm,
 Hmm hmm hm hm hm hm,
 There's no place like home
 There's no place like home.
 Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home!
 There's no place like home
 There's no place like home.*

Sophie:

To close today, we'll sing the whole of 'Can you, can you remember?', not too fast...and thinking about the words as you sing. Good luck with your performances! Bye!

*Can you, can you remember
 A time, a time of wheatfields?
 Think back, to skylarks singing,
 To when the bells were ringing...
 And ask the questions - who, what, how, and why,
 And where, and when so many had to die?*

*Can you, can you remember
 A time, a time of anger?
 Think back, to pain and fear
 Young lives cut short each year...
 And ask the questions - who, what, how, and why,
 And where, and when so many had to die?*

*Can you, can you remember
 A time, a time of friendship?
 In peace, can we recover
 And learn to help each other?
 And ask the questions - who, what, how, and why,
 And where, and when so many had to die?*



*Can you, can you remember
Across the generations?
Think back, and share each memory
Reach hands across a century...
And ask the questions - who, what, how, and why,
And where, and when so many had to die?*

Can you, can you remember?

