

War and Music Topic: Songs Stories

1. And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda by Eric Bogle

This song was composed in the early 1970s and tells the tale of a young Australian who went off to fight in World War 1 and had a bad time.

Aim: To understand some of the horrors of war through listening

Music Skills: Listening; playing with instruments; singing.

Resources: a variety of recordings of this song. Listening comparison sheets

Activities: Listening comparison; learning a song through listening; performing a song with expression.

Careful Listening

Gather together a few recordings of And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda, a song by Eric Bogle. I really like the versions by Eric Bogle himself, also Slim Dusty's, and the Cornell Glee Club choir (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3u-r_hfkJk), but any will do! Have a look on Youtube – there are loads to choose from.

Choose one and listen carefully...so carefully that you can answer these questions:

Timbre and Texture

1. What voices can you hear?
2. What instruments can you hear?
3. Can you hear any other sounds? List them.
4. Does this instrumentation stay the same throughout the song?
5. If not, how does it change as the song goes along?
6. Can you hear examples of these textures? If so, explain where (give lyrics, or verses).
If you don't know what these musical terms mean, look them up first!
 - Monody
 - Melody with accompaniment
 - Homophonic textures
 - Polyphonic or contrapuntal textures
 - Octaves

Lyrics

1. How many verses are there in your version?
2. One of the middle verses of this song is often missed out (The verse that starts "And those that were left...") Why do you think that is?
3. List the occasions on which the band plays "Waltzing Matilda" in the song.
 - Explain the meaning and significance of each of these phrases:
 - I waltzed my Matilda all over...
 - Suvla Bay
 - We sailed off for Gallipoli
 - He rained us with shell
 - The crippled, the wounded, the lame
 - Circular Quay

4. Answer the young people's question "What are they marching for?"
5. Do you agree with his comment that "soon no-one will march here at all?" Why? Why not?
6. Find five positive things in the lyrics of this song. (Possibly the most difficult of all these questions!)

The music

1. Which of these terms and phrases could be used to describe the music you hear?
 - It's in a major key.
 - It's in a minor key.
 - It's in duple or quadruple time.
 - It's in triple time.
 - It changes time signature quite a bit.
 - The melody has a small range (less than an octave).
 - The melody has a wide range (more than an octave).
 - The tempo is slow.
 - The tempo is lively.
 - The melody is characterized by mostly stepwise movement and thirds, with some dramatic octave leaps.
 - The melody is characterized by mostly stepwise movement and thirds, with some dramatic leaps of a major 6th.

The performance

1. Say five things about how this particular performance conveys the emotions of the song.

Listening Comparison

1. Gather together and listen to a few more recordings of this song.
2. For each recording list five ways in which it differs from the original one you listened to.
3. In your opinion what is the principle difference between your original recording and each of the newer ones?
4. Which one do you prefer? Give reasons for your choice.
5. You must be quite familiar with this song by now – learn to sing it yourself and make up an accompaniment or arrangement of your own. You could try and be different to all of the versions you've listened to in some way. I wonder which way that will be!