Rhythm and War Blues

Music and Song Capture the Spirit of War

Emotions and feelings can be deeply touched when a nation enters war. World War I was no exception as the songs from that era depict a time when all Americans were expected to support the war. Popular patriotic songs demonstrate how music was used to inspire soldiers and civilians in times of crisis.

Directions: Choose one of the suggestions below and flex your musical or performance muscles. Submit a written reflection or undertake a spoken performance in front of an audience (in the classroom, school auditorium, etc.).

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1. Listen to and interpret the song lyrics to "Over There," "The Yanks with the Tanks Will Go through The German Ranks," "Lafayette, We Hear you Calling," "France, We Have Not Forgotten You" or another World War I era song.

2. Sing the soldier farewell song "Goodbye Broadway, Hello France" or the homecoming song "Hello Broadway, Goodbye France" or play the musical accompaniment with any instrument of your choosing.

3. Write and deliver a speech about the influence Big Band music had on World War I.

4. Compose a song about the sinking of the *Lusitania*, America's entry into the war, being drafted into the U.S. Army, being sent overseas as part of the American Expeditionary Forces, life in the trenches, being left behind by a soldier serving in the war, or any event related to the war that listeners could identify with and rally around.

5. Listen to and compare the perspective of American, French, and German songs played during World War I.

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For more song options and audio recordings please visit the Library of Congress at:

- https://www.loc.gov/audio/?fa=subject%3Aworld+war&dates=1910-1920
- https://www.loc.gov/collections/world-war-i-sheet-music/about-this-collection/