

Fred's Lecture Notes on HIST1000 Learning History via Songs:

“The Impossible Dream” (“The Quest”) is a popular song composed by Mitch Leigh, with lyrics written by Joe Darion. It was written for the 1965 musical Man of La Mancha.

In this song, Don Quixote explains his quest and the reasons behind it ... in doing so, he captures the essence of the play and its philosophical underpinnings.

The song is sung all the way through once in the musical by Don Quixote as he stands vigil over his armor, in response to Aldonza's question about what he means by “following the quest”.

The song received the Contemporary Classics Award from the Songwriters' Hall of Fame.

The American Pop Culture:

The song is also related to the 1967 Boston Red Sox, as their winning season was dubbed “The Impossible Dream”, too.

During Senator Robert Kennedy's campaign for the presidency in 1968, George McGovern introduced him before a South Dakota speech by quoting from The Impossible Dream. In fact, the song was Robert Kennedy's favorite song. It was also a favorite of Ted Kennedy and the song was performed by Brian Stokes Mitchell at his memorial service in 2009.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfHnzYEHAow>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jjl7VeIA7ZI&feature=related>

“The Battle Hymn of the Republic” is a hymn by American writer Julia Ward Howe using the music from the song “John Brown’s Body”.

The song links the judgment of the wicked at the end of time (*New Testament*) with the American Civil War.

Julia Howe’s “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” was first published on the front page of *The Atlantic Monthly* in February 1862.

Julia Howe was the wife of Samuel Howe, the renowned scholar in education for the blind. Samuel and Julia were also active leaders in anti-slavery politics and strong supporters of the Union.

This was one of Sir Winston Churchill’s favorite songs. At his request before he died, this song was played at his funeral in St. Paul’s Cathedral in 1965.

Singer Judy Garland performed this song on her weekly television show in December 1963. Originally, she would like to dedicate this song to President John F. Kennedy upon his assassination in November, but CBS would not let her, so she just performed the song without mentioning JFK.

Singer Whitney Houston also sang this song at her concert to the American army called “Welcome Home Heroes” in 1991.

The lyrics of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” appear in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s sermons and speeches, such as “How Long, Not Long” on March 25, 1965, and his final sermon: “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop”, on April 3, 1968, the night before his assassination – actually, this last sermon, Martin Luther King’s last public words, ends with the first lyrics of the song, “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”

All in all, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” has been sung at the funerals of such VIPs as: Sir Winston Churchill, Robert Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan. The Hymn was written during the American Civil War, and since the lyrics are touching and moving, it often brings tears to the eyes of the audience.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5mmFPyDK_8

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSvH4s-4sCQ&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kR7HPQM0Jgg>

”Edelweiss” is a song from the musical “The Sound of Music” (by Rodgers and Hammerstein). It is named after the edelweiss, a white flower found high in the Alps. It is sung by Captain Georg Ludwig von Trapp and his family during the concert near the end of Act II as a defiant statement of Austrian patriotism in the face of the pressure put on him to join Nazi Germany.

The song provides a metaphor of the edelweiss flower, as a symbol of Austria that Captain von Trapp, Maria, and their children would have in their hearts despite the Nazi annexation of their homeland.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFHujvkacNY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rMkbSO0ZSc&feature=related>

“The Longest Day” is a war film in 1962 about the D-Day, the Allies landings on Normandy on June 6, 1944 during the Second World War.

The theme song was written (and sung) by Paul Anka.

Unique for British and American produced in the 1960s (The Cold War between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.).

General Eisenhower (then, later President of the U.S.A.) led the Allies fought back and defeated the German army (even though a bitter victory with many killed) eventually.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpaTwpWt8BQ>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ff4ci4-tY_0&feature=fvwrel

“Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream” by Ed McCurdy (and sung later by many singers, including the Kingston Trio, Joan Baez, and Simon & Garfunkel), an American folk singer and songwriter. This anti-war classic (in 1950s) inspired and gave hope to many in the peace movement.

The song was first sung during the Korean War in the 1950s, and then in the Irish Independence, and then the Vietnam War.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_vXT95ITRI
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZU-9TBP2NY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3kCGyqAEiA>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Pf_DntbQ8Y

“One Tin Soldier” is an anti-war song in the 1960s (probably against the Vietnam War) written by Dennis Lambert and Brian Potter. The Canadian pop group Original Caste first recorded the song in 1969.

“One Tin Soldier” is about the story of a hidden treasure and two neighboring peoples: the Mountain People and the Valley People. The Valley People had heard that there was a treasure on the mountain, buried beneath a stone. They sent a message to the Mountain People to share the treasure. When told that they could share the treasure, the Valley People instead decided to invade the Mountain People. After Killing all the Mountain People, the Valley People moved the stone and found nothing but a simple message: “Peace on Earth”. Ironically, the Valley People had destroyed the treasure in pursuit of it.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qswm7lHp7oY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7jHp7OchP0>

"Blowing in the Wind", written in 1962 by Bob Dylan and sung popular by Peter, Paul & Mary, was an anti-war protest folk song in the 1960s.

Cf. Book of Ezekiel (12:1-2) [Old Testament]: "The word of the Lord came to me: "Oh mortal, you dwell among the rebellious breed. They have eyes to see but see not; ears to hear, but hear not." In "Blowing in the Wind", "How many ears must one man have, before he can hear people cry?" "How many times can a man turn his head, and pretend that he just doesn't see?"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3t4g_1VoGw4

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLUDJlx5jEc>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDFYbtp8h_w

"Where Have All the Flowers Gone" is an anti-war folk song by Peter, Paul & Mary in the 1960s.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYii6nxhvUk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7btcIj3p4-I>

光輝歲月 (Beyond)

(about Nelson Mandela of South Africa)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Unj29KvpaU8>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2RRk6OLq8E>