The Grainger Museum’s contribution to the centenary of Anzac in 2015 is the exhibition Pack up your troubles: Music in the Great War. With a focus on the Australian experience, the exhibition explores the powerful and varied role of music and musicians during World War I and considers why music resonated so strongly across a broad spectrum of domestic, civic and military life. Pack up your troubles is the title of a British music hall song by Felix Powell and George Asaf, which, like It’s a long, long way to Tipperary, was one of the war’s greatest song hits. As an exhibition title, ‘Pack up your troubles’ can also be read ironically, referencing popular music’s customary disregard for—or ignorance of—the realities of war, and favouring, for the most part, jingoistic support of empire and pride in ‘our boys’ at the front.

The exhibition is enhanced by video footage from the war years, and by sound recordings of songs, brass band numbers and excerpts from the musical theatre popular with troops during the period: visitors can choose from 20 tracks through loaned iPods, many recorded especially for the exhibition. The exhibition also features a break-out area illustrating Percy Grainger’s experience of the war, when he was resident in America. While entertainment in Australia when war broke out, as elsewhere. These pieces of sheet music (‘song sheets’) were the predominant means of disseminating songs to the domestic market, though increasingly the gramophone and the player piano offered newer—but considerably more costly—ways of acquiring the latest hits for home use. Sheet music was relatively cheap to buy and publishers sold the most popular numbers at 6d per copy; ‘sixpenny pops’, from around 1900, used cheaper paper and fewer pages to print the song, squeezing in advertisements wherever possible. At the same time, sheet music that sold for 2 shillings (occasionally more) had a more generous layout, with sometimes an entire page devoted to the lyrics, and superior paper stock and printing. There was a proliferation of music publishing companies; each big music warehouse had its own: Allan & Co., W.H. Paling, J. Albert & Son and many others.

Sheet music was produced on a huge scale and sold in large numbers. We know from many sources, including contemporaneous fiction, that it was a ‘treat yourself’ purchase on a shopping trip, for example, or was bought as a modest gift. Sheet music was played at
home on the parlour piano or when visiting friends, as a contribution to an afternoon's or evening's entertainment. Dancing, or learning to dance, around the piano was also commonplace. Songs could double as dances, though not during World War I; it was march songs (such as Bravo! Boys of Australia, left, and Sons of dear Australia) that proliferated at this time.

Musical literacy—the ability to read notated music—was remarkably high in Australia and the middle classes sent their children, particularly the girls, to learn piano or, to a lesser extent, singing, from exponentially increasing numbers of teachers, not all of them good. The proliferation of vamping methods, in addition, is proof of an interest in quick ways for adults to learn pianistic skills they had not acquired in childhood. And while printed sheet music provided perfectly serviceable and not-too-hard piano marches, dances and song accompaniments, playing the music as notated was not mandatory. Demonstration pianists in publishers' warehouses (Allan's, for example) elaborated and improvised, making the store's printed wares irresistible to purchasers, who were often disappointed when they played the same music at home.

Bert Rache and Private Harley Cohen, *They were there! There!! There!!!*, Sydney: W.J. Deane & Son, 1916. Music RB M R11892 THE.1, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne Library.

Leslie Vane, *Afterwards 'What will you do',* Glenferrie (Melbourne): Leslie Vane, 1918.
Music RB M V250 AFT.1, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne Library.

Music RB M S8814 HER.1, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne Library.

Music RB M C4495 FIG.1, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne Library.
Against this background of a vast domestic market for popular song, war-themed songs started to appear in the published song repertoire—first imported, then local—from the very early months of World War I. The numbers of songs published accelerated into 1915 and 1916, tapering off somewhat in the latter years of the war.7 Lyrics reflected the mood and responded to the events of the war. Early on there were songs of empire (Fighting for the Motherland, December 1914, illustrated on p. 27) and songs of burgeoning pride in the bravery of the Australians who volunteered to serve (Bravo! Boys of Australia, 1915). The Gallipoli campaign featured heavily in numerous songs (Heroes of the Dardanelles, 1915; They were there! There!! There!!!, 1916) and, as more soldiers were needed to replace the injured and dead (They lie sleeping in Gallipoli to-night, 1916), recruiting songs started to emerge to persuade the hesitant or reluctant (Coo-ee! Coo-ee! You’re wanted at the Dardanelles, 1915; For auld lang syne! Australia will be there, 1916). In later years songs about what the future might hold for returned servicemen began to emerge (Afterwards 'What will you do', 1918; Back home, 1918).

The individuals who wrote these songs were mostly established composers or relatively obscure amateurs. Of the latter, many turned to song composition in response to the war and had a message to impart;8 others (presumably the minority) had a more cynical motivation: to cash in.9 Most of the professionally written popular patriotic music was first heard in popular staged entertainments—vaudeville and pantomime. Vaudeville shows—popular staged variety given all year round—seem to have offered the best audiences and thus the greatest potential for publication and subsequent sales of the Australian songs.10 Songs, even the successful ones, range from those with the sophistication of the British drawing room tradition (Reginald A.A. Stoneham's Heroes of the Dardanelles) to well-crafted vaudeville numbers (Edward H. Tyrrell's They lie sleeping; Coo-ee! Coo-ee!), right through to the manifestly inept, the musically mediocre and those with clumsy lyrics.

Songs were also heard at patriotic concerts. These ranged from major events with star guests at city town halls to the suburban or country town equivalent. Common to all were kilometres of red, white and blue bunting and hand-held Allied flags, which the children waved.11 There were often also larger flags to auction off at high prices: soprano Nellie Melba, queen of capital city patriotic fundraisers, was well known for exhorting the well-heeled to pay above the odds when auctioning large silk Allied flags that she herself signed and dated.12 As the writer of one column for 'The Ladies' put it: 'Madame sang, we listened with reverent joy; she pleaded for war stricken families, and we gave willingly, gladly'.13 Souvenir programs, of often very attractive design, survive from these concerts and were also used to raise funds. At her patriotic concerts Melba sang songs and operatic excerpts from her usual repertoire, rather than anything of direct relevance to the war, though she and other singers who raised funds, like Antonia Dolores,14 would generally also sing one or more national anthems (or national songs).

An extended article published in the Sydney Morning Herald only months after war began gently satirised the patriotic concert phenomenon, specifically the suburban variety, of which national songs were a particular feature. In this humorous account, the singers and a lone cornet player were kept together by a pianist, plodding on ‘like a howitzer with caterpillar feet’, through the national anthem,
the Marseillaise, the Belgian and Russian national anthems, then a Japanese hymn. In these songs the school children excelled while adults floundered with the lyrics; in Belgium’s La Brabançonne the ‘curly notes’ proved very troublesome. This widespread singing of Allied patriotic songs—and the difficulties they could present—explains the proliferation of sheet music for sale reproducing these numbers. Judicious practice at home of words and melody would undoubtedly have been beneficial to those who attended these frequent and well-supported community events.

Popular song was also a feature of suburban patriotic concerts, sometimes composed especially for the event. In the Sydney Morning Herald’s satirical narrative:

… the tenor in the artists’ room waits nervously for the proudest moment of his life when he shall sing the patriotic song composed for the occasion by local talent, ‘Khaki Can Do Its Little Bit,’ or ‘Mother, Your Boy Will Do You Proud’.16

One Australian song surpassed all others in popularity, sheet music sales (even allowing for the customary exaggeration of sales figures) and
Program for *Melba patriotic concert* at The Auditorium, 10 September 1914. Concert Program Collection, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne Library.

Adoption by the soldiers themselves: Skipper (W.W.) Francis’s *For auld lang syne! Australia will be there*. Subsequent editions and reprints of the sheet music suggest that well in excess of 116,000 copies were sold; the copy pictured on p. 29, from 1916, is one of the ‘85th thousand’. It is hard to know exactly why this song was so popular and travelled so far. *Australia will be there*, in the standard two verse and chorus vaudeville form, quotes the music of *La Marseillaise, Rule Britannia, Advance Australia fair* and *Auld lang syne*, has an easily memorable chorus (an ‘earworm’) and its piano accompaniment is at the simpler end of the spectrum. These advantages pair with chorus lyrics that combine the essence of empire (‘Rally round the banner of your country / take the field with brothers o’er the foam’) with the Australian troops cast as Britain’s saviours (‘But England home [sic] and beauty have no cause to fear / Should Auld acquaintance be forgot / No! … Australia will be there’).

Francis, a Welsh entertainer, was in Sydney in 1914 with Fuller’s vaudeville presenting a silent movie of his 1912 Bristol Channel Swim.¹⁷ When war broke out he was inspired to write *Australia will be there*. As a popular stage performer himself he was able to sing his own song...
to great success. His backstory of physical disability and sporting accomplishment probably helped attract press coverage and initial interest in his song.\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Australia will be there} was to acquire official status as ‘the accepted march song of the Australian expeditionary forces’ and was dubbed ‘Australia’s Battle Song’. On several occasions it was named in reports where Australian service personnel distinguished themselves; stories like these were widely syndicated. The sinking of the \textit{Southland} by torpedo strike is the standout example of this. At the call to abandon ship, Australians were reported to have sung \textit{Australia will be there} ‘with no more hurry than a brisk march’ as they calmly followed orders, lowering the lifeboats and giving priority to the wounded.\textsuperscript{19}

Australian folklorist Warren Fahey provides an account of how singing was a constant in military life:

They sang on the march to relieve boredom and as an aid to maintain uniform marching time, they sang in the barracks, they sang in the troop trucks as they cris-crossed [sic] foreign lands and, of course, they sang in the trenches. Above all, they sang on those rare opportunities when they were ‘temporarily free men’ on leave and on the rantan.\textsuperscript{20}

Fahey’s interest is in collecting lyrics where parody and liberal amounts of often ‘blue’ humour provide an unvarnished picture of military life—the appalling food and widespread disrespect for their superiors and the British, for example—as well as lyrics that were aggressively gung-ho and designed to be heard by the enemy in battle. The lyrics Fahey has collected were often sung to traditional tunes; others were bowdlerised or localised versions of international hits and provide an interesting counterpoint to the songs that appeared in print.

Some returned soldiers, wounded in battle, forged careers as songwriters and variety performers; this could provide a living for those unable to return to their former occupations. Private Harley Cohen, who lost an eye at the Battle of Lone Pine, for example, formed the Anzac Concert Party with other wounded veterans, and later the Gallipoli Strollers.\textsuperscript{21} Cohen began writing lyrics in the trenches at Gallipoli. A small collection of well-thumbed Australian song sheets with lyrics by Cohen has survived (\textit{They were there! There!! There!!!; The dawn of a perfect day}), autographed by the soldiers-turned-performers of the Anzac Concert Party; most of the men have added their battalion number or unit and some even note where they were wounded.

Songs and singing resonated throughout the war years for many Australians: creators and performers, publishers and music-sellers, civilians at home and soldiers at the front. One hundred years on, the popular songs and concert programs in the Rare Collections of the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library, University of Melbourne, bear witness to, and illuminate, the music that accompanied those troubled times.
Dr Jennifer Hill is the music curator at the University of Melbourne and has worked for over a decade with the Grainger Museum’s collections. She is also an honorary research fellow at the University of Melbourne and has worked for over a decade with the Grainger Museum’s collections.

The Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne Library.


However, very few Australian popular songs were recorded during this period, presumably because the market was too small; Australia will be there and Heroes of the Dardanelles were notable exceptions.

Georgina Binns identifies 485 World War I songs for examination in ‘Patriotic and nationalistic song in Australia to 1919: A study of the popular sheet music genre’. MMus thesis, University of Melbourne, 1988 (vol. 1), p. 159 and passim; inevitably more songs have been located in the years since this fine study was completed.

See for example ‘Vaudeville jottings’, Sunday Times (Sydney), 16 August 1914, p. 18, which opens: ‘The patriotic wave has brought along on its crest a host of new song-writers. Spurred to action by dreams of daring feats of arms, people who never before thought of themselves as versifiers or composers, have been sending in to the Tivoli management songs by the score. Most of them are bad …’

See for example ‘Songs in time of war’, Advertiser (Adelaide), 27 February 1915, p. 16, which begins: ‘War is a boon for song-writers. If a ditty is taken up by the soldiers the composer is almost sure to become a wealthy man’.

One of these signed flags is located in the Collection of Katherine Griffiths, Melbourne; Collection of the Durance family, Victoria; Collection of the Crouch family, Melbourne; National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra; Collection of the Crouch family, Melbourne; Collection of the Crouch family, Melbourne; Collection of Katherine Griffiths, Melbourne.

The exhibition Pack up your troubles: Music and the Great War at the Grainger Museum closes on 23 December 2015.

1 The song Pack up your troubles, published in Australia in 1916, won the competition held by British publisher Francis, Day & Hunter to find the ‘best marching song’.

2 A seven-minute silent movie was compiled from World War I footage from the collections of the National Film and Sound Archive.

3 Eleven songs were recorded in the university’s Melba Hall, most for the first time, by baritone Kiran Rajasingam and pianist Andrea Katz.

4 Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne; Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne; Australian War Memorial, Canberra; Performing Arts Collection, Arts Centre Melbourne; Art and Historical Collections, Federation University; National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra; Collection of the Crouch family, Melbourne; Collection of the Durance family, Victoria; Collection of Katherine Griffiths, Melbourne.

5 Two of these signed flags are located in the Collection of the Crouch family, Melbourne; Collection of Katherine Griffiths, Melbourne.

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10 The Tivoli and Fuller circuits were the most prominent.


12 One of these signed flags is located in the Rare Collections of the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library, University of Melbourne (Music RB MELBA FLAG). It is an incomplete French flag (one panel missing) with wooden rod, restored but very fragile.

13 ‘The Ladies’.

14 Antonia Dolores (also known as Antoinette Trebelli) was a French-born soprano touring Australia at the outbreak of war.

15 ‘The patriotic concert’.

16 ‘The patriotic concert’.

17 Francis claimed he swam 15 miles, from Penarth to Newport. For an account of this film, see the Riverine Herald, 14 June 1918, p. 2.

18 For an account of why Francis came to write this song, see The Register (Adelaide), 9 December 1919, p. 8. His physical disability is inconsistently identified in the press.

19 For one of many accounts see the Southern Star (Bega), 27 November 1915, p. 4.
