

MEETING THE SUN

Movement 5: 'Lest We Forget'

Listening Guide

Australian composer Elena Kats-Chernin was asked to write *Meeting The Sun* to commemorate the centenary of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, or 'Anzac', landings at Gallipoli in 1915. It is a piece of music that has been composed for children's choir and concert band, which is a large group of woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. *Meeting The Sun* is in five sections (or movements) and lasts for about 18 minutes in total.

'Lest We Forget' is the fifth and final movement of *Meeting The Sun*. In it, composer Elena Kats-Chernin sets small portions of the text from the previous movements to music for choir and band. The text is below:

LEST WE FORGET

Golden moon clouds, silver dreams,
Silver light and remember this night.
May the stars above me twinkle with your
likeness, smile the same on me.
My heart shall never fail.
Take all my promises.
May you come back to me.
I wish I was young, too young to care.
Alas, tomorrow.

This movement starts with a long instrumental passage. Two horns alone open it quietly. Soon the music is moving forward more urgently with short, spiky chords. Three trombones then start to play a theme which is taken up by the woodwinds. The spiky chords return before the choir eventually enter. The singing builds and reaches a climax on the word 'night'. The music suddenly becomes quieter and thinner in texture ('I wish I was young') and ends with a solo trumpet playing a quote from the *Last Post*.

Activity 1: Research

Use this website <https://www.awm.gov.au/events/last-post-ceremony-questions/>

and this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3B1f2icDgA0> to answer the following questions.

1. How often does the Last Post ceremony take place at the Australian War Memorial?
2. At what time does it start?
3. Other than *The Last Post*, what other music is played?
4. What is the Ode that is recited?
5. Who recites it at these ceremonies?
6. How is each of these ceremonies unique?

Extension Questions

7. Describe the music and historical origins of the Last Post. Describe its use of pitch, dynamics and performing media. Give an account of how its meaning and significance has changed over the years.

8. Compare and contrast the *Last Post* ceremony at the Australian War Memorial with the *Last Post* ceremony held at Menin Gate in Belgium.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nACpXZyHOA8>

<http://www.lastpost.be/en/home>

Compare and contrast the two ceremonies. How do they differ? How are they the same? Why do you think there are these similarities and differences?

9. Compare the historical origins and music of the *Last Post* with the American bugle call *Taps*.

Activity 2: Listening

First, listen to the whole of 'Lest We Forget'.



Now, listen to a part near the end six times [from bar 112-120]. There will be a short pause between each playing.



Answer the following questions while you are listening.

1. Describe the woodwind part.
2. Name three percussion instruments that are playing.
3. Describe the part played by the lowest pitched instruments.
4. Describe the dynamics of this part.
5. Which instruments play long notes?

Extension Question

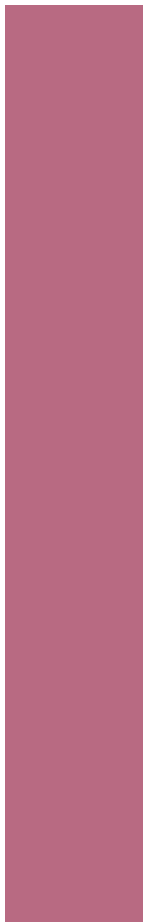
6. Describe the use of duration in this part.

Activity 3: Performance

In pairs, using two of the same instrument, play the classroom arrangement of the start of 'Lest We Forget'.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for the beginning of 'Lest We Forget'. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The top staff of each system has chord labels above the notes: A, B \flat , A, F, G, A, B \flat , A, F, G, A, B \flat , A, G, A, G \sharp , F \sharp , G \sharp . The bottom staff has chord labels: F, G, F, D, E, F, G, F, D, E, F, G, F, E, F, E, D \sharp , E. The first system includes a piano dynamic marking (*p*) in both staves. The time signature is 3/4, with a 2/4 section in the middle of each system. The second system ends with a double bar line.

Arranged by Jim Coyle with permission from Elena Kats-Chernin

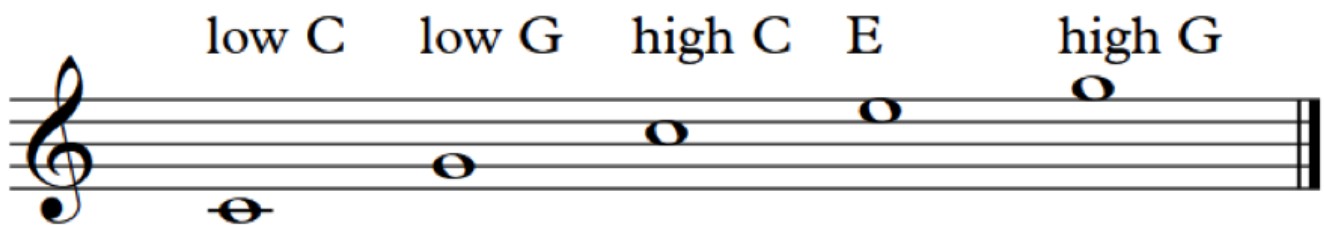


Activity 4: Composition

Create a short composition for your instrument using only the pitches of the *Last Post*. These pitches are given below. Improvise using these notes at first, until you start to form clear ideas of what you wish to create. Make sure you are recording your ideas as you go by writing them down as letter names or music notation or by using your phone, computer or device to record your work in progress.

When you have finished your composition, rehearse it so that you can play it to your teacher and your class. Remember to record your performance.

The *Last Post* pitch set:



Activity 5: Creative Writing

Tyne Cot cemetery in Belgium is the largest war grave of Commonwealth Forces in the world. Nearly 12,000 First World War servicemen from nations including Australia, Great Britain, New Zealand and Canada are buried there. The majority of them remain unidentified.



Image Caption: Sgt Jez Doak, RAF, photographer, Thousands of graves of British and Commonwealth soldiers at the Tyne Cot cemetery in Belgium, 2013, reproduced under Open Government Licence v1.0.

There are many First World War or 'Great War' cemeteries throughout Europe and elsewhere such as Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery in France, where there is a memorial to more than 10,000 Australian servicemen who lost their lives in the battlefields of the Somme.

Find some images online of Tyne Cot, Villers-Bretonneux and other Great War cemeteries. Imagine you are there today amongst the thousands of graves. Write a poem that expresses your views about these places and the men and women who are laid to rest here.

Acknowledgements

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