



With a sad heart and my soul in suspense....

Lately I've had time to reflect, and have reflected on the following:

Anti-war songs have always been around, (unfortunately), because there has pretty much always been a war to sing against. Their purpose is at the very least to get us to think, and to have a conscience. There are hundreds in many languages, songs about the world wars, the American Indian war, the American civil war, the Gulf war, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, America del sur etc.etc.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_anti-war_songs

From the anglo-saxon repertoire, everybody probably knows "Give Peace A Chance" by John and Yoko, or "Blowin' In The Wind" by Dylan. For those of us who have lived with war in their lives or have served actively in the military these songs may acquire a deeper significance. Generally they are harmonically and rhythmically simple, have a very important message and are sung or recorded with a ton of emotion. Maybe my younger friends, or those not from the U.S. don't know these North American songs that were so important during our young years. I have chosen a few...to provoke thought and emotion and keep in mind the current state of affairs.

· I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier

Alfred Bryan lyrics, Al Piantadosi music

This song was the first commercially successful anti-war song, released in the U.S. in 1915. It was promoted by the anti-war movement that protested against the U.S. entry into World War I. The warmongering ex-president Theodore Roosevelt objected to the song's message of peace and its early feminism. He said: "Foolish people who applaud a song entitled 'I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier' are just the people who would also in their hearts applaud a song entitled 'I Didn't Raise my Girl To Be A Mother.'" Future president Harry Truman, then a captain in the National Guard, hated the song. He suggested that the place for women who opposed the war was in a harem, not in the United States.

Many parodies of the song were produced, such as "I Did Not Raise My Boy to Be a Coward," and "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier, But I'll Send My Girl to Be a Nurse." Parody poems and other responses were also produced such as "I Didn't Raise My Dog to Be a Sausage", and "I Didn't Raise My Ford to Be a Jitney." According to Groucho Marx, a popular joke of the period concerned a poker game in which a cardplaying mother states, "I didn't raise my boy, he had the joker".

Its expression of popular pacifist sentiment helped make the pacifist movement a hard, quantifiable political reality to be reckoned with. The song was revived in the 1960s in opposition to the US war in Vietnam.

Here is the original, by the Peerless Quintet

<https://youtu.be/-C2qOAgMCl4>

As a ballad with artistic melodic license (*too much* license for my taste):

https://youtu.be/p5I_zOLCero

Same words, in hebrew and arabic, but a different melody, by the Rana Choir, a choir of women from Palestine and Israel.

<https://youtu.be/dWSZmH6oP7s>

And my favourite, by the group – “If It Weren’t For The Irish And The Jews”-, with Mick Moloney

<https://youtu.be/GfZHwsFd72s>

More info:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Didn%27t_Raise_My_Boy_to_Be_a_Soldier

· Phil Ochs (1940-1976) was known for his protest songs against the war in Vietnam. I learned to play some guitar (Gibson J-15) with his songbooks. He was diagnosed as bipolar and hung himself at the age of 26.

I Ain't Marchin' Anymore

https://youtu.be/uRU_ruqnR6Q

· Edwin Starr (1942-2003) recorded this tune in 1976. From the Motown catalogue.

War

<https://youtu.be/dQHUAJTzqF0>

The original was by the Temptations, 1969.

https://youtu.be/S_-bpMqDqIg

And Bruce Springsteen has a version with a powerful video from 1986.

<https://youtu.be/mn91L9goKfQ>

· Richie Havens (1941-2013) opened the Woodstock festival with this song (he played for 3 hours because groups were delayed by collapsed roads and after playing his entire repertoire, he improvised the now famous *Freedom*). Havens opened for The Cream (Clapton/Bruce/Baker) at my first concert as an adult at the Café Au Go Go in Greenwich Village NY. He played with an unusual technique involving his left thumb and I believe he used an open tuning. His debut LP *Mixed Bag* was a musical milestone for me.

Handsome Johnny

<https://youtu.be/kwdyr9Ceh6Q>

· Country Joe and the Fish- Joe McDonald (1942-) led a group that also played at Woodstock, Monterey, and other venues, and forged his reputation in the country and psychedelic rock genres. We all sang (500,000 of us) the chorus....1- 2- 3 -...

Fixin' To Die

<https://youtu.be/KFTJTMimJYg>

· And for the pessimists among you readers, this song recorded in 1965 by Barry McGuire(1935-), was rejected by The Byrds, and recorded by The Turtles as well. Here the frustrations and fears of a generation are expressed during the Vietnam war.

Eve of Destruction

<https://youtu.be/N4RH0Ddir2Uc>

· Finally I couldn't resist including a tune of mine from about 25 years ago, recorded with a 4 track cassette and Logic 6. The voice has a "Strawberry Fields" effect on it... The title comes from fishermen in Nigeria.

When Two Elephants Fight the Only One Who Suffers Is the Grass

<https://youtu.be/MNkZYRmfSRo>

words English and Spanish

http://andrewbradphillips.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/1/4/12144539/when_two_elephants_fight_the_only_one_who_suffers_is_the_grass.pdf

· To give some contrast to all this, the military/industrial complex in the U.S.A. gave us kids quite a scare with this piece of propaganda during the cold war of the 50's. *Duck and Cover* wasn't exactly anti-war. Its purpose was to calm the nerves of young children, making them believe that you could be safe during a nuclear attack. It didn't work, to say the least. I can remember having to get under my desk at school, and live with a horrible overhanging cloud of fear, especially when the sirens sounded in my neighborhood park. My mother was a civil defense volunteer and I used to play with her special flashlight and helmet. There was a nuclear refuge in our basement.

<https://youtu.be/LWH4tWkZpPU>

Your comments are welcome...

Peace

