

A Selection of Songs from the Our Subversive Voice's list of 250

This list has been compiled by the Our Subversive Voice research team. It offers a selection of songs from the 250 highlighted by the project that might work well in concert. It tries to reflect their long history and their diversity (in form and content). Notes are added to explain the choices. Which ones are best for the concert is for us all to determine...

Marches, Hymns, Anthems

Eliza Flower & Harriet Martineau. 'The Gathering of the Unions' (1832)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12197/>

- Norfolk connection (Martineau born in Norwich)
- Documented history of performance by c.100,000 people
- The first song on our list by named women
- Three succinct verses and strong chorus; written with harmonies

Edith Nesbit, 'Come Gather, O People' (1888)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12289/>

- Surprising writer (famous children's author)
- Subverts the tune of 'Hearts of Oak', a great theatrical tune for a crowd
- Nice message of revolution through words

Anon., 'Rouse, Ye Women' (1910)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12305/>

- Tune 'Men of Harlech' is tried and tested for choral performance!
- At once a suffragette and a labour/union song

Ethel Smyth & Cicely Hamilton, 'March of the Women' (1911)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12310/>

- *The* canonical song of the suffragettes
- Score freely available online at different levels of complexity

Upbeat simple singalongs

Anon., 'Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire' (1914-18)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12315/>

- Well-known, and probably one or two should be for the audience's sake
- Injects dark humour
- Potential for audience participation (call-and-response)

Anon., 'Brazen Hussies' (1983)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12447/>

- Tune 'I Wish I Was In Dixie' is a belter and will be known by some
- As with many, never before recorded and should be better known!
- Truly infectious and fun to sing; great bold lyrics
- Very short (though you could add repeats) which might be a good thing?

Captain Ska, 'Liar Liar' (2010)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12593/>

- Mixes things up generically and rhythmically
- Easily adaptable, could be great fun to play with

- Adds a contemporary note
- Chorus suitable for audience rendition

Upbeat but potentially more challenging

Anon., 'Lock Jaws' (1795)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12126/>

- Topical relevance to the Crimes and Policing Bill and censorship of protest
- Set to a supremely enjoyable and propulsive theatre tune, catchy chorus
- Very fast lyrics so may not be quite suitable, but could be a fun challenge

Maggie Holland, 'A Place Called England' (1999)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12548/>

- Neatly summative of the whole thing, full of call-backs to history
- Thematically based on allotments and land so great for Common Plot
- Built on I-IV-V chords in different progressions so great potential to arrange
- this could work well as a finale
- Again, quite fast and lyrically dense, so comes with that caveat, but is distinctive in its pop/rock style

Narrative ballads

Penny of Wisbech?, 'The Powte's Complaint' (1619)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/11933/>

- Local connection! Eco-critical fen draining song
- Very simple tune – again, potential to play with this in interesting ways

Robert Coster, 'The Diggers' Christmas Carol' (1650)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/11970/>

- The one genuine 17th-century diggers' song we have
- i.e. the interesting alternative to 'The Diggers' Song' / 'The World Turned Upside-Down'
- A strong tune, originally for a dance, albeit a little demanding
- Unusually accessible, plain, relatable lyrics for such an old song

Anon., 'The Parliament Routed' (1653)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/11972/>

- Topical relevance in the hypocrisy of government
- A strong and simple chorus

Anon., 'The Sea-Martyrs' (1691)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12036/>

- Quite an extreme republican sentiment; historically very interesting
- Another simple tune that may lend itself to an experimental arrangement

Left-field bangers

Black Sabbath, 'War Pigs' (1970)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12370/>

- Stripped down, the melody is a great swaggering thing for call-and-response
- Could be fun to re-interpret the heavy metal music for this context

Anohni, '4 Degrees' (2016)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12627/>

- Similarly, exciting possibilities of interpreting an intense disco number
- Offers something different: minor, aggressive, but melodically simple
- Could really get the singers fired up? Theatrical possibilities here

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'Extras'

1) Grace Petrie, 'I Wish The Guardian Believed That I Exist' (2016)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12630/>

- A possibility for a soloist-vocal rendition of, say, verse two/three and the chorus, as a set up for the rest of the show? As a framing device?

2) John Gay, 'Tyburn Tree' (1728)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12054/>

- Sung to a variation on Greensleeves, but you could use the standard version of that tune
- From *The Beggars' Opera* so a neat theatrical homage
- Literally thirty seconds, and a savage lyric of class warfare
- To be sung by one or many as a short, sharp burst?

3) Joseph Mather, 'God Save Great Thomas Paine' (1793)

<https://oursubversivevoice.com/song/12114/>

- We love the idea of including this, perhaps even at the end, perhaps as shared with the audience (sung to the tune of 'God Save the Queen')
- Not the whole song, maybe just the third verse as a one-off
- The idea being for people to feel what it's like to sing protest lyrics to the national anthem, which was such a super-common phenomenon for centuries; there were hundreds of these alternative versions to this tune