PARADE OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS - JESSEL

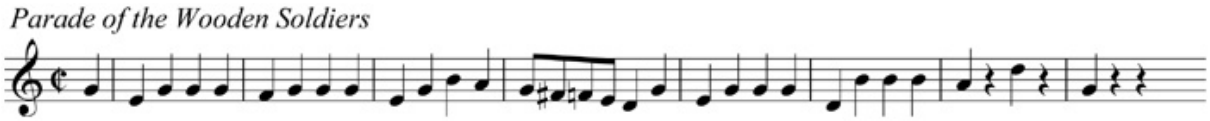
Context

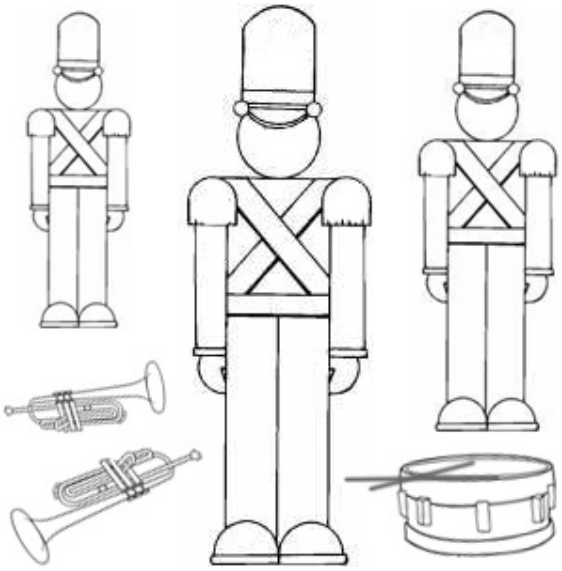
Parade of the Wooden Soldiers was written by Leon Jessel and heard by a Russian producer who decided to use it as a dance number in a show. In 1922, Ballard MacDonald, wrote words that could be sung to the tune. Here are some of those lyrics:

> *The toyshop door is locked up tight and everything is quiet for the night,*
> *When suddenly the clock strikes twelve, the fun's begun.*
> *The dolls are in their best arrayed, there's going to be a wonderful parade*
> *Hark to the drum, oh! Here they come cries everyone.*
> *Hear them all cheering, now they are nearing*
> *There's the captain stiff as starch*
> *Bayonets flashing, music is crashing as the wooden soldiers march*
> *Sabers a-clinking, soldiers a-winking at each pretty little maid*
> *Here they come, here they come, here they come,*
> *Wooden soldiers on parade…* (Ballard MacDonald)

Teaching and Learning

- This is a march in 4-time.
- The main instruments are muted trumpets, snare drum and strings
- When a mute is placed into the bell of a trumpet it changes the sound a bit. Toy soldiers often play a 'roll' on a snare drum. It sounds rattly. A xylophone has wooden bars.
- The music at the start of the piece is played again at the end. The structure is ABA.
- Fanfares are used at important occasions particularly when kings and queens are involved.
- We also hear sliding sounds (glissando).
- Sometime the sounds clash with each other (dissonance) and the music gets loud at the end.
- Words connected with the story-line: soldiers, brave, parade, swinging arms, strut, jaunty.
- Here are the first few bars of the tune:



Activities for Children

- The children stand in a circle and march in time to the music, reinforcing a sense of beat.
- They can choose an instrument and mime it – the snare drum and the trumpet are the best choices. This reinforces their sense of timbre.
- The lyrics can be read dramatically to the children who then act out the part of the soldiers and the onlookers while the music is playing.
- Sing along with the music.
- The children will understand the setting of the piece better when they are colouring in the image of wooden soldiers, trumpets and a snare drum, below.