

**Bryan Pinkall's Doctoral Recital**  
**"Wir wollen Deutsche bleiben"**  
**70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Soviet genocide of the Volga Germans**

**Ach Wenn Mutter Wolga**

Ah, if Mother Volga could turn back her flowing! Ah,  
we could live our lives over again!

Flowers in winter would keep sending their  
fragrance! Love would be faithful and unending!  
We would measure the ocean's depths and trust a  
maiden's beauty as well as treasure!

Ah, each old wife would be as youthful as her  
daughter! The wine flasks would have more brandy  
and a little less water! Seeking our lips would be  
their mission!

The devil would take down all tyrants! Within our  
pockets gold might fill! And each one of us would  
never lack a coat! Each day the hungry might be fed!  
And Father Czar would but know all things truly!

**Asie from Shéhérazade**

Asia, Asia, Asia!  
Ancient, marvelous lands of nursery tales  
Where imagination sleeps like an empress  
In her forest, surrounded in mystery.

Asia:  
I should like to leave with the schooner  
Rocking tonight in the harbor,  
Mysterious and alone,  
And at last unfurling purple sails  
Like an huge night bird in the golden sky.

I should like to leave for the flower islands  
Listening to the perverse ocean sing  
To an old, bewitching rhythm.  
I should like to see Damascus and the cities of  
Persia  
With light minarets in the air.  
I should like to see beautiful silk turbans  
Over dark faces with shining teeth;

I should like to see eyes darkened with love  
And pupils shining with joy  
Against skins golden as oranges;  
I should like to see velvet clothes  
And robes with long fringes.  
I should like to see pipes in mouths  
Surrounded by white beards;  
I should like to see grasping merchants

with shady looks,  
And cadis and viziers,  
Who with a mere crook of the finger  
Dispense life or death at will.

I should like to see Persia, and India, and then  
China,  
Pot-bellied mandarins under umbrellas,  
And princesses of slender hands  
And scholars arguing  
Over poetry and beauty;

I should like to linger in the enchanted palace  
And, like a foreign traveler,  
Contemplate at leisure painted landscapes  
On fabrics in pine-wood frames  
With a figure in the middle of an orchard;

I should like to see assassins smiling  
As the executioner cuts off an innocent head  
With his great curved oriental saber.

I should like to see paupers and queens;  
I should like to see roses and blood;  
I should like to see dying of love or else of hate.

And then return  
To recount my adventures to those curious of  
dreams,  
Raising, like Sinbad, my old Arab cup  
From time to time to my lips  
To interrupt the tale, artfully. . . .

**Chanson Indoue from Sadko**

Innumerable are the diamonds in the stone caves,  
Innumerable are the pearls in the midday sea of  
miraculous far off India.

There is in the warm sea a marvelous ruby stone, on  
that stone is a phoenix with a face of a maiden.  
Heavenly are all its songs, sweetly it sings, it unfurls  
its wings, and covers the sea. Anyone who hears the  
bird will forget everything.

Innumerable are the diamonds in the stone caves,  
Innumerable are the pearls in the midday sea... of  
miraculous far off India.

### **Nebbie**

I suffer. Far, far away  
The sleeping fog  
Rises from the quiet plain.

Shrilly, cawing, the crows,  
Trusting their black wings,  
Traverse the moors, grimly.

To the raw bites of air  
The sorrowful tree trunks  
Offer, praying, their bare branches.

How cold I am! I am alone;  
Driven through the gray sky  
A groan of the dead soars.

And repeats to me: come;  
The valley is dark.  
O sad one, o unloved one, come!

### **Verborgenheit**

Oh, world, let me be!  
Entice me not with gifts of love.  
Let this heart in solitude have  
Your bliss, your pain!

What I mourn, I know not.  
It is an unknown pain;  
Forever through tears shall I see  
The sun's love-light.

Often, I am scarcely conscious  
And the bright joys break  
Through the pain, thus pressing  
Delightfully into my breast.

Oh, world, let me be!  
Entice me not with gifts of love.  
Let this heart in solitude have  
Your bliss, your pain!

### **Wie bist du meine Königin?**

How are you my Queen?  
You are gentle and good!  
Merely smile, and spring fragrance wafts  
Through my spirit blissfully!

The brightness of freshly blooming roses,  
Shall I compare it to yours?  
Ah, soaring over all that blooms  
Is your bloom, blissful!

Wander through dead wastelands,  
And green shadows will be spreading,  
Even if fearful sultriness  
Broods there without end... blissfully!

Let me die in your arms!  
It is in them that Death itself,  
Even if the sharpest pain  
Rages in my breast... is blissful!

### **Kuda, kuda...**

Where have you gone, o golden days of my spring?  
What does the day coming have in store for me?  
It escapes my eyes, it is hidden!  
Shall I fall to the deadly arrow, or will it pass by?  
All for better, there is a pre-determined time  
For life and for sleep  
Blessed is a day of simple tasks  
And blessed is the day of troubles.

Will the day beam shine in the morning  
And the bright day shall reign  
And I, well, will I descend  
Into the mysterious darkness of my fatal tomb?  
And the memory of a strange poet will fall into Abyss  
The world shall forget me, but you, you, Olga!  
Tell me, will you, the maiden of beauty, come to  
shed a tear  
Over the early urn  
And think "he loved me, he was devoted to me  
The gloomy dawn of a troubled life!"  
Ah Olga, I did love you,  
To you alone I was devoted  
The gloomy dawn of my troubled life  
Yes Olga, I did love you!

My wonderful friend, my dear friend,  
Come, for I am your husband,

Where have you gone, o golden days of my spring?

### **Three Volga German Songs**

#### **Abschied**

Farewell, I must now leave. Further I must travel.  
You, my dearest, love no one else!

Do not have sorrow nor grieve, I will return to you; if  
not in winter, then it will be in the summer.

If you hear the little birds sing in the forest,  
remember my love, that it is bringing a message  
from me.

And if you cry like the dogs in the alley, remember  
that I will never leave you.

#### **Soldatentod**

The Sun sank in the west over Warschau after the  
battle, sending its rays across the field of death.

And along the edge of the forest lies a dying soldier,  
and kneeling next to him, his faithful comrade.

"Take this ring from my finger if I am dead and take  
all my letters that are in my knapsack."

"Tell her that I fell at Warshau in battle, that in my  
last moments I thought of her."

"And as people are led to the mourning altar, tell her  
silently that she was my love."

The Sun, Moon, and stars, yes they shine every day.  
They illuminate the soldiers from in their cool grave.

#### **Der Zecher**

Yesterday, brothers – can you believe it? – While  
drinking the juice of the grapes, imagine my dismay:  
Yesterday, Death came to me.

Menacingly, he swung his scythe. Threateningly, the  
skeleton spoke: "Away, you servant of Bacchus!  
You've drank enough!"

"Dear Death", I answered with tears, "Are you really  
taking me away? Have a glass of wine! Please spare  
me!"

Smiling, he seized the glass. Smiling, he emptied it  
with a toast to his cousin plague's health. Smiling, he  
put it back on the table.

Relieved, I thought I was spared, but then, quickly,  
he renewed his menace: "Fool! You think I'd let you  
go for a glass of wine?"

"Death", I begged, "I'd like to become a doctor on  
earth. Leave me be! If you do, I promise you half of  
my patients."

"Well, if this is so, then you may live. Just be my  
obedient servant! Carry on living until you have had  
enough kissing and are tired of drinking."

"Oh, how sweet this sounds to my ears! Death,  
you've given me new life! A toast to our  
brotherhood with this glass of wine!"

So – by the God of wine – I have to live forever!  
Forever shall love and wine delight me!

Translations by:

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