

# Vienna Boys Choir

Tuesday, November 18 at 7:00pm

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Presented by

**Juanita McMullen**



Photo by Lukas Beck

The Vienna Boys Choir is one of the world's most famous — and oldest — choirs. Boys have sung at Vienna's Imperial Chapel since at least 1296. On July 7, 1498, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I established a Court Chapel in Vienna and specified that boys be among the singers, laying the foundation for the Vienna Boys Choir. Like their modern successors, early choristers traveled widely, performing for parliamentary meetings, imperial coronations, weddings, processions, and feasts.

Over the centuries, the Viennese court drew musical luminaries including Heinrich Isaac, Johann Joseph Fux, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Joseph Haydn, Michael Haydn, and Franz Schubert sang as choristers; Anton Bruckner taught the boys singing and piano.

Today, the former imperial ensemble is a private, non-profit organization that funds itself primarily through concerts and touring, along with donations and sponsorship. The Vienna Boys Choir maintains a primary and a grammar school focused on choral music. Some 330 boys and girls ages six to nineteen study on campus; all receive individual voice lessons and sing in one of the choirs. In addition to the four boys' choirs, there is the Vienna Girls Choir (Wiener Chormädchen) for ages 10–14, the Chorus Primus (a mixed children's chorus drawn from the 4th grade of the primary school), and the Chorus Juventus (the mixed youth choir of the senior high school). The Choir's education — recognized by UNESCO as cultural heritage — is open to all, regardless of origin, gender, nationality, or religion.

There are currently 90 active boy choristers divided into four touring choirs — Brucknerchor (Choirmaster Manolo Cagnin), Haydnchor (Choirmaster Jimmy Chiang), Mozartchor (Choirmaster Manuel Huber), and Schubertchor (Choirmaster Oliver Stech). Performing under the collective name "Vienna Boys Choir," they share concerts, tours, recordings, and filming equally, giving nearly 300 concerts annually for almost half a million listeners. Since 1924, the choirs have completed more than 1,000 tours in 100 countries, totaling some 29,000 concerts.

The Choir partners with charities including UNICEF, Licht ins Dunkel (Light into Darkness), and the child-protection agency die möwe. With Caritas and the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Choir co-founded "superar," an outreach program providing free music education. The organization also runs Chorus amabilis, a choir for adult enthusiasts, especially seniors.

In 2023 the Choir marked its 525th anniversary. Deutsche Grammophon released a live album of the anniversary concert at the Musikverein; Decca Classics issued a 21-CD box of landmark recordings; and Böhlau published a book on the Choir's history. In 2024, the Vienna Boys Choir and the Vienna Girls Choir jointly received the European Culture Award. Erasmus Baumgartner was appointed Artistic Director in fall 2023.

**[www.viennaboyschoir.net](http://www.viennaboyschoir.net)**

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Opus 3 Artists Presents  
**Vienna Boys Choir**  
(Wiener Sängerknaben)  
Strauss Forever  
**Jimmy Chiang, conductor**

## **PROGRAM**

Johann Strauss II (1825–1899)  
**Tausend und eine Nacht** (Arabian Nights),  
Waltz, Op. 346  
Words: Ewald Seifert

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)  
**Insanae et vanae curae** (Vain and useless  
worries), Hob. XXI:1, 13c

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1720–1736)  
From Stabat mater (1736)  
**Fac ut ardeat cor meum**  
(Ignite my heart with love)  
**Quando corpus morietur**  
(When the body will die)

Anton Bruckner (1824–1896)  
**Virga Jesse floruit** (The rod of Jesse has  
flowered), WAB 52 (1885)  
Words: Isaiah 11:1  
Arr. Jimmy Chiang

Johann Strauss II (1825–1899)  
and Josef Strauss (1827–1870)  
**Pizzicato Polka** (1869)  
Arr. Alan Mosseset, Avi Esposito

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)  
**Laudate Dominum** (Praise the Lord), from  
Vesperae solennes de confessore, K. 339 (1780)  
Words: Psalm 117 (116)

David Foster (b. 1949)/Carole Bayer Sager  
(b. 1947) /Alberto Testa (1927–2009)/  
Tony Renis (b. 1938)  
**The Prayer**,  
from the film “Quest for Camelot”

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)/  
Mervyn Warren (b. 1964)  
**Joyful, Joyful (Ode to Joy)**, from  
“Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit”  
Arr. Roger Emerson

**~INTERMISSION~**

Irving Berlin (1888–1989)  
**There’s No Business Like Show Business**, from  
“Annie Get Your Gun” (1946)

## **Solo to be announced from the stage**

Jacques Offenbach (1819–1880)  
**Barcarolle – “Belle nuit, ô nuit d’amour,”**  
from “The Tales of Hoffmann” (1881)  
Words: Jules Barbier (1825–1901)

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)  
**Wiegenlied** (Lullaby), Op. 49/4  
Words: First verse from “Des Knaben  
Wunderhorn” (1806/08); additional verses by  
Georg Scherer (1824–1909)

Traditional; Arr. Jimmy Chiang  
**Erzherzog Johann Jodler**  
(Archduke Johann’s Yodel)  
Words: Anon. Schosser (1801–1849)

Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967)  
**Túrót eszik a cigány**  
(Chewing cheese curds, 1925)

Petar Liondev (1936–2018)  
**Kaval sviri** (A kaval flute plays, 1979)  
Words: Tanya Parvanova  
Bulgarian folksong

Mykola Leontovych (1877–1921)  
**Shchedryk** (New Year’s Carol, 1916)

Johann Strauss II (1825–1899)  
**Tritsch-Tratsch-Polka**, Op. 214 (1858)  
Arr. Gerald Wirth  
Words: Tina Breckwoldt

Rolf Løvland (b. 1955)  
**You Raise Me Up**  
Words: Brendan Graham (b. 1945)

Traditional Spiritual  
**Joshua**  
Arr. Rollo Dilworth

Johann Strauss II (1825–1899)  
**An der schönen blauen Donau**  
(Blue Danube Waltz), Op. 314 (1867)  
Words: Franz von Gernerth (1821–1900)  
Arr. Gerald Wirth

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**"Strauss For Ever" – Johann Strauss in the USA**  
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Johann Strauss II (1825–1899)

**Tausend und eine Nacht** (Arabian nights), waltz, opus 346

Words: Ewald Seifert; Arr. Uwe Theimer

Johann Strauss II, the „waltz king“, was the second Strauss with the first name Johann, but he is undoubtedly the more famous. At least four members of the family were active as composers: his father, Johann senior (1804–1849), Johann himself and his brothers Josef (1827–1870) and Eduard (1835–1916). When Johann was ten years old, his father became Hofball-Musikdirektor (Music Director at the Court Balls). A high honor, yet the elder Strauss did not want his sons to become musicians (a rather suspect profession) and enrolled them in a trade academy. Johann, aided and abetted by his mother, had music lessons behind his father's back. At nineteen, he founded his own very successful orchestra. Much of Strauss's music is influenced by Roma and Jewish Klezmer music. There is an inherent ambiguity in his music: Strauss, who made the entire city of Vienna dance, was a nervous, ill-tempered and lonely man, and he could not dance.

The Arabian Nights waltz is a blend of the best melodies from his operetta Indigo and the 40 thieves, which opened in Vienna in 1871. The play, a stage version of the famous tale of Ali Baba, received very mixed reviews and did not last; the music survives in this graceful waltz. The text was written for the choir by Ewald Seifert, one of their teachers in the 1960s and 1970s.

Words

Im Zauberland des Orient, da werden Märchen erzählt.  
Scheherazade alle kennt, kein Geheimnis darin fehlt.  
Offenbar wird eine Macht; Musik erklinge weit in alle Welt.

Was kann's Schöneres geben,  
mit Musik zu leben,  
und beim Spiel der Geigen  
Wiener Charme zu zeigen,  
schöne Weise lieben,  
sich im Walzer wiegen,  
wie im Märchen Tausendundeine Nacht,

Kommt und tanzt mit, wo's Musik gibt,  
lasst die Sorgen bis auf Morgen,  
froh und heiter, so geht's weiter,  
vieles wird dann anders sein.

Ein Walzer von Strauss hat schon vieles gemacht,  
hat Menschen und Länder zusammen gebracht,  
Kommt, tanzt und dreht euch fein,  
so schön kann ein Walzer nur sein.  
Der Zauber der herrlichen Walzermusik  
verleiht uns im Leben das Schönste von Glück,  
die Zaubernacht.

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Seht, wie die Jugend sich dreht  
und im Walzertakt bewegt,  
Also nur munter getanzt, so lang du immer kannst.

Translation

In the magical, mysterious orient,  
stories are being told.  
Sheherazade knows them all,  
she knows all mysteries.  
And you soon discover an overwhelming power: May music sound around the world.

What could be better  
than to live with music,  
and when the violins sing,  
show Viennese charm.  
To love beautiful melodies,  
to dance a waltz,  
like in the tales of the Arabian nights.

Come and dance, where there is music,  
leave your worries until tomorrow,  
Happy and cheerful, that is how we go on,  
much will have changed by the morning.

A waltz by Strauss has accomplished many things,  
has brought people and countries together.  
Come on, dance and swirl about,  
only a waltz is like this.  
The magic of this music  
gives us the best part of happiness in life;  
a magic night.

Look, how the young people are dancing,  
moving to the rhythm of the waltz.  
So, keep dancing happily, for as long as you can.

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

**Insanae et vanae curae** (Vain and useless worries)

Hob. XXI:1, 13c

Joseph Haydn, son of a wheelwright, grew up in the town of Rohrau east of Vienna. When he was eight years old, Georg Reutter, master of the Imperial Court Music and of the music at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, heard Joseph Haydn and his younger brother Michael sing. In the following years, both boys became choristers at St. Stephen's and at the court. It was the beginning of two eminent musical careers.

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Already during his lifetime, Joseph Haydn was celebrated as a musical genius throughout Europe; many younger composers affectionately dubbed him "Papa Haydn".

In 1775, Joseph Haydn wrote the oratorio *Il ritorno di Tobia*, a setting of the apocryphal book of Tobit, for the Vienna *Tonkünstler-Societät*, a society founded by musicians which paid small pensions to musicians and their families. Haydn had applied for membership and waived his fee. In spite of the generous gesture, which certainly helped the society's funds, the composer had to wait until 1790 before being admitted. Another performance of *Tobia*, planned for 1781, could not be "*produced, because of the departure of an alto*". But in 1784, the oratorio was performed again. Haydn was asked to revise *Tobia*. Amongst other things, he added a chorus in d minor (*Svanisce in un momento*). This chorus became later, with a new Latin text, *Insanae et vanae curae*. It is not known what prompted this (although Haydn certainly knew that he had written a very successful piece); the author of the text remains unknown. The motet was published in 1809, and was reviewed as a work in its own right in 1810.

Haydn contrasts the wild passages in d minor (*Insanae et vanae curae*, insane and vain worries) with calm passages in F major, *quid prodest, o mortalis*: what good does it do, o human, to chase worldly goods? The resolution is in D major, *sunt fausta tibi cuncta si Deus est pro te*: all good luck is with you, if God be with you.

The piece was used in Curt Faudon's 2009 film about the Vienna Boys' Choir, 'Silk Road – Songs along the Road and Time'. There, it is the piece sung by the boys to Emperor Joseph II.

#### Words

Insanae et vanae curae invadunt mentes nostras,  
saepe furore replent corda privata spe,  
Quid prodest o mortalis conari pro mundanis,  
si coelos negligas.  
Sunt fausta tibi cuncta, si Deus est pro te.

#### Translation

Mad and useless worries flood our minds,  
often fury fills the heart, robbed of hope,  
O mortal man, what good does it to strive for worldly things,  
if you neglect the heavens?  
All things work in your favour, with God on your side.

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710–1736)

**Fac ut ardeat cor meum** (Ignite my heart with love)

**Quando corpus morietur** (When the body will die)

From: Stabat mater (1736)

Giovanni Battista was born in the town of Iesi near Naples in Italy, at a time when Italy was a patchwork of small states. The family's surname was Draghi, and they

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originally came from Pergola. Giovanni Battista combined the two place names to „Pergolesi“.

Naples had a thriving musical life at the time, and Pergolesi entered the conservatory as a child. He played the violin, he sang and composed. He was much admired for his talent, and worked for a number of patrons. The last two years of his life were spent in the service of the Duke of Maddaloni, who probably commissioned the Stabat mater. Pergolesi was never very healthy, and died of tuberculosis aged 26.

The liturgical poem Stabat mater dates to the 13th century. It originated in Franciscan theology; the text is closely related to St. Francis's mystic philosophy. The main source for the text is the Bible, John 19:25. The first part is a personal and emotional prayer, which expresses the feelings of Mary, when she sees her son on the cross. The second part is a prayer to Mary. It was clearly meant as an exercise in meditation. The question of authorship remains unresolved, the monk Jacopone da Todi (~1228 - 1306), Pope Innocent III. (~1160–1216) and Saint Bonaventura († 1274) are all possible candidates.

Pergolesi divides his composition into twelve parts, to correspond to the twelve apostles. His music is simple and emotional, to match the tone of the prayer. One of his preferred means of style is the suspension – the gradual blending of one chord into another.

Words:

Fac, ut árdeat cor meum  
in amándo Christum Deum  
ut sibi compláceam.

Quando corpus moriétur,  
fac, ut ánimæ donétur  
paradísi glória.

Amen.

Translation:

Make my heart burn  
With love for Christ, my God,  
So that I may please him.

When the body shall die,  
Make that my soul will be granted  
The glory of paradise.

Amen.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)



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**Ave verum corpus** (Hail, true body)

Anonymous prayer, attributed to Pope Innocent IV. (c.1195–1254)

In June 1791 Mozart went to Baden, a small spa town near Vienna, to visit his pregnant wife. While there, he was asked to write a piece for the Corpus Christi service. Being Mozart, the composer left it to the last minute: Ave verum corpus was written the night before the service. It is a simple piece of almost childlike piety, a humble and deeply felt prayer. Its emotional quality has made it one of Mozart's best-known compositions.

The well-known standard text of the Ave verum, attributed to Pope Innocent VI (died 1342), is a prayer for the Feast of Corpus Christi which was introduced by Pope Urban IV in 1264. There are several slight variants which occurred over time. During the Middle Ages, it would have been sung at the elevation of the Host during consecration. In just a few lines, it covers the Incarnation, the Passion, the Eucharist and the Last Judgement.

**Text**

Ave verum corpus Christi natum ex Maria Virgine.  
vere passum immolatum in cruce pro homine:  
Cuius latus perforatum unda fluxit et sanguine.  
Esto nobis praegustatum in mortis examine.

**Translation**

Hail, true body of Christ, born of the Virgin Mary,  
who has truly suffered, defiled on the cross for mankind.  
From whose pierced side water flowed and blood.  
Be us a foretaste (of heaven) in the agony of death.

Anton Bruckner (1824–1896)

**Virga Jesse floruit** (The rod of Jesse has flowered) WAB 52 (1885)

Words: Isaiah 11:1; Arr. Jimmy Chiang

Anton Bruckner was born in 1824. His father was teacher in the village of Ansfelden, Upper Austria, and as such responsible for the music at church and village fêtes. Anton Bruckner was taught violin, piano, and organ as a boy: He proved an exceptionally gifted organist, playing at church services from the age of ten onwards. At thirteen, Bruckner became a chorister in the nearby monastery of St. Florian. In the 1850s, the young man was appointed organist at Linz Cathedral; he became famous for his incredible, multi-layered improvisations. In 1868, Bruckner applied for and was appointed to a position as court organist in Vienna. As part of his duties, he gave the court choir boys music and singing lessons.

Virga Jesse floruit received its very first performance in Vienna's Imperial Chapel on 8 December 1885, sung by the court choir boys, the predecessors of the Vienna Boys Choir.

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Words

Virga Jesse floruit:  
Virgo Deum et hominem genuit:  
Pacem Deus redidit,  
in se reconcilians ima summis.  
Alleluja

Translation

The root of Jesse has blossomed  
A virgin gave birth to god and man.  
God gave us peace  
By reconciling the lowest with the highest.

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

**Adonai ro-i - Lama rag'shu goyim**

(The Lord is my shepherd – Why do the nations rage?)

from: Chichester Psalms (1965)

Text: Biblical (Psalm 23 and Psalm 2)

Leonard Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, to a Ukrainian Jewish family. At a very young age, Bernstein heard a piano performance which he loved so much that he began learning the instrument. His father was a businessman and initially opposed his son's interest in music. Bernstein studied music at Harvard University. He pursued his studies at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia with Isabella Vengerova and Fritz Reiner, who awarded him the only A he ever gave any student. Bernstein was highly regarded as a conductor, composer, and educator. For a long time, he was the director of the New York Philharmonic, and he conducted most of the world's leading orchestras. He wrote three symphonies, two operas and five musicals, among them *West Side Story*.

Chichester Cathedral commissioned the "Chichester Psalms" for the Southern Cathedral Festival in 1965. Bernstein chose the psalms himself. The second movement begins with a solo boy singing Psalm 23, arguably the most famous Biblical psalm: Adonai ro'i, the Lord is my shepherd, is thought to have been written by King David, whose professional career began as a shepherd boy. David sings in triple metre, a typical plaintive shepherd melody, designed to calm the sheep, echoed by the sopranos. They are brutally interrupted by the massed singers, with the lacerated phrases of Psalm 2, "Why do the Nations rage?". The shepherd boy takes no notice, but sings on, in the end overpowering the masses.

The shepherd theme was taken from a musical, "The Skin of Our Teeth", which Bernstein never completed; the "raging nations" theme from material originally intended for *West Side Story*.

Text



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Solo and Choir / Psalm 23  
Adonai ro-i, lo ehsar.  
Bin'ot deshe yarbitseini,  
Al mei m'nuhot y'nahaleini,  
Naf'shi y'shovev,  
Yan'heini b'ma'aglei tsedek,  
L'ma'an sh'mo.

Gam ki eilech  
B'gei tsalmavet,  
Lo ira ra,  
Ki Atah imadi.  
Shiv't'cha umishan'techa  
Hemah y'nahamuni.

Choir / Psalm 2  
Lamah rag'shu goyim  
Ul'umim yeh'gu rik?  
Yit'yats'vu malchei erets,  
V'roznim nos'du yahad  
Al Adonai v'al m'shiho.  
N'natkah et mos'roteimo,  
V'nashlichah mimenu avoteimo.  
Yoshev bashamayim  
Yis'hak, Adonai  
Yil'ag lamo!

Sopranos / Psalm 23  
Ta'aroch l'fanai shulchan  
Neged tsor'rai  
Dishanta vashemen roshi  
Cosi r'vayah.

Solo  
Ach tov vahesed  
Yird'funi kol y'mei hayai  
V'shav'ti b'veit Adonai  
L'orech yamim.

Translation  
Solo and Choir  
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,  
He leadeth me beside the still waters,  
He restoreth my soul,  
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness,  
For His name's sake

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Yea, though I walk  
Through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
For Thou art with me.  
Thy rod and Thy staff  
They comfort me.

Choir / Psalm 2  
Why do the nations rage,  
And the people imagine a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against the Lord and against His anointed.  
Saying, let us break their bonds asunder,  
And cast away their cords from us.  
He that sitteth in the heavens  
Shall laugh, and the Lord  
Shall have them in derision!

Choir / Psalm 23  
Thou preparest a table before me  
In the presence of my enemies,  
Thou anointest my head with oil,  
My cup runneth over.

Solo / Psalm 23  
Surely goodness and mercy  
Shall follow me all the days of my life,  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
Forever.

Traditional Spiritual  
**Joshua**  
Arr. Rollo Dilworth

"Joshua" is a hugely popular, traditional African-American spiritual, which likely originated among the slave population in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It was first published in two different song collections in 1882, M.G. Slayton's Jubilee Songs, and Marshall W. Taylor's A Collection of Revival Hymns and Plantation Melodies. It was first recorded in 1922 by Harrod's Jubilee Singers. Since then, it has been sung, among others, by Mahalia Jackson, by Elvis Presley, by Bing Crosby, and in 2011 by "Dr. House" Hugh Laurie.

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Joshua 6:15-21 does not describe a historic battle; but the idea of bringing down fortified walls by blowing trumpets (or rather shofaroth) would have held tremendous appeal not only for the slaves in America. It is a metaphor for the escape from slavery and achieving freedom.

Words

Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho,  
Joshua fit the battle of Jericho  
and the walls came tumbling down.

You may talk about your king of Gideon,  
you may talk about your man of Saul,  
there's none like good old Joshua  
at the battle of Jericho

Chorus

Up to the walls of Jericho  
he marched with spear in hand,  
"Go blow them ram-horns" Joshua cried,  
"cause the battle is in my hand."

Chorus

Then the lamb ram sheep horns begin a blow,  
trumpets begin a sound.  
Joshua commanded the children to shout,  
and the walls came tumbling down.

Chorus

David Foster (\*1949), Carole Bayer Sager (\*1947),  
Alberto Testa (1927–2009) and Tony Renis (\*1938)  
**The Prayer**, from the movie "Quest for Camelot"

The Prayer was written for the animated 1998 film, Quest for Camelot. It was sung by Celine Dion in English, and by Andrea Bocelli in Italian; both artists later recorded a duet version.

The song won a Golden Globe for Best Original Song and was nominated for an Academy Award in 1999. The duet version was nominated for a Grammy for Best Pop Collaboration with Vocals.

Words (Italian translations written in brackets)  
I pray you'll be our eyes

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And watch us where we go  
And help us to be wise  
In times when we don't know.  
Let this be our prayer  
When we lose our way  
Lead us to a place,  
Guide us with your grace  
To a place where we'll be safe.

La luce che tu dai – (the light which you give)  
I pray we'll find our way –  
Nel cuore resterà. (may it stay in our hearts)  
And hold it in our hearts –  
A ricordaci che – (and remind us)  
When stars go out each night –  
T'eterna stella sei nella mia preghiera – (eternal star, be in my prayer)  
Let this be our prayer –  
Quanta fede c'è – (how much faith there is)  
When shadows fill our day –

Lead us to a place  
Guide us with your grace  
Give us faith so we'll be safe

Sognamo un mondo senza più violenza – (We dream of a world without violence)  
Un mondo di giustizia e di speranza. (A world of justice and hope)  
Ognuno dia la mano al suo vicino (Everyone shall offer his hand to his neighbour)  
Simbolo di pace, di fraternità. (as a symbol of peace, of brotherhood)

La forza che ci dai (The strength that you give us)  
We ask that life be kind  
è il desiderio che (is in the wish that)  
and watch us from above  
Ognuno trovi amore (everyone will find love)  
We hope each soul will find  
Intorno e dentro sè (around himself and within himself).

Let this be our prayer  
Just like every child  
Needs to find a place  
Guide us with your grace  
Give us faith so we'll be safe

E la fede che hai acceso in noi (And this faith which you have ignited in us)  
Sento che ci salverà (I feel it will save us).

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Johann Strauss II

**Tritsch Tratsch** (Chitchat), fast polka opus 214 (1858)

Words: Tina Breckwoldt, Arr. Gerald Wirth

Tritschtratsch (Chitchat) is the title of a vaudeville by Johann Nestroy, first performed in 1833. In 1858, Viennese journalists created a satirical newspaper by the same name; Tritsch-Tratsch poked fun at famous people. On 21 March 1858, the paper printed a humorous portrait of Johann Strauss, speculating about his yearly visits to Russia. Strauss spent the summers in Pawlowsk with his orchestra, performing for the holidaymakers there. The paper obliquely hinted at an affair with a Russian woman, and the gossip spread through Vienna like wildfire. Strauss penned the polka as an answer.

Tritsch Tratsch was composed between August and November of 1858 and was first performed in a public house called 'The Great Siskin' in the Spittelberg area of Vienna on 24 November. The Viennese media printed notices about the piece's composition, its first performance and also its publication; a most unusual amount of publicity for a short piece of music – nineteenth century hype.

There are a number of texts for Tritsch Tratsch. The text sung by the Vienna Boys' Choir deals with gossip mongering and what it can do to people, ending with a tongue-in-cheek bow to Plato.

The cheerful polka has sometimes been put to unexpected use: it features in the James-Bond-movie Moonraker, where it accompanies Bond alias Roger Moore, gliding across St Marc's Square in a hovercraft; most recently, it was used in Netflix's The Gray Man.

The Vienna Boys Choir has performed this popular piece – a signature tune for Austrian musicians - thrice at the New Year's Day Concert of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, in 1988 and in 1998, and again in 2012.

Text

Er ist – man sagt – (Ach, Klatsch - und Tratsch)  
Man hat sich schon beschwert  
Er fragt – man klagt (Wir sind - empört)  
Das ist doch unerhört.

Er meint – es scheint (Nur Klatsch - und Tratsch)  
Er stellt sich gern zur Schau  
Man glaubt – man meint (Wie schön - ist das)  
Ich weiss es nicht genau.

Gerüchte brodeln ganz ungeniert  
raffiniert, kommentiert  
auf einmal fühlt man sich exponiert  
wie es denn das nur passiert?

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Das hat man noch nie vernommen!  
Ist das schon mal vorgekommen?  
Wie sind wir hierher gekommen,  
hier an diesen Punkt?

Das Gehirn geht im Kreis  
Der Verstand liegt auf Eis  
während sie die Mär verbreiten

Trio  
Wenn sie kleine Erbsen zählen  
Um die anderen zu quälen  
Zwischen Schwert und Worten wählen  
wollen sie nur zeigen  
dass sie tüchtig sind.

Treiben sie es auf die Spitze,  
feixen, frozzeln, reissen Witze,  
reden sich in Dauerhitze,  
um sich zu beweisen,  
dass sie wichtig sind.

Wir kommen jetzt so richtig erst in Fahrt  
Inzwischen geht es wirklich hart auf hart  
Wir streiten um des alten Kaisers Bart  
Ja, um des Kaisers Bart.

Coda  
Es ist ein Gerücht.  
Was weiss man denn? Man weiss doch nichts.  
Das weiss ich!

Translation  
He is – they say (That's gossip - more gossip)  
They have already complained  
He asks – they moan (We are - outraged)  
This is simply not on!

He says – it seems (Just gossip - more gossip)  
He likes to show off and pose  
They believe – they surmise (How nice - that is)  
I don't exactly know.

Rumours fly about shamelessly  
Tricky, annotated,  
And all of a sudden you feel utterly exposed

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How did that happen?

This is totally unheard of  
Has something like this happened before  
How did we get here,  
To this point?

The mind walks in circles  
Brain totally numb  
While they continue to spread tales

Trio  
When they get worked up over peanuts,  
Just to torture others,  
Choose between sword and words,  
They only want to show  
How efficient they are.

When they carry on  
Smirking, taunting, cracking jokes,  
Blathering on forever,  
They want to prove to themselves  
That they are important.

We are just getting started  
Now we are really talking  
We fight over nothing,  
Yes, over nothing.

Coda  
It is merely a rumour.  
What do you know? We know nothing.  
That I do know!

\*\*\* Intermission \*\*\*

Irving Berlin (1888–1989)  
**There's No Business Like Show Business**  
From the musical "Annie Get Your Gun" (1946)

Irving Berlin was born Israel Isidore Baline in Russia, probably in Tyumen, Siberia. His father, an itinerant cantor, had taken the family there. The Balines immigrated to the United States when Israel was five years old. Israel left home at 14 and sang his way through bars and restaurants. In 1907, he earned his first songwriting credit and changed his name to Irving Berlin. Berlin felt



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compelled to write music as if his life depended on it: He penned some 1500 songs, many of them hugely popular. He never learned to read music and only used the black keys on a conventional piano.

"There's No Business Like Show Business" was written for the 1946 musical "Annie Get Your Gun", where it is sung by the members of the cast of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show to convince Annie to join them. In 1954, it inspired the eponymous film, with Ethel Merman in the lead, singing about the ups and downs and the magnetic appeal of show business. The song has been covered countless times, by Judy Garland, the Andrews Sisters, Frank Sinatra, and Bing Crosby, and has since become a fixture in popular culture. Ethel Merman's original version has been sung and used in films and on TV, in the HBO show "The Late Shift", in "The Marvellous Mrs. Maisel", in "Who Framed Roger Rabbit", and in the Muppet Show, among others; and the rock band Genesis routinely used to play the Merman recording at the end of their shows from 1976 to 2007 – it is even included on one of their albums.

Words

There's no business like show business  
Like no business I know

Everything about it is appealing  
Everything the traffic will allow  
Nowhere could you get that happy feeling  
When you are stealing  
That extra bow

There's no people like show people  
They smile when they are low

Yesterday they told you you would not go far  
That night you open and there you are  
Next day on your dressing room they've hung a star  
Let's go on with the show

The costumes, the scenery, the make-up, the props  
The audience that lifts you when you're down  
The headaches, the heartaches, the backaches, the flops  
The sheriff who escorts you out of town  
The op'ning when your heart beats like a drum  
The closing when the customers won't come

There's no business like show business  
Like no business I know

You get word before the show has started  
That your favorite uncle died at dawn  
Top of that, your ma and pa have parted  
You're broken-hearted

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But you go on

There's no people like show people  
They smile when they are low

Even with a turkey that you know will fold  
You may be stranded out in the cold  
Still you wouldn't 'change for a sack of gold  
Let's go on with the show!

Johann Strauss II and Josef Strauss (1827–1870)

**Pizzicato Polka** (1869)

Arr. Alan Mossessey, Avi Esposito

The polka is a joint work by the Strauss brothers, written in 1869 for their summer stay in Pavlovsk; intended as a joke and without lyrics, the voices imitate the pizzicato plucking of the strings.

On this tour, the choir performs a special a cappella arrangement, by two of the choristers; a joint effort by Alan and Avi.

Jacques Offenbach (1819–1880)

**Barcarole - Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour** (Beautiful night, night of love)

from the opera "The Tales of Hoffmann" (1881)

Words: Jules Barbier (1825–1901)

Jacques Offenbach was born in Cologne, Germany, the son of a Jewish cantor. His musical talents were obvious early on. The family moved to France, when Jacques was a teenager to enable him to study at the Paris Conservatoire. Offenbach is known as the "father" of the operetta as a genre; he wrote more than 100 operettas, and greatly influenced Johann Strauss II, as well as Arthur Sullivan. In "Orpheus in the Underworld", he poked fun at the society of his time. The Cancan from the second act is a perennial favourite that is often performed separately today.

The famous "Barcarole" (barcarolle) was originally written for Offenbach's 1864 opera "Die Rheinnixen"; then re-used in his last opera, "The Tales of Hoffmann", where it is sung by Guilietta, Hoffmann's love interest, and Nicklausse, his best friend, as they ponder the beauty of the night and of being in love in Venice. It is in 6/8 time, to evoke the movement of the waves, and remains one of the most popular pieces of music ever. It has been transcribed and covered countless times, and used in countless films, from Disney's "Silly Symphonies" to Roberto Benigni's 1997 movie "Life Is Beautiful".

Words

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Le temps fuit et sans retour  
emporte nos tendresses,  
loin de cet heureux séjour  
le temps fuit sans retour.

Zéphirs embrassés  
versez-nous vos caresses,  
donnez-nous vos baisers.

Belle nuit, nuit d'amour,  
souris à nos ivresses,  
nuit plus douce que le jour,  
belle nuit d'amour!

Translation  
Time flies and without turning back,  
it takes away our tendernesses,  
far from that blissful moment,  
time flies without turning back.

Kissing winds,  
bestow on us your caresses,  
give us your kisses.

Beautiful night, night of love,  
smile on our bliss,  
night – much gentler than the day -  
beautiful night of love.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

**Wiegenlied** (Lullaby), opus 49/4

Words: first verse from the 1806/08 poetry anthology "Des Knaben Wunderhorn",  
further verses: Georg Scherer (1824–1909)

Hamburg-born Johannes Brahms was a reserved, logical, and thorough man, whose terse manner is reflected in his works. He knew a lot of music and had studied ancient music in some detail. When writing vocal music, Brahms paid close attention to words; his sacred music is a deeply felt, non-denominational statement of faith. For a while, Brahms was the artistic director of a women's choir in Hamburg, for whom he wrote motets, lieder, and folk songs. He made use of traditional folk tunes, sometimes simply arranging them but also crafting his own, such as his famous lullaby, written for the baby of Bertha Faber, who had been a chorister in Brahms's choir. The words are from a 19<sup>th</sup> century anthology of songs for children; "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" (The boy's magic horn). Roses are associated with the Virgin Mary, and cloves were a popular remedy used to ward off infections.

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The "Lullaby" received its first public performance in Vienna in December of 1868, with Clara Schumann playing the piano.

Words

Guten Abend, gut' Nacht,  
mit Rosen bedacht,  
mit Näglein besteckt,  
schlupf unter die Deck':  
Morgen früh, wenn Gott will,  
wirst du wieder geweckt.

Guten Abend, gut' Nacht,  
von Englein bewacht,  
die zeigen im Traum  
dir Christkindleins Baum.  
Schlaf nun selig und süß,  
schau im Traum 's Paradies.

Translation

Good evening, good night,  
Sheltered under roses,  
Protected with cloves,  
Slip under the covers.  
Tomorrow morning, God willing,  
You will wake up again.

Good evening, good night,  
Guarded by angels,  
Who show you in your dreams  
The Christ child's tree.  
Sleep blissfully and sweetly,  
And dream of Paradise.

**Solo to be announced from the stage**

**Erzherzog Johann Jodler** (Archduke Johann's yodel)  
Words: Anton Schosser (1801–1849); Arr. Jimmy Chiang

Alpine folk songs have certain characteristics that are easy to recognise. Many include yodels or a chorus or shout similar to yodelling – which was used by herdsman and women to communicate in the mountains.

The "Archduke Johann Yodel" was written in honour of the eponymous Archduke. Johann (1782–1859), the brother of the Austrian Emperor Franz I., loved Styria and chamois-hunting very much. To the horror and chagrin of his family, he "fraternised"

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with the locals to the point of marrying Anna Plochl, a postmaster's daughter from the town of Aussee in Styria. Unsurprisingly, the Archduke was hugely popular.

Anton Schosser, a 19th century official from Upper Austria, wrote the text with Anna Plochl in mind, expressing fierce pride in the homeland and in the archduke. The melody may well be older, it originated in the Tyrol and has all the typical characteristics of a melancholy Alpine yodel.

Words:

Wo i geh und steh, tut ma's Herz so weh,  
um mei Steiermark, ja glaubt ma's g'wiß;  
wo das Büchserl knallt und da Gamsbock fällt,  
und mei liaba Herzog Johann ist.

Ja, i sich mi scho' ganz verzückt und froh  
mit mein'n Herzog auf der Alma gehn;  
mit an frischem Mut in mei'm Steirahut  
offen stolz am Kogel obmat stehn.

Auf da Felsenwand, in am Steirag'wand,  
wenn i da mei lieba Herzog sich,  
wenn sei Büchserl knallt und da Gamsbock fällt,  
war's a Wunda, wenn i's Heimweh krieg'?

Translation:

Wherever I go, my heart aches  
For my beloved Styria, rest assured,  
Where the gunshot rings and the chamois falls,  
Where my dear Archduke Johann roams.

Yes, I see myself climbing happily  
Up the alpine meadow beside my Archduke  
With a happy heart, wearing my Styrian hat  
Openly and proudly on top of the mountain.

There in the mountains, dressed in Styrian garb,  
When I watch my dear Archduke,  
When his gun rings out and the chamois falls,  
It's no wonder that I am homesick.

Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967)

**Túrot eszig a cigány** (Chewing cheese curds, 1925)

Túrot eszig a cigány is an animated piece for four-part children's choir, based on a Hungarian folk song. The piece starts with the altos ominously chewing the initial phrase, before the sopranos start developing a melody, relating the events. To go by

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the text, this kind of cheese seems addictive and should probably come with a health warning.

The second part, which has little Janosh picking roses, is rather more lyrical; it offers a short respite before the manic chewing begins again.

Words

Túrot eszig a cigány, duba  
Veszekedik azután, leba.  
Még azt mondja, pofon vág, duba.  
Vágja biz a nagyapját, leba.  
Turót! Duba! Leba!  
Csipkefa bimbója  
Kihajlott az útra,  
Rida rida bom bom bom.

Arra ment Jánoska,  
szakajt egygyet rola.

Translation

The gypsy chews cheese, duba;  
Afterwards he begins picking quarrels and fights,  
Says he'll hit me; day after tomorrow, I tell him.  
Cheese! Cheese!

Little bud of the rose bush, how it sways.  
Little Janosh sees it, breaks it off and runs away.

Mykola Leontovich (1877–1921)  
**Shchedryk** (New Year's Carol, 1916)

The original Ukrainian *Shchedryk* is a shchedrivka (New Year's carol) traditionally sung on Malanka or Shchedry Vechir ("bountiful evening"), the Ukrainian New Year's Eve (January 13). Like most songs of this genre, *Shchedryk* looks into the year ahead; it longs for swallows and an early spring, invoking dreams a luscious wife for the farmer, wealth in general and a rich harvest – a kind of positive horoscope. Leontovych's composition is based on an old tune with supposedly magic powers. It was first performed in Kiev in 1916.

*Shchedryk* travelled across Europe and North America in the 1920s with the Ukrainian Republican Capella Choir, conducted by Leontovych, and attracted the critics' attention. Today, it is hugely popular in the United States and Canada, with a Christmassy English text and under its alias *Carol of the Bells*.

Words

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Щедрик щедрик, щедрівочка,  
прилетіла ластівочка,  
стала собі щебетати,  
господаря викликати:  
"Вийди, вийди, господарю,  
подивися на кошару,  
там овечки покотились,  
а ягнички народились.  
В тебе товар весь хороший,  
будеш мати мірку грошей,  
В тебе товар весь хороший,  
будеш мати мірку грошей,  
хоч не грошей, то полова:  
в тебе жінка чорноброва."  
Щедрик щедрик, щедрівочка,  
прилетіла ластівочка.

Shchedryk shchedryk, shchedrivochnka,  
pryletila lastivochka,  
stala sobi shchebetaty,  
hospodarya vyklykaty:  
"Vyydy, vyydy, hospodaryu,  
podyvysya na kosharu,  
tam ovechky pokotylys',  
a yahnychky narodylys'.  
V tebe tovar ves' khoroshyy,  
budesh' maty mirku hroshey,  
V tebe tovar ves' khoroshyy,  
budesh' maty mirku hroshey,  
khoch ne hroshey, to polova:  
v tebe zhinka chornobrova."  
Shchedryk shchedryk, shchedrivochnka,  
pryletila lastivochka.

**Translation**

Shchedryk, shchedryk, a New Year's carol.  
A small swallow flew into the house,  
it began to sing,  
to call the landlord:  
"Come out of the house, come, master,  
look at the sheep in their pen,  
the ewes are lying there,  
and the lambs have been born.  
Your livestock is thriving,  
you will be rich.  
If you have no money, you will have straw,  
and you have a wife with strong eyebrows."  
Shchedryk, shchedryk, a New Year's carol.



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A small swallow flew into the house.

**Oh, Shenandoah**

American folk song (19<sup>th</sup> century); Arr. Gerald Wirth

"Shenandoah" started life as a work song or shanty, with roots going back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It may have originated among the Franco-Canadian trappers and fur traders ("voyageurs"), who plied their trade along the Missouri River and in so doing spread the song, which eventually made its way to the sea as a work shanty on whaling boats. In 2015, the tune was made the official state song of Virginia, with a new text ("Our Great Virginia").

The name "Shenandoah" refers to an elected Oneida chief, Skenandoa (c.1706–1816), whose name might either mean "deer" (Oneida: Oskanundonha) or "hemlock". During the American Revolution, the Oneida ("People of the standing stone") fought alongside the colonists.

Words

Oh, Shenandoah, I long to see you,  
Away, you rolling river.  
Oh, Shenandoah, I long to see you  
Away, we're bound away 'cross the wide Missouri.

Oh, Shenandoah, I love your daughter  
Across the rolling water.  
Oh Shenandoah, I love your daughter  
Away, we're bound away 'cross the wide Missouri.

Oh, Shenandoah, I long to leave you,  
Oh, Shenandoah, I'll not deceive you ...  
Oh Shenandoah, I'm bound to leave you ...  
Away, we're bound away 'cross the wide Missouri.

Rolf Løvland (b. 1955)

**You Raise Me Up**

Words : Brendan Graham (b. 1945)

In 2001, inspired by the "Londonderry Air" (aka Danny Boy), Løvland wrote an instrumental piece called "Silent Song". It was intended for the Irish-Norwegian band Secret Garden and first performed at the funeral of Løvland's mother. Løvland later asked Irish writer Brendan Graham to add the lyrics, and the song became "You Raise Me Up", popularized by many iconic performances, by Josh Groban and Susan Boyle among others.

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Words

When I am down and, oh, my soul, so weary  
When troubles come and my heart burdened be  
Then I am still and wait here in the silence  
Until You come and sit awhile with me

You raise me up so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong when I am on Your shoulders  
You raise me up to more than I can be

You raise me up to more than I can be ...

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), Mervyn Warren (\*1964)

**Joyful, Joyful (Ode to Joy)**

from the movie "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit"  
arr. Roger Emerson

Beethoven's famous „Ode to Joy“ is based on a poem penned by Friedrich von Schiller, one of Germany's foremost poets. It is a celebration of the joy of friendship and the brotherhood of man, written by Schiller for a circle of his personal friends in 1785. Almost 40 years later, Beethoven used the poem in his 9th Symphony. Grammy winner Mervyn Warren reworked Beethoven's famous tune into a gospel-inspired celebration of the joy of God and life.

Words

Joyful, Joyful, we adore Thee  
God of glory, Lord of love  
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee  
Hail Thee as the sun above  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness  
Drive the dark of doubt away  
Giver of immortal gladness  
Fill us with the light of day.

Joyful, Joyful, we adore Thee  
in my life I put none before Thee  
'Cuz since I was a youngster I came to know  
That you was the only way to go  
So I had to grow an' come to an understandin'  
That I'm down with the King so now I'm demandin';  
That you tell me who you down with, see  
'Cuz all I know is that I'm down with G-O-D

You down with G-O-D? (Yeah, you know me)  
Who's down with G-O-D?

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Come and join the chorus  
The mighty, mighty chorus  
Which the morning stars begun  
The Father of love is reigning over us  
Right away

What have you done for Him lately?  
Ooh, ooh, ooh yeah  
He watches over everything  
So we sing . . .

Johann Strauss II  
**An der schönen blauen Donau** (Blue Danube Waltz), opus 314 (1867)  
Words: Franz von Gernerth (1821–1900); Arr. Gerald Wirth

Austria's secret national anthem is dedicated to the Vienna Männergesangsverein (Men's Chorus); it was first performed in February of 1867 at the chorus's Carnival Ball. The composer was absent, as he had a court engagement. The original text was slightly silly; it was meant to poke fun at the fact that many carnival balls had been cancelled that year and it ran, 'Viennese, be joyous! O-ho! Why-o?' This fitted the occasion but did not survive beyond the carnival. There were several attempts at improving the poetry, until Gernerth, a lawyer, wrote his in 1889. His maudlin, flowery, and somewhat patriotic description of the Danube has remained standard until today.

Words  
Donau so blau, durch Tal und Au  
Wogst ruhig du hin,  
Dich grüßt unser Wien,  
Dein silbernes Band  
Knüpft Land an Land,  
Und fröhliche Herzen schlagen  
An deinem schönen Strand.

Weit vom Schwarzwald her  
eilst du hin zum Meer,  
spendest Segen allerwegen,  
ostwärts geht dein Lauf,  
nimmst viel Brüder auf:  
Bild der Einigkeit für alle Zeit.

Alte Burgen seh'n  
nieder von den Höh'n,  
grüßen gerne dich von ferne,  
und der Berge Kranz,  
hell vom Morgenglanz

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spiegelt sich in deiner Wellen Tanz.

Die Nixen auf dem Grund  
Die geben flüsternd kund  
Was alles du erschaut  
Seitdem über dir der Himmel blaut.

Halt an deine Fluten bei Wien,  
es liebt dich ja so sehr,  
du findest wohin du magst ziehen  
ein zweites Wien nicht mehr.

Du kennst wohl deinen Bruder, den Rhein,  
an seinen Ufern wächst herrlicher Wein,  
dort auch steht bei Tag und bei Nacht  
die feste, treue Wacht.

Das Schiffelein fährt auf den Wellen so sacht  
Still ist die Nacht, Liebe nur wacht,  
der Schiffer flüstert der Liebsten ins Ohr,  
dass längst schon sein Herz sie erkor.

Nun singt ein fröhliches, seliges Lied,  
das wie Jauchzen die Lüfte durchzieht.  
Und zum Schluss bringt noch einen Gruß,  
unsrer Donau, dem herrlichen Fluss.

Translation  
Danube, so blue,  
you meander calmly through vales and meadows,  
Our Vienna greets you,  
your silver ribbon  
links lands  
and cheerful hearts beat  
on your beautiful shores.

From the Black Forest  
you rush towards the Black Sea,  
blessing everything  
on your way.  
You flow east,  
taking in many brothers:  
An eternal image of harmony.

Old fortresses look down  
from their hills,  
they like to greet you from afar  
and the top of the mountains,

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bright in the morning light,  
are reflected in the dancing of your waves.

The mermaids in the river bed  
whisper about  
everything you have seen  
since heaven began.

Stop when you reach Vienna,  
it really adores you.  
Wherever you may wander,  
you will not find a second Vienna.

You probably know your brother, the Rhine,  
lovely wine grows along its banks,  
and night and day it is flanked  
by faithful guardians.

The little boat rides on the waves,  
the night is quiet, love is in the air,  
the skipper tells his beloved  
his heart had selected her long since.

Now sing a happy, cheerful song,  
filling the air with joy,  
and, finally, give a special cheer  
for the Danube, our beautiful river.

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