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Ekh, Dorogi!

Ekh, The Roads!, Эх, дороги!



There are songs, written by a composer and a poet, sometimes even well-known persons, but commonly often regarded to be folk. The reason is mostly the highest artistic level of the music and poems, being in accordance with the soul of the folk and its traditions.

That is the case with the song "Эх, дороги!" (Ekh, Roads!)

The song, usually claimed to be a masterpiece, was composed in 1945 by the Russian composer Anatoly Novikov and the Russian poet Lev Oshanin.

They got an order from The NKVD Troops Song And Dance Ensemble, that used to make theater-like performances on certain topics.

The ensemble was the second by its popularity in the country.

Its producer Sergey Yutkevich gave a theme to the authors: "under the sound of wheels", "soldiers go to the front". The theme seemed new to some extent to the authors who had composed several war songs to that time. They felt an enthusiasm and began.

Novikov invented the first motive. It was a hard work for the poet to write words to that short music lines. He found the decision in an unusual combination of nouns without verbs and more ordinary phrases, following each other according to the music. Short phrases were to be very meaningful and strong. And Lev Oshanin succeeded! He did not take part in combat operations, but visited the front troops several times. There he went through air assaults, mortar fire, and saw people`s deaths. His impressions and stories, that he had heard, helped him to formulate very short and strong ideas. During the first performance the authors felt that the song was to be rearranged, that they had composed just a half of the future song. However, the public met it very warmly. Novikov and Oshanin changed the title from "The Soldiers Road" and the text as they had understood that the song had exceeded its mission as a war song. They composed a song that meant much more: a confession, a recollection, a meditation about everything bygone, a sorrow of numerous losses, and the belief in the final victory.

When the authors performed their new song at schools, the pupils joined and even cried a little. The children experienced the war also, its bombings, its hunger and cold, various dangers and limitations. Some of them lost their parents and other relatives. Once a case took place in the war prisoners camp: a music lecturer musicologist spoke about the Soviet music and its humanistic essence, and performed the song. The German war prisoners did hardly understand words, but became silent, listened very attentively and cried a little. The event showed the great strength and talent inherent in the song. "The soldier number one", the Soviet marshal Georgy Zhukov, mentioned the song as one of the three best songs devoted to the Great Patriotic War.

There are a lot of names of performers who included the song in their repertoire. Soviet singers Georgy Abramov, Mark Reisen, Georgy Vinogradov, Mark Bernes, Sergey Lemeshev, Georg Ots, Vladimir Troshin, Muslim Magomaev, Iosif Kobzon, The Soviet Army Song And Dance Ensemble named after Aleksandrov, and many others. The first performer was The NKVD Troops Song And Dance Ensemble soloist Ivan Schmelev.

Contemporary Russian artists performing the song are: Dmitry Khvorostovsky, Maxim Leonidov, Igor Rasteryaev, Oleg Gazmanov, Eugeny Dyatlov, Elena Vaenga, The Sretensky Monastery Male Choir, and others.

Among non-Russian performers, the Japanese quartet Bonni Dzyaks can be mentioned, who sang "Ekh, Dorogi" in Japanese language.

The song is commonly performed by Russian ordinary people at their home festivities devoted to important historical dates, connected with the WWII. The song is often radiobroadcasted and transmitted by television in the republics of the former USSR.

The score is popular in publishing and the song is very often performed by accordion.

Ekh, Dorogi! Performed by Georg Ots

Георг Отс "Эх, дороги"



[Download the score of the song for accordion](#)

Russian lyrics:

Эх, дороги!

Эх, дороги, пыль да туман,
Холода, тревоги да степной бурьян...
Знать не можешь доли своей,
Может, крылья сложишь посреди степей.

Вьётся пыль под сапогами степями, полями;
А кругом бушует пламя да пули свистят.

Эх, дороги, пыль да туман,
Холода, тревоги да степной бурьян...
Выстрел грянет, ворон кружит,
Твой дружок в бурьяне неживой лежит.

А дорога дальше мчится, пылится, клубится;
А кругом земля дымится, чужая земля.

Эх, дороги, пыль да туман,
Холода, тревоги да степной бурьян...
Край сосновый, солнце встаёт,
У крыльца родного мать сыночка ждёт.

И бескрайними путями, степями, полями
Всё глядят вослед за нами родные глаза.

Эх, дороги, пыль да туман,
Холода, тревоги да степной бурьян...
Снег ли ветер, вспомним, друзья,
Нам дороги эти позабыть нельзя.

Transliteration:

Ekh, dorogi!
Ekh, dorogi, pyl' da tuman,
Holoda, trevogi da stepnoj bur'yan...
Znat' ne mozhesh' doli svoej,
Mozhet, kryl'ya slozhish' posredi stepej.

V'yotsya pyl' pod sapogami stepyami, polyami;
A krugom bushuet plamyda puli svistyat.

Ekh, dorogi, pyl' da tuman,
Holoda, trevogi da stepnoj bur'yan...
Vystrel gryanet, voron kruzhit,
Tvoj družhok v bur'yane nezhivoj lezhit.

A doroga dal'she mchitsya, pylitsya, klubitsya;
A krugom zemlya dymitsya, chuzhaya zemlya.

Ekh, dorogi, pyl' da tuman,
Holoda, trevogi da stepnoj bur'yan...
Kraj sosnovyj, solnce vstayot,
U kryl'ca rodnogo mat' synochka zhdyot.

I beskrajnimi putyami, stepyami, polyami
Vsyo glyadyat vosled za nami rodnye glaza.

Ekh, dorogi, pyl' da tuman,
Holoda, trevogi da stepnoj bur'yan...

English translation:

Ekh, The Roads!

Ekh, the roads! The dust and mist,
Colds, excitements, roars, and the steppe weeds...
You can't know your future fate,
In these vasty steppes you can lose your pate.

The dust snakes along the high boots, the steppes, the wide fields;
The flame blazes all around and the bullets whistle.

Ekh, the roads! The dust and mist,
Colds, excitements, roars, and the steppe weeds...
A shot sounds, a raven whirls,
Down on the ground your dead sidekick hurls.

And the road rushes forward, that dusty and misty;
And the ground smokes round, the alien ground!

Ekh, the roads! The dust and mist,
Colds, excitements, roars, and the steppe weeds...
A pine region, the rising sun,
Homewards a mother`s waiting for her son.

And along the endless pathways, the steppes, the wide fields,
We feel the eyes glancing at us, the dearest eyes!

Ekh, the roads! The dust and mist,
Colds, excitements, roars, and the steppe weeds...
Wind or snow, let`s recollect,
The severe roads we shall not forget.

Translated by **Alexander**
2016

Sneg li veter, vspomnim, druz'ya,
Nam dorogi ehti pozabyt' nel'zya.

Sources: <http://www.liveinternet.ru/users/4262933/post388708280> ; <https://youtu.be/XLLrB-zGeWE> ; <http://www.proza.ru/2015/01/25/1204> ;
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