

# HISTORY 101

by VICTOR FET

*A tragicomical one-act opera*

## CHARACTERS:

Spirit of History

Prince Potemkin, à Russian noble.

Grachey, a courtier.

Jefferson, the President of the United States

Napoleon, the Emperor of the French

Charles Darwin, a British scientist.

Captain FitzRoy of the HMS Beagle.

Gavrilo Princip, a Serbian terrorist.

Queen Victoria, of the United Kingdom.

Tsarina Alexandra, of Russia, *nee* Alice of Hesse.

Tsar Nicholas the Second, of Russia.

Thomas Morgan, an American scientist.

Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister.

Roosevelt, the President of the United States.

Churchill, the Prime-Minister of the United Kingdom.

Stalin, the Soviet dictator.

Trofim Lysenko, the Soviet charlatan in charge of science.

King of Spades, an imaginary future world dictator.

Chorus, Sailors, Observers, Scientists.

## 1. PROLOGUE

*Enter the Spirit of History.*

Spirit of History

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I am the Spirit of History.

I have shaken hands with Shiva and shared the sun with Ra.

Today our subject is Russia - "a secret wrapped in a mystery",

We'll do plenty of singing, and even some dance,

We'll also cover some England and France,

But I am the Spirit of History, not the Phantom of the Opera.

Chorus

He is the Spirit of History, not the Phantom of the Opera.

Spirit

Tonight in the Opera House I beg you to watch and listen:

We ran an experiment here, the experiment went awry.

We're trying to find what happened, what we could have been missing,

We are dissecting History, as the notes flicker and fly.

Chorus

The night is dark, the stars are young, and the notes flicker and fly.

## 2. *PRINCE POTESKIN (1787)*

### Chorus

This geographic pear of land,  
 Crimea, granted its dependence,  
 Is good for those who pretend.  
 Prince, with nobody in attendance,  
 Is walking straight. Life goes as planned.

### Poteskin

Why lie?.. I need a firm position  
 With such a recent acquisition.  
 Alas! St. Petersburg is far.  
 We're working with the wild Tartar.  
 His horse is good, his riches, few;  
 His loyalty is nothing new.  
 But here comes the Judgement Day:  
 Let others wince, and cringe, and pay:  
 Here Catherine comes! But who am I  
 As not to use my art of the lie?  
 My crafty skill of a blatant fib  
 Which we all learn from a child's crib.

A particle of truth is lie,  
 Its elementary division,  
 But lies are gone as moments fly.  
 Lies make the life, truth makes a vision,  
 A tale told by a passer-by.  
 Kaleidoscope of truth and lie:  
 That's a political decision!

### Grachev

Forgive me, Prince, if I intrude,  
 (I do not mean to seem so rude) -  
 You talk of politics, but why,  
 For goodness sake, do you have to lie?!  
 Just what we're doing every day -  
 I cannot see why lies should pay;  
 When orders come, be there heat or cold,  
 You just obey them; do as you are told.

Send to Siberia someone -  
 No place for lies - just said and done.  
 A letter to a foreign king -  
 To lie is such a lowly thing!  
 Tsarina waits for your reply -  
 It does you no good to lie!  
 I do not want to seem so dumb:  
 But why do we lie when orders come?

Potemkin

Grachev, you did not understand:  
Lies come and go, life goes as planned.  
Since lie is just a moment's name,  
You never feel a bit of shame.  
Just what you're doing every day -  
You do not think, you just obey.  
But if your thinking is denied,  
There's no telling one has lied.

Grachev

Why do we lie when given orders?

Potemkin

We are inside the Russian borders.

Grachev

Why lie, I do not understand...

Potemkin

Lies come and go, life goes as planned.

## 2. *JEFFERSON & NAPOLEON (1803)*

Jefferson

All people were created equal -  
Or so we were told they were.

Napoleon

That sounds rather like a sequel  
To something I have seen before -  
My data may be outdated,  
As I recall, only two people were created.  
While everybody else just came from Mother Eve  
After she and her husband from the Garden of Eden took their extended leave.

Jefferson

Well, you can say "All people come to this world equal", if you want.

Napoleon

Oh no, they don't.  
We all are born unequal to each other,  
Equality is not a natural design,  
You are dealt a gene from father, from *mama* you get another,  
And through the whole life you keep your own line.  
Our individuality  
Is the way of all reality,  
It is the only way we grow, play, and stay  
With our sanity, and vanity, and clarity,  
Since the stone spears and caves, there were masters, knaves, and slaves,

There was no place and no reason for equality.  
 I despise *egalite*, and I forsake *fraternite*  
 In my individual pursuit of *liberte*.

Jefferson

Who should be slave? who should be master?  
 That's a prescription for disaster,  
 Slaves will revolt, if there's a chance...

Napoleon

That we already had in France.  
 But everybody knows the story--  
 I did not ask for riches, crown and glory,  
 I used my force to save my ailing nation  
 And to reorganize the French civilization.

Jefferson

And thousands of people had to die.

Napoleon

Well, one who is a king, he cannot shy  
 From blood, and war as ultimate solution.  
 You fought the British in your revolution,  
 I do the same, while I'm in charge I fight for what is my land,  
 And I will end my life on the Atlantic island...  
 (*leaves*)

Jefferson (alone)

I hate the politicians, their words and tricks...  
 Oh Science, you're so free and far from any politics...

The bones of a giant beast were brought to my attention,  
 They are as interesting as any technical invention;  
 The Flood, the Noah's Ark, the people use to say;  
 It seems to me -- it does not work this way.

The memories of life in earthly layers lie:  
 One measures what they overlay or underlie,  
 One reads the history from cold and lifeless stones,  
 From splinters of a flint, from smashed and broken bones.

Observer

With the United States, and France, and England gone,  
 Oh, Thomas Jefferson, your name will still be known  
 As a describer of the fossil ground sloth,  
 Whose bones you neatly sketched right on the tablecloth.

Chorus

Down, down the River of Memory,  
 Back to the caves and stone spears,  
 Listen to the Spirit of History,

Catch this tune before it disappears,  
 Listen to the words the stones try to say  
 Before the time and water will wash it all away...

#### 4. HMS BEAGLE (1832)

##### Young Darwin

My research, which has not been illegal,  
 Brought along such a lively debate  
 Since I sailed on the HMS Beagle  
 Being Captain FitzRoy's dinner mate.

##### Chorus

Yes, he sailed on the HMS Beagle  
 Being Captain's friend and dinner mate.

##### Sailors (dance)

What's the problem? What's the fuss?  
 Mister Darwin comes with us!  
 He will bring the skulls and stones,  
 Smelly hides and stinky bones,  
 Slug, and squid, and cachalote!  
 On the deck all this will rot!

##### FitzRoy

Our proud little nation  
 Boasts perfect transportation,  
 And we sail around the world a lot,  
 But in all my troubled travels,  
 When a mystery unravels,  
 I am able to recognize the plot.

##### Sailors

Yes, in all his troubled travels,  
 When a mystery unravels,  
 He is able to recognize the plot.

We are sailing the world all over,  
 From the chalky cliffs of Dover  
 To the Mount of the Cape,  
 Coming from across the ocean,  
 Bringing back the spice and potion,  
 And the monkey, and the ape.

*Dance with the ape masks.*

Tell us, tell us, Mr. Darwin,  
 How the humans took their shape?  
 Who did such a skillful carving  
 On the genes of a dirty ape?

Hear the word of Dr. Darwin,  
Hear from Dover to the Cape!

Young Darwin

Of the Captain's debates growing weary,  
Which from physics to musics did range,  
I suggested, to the Captain's contrary,  
That the shape of all creatures could change.

That some creatures that have been related,  
Much like British and Germans were once,  
Came apart, and became isolated,  
And mutated just by happenstance.

Not a shaman, not a wizard, not a druid,  
I just routinely recorded what I've seen,  
And Nature suddenly became so very fluid --  
Or rather fluid it has always been...

Chorus

Historical change --

FitzRoy

How can anyone even think or desire? --

Chorus

Historical change --

FitzRoy

Nothing changes: not a man, not a tree, not a beast --

Chorus

Historical change --

FitzRoy

Just remember what happened to the Roman Empire --

Chorus

Historical change --

FitzRoy

When your sun does not rise anymore from the East.

Chorus

Why should anything change if we are on the top of the list?

FitzRoy

Under the best of governments, under your own king,  
Only a madman would wish to get rid of a magic ring,  
To disrupt, to corrupt, and to open to waves and wind  
The tranquility of our soul and mind --

Chorus

Historical change - we don't want anything of the kind.

FitzRoy

Sun may rise in the East, it may set in the West,  
 But it never goes down over our Empire,  
 Any change only madmen can truly desire:  
 We are the Englishmen; of all the lots we got the very best.

Chorus

"He is an Englishman"; of all the scores he got the very best.

All Sailors

Give us peace and tranquility,  
 Give us trade and stability,  
 Give us law and civility  
 As the winds for our sail.  
 Raised with pride and austerity,  
 Work for future prosperity,  
 Proudly sail to posterity  
 For the ages to hail!

Young Darwin

I am sorry, Captain. I just have to say  
 It does not seem to me that Nature works this way.  
 A species can not survive unless its genes are fit.  
 What was true for the Romans, should be true for the Brit.

5. *WAR & BLOOD (1914-1918)*Princip

Gavrilo Princip is my name  
 And life will never be the same.  
 Before it was your God who told you when to die.  
 Guess what: from now on it's I!

Chorus

Guess what: from now on it's him,  
 The person who is not what he may look and seem,  
 The person next to you, he's walking through the crowd,  
 He does not look afraid, he does not talk too loud,  
 His forehead has some sweat, he is a rat who runs his maze,  
 All powers of God are in his small briefcase.

Princip

Oh future leaders of the superpowers:  
 Are your briefcases so different from ours?  
 I'm looking for a single person's blood to spill,  
 While you may indiscriminantly kill.

Your doctors will decide that I'm insane -  
But I will kill just once - so I am more humane!

Chorus

He killed just once, but this was quite enough  
To make the coming years rather tough.

*Change of scene.*

Victoria

My dear granddaughter Alice, I'm writing to you from Windsor,  
I remember you coming from Hesse, you used to visit us every winter,  
And now you're a Russian queen, you live in luscious royal quarters,  
And by 1901 when I will die you'll have three little daughters.

Our family is cursed with a disease:  
Let you never have chance to know what it is;  
It takes such a toll on your body and soul  
When your baby is sick, and you can't help at all...  
My baby son, my darling Leopold...

Alexandra

Oh, poor uncle Leopold... I know, I was told.

Dear Granny: I know, I've read in the history books,  
Our body not always really is what it looks,  
It may carry some hidden evil which we cannot know at all.  
And sometimes it comes to the surface like a memory you recall.

Somebody

And this time it came to the surface like a memory she recalled  
And her son was born with the same disease as her uncle named Leopold.

Chorus

He was born Queen Victoria's great-grandson,  
At the age of fourteen he faced the killer's gun,  
With his Mom and Dad, and his sisters four,  
Killed by communists, suffered no more.

Nikolai

He will become the future Tsar of my empire,  
To live to see him reign is my desire,  
He will be crowned as Alexei the Second.

Alexandra

But our baby's life, it is in danger every second.  
Let us tell nobody that our son is not well:  
And we'll hide him from the crowds, and the doctor will not tell,  
And we'll bring the British nurses, and we'll pray to the Russian God,  
Maybe Lord will have His mercy on the son of royal blood.

Chorus

Dear Lord, please have your mercy on the genes of human blood.

Victoria

There is a gentleman in America, at Columbia University, in New York,  
Dr. Morgan, he claims he explained inheritance in the lowly flies,  
Of course it sounds rubbish, much like Dr. Darwin's notorious work,  
But things really run in families, if to humans his theory applies.

*Enter Thomas Morgan.*

Chorus

Tell us, tell us, Doctor Morgan,  
Why we look like Dad and Mom?  
How the body builds the organ?  
From whence good and evil come?  
Tell us, tell us, Thomas Morgan,  
From whence our talents come?

Morgan

We are Mother Nature's creatures,  
What's the problem? what's the fuss?  
Our talents, our features  
Our parents give to us.

Somebody

So, get rid of bad mutation,  
Breed the talents, build the nation,  
Bring our race to bliss and glory!

Morgan

It does not work this way, I'm sorry.

Chorus

How sad. We only have to say:  
Heredity, it does not work this way.

Morgan

The mysteries of life in all earth's creatures lie,  
But truth may be concealed when outer features lie.  
O hemophilia, our unlucky lot,  
When blood in human veins, if ruptured, cannot clot.  
Or you may bleed inside, without being cut,  
It all depends on genes which you from parents got.

*Change of scene.*

First Observer

The Emperor of Russia, Nikolai,  
Was a strange man who never said a word.

Second Observer

Does it not strike you as rather absurd?

First Observer

If you are silent, you don't have to lie.  
 Grigory Rasputin was a crazy psychic,  
 Who made all royal dames to do a high kick,  
 He told the Tsar: don't start the war, don't bring the torments,  
 Make peace! make eternal peace with the Germans!! make it! make it!  
 make it NOW! before we all are killed!

Second Observer

To spare the millions whose blood was spilled...

Both Observers

How sad. We only have to say:  
 It does not work this way.

Chorus

Oh History, you do not work this way.

Somebody

Our History is mixed with soldiers' blood,  
 Enlivened by women's tears and orphans' sweat,  
 And when we let it pass, then let us pray to God,  
 That we remember it, that we do not forget.

Chorus

Down, down the River of Memory,  
 Row, row your boat through blood and tears,  
 Listen to the Spirit of History,  
 Catch this boat before it disappears.  
 Catch this train before the train departs  
 Carrying the passengers to the better parts...

*MUSICAL INTERMISSION**6. THE YALTA CONFERENCE (1945)*Molotov (a comical dance)

Old Uncle Joe, he is a real man,  
 Such men are hard to come across again,  
 He starts a war -- no, he didn't start (I just forgot the second part) --  
 He fights a war, and what a war! such wars were never fought before!  
 He won the war, and he won more than just a war,  
 Such men were never seen before.  
 Good Uncle Joe, he's more than just a man,  
 Such men will never be encountered again,  
 Like Uncle Joe,  
 Oh yes, like Uncle Joe.  
 Of the entire world he is the Lord Protector;

Of all the operas, composer and director,  
 And if he tells me "Molotov, go fly around the Moon",  
 I'll take off in a moment in a stratosphere balloon  
 For Uncle Joe,  
 Oh yes, for Uncle Joe.  
 Let Europe cringe, let Europe pay,  
 That's what we are doing every day,  
 We engineer a global lie,  
 Who cares how many people die?  
 Not Uncle Joe,  
 No, no, not Uncle Joe.  
 He does not care how many people die,  
 Old Uncle Joe.

#### Chorus

He never shied from the sight of blood,  
 He wanted a real job.  
 In his Bible he liked the role of God,  
 And he hated the part of Job.

And he put his people on their knees,  
 And appointed himself a God,  
 And checks he took for his legal fees  
 Were drawn in human blood.

We are crushed by the scores in his crusty old hand,  
 And we praise him in prose and verse.  
 Uncle Joe is the ruler of the Russian land  
 And the leader of the Universe.

#### Molotov & Chorus

We were brought from caves and stone spears  
 By old Uncle Joe's almighty hand,  
 Man of Steel, that's how he appears  
 To the people of the Russian land.

Uncle Joe, a ruler of the nation,  
 With his iron hand and golden mind,  
 He will lead our nation's elevation  
 To the final stage of humankind!

#### Roosevelt

How can we say for certain:  
 Who will rise and who will fall?

#### Churchill

I can see the Iron Curtain,  
 I can feel the Berlin Wall.

#### Chorus

Jail for those who cross the Curtain,

Death for those who jump the Wall.

Roosevelt

Eastern Europe disappears,  
Western Europe understands:  
We have fought for many years,  
We have made too many plans.

Chorus

They have fought too many years,  
They have made too many plans.

Churchill

If we draw another border,  
Russian soldiers we will fight.

Churchill & Roosevelt

Let us serve his modest order;  
Let us quench his appetite.

Chorus

So tell us who is the winner?

Churchill & Roosevelt (childishly)

Uncle Joe who came for dinner.

Roosevelt

He ate the Poles and he ate the Czechs.

Churchill

And he paid with the rubber cheques.

Roosevelt

And those Romanians he also ate.

Churchill

He would eat the Romans, but he was too late.

Roosevelt

He also did something we did not understand --

Churchill

He killed half the people of his own land.

Stalin

All mysteries of life in ancient statements lie:  
Thou shall not kill, thou shall not steal, thou shall not lie.  
But if you made yourself another God,  
Just live your life and chew your cud,  
You lie, and steal, and kill, you do as you are told --  
Your soul is to a higher bidder sold.

The laws of nature, laws of natural selection,  
 They do not fit a whimpy Western-style election,  
 Why struggle to convince the rich not to be greedy?  
 You better kill the rich and feed the needy,  
 And then you feed them something new,  
 And they will lie and kill for you,  
 On their soul we put a nasty cancrous lesion:  
 That's what I call a nice political decision.

7. *TIMES OF LYSENKO (1948)*

Lysenko

What is the truth?.. It's what I say it is.  
 With soul and sin our people do not bother.  
 Our murders are performed by the police,  
 Our children are informing on their father.  
 It may not be so good - but, as we Russians say,  
 One chops the wood, and splinters fly away.

Chorus

And inside Russian History's forever lasting winter  
 We know, each of us is nothing but a frozen splinter.

Lysenko

We will purge the mutant features,  
 Foreign blood and rebel clan,  
 We will forge all nature's creatures  
 Into slaves of our men.

I will change your bread and water,  
 I will change your soul and mind,  
 I will take your son and daughter  
 To a better humankind.

Chorus

He will take our son and daughter  
 Kill their soul and purge their mind.

Scientists

We need to stick to our professional duty.  
 Our science is truth, and truth is beauty.  
 Blessed be a man who to his duty sticks,  
 Our science is so far from any politics.

Lysenko is put by Stalin in charge of our farms and fields.--  
 -- He is a madman. -- He is a very dangerous man. -- He is truly deranged.--  
 -- He thinks everything he will touch would be changed.  
 He does not wait for what Nature has to do,  
 he'll press and crush until this Nature yields.

We need to stick to our professional duty.  
 Our science is truth, and truth is beauty.  
 Let's just be quiet, let's wait, let this nightmare fly away from us,  
 So Galileo did, so did Copernicus.

Chorus

To their crimes all culprits have confessed,  
 Our good cells of memory are free,  
 Our great land, the country of the blessed,  
 Jail and kill those who do not agree!

We don't know who was here before us,  
 To the Western plagues we are immune,  
 Our singers never leave the chorus,  
 And until they die, they keep this tune:

To their crimes all culprits have confessed,  
 Our great land - the country of the free,  
 Realm of truth, the country of the blessed,  
 Our good genes are purged of memory.

Scientists

To the Western science we will not bow,  
 From the Western hands we will not eat,  
 Our true milk flows from a Russian cow,  
 Our good bread is made of Russian wheat.

Observer

Your agriculture being thoroughly destroyed,  
 The Western farmer with his grain will fill the void.  
 And twenty years from now, as History relates,  
 Your bread will come from the United States.

8. *KING OF SPADES (2030)*

Spirit of History

Let us take a quick break to express our grief;  
 For History's ship hit a serious reef.  
 Never mind the nets and the catch,  
 There is water down the hatch,  
 Who will stand at the pumps, who will try to repair and patch?

If you really want to know what shape your future can take,  
 I can put you to sleep for a while, and you will be seeing a dream.  
 I will point your subconscious many years to the future, and before you're awake,  
 For a very brief moment you will see what the future may seem...

*Sings a Lullaby:*

Nobody can know the future,

Anybody can learn from the past,  
 And the price of this learning is something you can afford,  
 If your books were not burnt,  
 And your lessons were learnt,  
 And you finished your homework on your own at last,  
 Then a teacher may give you a little reward.

Chorus

Dear History, please, will you give us a little reward?..

*Change of the scene. Enter the King of Spades.*

King of Spades

I am the King of Spades. That's how I am known,  
 And I can count this whole planet as my own.  
 I am the man who owns all the nations  
 And who distributes oil and gas in rations.

Chorus

You are the man who gives us our life in rations,  
 Oh King of Spades.

King of Spades

When I was born in nineteen-eighty-one,  
 Reforms in Russia have not yet begun.  
 At thirty years of age, in Moscow, I was  
 Of the Russian Mafia the most accomplished boss.

Chorus

In twenty years you came to be the planet's boss,  
 Oh King of Spades.

King of Spades

We shot the journalists, we bought the readers,  
 We used to keep extensive files on Russian leaders,  
 It's quite amusing how, by using those files,  
 We suddenly got hold of nuclear missiles.

Chorus

You finally got hold of nuclear missiles,  
 Oh King of Spades.

King of Spades

The rest is history. It's written in the books.  
 We finally got rid of dirty rotten crooks,  
 We gave our people back their former Russian pride,  
 And made their silly life a Disneylandish ride.

Chorus

You made the Russian life a Disneylandish ride,  
 Oh King of Spades.

King of Spades

The people thought that oil and gas on Earth were plenty,  
That was before the Oil War of twenty-twenty.  
The Devastation hits, it goes for seven years,  
Two billion are dead, and Europe disappears.

Chorus

And you become the Boss when Europe disappears,  
Oh King of Spades.

King of Spades

And now I have nothing more to gain,  
What's left of former proud nations writhe in pain,  
Their life became a nuclear blackmail,  
Where everybody pays a billion-dollar bail.

Chorus

Yes, every day we have to pay a billion-dollar bail  
To the King of Spades.

King of Spades

I am the King. We also have princes, counts, and dukes;  
Our power relies on our rusty nukes.  
Oh Russian history, you suffered long enough,  
And our happy boys are now very tough.

Chorus

Your happy boys are now very, very tough,  
Oh King of Spades.  
He is the Lord Protector of the nations,  
In twenty years he became the planet's boss,  
He is the one who gives us our life in rations,  
Can History forget the man who was  
The King of Spades?

*The Dream ends.*

Chorus

No! no! no! It is not how we want to live!  
It is scary, nightmarey, it is a rotten make-believe.  
It was just a bad dream. It was a bad nightmare.  
It cannot be, it cannot be true, it cannot happen so!  
Such dismal fate cannot be waiting over there.  
It's bad enough as it is now, there is no more way to go.  
You are always punished if you sin,  
And the good over evil prevails,  
And the bad guys lose, and the good guys win.  
We know it from the fairy tales.  
Let the bad guys lose, let the good guys win.  
Let it be like in the fairy tales.

## 9. THE GRAND FINALE

*Opens the background view on the Galaxy.*

### Spirit of History

I'm traveling among the stars,  
 Unraveling the plot.  
 There are bacteria on Mars,  
 An ancient, decent lot.  
 There races are I like to see  
 When racing through the Galaxy,  
 And races I like not.  
 They all have women; most have men;  
 Some die for good, some come again;  
 They all have cells, their cells have genes,  
 I guess you know what this means,  
 This means that you are all alike  
 Until the bad mutations strike.

### Chorus

And when the bad mutations hit,  
 We do not do so well.  
 The billions of stars were lit,  
 So many tales to tell.  
 Unraveling the mystery,  
 Oh Spirit, tell us true:  
 Direction of our history:  
 Is it OK with you?

### Spirit

You're making life with what you've got,  
 On average, you are a crafty lot,  
 But for your own sake  
 You better take a break.  
 Go count your sheep and collect your wits  
 Before a bad mutation hits;  
 And be careful with nuclear guns,  
 You could be wiped out at once.

### Somebody

But we developed quite a new civilization:  
 In what we now call a Cyberspatial Nation,  
 Technology without paper, pen, or ink,  
 With information flowing free from link to link.

### Chorus (proudly)

Yes, we developed quite a new civilization:  
 In what we now call a Cyberspatial Nation,  
 Where people, white and yellow, black and pink,  
 Are all connected link to link,

Technology is our road to salvation.  
Technology, you are the human way to the salvation.

Spirit

It may not be evident from inside,  
You treat your inventions with such a pride,  
But lately you did not seem to mind  
The large-scale killing of your own kind.

Chorus (sheepishly)

Yes, lately we did not seem to mind  
The large-scale killing of our own kind.

Spirit

I am not making fun of your ability  
To handle simple tools with both hands;  
But I just wish you took at least responsibility  
For being fools: you know how it ends.

Chorus

If you're a dunce, there's no chance for any happy ends.

Actors (*taking off their masks*).

Our dear Spirit of History, please have the minimal tact,  
We in the production are also humans, we just run the theatrical act.  
We put on disguise of fools and bad guys, for our paycheck to earn,  
But you must talk to the real folk if History is to learn!  
*(everybody points at and over the audience).*

Chorus

Yes, you better talk to the real folk if History is to learn!  
And in Russia's case, in the Russian land,  
With the next millennium at the door,  
Let her people realize where they really stand,  
Let there be no slaves anymore.  
Let their music be as good as they can afford,  
Let their lyrics shine with a better writer's word,  
Let their opera have a better score.

Down, down the River of Memory,  
Row, row your boat through blood and tears,  
Listen to the Spirit of History,  
Catch this boat before it disappears.  
Catch this train before the train departs  
Carrying the passengers to the better parts...

THE END

(1997, Huntington, West Virginia -- Corvallis, Oregon)