

AUFLÄNDER und STAATENLOSE

An opera by Andrew Garton



The desert

LIBRETTO

AUSLÄNDER UND STAATENLOSE

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CHARACTERS

Mark Fedotych – ailing Eastern European refugee

Marusia Fedotych – Mark's embattled wife

Semyon Semyonich – Friend of Mark and Marusia's, a refugee

SUITS – Three powerful, ominous, phantom beings

ADDITIONAL PERFORMERS

Narrator – English : adaptation from original Russian texts

Narrator – Russian : original Russian texts

Narrator – German : biographical, diary, memory texts

10 piece Choir – Libretto

ACT 1

BETWEEN STAATENLOSE

Mark Fedotyich is dying. He and his wife, Marusia have been living in Lagerstrasse, a refugee camp in Central Europe. They survived off what money he made selling goods on the black Market. Chocolate, stockings, that sort of thing.

Mark drank and smoked all the time. Years of poor food, beatings, tobacco and alcohol were taking its toll. His will shaken by life on the run, from one war torn crisis to the next his body could take no more.

When Mark and Marusia, arrived at Lagerstrasse his life came quickly to a standstill. His was a life on the run. Movement was his country, his freedom. To stop was the end of knowledge, the end of life, to die.

Marusia loved, cared and looked after him. She'd done the same for her father, also a heavy drinker, since she was in her early teens. Why should life with Mark be any different?

Soon it would all come to an end. Mark was in great pain and Marusia could not bare to see him suffer.

Their friend, Semyon Semyonich, watches over them, comforting Marusia as Mark nears his death.

"What have I become," Mark wonders. It seemed that all his struggles; the strength and courage it took to stay alive had amounted to nothing. Nothing, but food for the worms. "I will lie in a grave, in a grave cold and yellow."

"I was born without a country, born staatenlos, my home was the land my feet walked upon." He cried, like a child, softly, helplessly...

No matter how many borders he'd had to cross, his country was movement, his language was that of the road and the people he would meet along the way. A foreigner, ein Auslaender!

Dying staatenlos wasn't a problem for Mark. This was just one more runner. "Forever stateless, forever free... the road is my home. So long as I move I have a place. It's this camp, this Lagerstrasse that's killed me. If the ground ceases to move beneath my feet then so must I."

And then the day and the hour of death came. His was a difficult death, he was fully conscious, looking at his Marusia, parting from her forever, and from his friend Semyon.

Marusia wept inconsolably, and so did Semyon.

Mark Fedotych's last breath tore from his chest, his eyes closed and everything disappeared. It was all over.

SUITS

(quietly)

Ausländer und Staatenlose

Ausländer und Staatenlose

Ausländer und Staatenlose

Ausländer und Staatenlose

(Continues till the end of MARK FEDOTYCH's first song)

MARK FEDOTYCH

(strained)

I

I will

I will die

And

and these

these hands

these hands and legs

these hands and legs and all of me will die

Yes, living

living had been good

Yes, living

Living had been good

I

I will

I will lie

lie in a grave

in a grave cold and yellow

and

and the worms

worms will eat all of me

yes, the worms

the worms will eat it all

(SUITS end abruptly)

ACT II

THE MESSAGE

Mark leaves the physical world weightless and translucent. His body feels vital, fresh, firm and light. He stretches his arms and legs out through a fabulous white suit. A sun-bright bowler hat is tipped back on his head.

He stares in disbelief at the body he's leaving behind. "I'm lookin down and seein, it's horrifying my wretched arse in need of purifying."

He turns and faces the radiance of this new life, but he's quickly enveloped by a somber darkness. He hears a swarm of voices advising him to return to Earth where he must stay for 40 days. He must move amongst his mourners and then and only then can he return to continue on his new journey. "The stars are my friends. They will have me back."

He returns to find Semyon and Marusia singing together, grateful for his death, grateful to be rid of him. Marusia is clearly happier to be free of Mark and the life, through no fault of his own, she'd felt trapped in. However, despite her apparent freedom she's no closer to leaving Lagerstrasse than before, but she wasn't to know that.

Mark turns away from the jubilant couple just as their tent is cut to shreds by bayonets. He looks back on them helplessly, watching as they and the rest of Lagerstrasse's population are herded onto trucks. He knows they're to be returned to the countries they fled from and there they will meet their death.

Mark leaves the sorry site deciding to spend the remainder of his days on Earth visiting its farthest shores. He finds he can transport himself through the air at incredible speeds and in doing so, begins to see the many worlds he'd run away from, the countries and people he'd only heard of and the seas he dreamt about.

The following days were no less pleasant than the life that had been taken from him. Everywhere he was invisible and able to see what no one else could. How much hypocrisy, lying, hatred, envy and evil there was on this planet! Everything was a lie, a pretense! And Earth too was filled with deafening noise and chaos! Whole cities fell and the sound of human groaning never ceased.

MARK FEDOTYCH

(sung like a sea-shanty)

To think I was sorry
to part with that body
that dirty, smelly, worthless body

To think it was me
troubled and sick
from the fight to be free
what it meant to be free
a dream to be free

We fled with our dreams
our demons and fears
stateless but free
if running can be free

Fighting their wars
for their dead and unborn
we took scars to our flesh
we sang, we cried
trapped in our worlds
soiless, sunless, struggling worlds

To think I was sorry
to part with that life
that dirty, smelly, childless life

To think I was sorry
to think it was me
to think I was sorry
perhaps now I'll be free

VOICES

(Russian Orthodox theme)

Forty, forty, forty days
forty days
fly close to Earth...
forty days
close to Earth
then...

Forty, forty, forty days
Closer, closer

Forty, forty, forty days
Later, later

SEMYON SEMYONYCH

(dirge-like)

Thank God he's dead
he's finally dead
he's gone he's gone and taken his stench

SEMYON & MARUSIA

We'll throw out his bottles
and burn all his filth

SEMYON

you can free your mind of his lies and deceit

MARUSIA

I can wash my breasts of his quivering hands

SEMYON

and rinse your mouth of his blistered lips

SEMYON & MARUSIA

We're free of the rot that laughed through his teeth

MARUSIA

and the corns that bleed through the socks on his feet

SEMYON

the worms will no doubt choke on their feast

I hate to think of the love he gave

MARUSIA

I've suffered enough!

SEMYON

We'll love in the snow, delectable snow

SEMYON & MARUSIA

Thank God he's dead
he's finally dead
he's gone he's gone and taken his stench

We'll dance on ice in skates of steel
and love in the snow, delectable snow

ACT III

THE MESSAGE IS A LIE

Forty days quickly passed and Mark hastily left the world of mortals, the dominion of flesh and bone, the dread, the darkness. Whilst doing so he longs for his Europe lost. "I uphold the world, I raise my fists, I fight for you, I long for you, God's tears Europa." His words are like sonic projectiles, punching voice into space, hurtling him towards his destiny.

As he leaves Earth he encounters the stratosphere, that space in which Earth is encircled by satellites transmitting commerce, weather, radar, military and entertainment data. Upon entering this dense cluster of information, Mark finds himself caught, snared much like a fish. He's then met formally by the SUITS.

The SUITS, in rich black drop coats and capes cast an imposing presence. They're curiously elegant and seductive.

"Die Like a Tourist", they snarl. They're not about to let him go. As Mark fights to free himself, the SUITS make it clear to him that he's not yet separate from that which sustained life on Earth, that his journey is far from over. He's to be recycled!

Struggling to free himself, Mark screams, "There's no freedom, no freiheit, no choice!"

Mark is bound to duty, to inhabit only a fraction of barely livable space in the global economy from which he must fuel, along with everyone else, the expansion of commerce, of power, of capital.

MARK FEDOTYCH

The medium was the message, but the message is a lie.

SUITS

Shut your cryin' eyes!

And then he knew nothing more of what was happening to him,
everything disappeared and so did he.

MARK FEDOTYCH and SUITS

*(Slowly at first, the words uttered as if being punched through
space)*

I uphold the world
I raise my fists
I turn the key
I fight for you I die for you I long for you
God's tears Europa

Take the weight, the weight
I know no pain
I take the pain
you open the doors
fill our streets with glassy eyes with glassy hearts
looks as though they're here to stay
I take the weight
hose me down I shine for you
God's tears Europa

(Tempo is now constant and sung with SUITS)

I uphold the world
I raise my fists
I turn the key
I fight for you
I die for you I long for you
God's tears Europa

Still the pain I face the world
Know me know me know me know me
Forget me not forsake me not
carve me out I stand by you
carve me up I die for you
would I leave God's tears will fall, Europa!

*(Soundscape - click-clack sample, market place mixed with zoo
sounds, stock market, auctioneers.)*

*(Soundscape of destruction, death, famine, global communication,
"the want for America" - cultural genocide, etc. A single bell is
ringing.)*

SUITS

You come like a tourist
Your mama said you would
crawl like broken clockwork
ring em bells loud and true

You've got blistered nipples so colour
so tortured by the sun
Your mama's doin time
while we load our special guns

Feet been walking charcoal
Easter Island ruby red
Lips a grand canyon
Chicka-back she goes that gun

Children be smilin and dreadful
clothes a rippin yarn
We're selling lava pumice to stone washing jeans

Come die like a tourist
You're eyes no goin where
wearin thin them shutterin tumblers
tumblin to yer grave

I feel your arms grippin vicely
hands straining me goose flesh
no fiction no hidin no shirkin feeble hearted
like your mama said you would like your mama said you would

Stonehenge casts a shadow
pilgrims rock the cradle
lonely planet she's a screamin as fires burn in Boche's hell

Come Die like a tourist
Your life no goin where
crawl like broken clockwork
Like your mama said you would
All your mamas said you would
Like your mama said you would
All your mamas said
Chicka-back!

ACT IV

FREIHEIT REVEALED

Mark awakens. The SUITS, still with him, encourage him now to open his eyes, "sky blue eyes."

From out of his darkness comes to the realisation that he's still alive. Mark senses his body. He hears voices in a language he can barely understand. The air is clean, cool and salty. But the more conscious he becomes, the more he remembers Lagerstrasse, Marusia, the fallen cities, the hungry hordes of homeless peoples. "Taken me blood earth, pound me flesh."

He craves for a smoke and a solid drink. As he cries for attention, to his horror, he can only make a harsh wailing sound. The SUITS scream in unison with him.

Mark becomes agitated, frustrated and angry, drawing more on his past, seeking freedom in movement, seeking answers for the repatriation of his friends. "They bartered me living, exchanged me dead!"

Slowly he comes to the realisation that his thoughts are cradled within the fragile body of a newborn child. As soon as he becomes fully conscious of his predicament he's picked up and hurled into a vast body of water. He feels the cold, salty water envelop him. He hears a woman's screams. They fade the deeper he enters the black oblivion.

He opens his eyes and sees the rotting hull of wooden boat pass overhead. More than 100 starving people are on board. A floating Lagerstrasse. Dozens of tiny emaciated hands paddle in unison on either side of the hull. Mark's eyes close once more. "Forever Auslaender, Forever ein Staatenloser."

SUITS

He's opening his eyes.

MARK FEDOTYCH

I'm opening my eyes.

SUITS

Clickety clack, sky blue eyes

MARK FEDOTYCH

My eyes, my eyes
blind to the seein world

SUITS

Clickety clack, sky blue eyes

MARK FEDOTYCH

My soul eyes
my God given soul eyes blinkin to the seein world

SUITS

Clickety clack, expanding eye

MARK FEDOTYCH

Come then bones
come then skin
give me form
wake me spring

They bartered me living
Exchanged me dead
Taken me blood earth
Pound me flesh
My land, my ice

SUITS

Open, open, open your eyes
Clickety clack, wider eyes

MARK FEDOTYCH

The medium was the message
but the message was a lie
Der sonne mach spase
spase nicht mein fleish

SUITS

Clickety clack, wider eyes

MARK FEDOTYCH

I'm seein, I'm seein
Lagerstrasse now
Freiheit it ain't
does it matter any how

All I want, all I need
is one cigarette
just one cigarette
Just one drink,
Just one sip
to dance all night on Stalin's grave
to stomp my way out of Lagerstrasse
only one sip
just one sip

SUITS

Clickety clack, oh Hell oh Hell
Click clack click clack click clack click!!!

(Hissing and whining sounds)

SUITS

Kick them kick them kick them legs

SUITS

Ausländer und Staatenlose
Ausländer und Staatenlose
Ausländer und Staatenlose
Ausländer und Staatenlose

MARK FEDOTYCH

Ich
Ich bin
Ich bin nicht
Ich bin nicht ein Auslander

Ich
Ich bin
Ich bin nicht
Ich bin nicht ein Staatenlose

SUITS

Ausländer und Staatenlose
Ausländer und Staatenlose
Ausländer und Staatenlose
Ausländer und Staatenlose

MARK FEDOTYCH

Ich
Ich had
Ich hab ein
Ich had ein apfle in mein kauf

Undt ales
Ales ist gute
yah, ales
ales ist gute
yah, ales
ales ist gute
yah, ales
ales ist gute!