

# VIKINGS - Libretto



**Yevehn Stankovych – «Vikings» (1999)**

Libretto by A.Bystrushkin – Ballet in two acts

**Act One** There is a shore of North Sea in Norway. Scandinavian nature is austere and wild. Youth celebrates the spring. The young Vikings and girls are jumping round in exuberant round dances, competing in finesse and animation. The young boys arrange war like games, boast of their strength. A golden-haired athlete wins all the fights and contests and raises the young people admiration. It's Harald, prince of Norway, courageous knight and reckless handsome man. But he is tired of the games and contests; he wants real military campaigns and urges friends to set out to conquer new lands.

Conquerors-North men win time after time. No gales, no storms, no high walls of fortresses frighten strong, dexterous soldiers and their ferocious leader Harald. But doubts sneak in his soul – is it worth to devote all the life to bloody battles and violence. Unknown feelings disturb his heart.

Waves are rising, invincible ship of Vikings is sailing and mighty wind blasts are filling the sails. A song «We are Vikings» is sounding.

Clouds become dispersed, opening vestured in haze golden-headed Orthodox cathedrals of Kyiv. Young Russian boys and girls are singing and dancing in a ring. A daughter of Grand Duke Yaroslav, Yelizaveta, is among them. In the heat of the spring games a band of Vikings appears headed by Harald.

Russian warriors are ready to rush to uninvited guests. Harald takes out a sword and challenges a leader of the Russians to contest with him. In a second a fight should start. Russians and Vikings approach each other. But suddenly a girl runs out the crowd and flings herself between the leaders, stopping them. Being struck by her beauty, Harald lowers his sword. The Russians kneel in her face. The beauty of Yelizaveta charms Harald.

Grand Duke Yaroslav and Grand Duchess Ingigerda appear surrounded by the priest Illarion, boyars and retainues. The Vikings incline before them. Grand Duke orders to receive Vikings as honourable guests.

The festivities continue. But Harald sees only Yelizaveta. Passionate Harald goes down on his's knees before Yaroslav and begs to give the daughter in marriage to him. Everyone is

shocked about the overbold behaviour of the Viking. Russian warriors are ready to rush to the Vikings. Harald and Yelizaveta are standing between two forces, keeping themselves hand in hand. Yaroslav disjoins the hands of the loving couple and asks Harald to wait, because Yelizaveta is very young yet. The Prince of Norway should win her hand, having obtained a power and a crown.

**Act Two** The song «We are Vikings» is sounding over the sea. Waves are roaring; the wind is filling red sails. Harald and his faithful friend Asmund are near a rudder of the ship. In his thoughts Harald returns to his past: terrible battles in Sicily, an assault of Alexandria together with Byzantines, a battle against Arabs. An image of Yelizaveta appears in his dreams again. Vagrancies sail towards Byzantium.

Byzantine empress Zoya is meeting Harald as a rescuer and prominent commander. She has fallen in love with prince of Norway. But Harald dreams of Kyiv where Yelizaveta waits for him. The indignant Zoya feels angry with Harald, which rejects her burning feelings. She orders to kill the Viking. Zoya's guard is rushing with spears toward Harald. Asmund hides his friend behind himself. The betrayed Vikings fight their way free through the guard of Zoya to their ships and started to sail toward Kyiv along the river Dnepr.

People of Kyiv has gathered near the Grand Duke's palace. Yelizaveta has just become 22 years old and princes from different countries ask the Grand Duke to give her in marriage. But his daughter is not glad about marrying the next respectable pretender, because all her dreams are about Harald. She did not receive any news from him for a long time, but a fame of his heroic feats has reached Kyiv. Grand Duke Yaroslav and Grand Duchess Ingigerda try to appease her. Yaroslav ask her not to reject the high-ranking guest but her mother understands their daughter's feelings about the unrequited love. A slender young man in a white Byzantine raincoat has arrived to ask to get her in marriage. In that moment Grand Duke's daughter finds herself in arms of the supplicant. Russian warriors rush to them. The Byzantine raincoat falls down and reveals Harald.

Grand Duke Yaroslav gives his blessing to the marriage of his daughter and steadfast prince of Norway. Sea waves are roaring and wind fills the red sails.

**Epilogue — Apotheosis** There is a shore of North Sea in Norway – austere nature, lowering sky around. Harald, young king of Norway, and golden-haired beauty Yelizaveta, queen Elisif, appear on the shore. Vikings and Russians glorify the young couple. Blue sky rises above them, illuminated by the sun. On the horizon the silhouette of the beautiful city Oslo, new capital of the Kingdom of Norway, is appearing.