FRIEDENSNOTE NR. 32

Rediscovering Life

A Swiss folk song gives voice to the longing for peace and a fulfilled existence.

Songs for peace — folk music is not necessarily the first thing that comes to mind. Isn't such music banal, even reactionary and "right-wing"? One is more likely to picture a guitar-strumming songwriter with an accusing expression, or a shaggy rock singer bellowing his protest against the warmongers into the microphone over electric-guitar riffs. But this may turn out to be a prejudice.

In her local yodel choir the author found a song that moved her deeply, because it expresses in simple words the longing for the silence of all the world's quarrel and noise. At first this text is about personal impressions, spoken from a soul that lets itself be seized by the peace of evening. But here too, as so often, the private is political.

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SONG Aabeglogge 1999

PERFORMER	Jodlerclub Balfrin
ALBUM	1999

Actually I had wanted to choose a song by Victor Jara: „El derecho de vivir en paz“ – the right to live in peace. It is a song against the Vietnam War. But then my own memories of the 1970s came flooding over me, my political awakening in the anti-nuclear-power movement, in the squatter scene, in the women’s movement. Despite the mood of new beginnings and a good deal of youthful drive to make the world better, there were also recurring phases of helplessness and resignation. And so, back then, Jara’s music, underlaid with a lyrical melancholy, would time and again reach me in its sadness. When Victor Jara was brutally murdered by Pinochet’s Chilean coup plotters in 1973, we would put on his LPs in our shared flat and sing along.

These emotions no longer reflect the way I feel today. Exactly 50 years later I choose a song that I myself sing together with my yodel choir. A Swiss folk song in the dialect of Bern, with a yodel part for women and men. The translated text reads:

> ORIGINAL
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> *„Die Welt ist müde vom vielen Streiten, müde von all dem bitteren Leid, doch wenn die Abendglocken läuten, spürst du Frieden, spürst du Freud.*
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> *Spürst im Wald den heiligen Frieden, rings um dich die tiefe Ruh, und von der weit entfernten Stadt klingen die Glocken zu dir hinauf.*
>
> *Es dunkelt früh nach kurzen Tagen, in der stillen Abendzeit, und du hörst mit Wohlbehagen von der Kirche Glockengeläut.*
>
> *Allen Gesunden und allen Kranken rufen die Abendglocken zu: Für den Frieden wollen wir danken, müde Welt steh auf und sing mit. Müde Welt steh auf und sing mit.“*
>
> ÜBERSETZUNG
>
> *„The world is weary of all its quarrels, weary of all the bitter pain, yet when the evening bells are ringing, you feel a peace, you feel a joy.*
>
> *You feel in the woods the holy stillness, all around you the deep repose, and from the far and distant city the bells come ringing up to you.*
>
> *Darkness falls soon after brief days, in the quiet evening hour, and you hear with quiet contentment the church's pealing bells.*
>
> *To all the healthy and all the ailing the evening bells send out their call: For the peace let us give thanks now, weary world, arise and sing. Weary world, arise and sing.“*

Ernst Sommer wrote and composed this song in 1976. Three years after Victor Jara was murdered. I like it for its modesty and restraint: it calls on us to sing and to give thanks. Almost like a prayer.

When we sing this song in the choir and the four vocal registers align well, a feeling arises of a single resonant body, like a bell, that leaves us lastingly awestruck.

In the 1970s Swiss folk music was frowned upon among us; it was pushed into the right-wing corner. Anyone who thought well of themselves naturally chose rock and pop music, the Italian canzoni, Bob Dylan and many more. In the early 2000s a shift set in, a turning back to our own songs, and folk songs found their way into our music schools.

This song reminds me of life, of joy, of how it could be if we celebrate life, not in fear, not in a constant state of threat, but turning back to what makes life, and what within life, worthwhile to us.

With this we could think life anew, we could experiment, also with new forms of human bonds that are no longer arranged along a hierarchy, but on equal footing, in the mutual recognition of difference. For: the only thing that connects people is the recognition of difference. It is not love or tolerance, but something plainer, more modest: the recognition that the other is «not me». For me this recognition means freedom.

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www.manova.news/artikel/das-leben-neu-entdecken

THE SONG IN ITS ORIGINAL · YOUTUBE

www.youtube.com/watch?v=32SSeGEkUQI

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Jeannette Fischer studierte in Athen und Tübingen vergleichende Religionswissenschaften, wechselte dann in die Ausbildung zur Freud'schen Psychoanalytikerin in Zürich. In diesem Beruf arbeitete sie mehr als 30 Jahre in eigener Praxis.

Sie beschäftigt sich intensiv mit Fragen der Gewalt, Macht und Ohnmacht. Hierzu kuratierte sie Ausstellungen und drehte zwei Dokumentarfilme. Sie schrieb mehrere Bücher, unter anderem über Hass, Angst und Narzissmus.

Website: www.jeannettefischer.ch

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