

“Come Forth, Ye Multitudes, to the Banks of the German Rhine” (1907)

Abstract

The lyrics for this song were written in 1848 by Otto Inkermann, a Saxon author and book seller who used the pseudonym C.O. Sternau. In 1867, five years after the author’s death, it was set to music by Peter Johann Peters and became a popular folk song whose lyrics underwent several changes over time. In nationalist literature and art, the Rhine frequently featured as a mythical symbol of Germanness, and this song reflects that tradition. Its romantic, patriotic sentiment made it popular with student fraternities, and in the years preceding the First World War it was part of a list of patriotic songs recommended for classroom use in Prussian schools. This recording was made in 1907 for the Edison Record Company and features two of the song’s four verses. The singer is Carl Nebe, a classically trained bass who also performed and recorded with one of the period’s most successful vocal ensembles. For the complete lyrics, please see the link included under “further reading.”

Lyrics:

Come forth, ye multitudes
to the banks of the German Rhine;
if ye wish to experience true joy
then join hands.
Only on the Rhine do I wish to live
only on the Rhine do I wish to be born,
where the hills bear vines
and the vines bear golden wine!

May a thousand beautiful women
entice you with all their splendor,
where Italy's beautiful meadows lie,
where the night revels in fragrances.
Only on the Rhine will I love,
for in every eye's gleam
it is written in fiery words:
only on the Rhine may you court!

Let the Frenchman eagerly praise
the omnipotence of his wine,
let him rage with enthusiasm
when the corks pop from the bottles;
only on the Rhine do I wish to drink
a genuine German beverage,
and as long as the cups still sparkle
let loud praise and thanks resound!

Source

Source: *Strömt herbei, ihr Völkerscharen, zu des deutschen Rheines Strand*, lyrics: C.O. Sternau, music: Johann Peter Peters, 1867.

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