

Tumbalalaika - A Traditional Yiddish Song

Yiddish

Shteyt a bocher, shteyt un tracht,
tracht un tracht a gantze nacht.
Vemen tsu nemen un nit far shemen,
vemen tsu nemen un nit far shemen.

Chorus:

Tumbala, tumbala, tumbalalaika,
Tumbala, tumbala, tumbalalaika
tumbalalaika, shpiel balalaika
tumbalalaika - freylach zol zayn.

Meydl, meyd, ch'vel bay dir fregen,
Vos kan vaksn, vaksn on regn?
Vos kon brenen un nit oyfhern?
Vos kon benken, veynen on treren?

Narisher bocher, vos darfstu fregn?
A shteyn ken vaksn, vaksn on regn.
Libeh ken brenen un nit oyfhern.
A harts kon benkn, veynen on treren.

English

A young lad is thinking, thinking all night
Would it be wrong, he asks, or maybe right,
Should he declare his love, dare he choose,
And would she accept, or will she refuse?

Chorus:

Tumbala, tumbala, tumbalalaika,
Tumbala, tumbala, tumbalalaika
tumbalalaika, play Balalaika,
tumbalalaika - let us be merry.

Maiden, maiden tell me again
What can grow, grow without rain,
What can burn for many years,
What can long and cry without tears?

Silly young lad, why ask again?
It's a stone that can grow, grow without rain,
It's love that can burn for many long years,
A heart that can yearn and cry without tears.