

UO Russian and European Studies Center  
and Yamada Language Center Present:

# AZ BUKES VSIDI OR *Lessons for the Princess*



A Bilingual Russo-English Play in Two Acts

**By Julia Nemirovskaya**

Translated into English by:  
Jennifer Haley and Amberle Johnson



Empress Catherine the Great of Russia

## *Cast (in order of appearance)*

Sofia (later Catherine the Great).....	Megan Dixon
Johanna, her mother.....	Paige Deering
Elizabeth, the Russian Empress.....	Luda Kremers
Shuvalov, her favorite.....	Jason Lobo
Peter, her nephew and heir.....	Sergei Larionov
Letter A (Az).....	Tanya Beede
Letter B (Bukee).....	Melissa Tucker
Letter V (Veidee).....	Dakia Anheluk
Letter G (Glagol).....	Jennifer Haley
Letter D (Dobro).....	Svetlana Easton
Letter E (Esti).....	Dasha Shulgina
Lady-in-Waiting.....	Amberle Johnson
Ivan Adadurov.....	Matvey Ivashov
Sir Williams, the British Ambassador.....	Amanda Drap
Todorsky, the priest.....	Vera Ivashova
Chogloкова, Elizabeth's cousin.....	Tanya Beede
Princess Dashkova.....	Gabriella Anelauskaitė
Lisa Vorontsova.....	Dasha Bakhtina-Beede
Doctor.....	Valerie Shine
Prince Saltykov.....	Philipp Novikov
Orlov.....	Jonathan D. Turner Dmitry Vaintrob
Guard.....	Matvey Ivashov
Courtiers at the masquerade.....	Valerie Shine,
Dasha Bakhtina-Beede , Matvey Ivashov, Sergei Larionov, Amberle Johnson	





# Synopsis

## ACT ONE

Sofia, a 15 year old princess from a small German principality, and her 31 year old mother arrive at St. Petersburg.

The new Russian Empress, Elizabeth I, intends to marry Sofia to her nephew Peter, grandson of Peter the Great.

Before that, Sofia (christened in Russia Catherine) takes lessons in the Russian language (from a scholar, Ivan Adadurov, and six little Slavonic Letters), in history (from a friend, Princess Dashkova) and in the Orthodox faith (from the priest Todorsky). Sofia is smart and learns fast. She pleases everyone and establishes herself at the court. Catherine borrows an enormous sum of money from the British Ambassador in order to bribe her supporters.

## *Intermission...*

## ACT TWO

A mean little letter, Az, persuades Catherine to do away with Peter and seize power when the Empress dies.

A kind little letter, Dobro, a personification of her conscience, persuades Catherine to love Peter and see through his whims to find the unhappy and abandoned little boy in him.

**P**eter is indeed a difficult teenager of 14. He admires the rival Prussian king Friedrich and dislikes the Russian ways. He is not inclined to do anything but play soldiers and stage puppet shows. After his wedding, Peter falls in love with Lisa Vorontsova, who enjoys his puppets and, unlike Catherine, figures out how to please him.

**P**eter senses that Catherine is cold and calculating; nevertheless, her friendship means a lot to him.

**M**eanwhile, Catherine's mother flirts with courtiers and spies for king Friedrich. She is caught and expelled from Russia.

**E**lizabeth, whose primary goal is to secure a legitimate heir to the Russian throne, hopes the newly-weds will produce a baby.

**H**owever, after eight years of marriage Catherine stays virgin.

**T**his enrages Elizabeth who summons her cousin, Choglokova, and threatens to send her to Siberia if an heir is not produced.

**C**hoglokova orders Prince Saltykov, a happily married man, to win Catherine's heart and make her pregnant.

**C**atherine, to the dismay of her closest friend, Dashkova, falls in love with Saltykov and gives up all her ambitious plans.

**W**hen she gets pregnant, she finds out that her lover actually loathes her and that his affections are just an assignment.

Catherine is shocked and unhappy, but she resumes her pursuit of power. An heir is born, and Elizabeth is no longer interested in her nephew's wife. However, when Elizabeth dies, many people are loyal to Catherine and not to her husband or son.

Peter's misbehavior at Elizabeth's funeral displeases even his loyal courtiers; Dashkova and the guards stage a coup and overthrow Peter. An officer, Gregory Orlov, strangles the new emperor.

Catherine becomes Empress. She thanks or forgives every one who fought for or against her; little letters who did not take part in the coup citing different fake reasons are forgiven as well.

Only Dobro, the letter representing Catherine's conscience, decides to leave the court forever. However, after the British Ambassador bribes Dobro, she stays at the court.

*The End...*





# Credits

Director.....	Julia Nemirovskaya
Producer.....	Petya Ilcheva
Stage director.....	Elaine Lyon
Stage help.....	Philipp Novikov Jason Lobo
Assistant director and choreography.....	Tanya Beede
Assistant director and lights.....	Kris Santoro
Music director.....	Philipp Novikov
Music assistant.....	Aleksander Polishchuk
Assistant.....	Amberle Johnson
Props.....	Jason Lobo
Costumes.....	Tanya Beede Emily Mead
Makeup.....	Dasha Bakhtina-Beede
Program.....	Gabriella Anelauskaitė
Web designer.....	Tom Dolack

**Music selected, arranged, edited and played by:** Philipp Novikov, Sasha Polischuk, Jonathan D. Turner, Dasha Bakhtina-Beede

**Music pieces by:** W. -A. Mozart, F. Schubert, M. Glinka, F. Suppe, G. F. Handel, L. van Beethoven, J. Brahms, D. Shostakovich, Yu. Kim, St. Petersburg Choir of the Cathedral of the Transfiguration, Trio Voronezh, S. Polishchuk



*Thank you for coming!*



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