Kalinka

If you open up a dictionary, even a great one, you won't find the word **Kalinka (Калинка)** listed anywhere. This is because it is actually a diminutive of the word
Kalina (Калина).

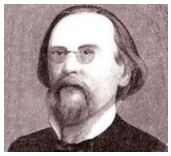
The word **Kalina** has quite a few interpretations, but only one is correct. A Kalina is a shrub (small tree / leafy bush) with sour red berries, growing up to 3 or 4 metres in height. Its botanical name is *Viburnum Opulus,* which in English we identify as a Guelder Rose.

Kalinka

Kalinka is a song. But not just any song, it is arguably the most popular folk song in Russia, but not widely known internationally. Every Russian knows (or can at least hum!) Kalinka, so even if you have a passing interest in Russian culture this is one song you should be familiar with.

Kalina

In fact, it's not folk. Some historians claim the song was written by Russian composer **Ivan Petrovich Larionov**
in 1860 and first performed in Saratov as part of a theatrical entertainment that he had composed. Soon it was added to the repertory of a folk choral group.



Ivan Petrovich Larionov

There are numerous arrangements of it, both vocal and instrumental, the latter type often serving as accompaniment for lively folk dances. Performances of the folk song may vary in treatment, of course, but most open with the chorus (or soloist) singing a slower introductory section, after which they introduce the exotic, rhythmic main theme, which unhurriedly begins but gradually gains momentum until the tempo is racing, with hands clapping, feet stomping, and the listener breathless trying to keep up with the sonic frenzy.

It was **Dmitri Oleg Yachimov** who created the arrangement of Kalinka which is traditionally performed by the **Alexandrov Ensemble,** and who turned the frivolous song into an operatic aria. The first Ensemble soloist to perform this was
Pyotr Tverdokhlebov,

but the first tenor to earn the title of
Mr Kalinka
was Victor Ivanovich Nikitin at the Berlin peace concert of August 1948, where he sang three encores of the song.

Alexandrov Ensemble

A definitive recording of Kalinka was made in 1963 at the Abbey Road Studios, London by the lyric tenor Evgeny Belyaev, with the Alexandrov Ensemble, under the direction of Boris Alexandrovich Alexandrov. Belyaev earned the Mr Kalinka title at the London concerts of 1956 and 1963. Since then there have been several Mr Kalinkas, including Vasily Ivanovich Shtefutsa and Vadim Petrovich Ananyev.

Evgeny Belyaev, tenor

A tradition of dancing developed around the song Kalinka. Kalinka dances are notable for the crossed arms and kicks of the dancers. Dancing to the song often spontaneously broke out at private parties and eventually evolved into choreographed performances.

Kalinka, dance

The quick rhythms and intense emotions in Kalinka have allowed it to be transformed into modern performances, especially in club music and electronica mixes. Many unique and unusual versions of the song have been recorded for use in popular modern dance clubs.

In 2003, Roman Abramovich bought Chelsea FC. Since then, **"Kalinka"** has been associated with the London based football club and is often played before or after important matches, including the Champions League clashes with FC Barcelona and the Carling Cup final.

Kalinka ???

Russian lyrics:

Калинка, калинка, калинка моя! В саду ягода малинка, малинка моя! Ах, под сосною, под зеленою, Спать положите вы меня! Ай-люли, люли, ай-люли, Спать положите вы меня. Калинка, калинка, калинка моя! В саду ягода малинка, малинка моя! Ах, сосенушка ты зеленая, Не шуми же надо мной! Ай-люли, люли, ай-люли, Не шуми же надо мной! Калинка, калинка, калинка моя! В саду ягода малинка, малинка моя! Ах, красавица, душа-девица, Полюби же ты меня! Ай-люли, люли, ай-люли, Полюби же ты меня! Калинка, калинка, калинка моя! В саду ягода малинка, малинка моя!

Transliteration:

Kalinka, kalinka, kalinka moya! V sadu yagoda malinka, malinka moya! Akh, pod sosnoyu, pod zelenoyu, Spat' polozhite vy menya! Ay-lyuli, lyuli, ay-lyuli, Spat' polozhite vy menya. Kalinka, kalinka, kalinka moya! V sadu yagoda malinka, malinka moya! Akh, sosyenushka ty zyelyenaya, Nye shumi zhe nado mnoy! Ay-lyuli, lyuli, ay-lyuli, Nye shumi zhe nado mnoy! Kalinka, kalinka, kalinka moya! V sadu yagoda malinka, malinka moya! Akh, krasavitsa, dusha-dyevitsa, Polyubi zhe ty menya! Ay-lyuli, lyuli, ay-lyuli, Polyubi zhe ty menya! Kalinka, kalinka, kalinka moya! V sadu yagoda malinka, malinka moya!

English translation:

Little snowberry, snowberry, snowberry of mine! Little raspberry in the garden, my little raspberry! Ah, under the pine, the green one, Lay me down to sleep, Ah, rock-a-baby, Lay me down to sleep. Little snowberry, snowberry, snowberry of mine! Little raspberry in the garden, my little raspberry! Ah, little pine, little green one, Don't rustle above me, Ah, rock-a-baby, Don't rustle above me. Little snowberry, snowberry, snowberry of mine! Little raspberry in the garden, my little raspberry! Ah, you beauty, pretty maiden, Take a fancy to me, Ah, rock-a-baby, Take a fancy to me. Little snowberry, snowberry, snowberry of mine! Little raspberry in the garden, my little raspberry!

Kalinka, dance