

The Mozart Times

December 2022

Introduction

Dear teachers, fellow students, parents, and random readers,

We are delighted to bring you a new edition of our school's English magazine The Mozart Times. In this edition, you will find articles concerning news from our school as well as from the global point of view, both serious and silly, but nevertheless, we believe, that you can learn something new from each one of them. Either be it about the Queen Elizabeth II, our school trip to France, our Finnish exchange student Edith, interesting books from around the world, the recent annexation of Kaliningrad and enlargement of our homeland, or about the situation in Russia from the point of view of a student. I would like to thank everyone that has contributed to this magazine for their efforts and compliancy, and also encourage all the English- or language-lovers of our school to join our little redaction. The Mozart Times is a space for everyone to express themselves and share their interests and at the same time leave a mark in the history of our school :) So, if you happen to like writing and English (or German, Spanish, French, Russian... all the languages are welcome!), don't be shy and become a part of our crew. You can try to reach us on Messenger or contact us via your English teacher!

We hope you will enjoy reading what we have created!

Kateřina Bureřov
on behalf of The Mozart Times Team

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The graceful life of the Queen Elizabeth II.

It was only the first week of our back-to-school life, when the earliest tragedy occurred. We were all witnesses of the passing away of the beloved Queen of the United Kingdom. But have we known enough about her peculiar life? In this article, I want to bring to light her childhood, her early years on the throne and family life.

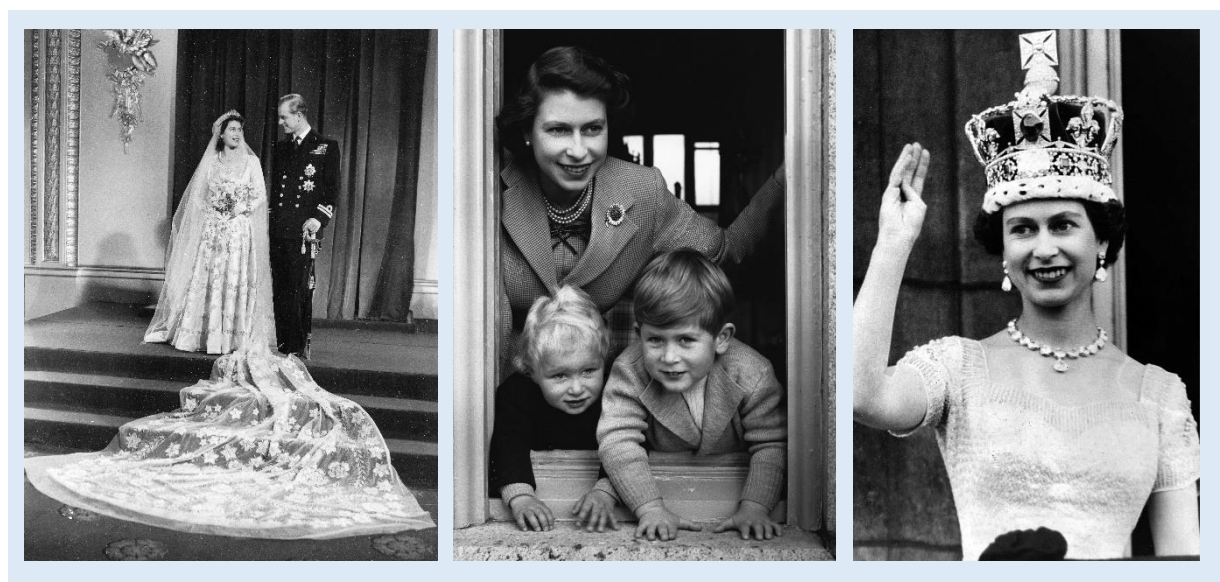
Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor, also known as Lilibet, was born on April 21, 1926, in London. She was the elder daughter of Prince Albert, duke of York, and his wife, Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. She had little prospects to reign, however, after the abdication of her uncle, Edward VIII, which was in favour of her dad, she became the first in line to the throne.



When the World War II struck, Lilibet being only 11 years old, was evacuated alongside her little sister Princess Margaret Rose to the Windsor castle. They weren't the only ones that had to leave behind their beloved. Nearly 3 million other children were sent to the countryside. There, she gave her first address in the television, where she talked directly to the children who had been separated from their families. At the age of 18 in 1944, she insisted upon joining the Women's branch of the British Army, although she never fired any guns, as it was prohibited in the ATS. However, she undertook a driving and vehicle maintenance course and was called a "Princess Auto Mechanic" by media. Who knew she could repair cars?

Three years later, Princess Elizabeth went to South Africa with her parents and shortly after the return there was an announcement of her engagement to her distant cousin Philip Mountbatten, formerly Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark. Months later, they married in the Westminster Abbey on November 20, 1947. Although it might seem rushed, they knew each other since Elizabeth was 13 years old. They had to wait to officially announce the engagement until Elizabeth turned 21. Another controversy of their wedding was the vow of the future queen to “obey” Philip, as the queen is thought not to obey anyone but God and herself.

A year later, the couple was blessed with the birth of their first child, Charles III., who is presently the King. And before Elizabeth became the queen, she had another daughter, Anne. It was more than a decade later they had two more children, Andrew and Edward, which public called her “second family” as they waited so long.



On February 6, 1952, King George VI died following a prolonged illness and Princess Elizabeth immediately acceded to the throne, becoming Queen Elizabeth II, and taking on all of the responsibilities which came with her new title. Later in the year, the date was set for the Coronation at Westminster Abbey and preparations began for the spectacular ceremony. It was the first televised Coronation in the history. 27 million people in Britain only watched the ceremony and 11 million listened on the radio.

In her life, she had to face many obstacles as a queen, wife, mother, or a grandmother. But she overcame them all with grace, and I think everyone will agree when I say she will be greatly missed.

Voyage to Provence, France

It was the beginning of October 2019 when the students of our high school first heard of a school trip to France, planned for spring the very next year. Everything looked rather too good to be true, Eiffel tower and Louvre were supposed to be seen and tasty baguettes and crepes were meant to be eaten.

Boom. Covid-19 took over the whole world and our plans have come to great confusion and then the trip was (with much sorrow) canceled.

It wasn't until this June when our dreams of going to France were fulfilled. Our program contained some changes, starting with the location not being Paris but beautiful cities of Provence, however we didn't really dwell on anything except to go somewhere picturesque.

Day 0

With positive mindset and a few essentials in our bags we left our hometown on September 11 and set out for a 20-hour long bus ride. Just when we started to feel a little skeptical, we crossed the Italian border and saw those beautifully turquoise sea waves, which seemed to wash away all our negative thoughts. The closer we were to French border the more excitement was running through our veins.



Day 1

And just a few moments later we were crossing the streets of Nice, the most typical city of Côte d'Azur. Our first steps led to the local flea market, where antique artifacts could be purchased as well as pieces of modern art. Those of us who were interested in French cuisine (or maybe a cup of coffee) could pick up a small refreshment in one of the cafés that were just behind the flea market.



Afterwards we admired the beauty (and also the cooling effect of shadows caused by plenty of trees) of Terrasse Nietzsche, the well-known natural park in Nice, where we could lay our eyes upon a marvelous waterfall and stunning views. At the end of our first day in France we decided to lay on the beach right below Promenade des Anglais, letting the sun tan our skin, and occasionally take a swim in the Mediterranean sea.



Day 2

After spending the night at Formula 1 hotel, which was located about 100 km from Nice, we got ready to spend the morning in Nîmes, historic city with an amphitheater at the very center. The opportunity to spend some time inside a building where gladiators fought for their life on daily basis just a few centuries back truly was exciting. After seeing this monument, we went to see the Pond du Gard viaduct. I think we can all agree that its size is not something that a picture could capture; it is about 49 meters high and 275 meters long – truly a place to go to when a little walk is desired. In the evening our last steps of the day led to the city of Avignon. Some students, who are learning French as their second foreign language, had a unique chance (were forced) to sing *Sur le Pont d'Avignon* (On the bridge of Avignon) right there on the legendary bridge, which was an unforgettable experience. After this musical piece of art, we went to see the *Le Palais des Papes* (Palace of Popes), world's largest Gothic building, that was created in the 14th century.

Day 3

On the morning of the third day of our adventure we visited *Les Baux-de-Provence*, specifically *Ville morte* (The Dead city). At our arrival we were, quite illogically, surprised that the city was indeed dead – on our way to the top of the city, from where you could see the whole city and numerous fields, we met only about five people, which, in comparison to the crowded streets of Nimes, was a real shock. After about 15 minutes of walking, we have arrived at the ruins of *Chateau des Baux* and after about 40 steep steps we have been at the top of the Paravelle tower. The morning was not rainy or foggy, therefore the views, which we still had in mind even while shopping for souvenirs and sweet a few moments later, were really splendid. Our afternoon plans had to be a bit altered,



because of the huge waves that were caused by strong wind, and instead of going to the Camarque reservation, where we should have seen flamingos, we were given the option to see a toreador show or we could visit the Church of the Saintes Maries de la Mer and chill at its windy rooftop with a view of the Mediterranean.



Day 4

On the very last day of our stay in the area of beautiful Provence, we visited Marseille, second largest city of France (Paris being the largest one ☺). After a little walk around the *Vieux Port* (the Old Port) we have boarded a boat that took us to the Friuli Islands. On our way there we have seen another monument, the home of famous count of Monte Cristo (Edmont Dantés), literature character who was made up by Alexandre Dumas senior, French romantic writer. On the Friuli Islands themselves we admired the beauty of nature around us, sandstone cliffs, the sea that could be seen from everywhere, especially from the viewpoint of *Tour de l'Île Pomégues*. After being in the sunlight for a couple hours, it was more than comfortable to jump into the cool sea waves again and lay on *Plage Saint-Éstève*.



After returning to Marseille, the only thing left for us to do was buy some snacks and prepare, both mentally and physically, for another “lifelong” bus ride. Even though we were all grumpy from travelling so long, when we arrived home, I do not think there was even one person who did not focus their memories mainly on the beautiful moments we spent in France.



Get to know Edith

As some of you may know, our school have hosted exchange students several times in the past. But did you know, that after the COVID restrictions of the past two years, there is again a new exchange student wandering the halls alongside you? She looks like a regular student, she might even greet you in Czech, so you might not notice at first that you're in fact talking to a foreigner.

Get to know a bit about Edith, a bright friendly girl from Finland attending classes with G3.B, with whom you can strike an interesting conversation about anything and everything.

Why did you decide to be an exchange student?

And what drew you towards the Czech Republic?

I decided to be an exchange student because I wanted to experience something new and learn new things. One of the reasons I chose the Czech Republic was because of the language. I am interested in languages and Czech is very different from the languages I know from before. Also, the Czech Republic is not too far away from my home country which is good if I want to visit in the future.

How is the Czech culture different from the Finnish one?

What was your biggest culture shock?

The school here has shorter lessons and there is less freedom when it comes to choosing subjects. The lessons are also with the same class most of the time, which is not the case in Finland, or at least not in my school.

Food is different here and a lot of soups are eaten. When we have soup in Finland it's usually the main meal.

In Finland the common way to have a meal together is to place the food on the table and let everyone put it on their plates themselves, whereas here someone often puts it on your plate for you.

What do you like the most here
and what do you miss the most?

I like the food, for example the dumplings are really good in my opinion. I also enjoy eating soup every day especially now that it's getting colder. What I miss the most is my family and friends in Finland.

What would you say to students that are thinking
about going on an exchange program but are hesitant?
What are the advantages and disadvantages?

If you have the opportunity to go, I really recommend it. It's a great way to learn more about another country and meet people. A disadvantage is being away from your home for so long because it can be challenging at times.

Thank you for your responses!
I hope you will continue to have a good time here
and meet more and more amazing people :)

Madness of literature

Hi! How are you?

Being told to write something, I am nothing if not partial to fulfill the request. And it wouldn't be me if I didn't present you some books that I utterly adore.

You could say that I am what people call a bookworm; I am consumed by literature, books are everywhere around me and I believe that you can justify anything if you do it poetically enough. It is a disease, and it cannot be cured.

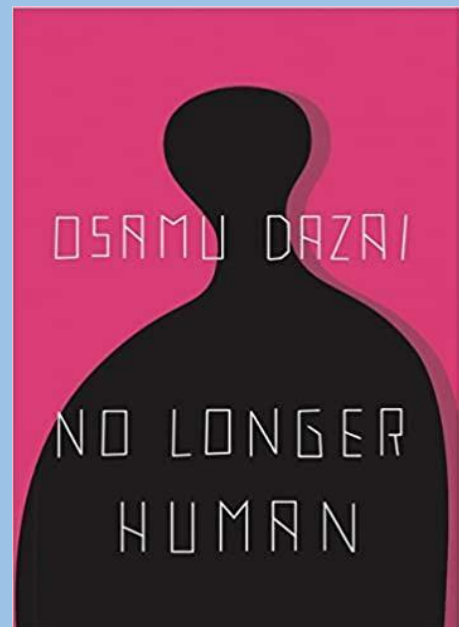
So let me show you some of my favorite books. I hope at least one of them makes you curious and in the end, it pulls you into the madness of literature. Enjoy.

(author's note: please, check trigger warnings before you start reading any of this, thank you)

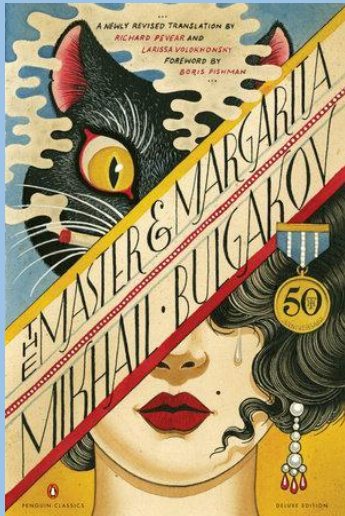
No longer human by Dazai Osamu

This is a semi-autobiographical Japanese novel, that portrays how a person can be incapable of understanding other human beings. What it's like to see yourself as a failure. Trying to mask your true self behind the mask of a clown. How can you be disqualified as a human being. This book is rough. It perfectly shows emotions that main protagonist feels. No, not the protagonist – what emotions the author felt.

Dazai Osamu tried to commit suicide. Many times. Even with his wife. He eventually drowned himself. He portrayed his suffering in this book breathtakingly. His pain came from not seeing himself as a human. It's a sad book that takes a lot of time to process. But even with all this pain going around, I loved reading it. And let's be honest – sometimes we all feel the way Dazai felt.



The Master and Margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov

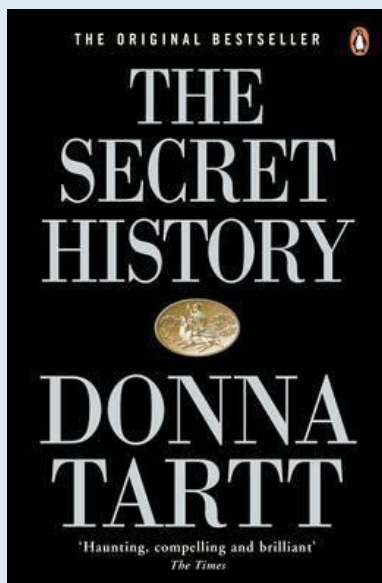


A Russian classic, that is hard to read, hard to understand, yet so easy to love. This book is the definition of a complete chaos. That's also why I read it in the first place.

Most of the time you have absolutely no idea what is going on; in one time there is a devil talking with two writers about whether God or Devil himself exist, in another time there is a talking black cat with affinity for vodka and chess and, in the end, there is a big ball held by the devil himself with a naked woman where dead criminals drink and talk about what they did or how they died. Just as I said –

chaos.

Even with this mess going around, this book is philosophically themed. And it's also just a funny witty fast-paced read. And if you seek some deep and dark classic, this is the way to go. But I must warn you, this book feels like a fever dream. Like it never happened. This magical feeling is what makes this book so special.



The secret history by Donna Tartt

This book was revolutionary for me. It made me realize how twisted and unmoral a human could be.

Our protagonist finds himself entangled in a group of classic students with absolutely no morals. For them there is only aesthetic, ancient Greek, Latin, philosophy, and murders. It is that kind of book you wish you hadn't read so you could read it for the first time again. The author makes you despise every single character in this book, yet still there is no choice for you but to wish you were them. It is deliciously twisted and meticulously

calculated and so well done – it's insane and I love it.

Kaliningrad is no more, long live Královec

Kaliningrad region. A small exclave of Russian territory surrounded by Poland, Lithuania, and the Baltic Sea. Created after second world war, it became westernmost territory of the Soviet Union, homebase of Baltic war fleet and also, after the fall of communism, a thorn in the side of democratic Europe.

It wasn't until October 2022, when a group of Polish experts came up with a plan to divide Kaliningrad region between Poland and Czechia.

The petition

A petition was created immediately, asking the government of Czechia to send the army to Kaliningrad, announce a referendum on joining Czechia, in which 98% of people will be for joining, Kaliningrad will be annexed and renamed Královec.

Reason? Kaliningrad was throughout his existence

owned by many countries. Russia, Poland, Germany or perhaps the Soviet Union.

According to the authors of the petition, it is time for Czechia to own this piece of land, which is rightfully Czech, as Kaliningrad was founded in honour of the Bohemian king Přemysl Otakar II.



Annexation

It is not entirely clear how the annexation itself took place, but it is certain that Russian army didn't put up much resistance and that it was completely destroyed, which Russia tried to cover up claiming it was sent to Ukraine.

However, there are rumours, that the Czech air force

deployed feared strategic bomber Rumburak II., which dropped vodka into Kaliningrad, effectively erasing entire army.

Future

The Czech government in the region is still fragile and Czechia faces many important tasks. Among the first and most important changes is renaming Kaliningrad to Královec and its incorporation into the system of regions as „Královecký kraj”.

The future Czech navy began to emerge in Královec. It soon announced referendum for the name of an aircraft carrier, that will be acquired soon.

A suitable place for the launch of a Czech space program, named after the biggest sponsor „Pilsner I” was also found in Královec region.

International reactions

Reactions to the annexation are mostly positive, of course with the exception of Russia. Czechia strengthened its relations with the Baltic states and Ukraine. It even looks like the annexation will become a new trend in the future, as there are rumours from Saint Petersburg and other places, stating there is a similar situation there.



Warning. These are not real events, and this article is based only on memes.

The other side of the story: Being a student in today's Russia

Have you ever wondered what is it like being a student in Russia right now? How is their situation different from the other students in the rest of the world? An interview with Julia, a high school student from Saint-Petersburg, will shed some light on these questions and help you get rid of misconceptions and generalizations about present day's Russia.



Our school stands with Ukraine and all the victims of the current war and condemns the military aggressions of the Russian government. This article's purpose is to simply show the complexity of the conflict, that there are no winners and losers in this war, only endless struggle, pain, uncertainty and suffering on both sides. This is not a war between nations, this a war created by a small group of people who are cut off from reality and try to push their delusionary fantasies onto the rest of the world by force.



That being said, let's get into the interview!

(Disclaimer by Julia: My answers could be full of my subjective thoughts on the current situation. All of this is just my personal point of view.)

Has your everyday life changed in any way since the end of February 2022?

It did. But more in the moral way: since February 24 my thoughts, worries are different. I still go to school, prepare for my final exams, hang out with friends. But all this standard routine is saturated with feeling of hopelessness and uncertainty about the future, which makes me less productive and positive.

Moreover, life around me is different: every day on my way from school to underground I see bunches of policemen and paddy wagons (As far as my school is located in the

center of Saint-Petersburg, these places are popular place for protests). So, it makes me feel insecure, literally like «big brother is watching you».

Changes affected practical side of life. A lot of foreign companies as H&M, Coca-Cola, Zara, Spotify left Russian market. Instagram and Twitter are not available anymore (we use them through VPN apps). One of the last measures by Russian government is a law about total ban of LGBT 'propaganda', which has been issued only recently.

But all these practical aspects can't be compared with constant feeling of desperation, anxiety and pain for Ukrainians.

(Also, half of my relatives are from Ukraine, I spent a lot of time there when I was a kid, so it hurts even more)

Has the "special military operation" had an influence on your student life?
Have your plans for the future (college, job...) changed because of it?

Yeah. Most of the time I feel hopelessness about my future. Due to Russian policy based on 'traditional values', 'special Russian way' and so on my dream faculty, which is the faculty of liberal arts and sciences, was closed. This faculty used to be a great place where students are allowed to choose studying courses, with the best professors and cooperating with English Bard college. But according to university governance "there are big amount of extremely ideological disciplines in accordance with the worst west stereotypes. There are disciplines, current names and content of which in terms of style do not comply with standards of academical strictness and formality" so it can't exist.

Even before war started, I was quite skeptical about level and quality of Russian higher education, so I was thinking about studying abroad after high school. Then the situation became even worse, Russia was excluded from Bologna system, which means my Russian degree won't be considered seriously anywhere.

As I heard, a lot of university professors, who take antiwar positions, were fired. One example is that the principal of the Higher School of Economics (HSE University), which is one of the best universities in Russia, has been changed.

Therefore, now I am absolutely unsure about where I am going to apply in 6 months.

Another side of Russia's strengthening of ideology is that a specific lesson appeared. From the start of this year, we are obliged to come to school at 8 in the morning (usually our school lessons start at 9.30) every Monday to visit a lesson called "conversations about what is important" which is basically a way of translating ideology such as traditional values, patriotism and other stuff in schoolers' minds. For me it's really similar to the "lessons of political propaganda" which used to take place in Soviet schools and about which I know only from my grandparents and teachers.

I got lucky with my school cause in all this insanity our teachers are still normal and adequate people. So, in our school "conversations about what is important" do not contain propaganda as they are supposed to. We are told about history, law, and other innocent things.

Most of my teachers do not support current situation which inspires me. My 60-years-old literature teacher translates her thoughts about situation in her internet blog. Once she even mentioned that she took part at the protests. My history teacher was an independent election monitor. My economics teacher even calls war a war, which means a lot. So, I am really proud of my school, but because it's that good and independent I can't realize the true scale of war and politics affects school.

What is the overall atmosphere among the students? Are you afraid to speak your mind, or do you talk openly about the current state of affairs?

As I said in previous question, thanks to my school I can't feel all the scales of situation. As far as I'm concerned, in some not prestige schools, teachers may talk about war supporting it.

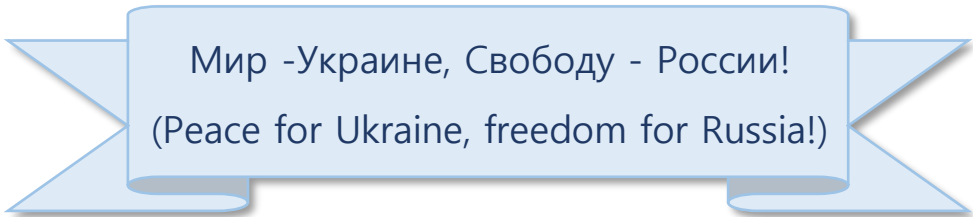
My classmates are adequate. But I can't be sure about each of them position about war because we normally don't talk about it in school. I brought it up only with close friends and couple of teachers. So, it feels like no one supports it but there is unspoken rule not to talk about it. But, again, it may be my school's specifics cause all the students had to pass exam to study here, they are more intelligent than average.

What would you say to people in the west that think ordinary Russian people are to blame for the military aggression and the crisis because they silently agree with their government?

Unfortunately, partly it's true. I've seen a statistic which says that about 60 percent of Russians silently approve current government actions. As I can see, opposition is usually the thoughtful people with high education and cultural level higher than average. Government has a strong weapon for propaganda – television. So not to support Putin you should at least have critical thinking and time to think deeper. But it would be absolutely wrong to say that all Russian support Putin. In my social group (consider I live in cultural capital and talk to young intelligent people) most people are against war. But it's hard to openly oppose because the Russian opposition is aggressively blocked: the leader of Russian opposition is in prison, all the protest are being aggressively suppressed, famous people are becoming outlaws, which is one of the most ridiculous things. Famous people, such as journalists, singers, writers, who openly speak against the Russian government and war are being declared as 'foreign agents'. (You can read more about it on Wikipedia)

Another huge problem is that all the votes have been falsified for the last 20 years. So, we can't talk about Russians supporting Russian government, when we haven't even chosen this government. One of the reasons why I am looking forward to becoming 18-years-old is that I will finally be able to take part in politics.

To finish this interview, I'll quote the slogan which I really like.



Мир -Украине, Свободу - России!
(Peace for Ukraine, freedom for Russia!)

Thank you
for reading!

