

SONGS FROM THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918

Act 1, Scene 1

“Sonja”

Music by: Eugen Paitos

Words by: Beda

Date: 1922

Publisher: Edward B. Marks Music Co.

Format: Large format

Show cover: No



... A short description of one song, “Sonja”, challenges the notion that what is written on the page is equivalent to how a number was performed... Willie Howard... “ha a special version for himself written on the lyric”... The English version is about a Russian immigrant who sees a play that reminds him of the simple life he and his wife, Sonja, enjoyed before coming to America. He sings of how he misses “old Russland” and remembers meeting his wife at Ellis Island... Although nothing about this story or its accompanying music, in a haunting E-harmonic minor, seems anything other than heartfelt, these new words... are described by Marks as an “American comedy version”. It is hard to imagine these new words presented in a humorous way... As any performer knows, the delivery can transform virtually any song to fit the singer’s wishes. [Westover, pp. 81-82]