

The Dance of Death

An other-worldly promo of life's joys

Directed by Michaela Váňová

Dramaturgy: Petr Hašek

Set and costumes: Jitka Nejedlá

Musical arrangement: Marek Doubrava

Voice collaboration: Pavla Fendrichová

Cast:

The Soldier, Violent Death Vojtěch Franců

The Peasant, Death by Exhaustion Martin Bohadlo

The Beggar, Death by Disease Simon Dohnálek

The Sweetheart, Death by Grief..... Eva Burešová

The Queen, Peaceful DeathClaudia Eftimiadis

"When we acknowledge mortality, only then can we realise the value and joy of life."

1. Exposition – *Opening ceremony of the promotional event of the Friends of Cremation Club led by its Chairwoman.*

Chairwoman: Dear bereaved family and friends... Oops. Dear distinguished guests, welcome on behalf of the Friends of Cremation Club, hereafter referred to as FCC. We are gathered in this beautiful place to celebrate the joyous moments of our lives and to bury our fears of death. Ah, it's time! Geisslers Hofcomoedianten, hereafter referred to as GH, present: The Dance of Death.

*All: When I think of my dear old father,
I can't see the path for tears*

*When I think of my dear mother,
I'm crying searing tears as I'm walking to mow the meadow*

*Peasant: Up the cobbled path to the graveyard,
There's my dear mother buried*

*Sweetheart: Up the cobbled path to the graveyard,
there's my good old father buried*

*All: The bells of Buchlov, ring above us,
and you my dear parents, rise up for me*

Chairwoman: That was a little taster but let's not get ahead of ourselves... after all, there's no hurry. Now, under the guidance of our guides, we will embark on a journey of life's joys... and sorrows... Together we will remember that we should live each day to the fullest as it is unique and we can never know if it's not our last... (laughs) I'm overjoyed that we get to spend time together. Time... Well, welcome, have fun, live! Anyone seriously interested in joining our FCC can come to me after the event. I'll be waiting for you... Now would you please turn off your mobile phones and watch the paths. And shh! We're in a cemetery. Chop-chop, what are you waiting for... We don't have *forever*.

2. Stations of the Dance of Death

Jeopardy – About how exciting gambling is, and how little it takes to make it all go wrong.

Funeral Playlist: Pop Your Clogs – There is a Czech idiom "zaklepat bačkorama" which means that the person passed away, or died. Literally, the idiom means "to beat the slippers". So let's beat the slippers together!

Ill be right back

Beggar: Once upon a time, there were one, two, three... thirteen brothers. Those brothers were all brothers should be. Where one went, there went the second, the third, the fourth... When one fell, the other picked him up... They were full of beans, thick as thieves! But as time went on, they each went their separate ways. // One, two, three... four... All but one who didn't need to be fooling around in Iceland or Reykjavik. To make some dosh, they said... To live... Here! // Everything he needs is here... // Stuck-up dimwits!

And so the thirteenth brother wandered through life, all alone, which is the burden of many a genius. // *Got a fag?* Even the women... there was a woman who was always around our hero and fancied him a lot! He had no trouble... charming her every day! But she could not bear to live by the side of a man so great.//

And so, misunderstood yet unbroken, our hero continued to soldier on, // always full of stamina, all alone against adverse fate, // in vain did he seek happiness in this valley of tears. And so, having lost his fullness, he left us for good, grieving for his loss. And all the brothers of Iceland and Reykjavik, *give it here!*, came back at once and wept! And they were sorry. Too late...

Last Wish – *Light the candle, place it on the stand and make your final wish.*

Gravestone Menu – *About how work can be fun but it's not everything.*

Take a Look at Yourself – *Reach in all of the urns, one by one. What are they – your conscience – hiding?*

Love Beyond the Grave – *A poignant story about how love is beautiful but no way eternal.*

Family Reunion – *The whole family together - and departed....*

3. Conclusion: Dance as a ritual of good death (a mime and folk songs)

Chairwoman: And finally, we have rehearsed a musical programme with a bit of a lesson.

“Leaves are falling”

*Peasant: Leaves are falling, the mountain has grown sad
And I've fallen like a maple leaf*

*All: Like a maple leaf, I'll rustle it softly
So quietly have I have left you all behind.*

*Peasant: Farewell, my wife, my children, my friends,
Leaves have fallen and time will heal all things.*

Chairwoman: In the sweat of thy face didst thou win bread for thyself:
and when there was no food, thou hadst no harvest.
Be of good cheer, for thy misery also shall pass away when thou art gone:
thou that hast not peace on earth, shalt find peace under the earth.

“Country, country”

*Sweetheart: Country, country, country, what are you so cheerless for?
When I can be wherever I think of.*

*I thought of being in a dusky field,
So that I might see my sweetheart there.*

*I espied a stag as he was jumping about,
I remembered my sweetheart, and my heart wept.*

Chairwoman: You, who have loved all your life, I embrace you now.
I give you peace of mind, you need not fear,
For in love you leave love behind.

“When Janko was going to war”

*All: When Janko was going to war, tarara tarara,
thus he urged his sweetheart, chincha rarara.*

That she should not marry, tarara tarara,

that she should wait for him for seven years, chincha rara.

*Seven years she waited, tarara tarara,
the eighth she made a spell, chincha rara.*

*He came under her window, tarara tarara,
Are you asleep, my little turtledove, chincha rarara.*

*Women: Welcome, my dear, tarara tarara,
seven years were you gone, chincha rarara*

*I have a nice evening to give you, tarara tarara,
or should I make the bed, chincha rarara.*

*Dear: My dear heart, tarara tarara,
caress my head, chincha rarara*

*As many hairs you run your fingers through, tarara tarara,
as many tears you shall shed, chincha rarara.*

Women: But oh Janko, Janénko, your hair is all putrid!

*All: How would it not, my dear, tarara tarara,
seven years in the earth, chincha rarara.*

*Seven years in the earth, tarara tarara,
the eighth year to rise, chincha rarara.*

Women: Janénko, Janénko, Janénko, Janénko – mine!

Chairwoman:

The helmet, the cuirass, the shield, the sword, and the spear were thine armour in this world,
Many a battle hast thou fought, and now death invites thee to fight.
What fearest thou this battle? You have feared none;
Thou hast lied, thou hast cursed, thou hast sworn, thou hast sworn according to thy custom.

“Praised be the Lord that I was born”

*Beggar: Praised be the Lord that I was born and enjoyed my youthful years
/: I lived them in full, they left me, no more to come :/*

*Remember, O man, you are but ashes and mud
/: When you meet God’s judgement, no excuse will save you :/*

*If money could buy heaven, meagre few paupers would get in
/: but since you can't pay your way, the beggar and the emperor are equal :/*

Chairwoman: A slave to your belly, thou hast poured wine down thy gullet,
And stuffed thine face worse than any beast,
But thou shalt find that more souls perish by the tankard than by the sword.
You'll soon drown in the pitcher in which your life flows.

“There was a time”

Chairwoman: *There was a time, but it's gone
After a little while, we'll be gone too*

All: *When we're gone, the country will be gone
Like a rosemary leaf falling off*

Chairwoman: Come, Queen, remove your crown, it's time to go, it is your turn.
There is no escape, it is of no avail to resist, no use in railing.
Write down what you have done to the poor, then this and what good you did
will be your reward.

All: *When we pass away, so will the world,
Like a red rose blossom falling off.*

The End