



ANTOLOGÍA

To understand how unique the Antología show is we have to tell you a bit more about it. It is a time machine into the history of our company and since the Black Light Theatre Srnec founded in 1961 by Mr Jiri Srnec is the first Black Light Theatre in the world and for decades the only company using the technique of black cabinet, it is also an insight into the history of this "genre".

It seems like a miracle that the props from these very first black light theatre sketches that were becoming alive all around the world under the skilled hands of old masters of black light theatre - that these props were preserved for decades and that we were able to create new set of props identical to the original pieces.

It seems like even bigger miracle that the analog master tapes with the original recordings of the music for these sketches were found in an old chamber under the stage of the studio we used for years for the rehearsals of the new productions. Our sound masters converted the music into digital form and restored it carefully so the essence of the moment - the time that past from the original recordings - would be present.

By the way all the music for the sketches was composed by the founder of Black Light Theatre himself - Mr. Jiri Srnec.

The Launderette (from 1958)

On a summer day a young girl washes laundry the way it used to be washed in the past and hangs the washed laundry on a clothes line. From a ball of wool she knits a long stocking. Her beloved calls her, she runs after him. The clothes on the line come alive. Two pairs of men's pants awake, stretch and end up fighting over a pair of women's panties hanging in between them. The knitting needles turn into swords, the two halves of the wool ball into bucklers. The winner courts the frightened onlooker and both jump into the laundry basket. The girl comes back with a bouquet of flowers, but the laundry line is empty! She starts crying. The laundry jumps up out of the basket, "he" and "she", followed a short while later five little panties.

This is the oldest sketch ever created for black light theatre. It was the very first attempt to use the technique of black light theatre as a medium to tell the story.

At that time, in the last year on Academy of Performing Arts in 1958, Mr. Jiri Srnec composed the music and the libretto of the *Launderette*.

No one could have suspected that it will be the beginning of what is now a sixty one years journey of the Black Light Theatre Srnec around the world.

The Suitcases (from 1961)

However even though the *Launderette* was very successful on the Academy of Performing Arts it was not possible to start a new company with one sketch solely. There was a long way ahead.

The technique was yet to be mastered. The history was yet to be written.

There did not exist any UV lights or luminescent colours.

There was no one to tell what would be the best material to do the black costumes for invisible actors. No "best" position of the lights nor any stage designs such as various covers, cubes, boards and screens which became part of every production later.

Mr Srnec with few fellow artist (by the way all painters) were true pioneers on this field.

After three years of ups and downs, constant failures and successes, finally in 1961 the full evening show that consisted of several short sketches "What's next?" was created.

The *Suitcases* sketch is from this very first show of a new company of Black Light Theatre.

On the international festival in Edinburgh (1962) the show was acclaimed by critics with words "Black Light Theatre brings back magic to the world's stages". The skit named "The Suitcases" is one of these magical stories. It deals with a happy man, who is blissful for not having any possessions until the moment that another man comes with a minute possession, a small suitcase. That is the inception of the old motif of envy, the effort to overtop others, the yearning for power, including the premonition of a possible end in which no winner survives.

The Lamps (from 1975)

In the "Flying Bicycle" show the protagonist of main character was an inventor who wanted to fly under his own power, using the force that frees man of the earth's gravity, that is, love. In "The Lamps" the inventor is caught tasting an intoxicating drink in greater quantities than his head can bear.

The "Flying Bicycle" was by 80's the most performed show of Black Light Theatre Srnec.

For the purpose of a stand alone sketch the story was simplified and we have a lady who is fed up with the drinking habits of her boyfriend, leaving him alone on the street with a lamp...and spectators will witness what happens after that...

It is our shortest sketch but very popular indeed.

The Violinist (from 1971)

A comic skit of a distracted musician, in which the violinist has his own idea about the show. This sketch was presented the first time in London in 1971 in Sadler's Wells Theatre as a part of the show called *Diluvium*. Until nowadays "The Violinist" is loved by our youngest spectators - but not only by them of course.

There is an improvisation part where basically anything can happen. Artists have open field to come up with something new if the time and place and also chemistry with audience is right for that.

The Magician (from 1979)

The opening scene from "The Week of Dreams" presents art of black light theatre in its full variability. You'll become enchanted by the charismatic magician that, together with a mastery of invisible actors, shows the supreme possibilities of this genre.

The first night of "The Week of Dreams" was in France in Lille in January 1979.

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The Photographer (from 1963)

"My experience with the international public showed us that whatever anybody thought or did could have its humorous side, understandable for everyone. It is obvious that the cogency of the life of things is given by the manipulators' mastery of the art of acting. In Paris, Moscow, New York, Buenos Aires, Cairo and Sydney, in all continents, the critics held in high esteem these invisible actors who are capable to make audiences laugh as well as to think with the help of everyday things. The old camera in the studio where a soldier enters with his girlfriend for a memorial photograph is his master's loyal servant, helping him win over the girl's heart. The silent film era, Laurel and Hardy, Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin – these are masters who have our never-ending admiration. Laughter, or at least a smile, is more needed in our own high tech era of too many words and a dearth of good deeds, than ever before" said Jiri Srnec about this sketch in 2011 when the company celebrated 50 years of existence.

This sketch has one more interesting detail:

In 1964 in the Théâtre de la Renaissance in Paris the Black Light Theatre Srnec performed for a month as a part of the composed evening production where a live band performed as well. After two weeks Mr Srnec noticed that local musicians improvise into our recorded music. He loved it so much that later on he decided to record the music live during the show with the band. And it was not done just for the for the Photographer sketch but also for the Horse sketch.

Later all the sounds and noises were added into the recording.

Luckily both recordings have survived the time and you can hear the music as it was played in 1964 in Paris live during the performance.

The Fish (from 1979)

A story from the staging of "The Week of Dreams" which was presented successfully from Australia to South America, is about a Prague cab driver, whose dreams involve items left behind by his passengers. In this comic skit the passenger has paid for his trip with a fish and, as often occurs in dreams, some odd happenings involving the fish ensue in the cab driver's apartment.

The Horse (from 1964)

We end in a slapstick skit, a parody of a western. In order to part with a smile, the Horse is often closing Black Light Theatre special appearances on international festivals of theatre as well as private events.