

Jesus of Žižkov

An experimental drama based on the Gospels, by Cat Hearth 1999

Characters:

*Jesus
Disciples
Grandfather
Old Man (Bum)
Mary
Simon
Martha
Judas
Mourners
John
John's Mother
John's Girlfriend
Joe
Woman
Friend*

Scenes: *Desert, Street, Man's house, Simon's house, Unspecified*

Scene 1: Desert

[Jesus is downstage center meditating. Upstage in line, the disciples doing physical and voice exercises. Jesus chanting, dressed in loincloth, the others in wavy white material. Lights and sounds eerie, trippy. The disciples converge on Jesus and lift him up to standing. He now has his arms out. They lift him straight up by the legs and carry him off.]

Scene 2: Jahweh

Grandfather [upstage]: Father, grandfather, great grandfather, great great grandfather, great great great grandfather, etc. [Each time he adds one more "great."]

Others [enter reaching to the sky and mantraming]: Jahweh!

Others [They begin throwing an imaginary ball around. Each, when catching it]: Jahweh!

Others [The mantram changes to]: Jahweh is great!

All: [The ball increases in size until they lay it at Grandfather's feet and join in his chant, until they all end together with one last]: Grandfather!

Scene 3. Jesus of Žižkov

[A street. Old man (Bum), picking in garbage can. Enter Mary, Simon, Martha, Judas.]

Mary: If I have another beer I'll throw up.

Simon: Don't throw up on me.

Martha: Who has a cigarette?

Judas: That grass was strong. I'm just about hallucinating.

Simon: Hallucinate on me.

Mary: I want another beer.

Martha: Doesn't anyone have a cigarette?

Judas: Look at that guy! Maybe he's a prophet.

Simon: He won't make much profit that way.

Judas: Master! [All drop to their knees and pray to him, laughing.] I don't want to die. What should I do to go to heaven?

All: How do we get to heaven?

Bum: I don't know. What does it say in the Bible?

Martha: I never read the Bible.

Simon: It says don't kill unless it's a war or you're killing someone who broke the law.

Mary: It says don't steal but if you win a war you can steal from the loser.

Martha: Don't fuck your neighbor's wife. Or your neighbor.

Judas: Don't work on Sunday. Or is it Saturday?

Martha: I don't work on any day.

Bum: So do that. And leave me alone. Anybody got a cigarette? [They start to leave.] One more thing. [They stop.] Sell everything you have and give all the money to me.

[*They laugh.*] Hey! It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich fucker like you to get into heaven.

Mary: Why would you want to put a cigarette through a needle?

Judas: So where is this country of heaven?

Bum: I don't know. Sure ain't in this garbage can. Maybe it's in you.

Scene 4: Funeral

[*Enter mourners carrying a body. From other side enter Jesus and disciples, laughing. One of the mourners catches Jesus' eye and smiles.*]

Jesus: Come with me.

John: I have to bury my father first.

Jesus: Let the dead bury their own dead.

John: But he's my father! I can't just leave him.

Jesus: Leave the dead! Join the living! Come on! The time is now.

John: But my family! My mother! My fiancée! My friends! My inheritance. I'll lose everything.

Jesus: Well you have one chance. Follow me now, or forget it. Is that your real family? Your real mother and father? Your real friends? You came from somewhere else. Try to remember.

John: Yes I remember a little. Something in me doesn't belong to this Earth. Stars at night sound a distant melody in me, I hear it too when I see you. Who is my real family? These are just an accident.

Mother: John, you can't do this. I suffered pain giving birth to you. I fed you with my breasts. Your father is descended from Jacob, you are firstborn, you have a responsibility to carry on the family name. Look at him! He's a cult leader, a passing fad, he'll disappear and you'll be left with nothing.

Girlfriend: John, you promised to marry me. I love you. How can you leave me like this?

John: Yes, yes, I was just under his influence. I know now what my life should be.

Mother: You're a good boy.

Girlfriend: I love you so much.

Jesus: [leaving] Last chance. Choose. Live or die. *[With a supreme effort John wrenches himself loose from the family and runs after Jesus, leaving the women crying.]*

Scene 5: Lend me some bread.

Disciple: Master, teach us how to pray.

Jesus: Prayer takes practice. What you say is not as important as your intention and your intensity. Chase it, you won't catch it. Be pure and still, it will fly to you like a wild bird. In this country you are a beggar. Attract it by the pure thin glowing song of your desire. In your heart beg and plead as if nothing else matters. Focus. When you are in love, everything is beautiful. You can't wait to see that face, hear that voice. That is just a tiny fraction of the beauty and love that is always in you. God is essence. Say: 'Please show me your face. I beg you, give me a task. And when I fuck up, give me another chance like I give others second chances. And let me wake up every morning and remember who I really am and why I am here.'

But it takes persistence. I fasted in the desert 40 days. If you give up easily you won't succeed. Suppose you were in your house at midnight...

[Romantic music. Joe comes onto stage with Woman. Seduction scene. Candles, wine, groping. Friend knocks on door. At first they ignore him but as he continues knocking:]

Joe: Go away, I'm in bed.

Friend: It's me, Joe. Please just lend me some tea and cigarettes for tonight because my friend just arrived from New York and I have nothing to entertain him with.

Joe: Come and get it tomorrow.

Friend: But I need it now. The nonstop is closed.

Joe: Go away. *[He goes back to the seduction. They progress to bed. Friend knocks on the window.]*

Friend: Joe, please give me the tea and cigarettes. I can't get it anywhere else.

Joe: Go away you idiot! I'm with a woman. *[Friend goes, seduction proceeds.]*

Friend [knocking again]: Joe, please, I always help you out when you have a problem, this is such a small thing, why can't you just do this for me.

Woman: Give it to him.

Joe: No, if we ignore him he'll go away.

Girl: If you ignore him, I'll go away.

Joe: Go away! [*attempts to resume seduction but things have cooled.*] Alright. [*He gives the friend the stuff.*]

Friend: Thank you, thank you, you don't know what this means to me. [*He babbles on as Joe tries to get rid of him. Finally the friend leaves. Joe goes back to the Woman but she is out the door.*]

Woman: So long loser.

Joe: Bastard!

Jesus: Even though he won't help him out because he's his friend, because he makes a pest of himself the man will eventually give him what he asks for, just to get rid of him. The squeaky wheel gets the grease. Ask and keep asking and you will receive an answer, knock and keep knocking, and the door will open. Never say die.

Scene 6: Hair and Tears

[*A street before Simon's house. Jesus and Judas walking.*]

Simon: Jesus, I've heard so much about you, I would be so honored if you would eat with me.

Jesus: Actually, we were going to pray. Come on, Judas.

Simon: I have killed a lamb especially for you and cooked it with garlic and new potatoes.

Jesus: Well, I guess we can always pray later. Okay. [*They go in and sit down.*]

Simon: So, they say you're the son of God.

Jesus: We are all children of God. I'm a son of Man. God is our father and he lives in the country of high and the country of high is within you.

Simon: But you're special, right? You were sent by God.

Jesus: I came to show you the way. You can't get there by following rules. You have get back to where the rules come from. When you are in this world, follow the rules of this world or you get in trouble. But the country of high operates by different laws. It is very near, but you can't just go there. You need to activate your latent senses.

[Mary Magdalene enters, weeping, with a box or bottle of ointment, goes up to Jesus and drips her tears on his feet, wiping them with her hair. She massages his feet with the ointment.]

Simon: [aside] If this man were a prophet, he would know that this woman is a sinner.

Jesus: Simon, I have something to say to you.

Simon: Master, say on.

Jesus: There was a man and 2 people owed him money. One owed him a thousand dollars and the other owed him ten thousand dollars. Neither one could pay, so he forgave both debts. Which one do you think will love him more?

Simon: I guess the one who owed more.

Jesus: You got it. Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet and no towel to wipe them, but she has washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave me no kiss, but since the time I came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her many mistakes have been forgiven and so she has loved much, but one who is forgiven little, loves little.

Judas: This is a waste. This ointment might have been sold for a thousand dollars and the money given to the poor.

Jesus: Leave her alone. She bought it for the day of my death. You will always have the poor with you, tomorrow, next week, next year, in a hundred years, you can still give money to the poor but as for me - I'm outa here.

Sister, your mistakes are forgiven. You get a second chance.

Scene 7: Salt of the Earth

Jesus [enter Disciples, drunk]: You are the salt of the Earth!

Disciples [repeat as mantra]: We are the salt of the Earth.

A Disciple: [Running in] The salt has lost it's flavor!

Disciples: [repeat as mantra] The salt has lost it's flavor.

Other Disciple: How will you salt the salt?

Disciples: [repeat as mantra] How will you salt the salt?

Jesus: The salt is crap!

Disciples: [repeat as mantra] The salt is crap!

Disciples [line up upstage, song and dance, all together each mantra 3 times with dance and moving downstage with the last mantra. Then rap song with dance]:

Jesus said we were the salt of the Earth
And he's the man of the virgin birth
Then we found out that the salt had lost its flavor
Maybe something to do with our bad behavior
So the big problem now's how to salt the salt
Well if you don't know then it ain't my fault
So don't you be falling into this trap
Cause I'm tellin' you brother, the salt is crap.

Disciples [dance out, repeating]: The salt is crap, the salt is crap...

Scene 8: Cross

Disciples [Juggling, hula hooping, breathing fire, and mantraming]: What is the truth?

Disciples [One carrying "God's Penis" and howling. Another brings out table, used for cross. All mantram]: Rise from the dead.

[2 Disciples stand him at the cross, wrap him with black cloth, put red cloth over his head, put a cigarette in his mouth through the cloth and light it.]

Other Disciples [circling him with slashes and thrusts, mantraming]: You broke the law!

[They change to mourning, one raises knife to stab him at which everyone stops sounds. But she can't do it and they begin mourning again. They put hula hoop at his feet, they all take hold and gradually raise it, all mantraming]: Rise from the dead!

[The hoop comes off the top and he disappears out the bottom of the cloth. All now mantraming]: Crucify me!

[and move to upstage, arms out. Freeze and lights out.]

The end.

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First performed at BOD Theater Studio, Prague, Czech Republic, 21 December 1999.