

HAMLET MAJOR PRODUCTION HISTORY

After ten years of holding a top position in pop/rock music, Janek Ledecy was mixing his sixth solo album in 1997, when the producer of the album, Martin Kumzak, suggested the idea of a musical version of Hamlet. Janek thought „why not?“ before realizing just how crazy the idea was. Many composers around the world have tried to compose an opera or musical of Hamlet, but all have failed.

When no producer would touch this project, Janek built his own theatre in Prague and produced it himself. He'd used his last dime, even sold his motorcycle, but somehow the craziness paid off. In November of 1999 the musical Hamlet opened in the brand new Kalich Theatre and ran an unprecedented 650 performances! It went on to play more than 150 performances in Slovakia.

The first attempt to introduce Hamlet Rock Opera to American audience started with readings at Leonia Theater in NJ in April 2002 and then in September 2003 at Lamb's Theater on Broadway with such stars as Louise Pitre from Mamma Mia, John Hickock and Delisco from Aida and Jeremy Kushnier from Rent as Hamlet. George Harvilla, a poet awarded by the 2000 Hemmigway's annual poet's award, was brought on to do the English lyrics or better „transpoetrisation“. The show was awarded by TRU organization as one of the best readings of 2003. But the most important result was that Robert Johanson, respected theater director, decided to join the team. He worked as Artistic Director for the most prestigious Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey for almost twenty years adapting and directing more than 150 plays there, on Broadway, NY City Opera and in other US theaters. Robert liked the material, but his only condition was to ask Janek to make changes for a „US“ adaptation. So Janek with Martin Kumzak, arranger and orchestrator, met with Robert and they found immediately that Robert's ideas were all based on his theater experiences and his huge love for Shakespeare.

This new version premiered in April 2004 to great success at the Abingdon Theater in New York again with Jeremy as the Hamlet, Josh Tower – Simba from The Lion King as Horatio, PJ Benjamin – „Mr. Cellofane“ from Chicago as Polonius, Tony Award winner Jan Maxwell as Gertrude and many other famous Broadway names. Then the new Hamlet returned to Prague in English during the summer 05 to even more critical success and a beautiful DVD containing the whole production was filmed with Sebastian Arcelus as Hamlet (Jersey Boys, TV Netflix series House of Cards, CBS Madam Secretary).

The General Manager of Korea's EMK Productions, Sophy Kim, saw this Hamlet production and negotiations began immediately to bring it to Seoul where it's success has been astonishing with over 550 performances and plans to run it for more years! February 1st ,2012, saw the opening of the Japanese version in Tokyo directed by Tamiya Kuriyama with Yoshio Inoue as Hamlet. After 50 performances the show moved to Osaka and Nagoya. It totally sold out and received standing ovations every evening.

On March 22nd, Janek introduced the world version for the first time to a Czech audience in the Prague theatre Broadway. It was performed in Czech, of course. It was rated as the greatest event of the last theatre season.

In April 2017, the fifth Korean version of the Hamlet the Rock Opera premiered at D-Cube Sheraton Theater in Seoul. It was the tenth anniversary of Hamlet release in Korea. This time with the biggest stars of K-pop in the leading roles. All performances were hopelessly sold out.

Nowadays, the new version of the Hamlet the Rock Opera is going to be studied in Hybernia Theatre, Prague and the premiere is planned for 2021.