

Black, Blacker, Roma

Written and Directed by Elina Izarra

Rakastajat Theatre

Synopsis in English

An actor, Kaitsu, enters and informs the audience that the show has been cancelled - one actress is in hospital. He has also an appointment to discuss wedding arrangements with an actress, Liisa, who lives in Brazil and is planning to have a wedding in the theatre.

Liisa enters not knowing that there is a show going on. Kaitsu tells Liisa that she will need to replace the missing actress.

During the first dance the actors recount the history of the Roma since the year 1000.

Janette enters and tells her family was living in a shack during the 70's, before her birth in 1980.

VIDEO 1 Swedish Roma Katarina Taikon is worried about the life conditions of the Finnish Roma in Finland.

Janette is playing with her schoolmate Jarno who invites her to his home, but this is not ok for Jarno's mother, because Janette is Roma.

Kaitsu tells Liisa about Klooga concentration camp in Estonia, where the Nazis used to bring Roma. Janette's grandfather Kyösti tells how his family came from Karelia to Finland during the war in 1939.

Kaitsu offers some tidbits for Liisa to try with the wedding in mind, claiming he is from France.

VIDEO 2 Marja Pentikäinen talks about how the living conditions of the Roma in Romania are worse than in the refugee camps she has been working in.

Catina from Romania reveals that her family's humble home was destroyed when she was four years old and her family was forced to move into an old train carriage.

Janette tells her friend Jarno about her teacher's and schoolmates' racism.

Catina is searching for a job and an American lady gives her a pair of shoes. Catina's father tries to rob an American man. They start to fight and the man is taken to hospital. Catina goes there and is told that the man will die. She finds out that the man was the husband of the kind lady.

Grandfather Kyösti thinks back to the Continuation War where he lost his brother who was fighting with the Finns. After the War he had to beg and travel around with his family, homeless.

Kaitsu claims he is Spanish.

In the Summer of 1965 Kyösti's wife Hilja is arrested under the Loose Act and is forced to work on a farm far away even though they have three children. They decide to leave Finland and move to Sweden.

AFTER THE INTERVAL

Janette is now a teenager and her family is moving to another city. Jarno is helping with packing and asks if Janette will wear the Finnish Roma's traditional costume when she gets older.

Catina leaves Romania with her friends as there is no work, and she ends up begging in Finland. She returns to Finland every summer and after the fourth summer she realizes she is pregnant.

Kaitsu reveals that he is not a Spanish French, but a Finnish Roma. He talks about the different sides of the Roma culture in Finland.

Kyösti's wife Hilja dies of cancer. Kyösti is thankful of the better living conditions the Finnish Roma have compared to his childhood.

Kaitsu talks about the violations against human rights the Roma have to face in Europe.

Janette has chosen the Roma costume because she wants to be proudly part of a beautiful community and tradition, but she doesn't wear it in her work place in a retirement home.

Janette takes care of Jarno's mother in the retirement home. Jarno comes to see her mother and meets Janette after years and they fall in love.

Catina's baby Maria is born in Romania in a shack with a clay floor.

Liisa finally breaks up with her husband and decides to go travelling with Kaitsu.

VIDEO 3 Member of the European Parliament Sirpa Pietikäinen tells about the situation of Roma in Europe

Catina is begging in Finland. She is missing her three year old daughter Maria, who wants to have a Elsa doll from Frozen as Christmas presents. A child gives her money, Catina says to her: you buy Elsa, but the child answers: I already have one.

VIDEO 4 Names of the people interviewed for the play.