

# **LA MUSICA**

**(Theater Clips on the Music of Life and the Life of Music)**  
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**By Karol Horák**

Translation: Katarína Slugeňová Cockrell

## **CHARACTERS:**

Daughter (also Girl, Wife, Old Woman)

Father

Mother

Lover (also Trainer, Husband)

Chronos

Girl: Chronos, why are you prolonging my life? I want to join my loved ones.  
Chronos: Aren't you afraid?  
Girl: Of what?  
Chronos: Darkness. In the piano...  
Girl: You took my father and mother. My husband and children. Why are you leaving me here alone?  
Chronos: Play! Music is eternal. La Musica...  
*(Dreams of the Past: Father, Mother, Husband)*  
Father: I have both hands. I got hands! Hands is what I got...  
Mother: Stepmother is great. I gave birth to a son. I have a flock of children.  
Husband: I learned to stand on my own feet! I am educated. I got an excellent salary...  
*(Singing, happy noises.)*

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Daughter: We are leaving.  
Mother: No.  
Daughter: Yes.  
Father: Take your piano with you.  
Husband: I don't know...  
Daughter: No, give me the statuette.  
Father: That ugly thing?!  
Mother: His tooth is sticking out...  
Father: Take the piano or else you'll break my heart. *(To his Wife.)* You should have given me a son! A girl will become a whore. The world will screw her up. *(Yells upstairs.)* Watch out! Careful! It's not an armoire, it's a piano! *(He reads the label.)* Ein sielber Medaille. Zwei! Welt! Einstellung Wien. Ferdienstmedaille! Alois Kern! – You'll become a world-known artist. You'll be a famous virtuoso. You'll travel the world going from concert to concert. They will fight for you. You'll be the center of attention. You will, you will, you will! When the war robbed me of my hand and destroyed my musical career, now you will become famous! First you'll master the piano. Then the piano. And then – the piano. Alois Kern! You'll start composing!  
Mother: Why couldn't a woman become Mozart?

Father: But you'll have to practice. Practice, practice and practice again!

Daughter: I keep practising for three hours a day.

Father: Not enough.

Daughter: I keep practising for four hours a day.

Father: Not enough!

Daughter: I practice from the moment I come home from school till night!

Father: Not enough!! Start practising in the morning! Till you're great! The best. You have to be the best. You have to be a virtuoso. You don't have to be the best in school, but you must be a virtuoso. Nobody will look at your report cards. Just practice, girl! Practice!

Daughter: I'm too tired.

Father: You have to.

Daughter: I keep falling asleep.

Father: Get up! It's only eleven o'clock. Play!

Daughter: I hate music. Damned music!

Father: You have to. Let's go! One – two – three – four. Hold the rhythm. Andante! Not like that!! What are you doing?! I'm going crazy here. You little...!

Music without practice is worth nothing!

Only hard work mastering the technique of the play can lead us to perfection.

And it will lead us!

I will lead you. You'll be a virtuoso.

You'll be the best. Or else...!

Mother: Torturing your own kid like this!

Father: I'm crying... I'll pay for a teacher, she must be the best!

Mother: You're destroying her childhood.

Father: Can there ever be anything more noble and joyful than music?

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Father: How could that happen?! My piano is being destroyed by termites!

Chronos: Pear wood...

Father: But a steel plate!

Chronos: The piano will fall apart but the music is eternal...

Father: God help me!

Chronos: Sell that old piece of junk. Or get rid of it one way or another.

Father: What?! I'm supposed to sell my beautiful grand piano? My heart?! My soul?!

Chronos: Your only daughter will leave you. And you'll wander around your chambers like a ghost of a hanged man who cannot find his place in the sun...

Father: No! She adores me! My daughter knows I only want the best for her! That I want to open up the world for her.

Chronos: And you? You will only have one child.

Mother: I keep suffering the injustice. My stepmother used to torture me.

Chronos: The sun is shining, the rain is falling, the grass is green – and sins are being punished up to the third generation.

*(Girl is collecting her music in front of the piano, just like in the opening sequence, the opening music sounds. Girl is stroking the piano.)*

Daughter: My hand is touching you – as if my lips were exploring you. I keep praying to you, you are my sweet sin. Noble black sun, which kills the pale moon. You are my master. *(Enter Trainer – Lover to the sound of swift music, fit for gymnastics.)*

Trainer: That's it! Exercise with music!

One – two – three – four! Hold the rhythm! *(Girl continues spilling her heart.)*

Daughter: I'm flying with you in the musical paradise across the heavenly space – like a bird on your wings – saddled clouds of music are carrying me... A rose lay on your panel board... A wedding wreath...

Trainer: That's it!

One – two – three – four. Body and music in harmony.

Daughter: The pilot who leads me through my life. The safety of a day. Tempting darkness with the night's mask on its face.

Trainer: This is my rhythm. *(Period rhythmic musical motif.)* One – two – three – four.

Daughter: You were a stranger. Now – brother, sister that I'm longing for. Another mother. Father, when he's in a good mood. I am your humble servant.

Trainer: This is beautiful, exercising to music. You see how it is! One more time. Again.

Daughter: You are my dream. A bird of playful childhood. If they ever took you away from me, my heart would break...

Trainer: That's enough for the day, thank you.

Daughter: Thank you. *(Father appears.)* We're on a five-minute break.

Father: That's a good deal. You certainly are not killing yourself in the gym and he handed you cash for three hours of playing. Ten crowns!

Daughter: After the lesson the Trainer will give me music that I will play from in a couple of days.

Father: First of all he gives you ten crowns. And music sheets only after that. Twice a week, that makes eighty crowns a month. At your age! But don't forget: Skill comes first. Virtuosity. Only then comes money. Although one is a piece of shit without money.

Lover: You play so beautifully! Your hands are made of gold.

Father: Not so fast! You come out of nowhere, my daughter catches your fancy and you want to take her away right on the spot. Some student...

Lover: I don't want to drag her away, I want to marry her.

Father: Get out! She's an artist. A virtuoso!

Lover: I adore her!

Father: That's not enough. I swore she'd be famous one day. Academy...

Lover: You'd need lots of money for that.

Father: I'll sell the pig, cow, piece of land, just for her to be excellent. What can you offer her?

Lover: My heart. And a teacher's salary.

Father: Milk is still dribbling down your chin and you want to get married. You'll get your teacher's salary only after you finish your studies and they'll give you a position with some charity handout salary. No way we're talking about a marriage. Good day.

Lover: At least please give her my flowers.

Father: We've got enough grass, the garden is quite big. Good day. (*Lover is leaving, Father says to Daughter:*) You should have been a boy. We wouldn't have this scum hanging around you. These vagabonds wouldn't be waiting for you in front of your school and they wouldn't be luring you under the gates. So many years behind the piano! And some scoundrel will show up and mess up our plans! That'd be the end of it. You don't think I can see straight into his soul? His home is in disarray and here he wants to have a family. Create his nest. Pump my daughter full of children – and there goes music straight to hell! I should have had a son. Play!

*(Rapturous music.)*

Lover: You're playing beautifully. You know what? I'll keep working for you all my life and you can spend your time just with music and virtuosity. I'll be your companion when you tour. *(Chronos enters, Father and Mother after that.)*

Father: That's some kind of arrogance. I told you not to hang around my daughter and here you charge into my house! Out!

Lover: That's not me. That's him. Chronos. God of Time.

Father: Poppycock. You're done with my daughter!

Lover: You cannot order the heart.

Father: She's not the marrying kind of girl.

Lover: Every woman wants a child.

Father: This one is thinking only about music. You keep imposing yourself on her. Out! I don't want to see you in this house again. Chop-chop!

Mother: The girl has to get married some day.

Father: I want to make her an artist.

Mother: Piano players have families too.

Father: He barges into our house without a pot to piss in and – first fame, then family. There, I said it. *(He leaves.)*

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Daughter: Mom, I'm knocked up.

Mother: I knew this wouldn't end well. You've gotten what you wanted.

Daughter: Father will kill me.

Mother: I don't know when and where you messed with him.

Daughter: At the botanical garden. In the quarry that is overgrown with birches.

Mother: But when?

Daughter: During my school breaks. Before music lessons. After music lessons. Every spare moment I had.

Mother: Nympho! Father will break him in half and I will spill the chamber pot piss on him!

Daughter: All of the girls are envious!

Mother: What do you see in him?

Daughter: He exercises so beautifully. He plays the violin. I have to get married. Who'll marry me now?

Mother: Screwed up like this, no one! How did he lure you?

Daughter: He can sing with his eyes. He can stroke like no one else! He can make me laugh like no one else! He can dive into the bottom of the lake with me and then resurface in his arms...

Mother: He got you while you were in the water?! Such a nobody. He's got nothing.

Daughter: You're just like the father. (*Father stomps in with a bottle.*)

Father: This is red current wine that I can make with my one hand. It's red like blood.

Lover: Blood and honey.

Father: Shut up! When I say blood, it's blood. I know blood. You know how much blood I lost?

Lover: No, I don't.

Father: A bucketful. They sent us to Russia in October of 1914. From a training ground to the front line. (*Period song.*) We attacked and we landed in a cannonade. I was running in fear, praying, with a gun in my hand with a bayonet. Suddenly an explosion threw me in the air. I felt the sensation of flying up and then falling. I came to in the evening. It was all quiet. I was laying on my back, the birches around me were murmuring. I couldn't feel my right hand, it was laying beside me all twisted.

Lover: Was it cut off completely?

Father: It was still hanging by the skin. I carried it in my good hand, the left one – I crawled through the woods. I crawled with it for twelve hours.

Lover: Through the trenches?

Father: To the field hospital. Wood, road, meadow, birches...

Lover: You lost a tremendous amount of blood!

Father: I kept wandering around. The orderlies found me in the morning. I was maybe a half a mile away from them. But I kept wandering around like a fly without a wing.

Lover: Was the field hospital open-air?

Father: The orderlies said I didn't want to let go of the shot hand with my good hand.

Lover: Did they cut it off?

Father: That wasn't necessary, it was hacked off. They only amputated it. So what did I get for becoming a cripple? A medal. A diploma. A statuette – this scarecrow.

Lover: They pay you disability.

Father: You see how the statuette keeps grinning at me? Screw that. (*Mother enters.*)



Mother: Why are you on the piano?

Father: Hand me the wine and get the hell out of here! – Swear that you’ll only have one child.  
And that my girl will become a virtuoso.

Lover: I swear...

Father: What are you trying to prove, Chronos? See? You may have bitten off my hand in the war, but I still survived. To your health! You won’t drink red current wine that I made myself? Trade me a grenade for a glass. Or better – an hourglass. Are the sands of my life running out? I can’t hear anything! Time flies, true... But listen, Chronos, I’m telling you once and for all: keep biting me however much you want, but spare my daughter, my wife! And my son-in-law. Because that’s the way it’s going to be now. Although she should have been a virtuoso. Promise me, man-to-man. Promise? Yes? (*Darkness.*)

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Husband: Where are you?

Wife: Over here.

Husband: Are you playing hide-and-seek?

Wife: Yoo-hoo...

Husband: I’ll find you.

Wife: Peek-a-boo.

Husband: Where are you? (*Catches the wife. Contact with Chronos.*) And who are you? Chronos? You can’t get me. (*Sounds of shooting.*) The war started. I have to report for duty tomorrow.

Wife: God, protect the soldier.

Husband: I’ll think about you. Take care of the baby.

Mother: It’ll be a girl.

Father: Nonsense, it’ll be a violinist.

Husband: The war won’t last long.

Father: Every war seems short in the beginning.

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Father: Can’t you hear? As if Chronos over there was saying something.

Mother: You keep imagining that. It’s just a statuette.

Father: As if sand was falling through...

Mother: What kind of sand? You’re dreaming.

Father: What? You can't see it? Ever since our daughter got married, Chronos keeps speeding my time. All of my teeth have fallen out, I'm bald.

Mother: Don't think about it. It's dark, deep into the night.

Husband: *(Singing a period war song.)* Everything that reminds a soldier of his wife during war is dear to him.

Father: Then you gotta have a drink. To your health!

Husband: And when he's on leave?

Father: He drinks to forget he has to return to hell.

Husband: Here's the priest, factory director, chief of police. And the German commander with them. The director says we have to play.

Father: If you must, you must, but if you don't have to, that's even greater.

Husband: Shall we play their song? *(Period German song.)*

Father: How did we end up like this! My daughter is playing hopping polkas. For whom? For the enjoyment of soldiers.

Mother: Shut up or they will come and get you.

Father: Do you at least appreciate it? You know my daughter is an artist and she is playing in this village purely by accident?!

Mother: Quiet!

Father: Can your Hitler play a single instrument?

Husband: We cannot translate that to him. *(Sounds of gunfire.)*

Wife: Are you leaving me alone again?

Husband: The war is taking longer than I expected. But I will do my best to come back as soon as I can.

Wife: I am crying my eyes out for you.

Husband: You mustn't. You could hurt our sunshine.

Wife: I believe it'll be a son.

Husband: I'll come back as soon as possible. I'll hurry back.

Wife: I know, I know.

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Father: Silence! Stand still. When the soldiers come, don't say anything.

Mother: There's nothing here.

Father: Shush.

Mother: Sure there is, here, our pregnant daughter.

Father: Shut your trap! *(To the soldier.)* I am a cripple. You see, I lost my hand in the war. He ordered us to play for him.

Daughter: I'm scared.

Father: Don't be afraid, they like it when they play for them. Open your mouths, they're looking for gold. *(Russian period song.)* Look, I don't have a single tooth. *(Daughter is going into labour, screams, music, noises.)*

Chronos: Come on.

Father: What are you doing?

Chronos: I'm helping you.

Father: Who are you?

Chronos: I'm the one who measures life. I'm counting down your time.

Father: Go to hell! – She's playing beautifully... I keep forgetting everything when I hear my daughter play.

Chronos: Hey, you! You, or your daughter...?

Father: Me, of course. But why already now? Leave us our grandson. *(Chronos pulls him into the darkness.)*

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Husband: Well, I didn't succeed.

Wife: Forgive me! They bombed the school, they missed the factory. I was petrified. Some soldiers showed up first, then others. Only father saved us. But he didn't make it either.

Husband: Now it'll be better – peace.

Wife: They looked into our mouths, searching for gold. Only the piano saved us and my belly.

Husband: So you buried the father and the baby without me. Was it a boy?

Wife: A little girl.

Husband: Play something to say goodbye.

Wife: No, I'll never sit down at a piano again. I hate music.

Husband: Don't say that. Now it'll be better again. Go to sleep.

Mother: Did he come back?

Wife: He came back from the war.

Mother: Is he wounded?

Wife: Thank God, he isn't.

Mother: He's drunk...!

Wife: From happiness. He beat the reaper.

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Husband: (*Putting his military duffel bag away.*) Where's the bottle?

Wife: (*Playing the piano.*) I don't know what you're talking about.

Husband: Where is the bottle, huh?

Wife: Are you joking?

Husband: No! One more time: Where is the bottle?

Wife: What am I, a magician?

Husband: Give me the bottle or I'll beat you up. (*He listens to music.*) One more G – C – one more G – E. Here it is. (*He pulls the bottle out of the piano, he's drinking, singing cliché military songs.*) It was sitting on the C string. I love your piano. I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world.

Wife: You've never been like this. You never drank... Is it still you? (*A moment later.*)

Husband: Same room as before... Keep playing.

Wife: I don't know.

Husband: You play so beautifully.

Wife: Hold the rhythm, boy.

Husband: When was the last time you played so beautifully?

Wife: When you offered to accompany me while I tour.

Husband: My offer is still good. (*Lyrical tunes.*)

Wife: Something is pressing my behind. Statuette. How did it get here?

Husband: Chronos. He wants to be present. But let's make it a son!

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Wife: Why are you drinking again? You know what I'm dreaming about? About a Sunday afternoon. Summer. We'll sit in the school yard underneath the cherry tree. Everything will be full of light. A child is playing in the sand and we will play just for fun, for ourselves. Just to enjoy it. Then the music, La Musica, will stop time. (*Uneventful birth.*)

Husband: It's a son! I have a son. They came to congratulate us. Play something.

Wife: I'm supposed to play and my child is lying in the hospital?

Husband: So what. Play at least one song.

Wife: I can't.

Husband: Sure you can. This is my wife: The virtuoso. She'll play. (*Cliché period post-war song.*) Hold the rhythm! (*He is singing, he is cheering, he is greeting imaginary crowds, he takes a gulp from the bottle now and then.*) This music can make you feel so sentimental... (*He faints.*)

Wife: They sent a message from the hospital for me to come. The doctor said I should come.  
(*People dressed in carnival masks appear.*)

First Man: Who are you? Are you going to the ball?

Second Man: No, going home. She has to nurse.

First Man: No way. She's coming from the dance.

Second Man: So what are you dragging there?

First Man: Bread?

Second Man: A drum?

First Man: A bag of feathers.

Second Man: A bag.

First Man: A baby.

Second Man: Show me, it's carnival time, anyway.

Wife: Stop it! You can see he's dead. The baby.

First Man: Come, come now...

Second Man: Everything will be alright.

Wife: The one who was supposed to help him, killed him, The doctor.

First Man: But the music is eternal.

Wife: Damn the music.

Second Man: There's something about music.

Wife: I swear I will never sit at a piano again.

First Man: Forget about it.

Wife: I was playing while my baby was dying.

Mother: Here I am. They sent me a message from the hospital to come and get the baby and he was dead already.

First Man, Second Man: And we were drinking all night.

Wife: People say that the doctor is testing a new drug on children.

Husband: How can that be?! He's supposed to be helping them and he's giving them poison?!

Mother: A woman shouldn't live longer after her husband had died.

Chronos: You just have a cold.

Mother: Even my grandchild beat me on the way to the other world.

Chronos: It's a nice death, to die of a cold. It's harmonious like music. Two dead grandchildren, two dead grandparents. Come!

Husband: And who are you?

Chronos: I'm the one who measures life.

Husband: What?

Chronos: Yeah, I'm counting down your time.

Husband: Go to hell! (*Melody.*) She plays so beautifully. I keep forgetting everything when my daughter plays. (*Illusion.*)

Mother: I'm young again. My mother is alive. My brother and I are not orphans. We don't have a stepmother.

Father: I've got both hands. I have two hands! I can.

Husband: I am finally standing on my own feet and I no longer have to be humiliated by anyone. I've got education.

Chronos: Enough! The circus is over...

Father: But why already? Now that our lives are best?

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Wife: Why are you drinking?

Husband: I got used to it during the war.

Wife: Was it so bad?

Husband: Not really.

Chronos: Just keep lying. You killed.

Husband: What else was there to do during war?

Chronos: But that was not during the war. You killed a woman and a child.

Husband: Unwittingly.

Chronos: You were drunk. You were shooting in the air and you struck them. You scoundrel. You will leave this world in a horrible fashion.

Wife: You can't do that to me!

Husband: Play. It's easier with your music. (*Closes his eyes.*)

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Old Woman: Chronos, why are you prolonging my life? I want to join my loved ones.

Chronos: Aren't you afraid?

Old Woman: Of what?

Chronos: Darkness.

Old Woman: What darkness?

Chronos: In the open piano.

Old Woman: You took my parents, my husband, my children. Why are you leaving me here?

Chronos: Play. Free yourself. When you finally relax – you will take off – you will fly.  
Music is eternal. La Musica.

The End