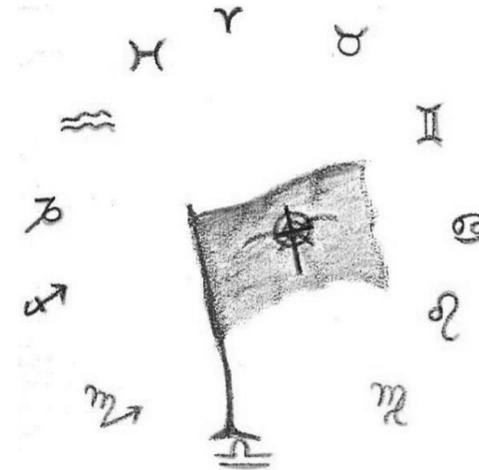


A St John's Play

Written on June 6, 1943

Cast

JOHN (the Baptist)	in brown garment, a sheepskin over his shoulder, a staff
RED FIGURE (I)	(Aries, the Ram) red garment, bearing ram's horns
ORANGE FIGURE (II)	(Taurus, the Bull) orange garment, bearing cow's horns
TALL YELLOW FIGURE (III A)	(Gemini, the Twins) yellow garments
SMALL YELLOW FIGURE (III B)	(Gemini, the Twins) yellow garments
GREEN FIGURE (IV)	(Cancer, the Crab) green garments
THREE GREEN CHILDREN	(Cancer, the Crab) green garments
LIGHT BLUE FIGURE (V)	(Leo, the Lion) light blue garment
SEVEN CHILDREN	(as planetary substances) light blue garments, circlets with the planetary sign in corresponding colour
DARK BLUE FIGURE (VI)	(Virgo, the Virgin) dark blue garment
(BELL)	The Bell (later) consists of the Figures I–VI and the Seven Children
VIOLET FIGURE (VII)	(Libra, the Scales) violet garment, carrying a banner
BLACK FIGURE (VIII)	(Scorpio) black garment; carrying a spear
HUNTER (IX)	(Sagittarius, the Archer) with bow and arrow
SHEPHERD (X)	(Capricorn) with shepherd's crook
FARMER (XI)	(Aquarius, the Waterman) with sickle
CITIZEN (XII)	(Pisces, the Fishes) with key



This play is intended for a group of teachers and pupils. It should be acted on St John's Day, outside in the open air, in a park or a large meadow. All actors and participants stand in a large circle, holding hands singing the following song, during which they slowly circle around.

ALL [*singing*]: Rushing beats the Stream of Time
Onto the shore of our existence!
Bears the stones for which we have striven,
Washes the pebbles of what we have given.
Glorious sounds the chiming Bell of Time.

Rushing sounds the Stream of Time!
Along with the Sun the days go wandering,
Nights rise up, the lament rings far,
Moon gives answer to the asking star.
Glorious sounds the striking Bell of Time.

Rushing beats the Stream of Time
And the Sun goes wandering higher.
All the stars are drawing nearer
And the world is filled with light.

Sisters, clasp one another's hands,
 Brothers, kindle the dry firebrands,
 Join in with the dancing stars.
 Glorious sounds the singing Bell of Time.

[JOHN leaves the circle and goes into
 the centre.]

JOHN: The light of time
 Fills the widths of space.
 The soul of man
 Lives in eternities.
 Angelic hosts
 Descend and reascend.
 The light of ages
 Again appears and sounds.
 Fulfilled are all the earthly spaces,
 Fulfilled too is the human heart.
 Yet foreboding dreams reveal
 The pain of all the darkness.
 What was accomplished
 Is no longer missed.
 Where we have deceived
 The heart is torn apart.
 Where we have told lies,
 The garment is soiled.
 The Hammer of Conscience comes falling down!
 Is all resurrection followed
 Ever again just by the grave?
 Is all fulfilment followed
 Evermore by destruction?
 Is clear insight followed
 Nonetheless by bewitchment?
 Is the sting of death
 The end of our existence?
 O friends,
 Clasp each other's hands in hope!

The beginning of the cosmos is the end of chaos
 If hearts are faithfully United.

RED FIGURE (I) [*stepping forward*]: I look backwards
 And my gaze is filled
 With all that has once been.
 In the great book of Creation
 I have read the Word!
 The past has wrapped me around.
 Who will help me forwards?

ORANGE FIGURE (II) [*stepping forward, turning towards
 the Red Figure*]:

Can you not there
 Upon the upper shore
 Of Heaven
 Perceive your future?
 The stars'
 Manifold bright paths,
 How they move with the same regularity?
 And you alone,
 You are their earthly place!

[TALL YELLOW FIGURE (III A) and SMALL YELLOW
 FIGURE (III B) step forward.]

TALL YELLOW FIGURE (III A):

Brother, if I just look at you,
 I know myself in me.

SMALL YELLOW FIGURE (III B):

Sister, your spell is holding guard,
 Always close are we.

TALL YELLOW FIGURE (III A):

Brother, give to me your hand,
 And united in our clasp
 We step into the earthly land.

SMALL YELLOW FIGURE (III B):

Sister, shelter and
 Strong leader,

Let your garment be at hand,
Awesome is the earthly land.

*[The figures who have come forward
turn their gaze on John.]*

JOHN: You, who are founded from the beginning,
Carry Heaven to the Earth.
You, whose stream flows down to here,
Be now the light
Which dawns on our darkness.
Yet the last one is missing
In your round!

*[As if at John's command, the GREEN
FIGURE (IV) appears followed by THREE
GREEN CHILDREN.]*

GREEN FIGURE (IV):

Heights of the Sun, depths of the Earth,
Joys of the light, sorrows of the grave,
All in me is wound together.
Colours are enfolding,
Sheaves of corn fulfilling,
Scars of wounds are hardening,
And the starving pass away.
You who are my children here,
I embrace you in my care.
Easy and light become the burdens
Which you are prepared to bear.

THREE GREEN CHILDREN: Mother, your supporting arm
Shelters us from any harm,
Keep us close to your own breast,
Let your lips upon us rest.
Death it is if you forget us.

GREEN FIGURE (IV): Death is forgetting,
Life is remembering.
Within you,
Children,

I feel myself measured
And so my measure find.

JOHN: Thus it is now,
That the first four epochs
Like heralds from Heaven
Come riding here to Earth.

*[LIGHT BLUE FIGURE (V) enters quickly with arms,
hands and fingers spread out upwards.]*

LIGHT BLUE FIGURE (V): Yet these first epochs
Are just hollow and empty,
Are only mould and sheath.
If into the Earth the Bell should spread,
If its tones to men should reach,
I must prepare for it
The fullness of the cast,
Filled with substance and recurrence.
Come, gold and silver,
Sun and Moon,
Come, you copper and iron,
And Mars and Venus,
Tin and lead,
Jupiter and Saturn, over here.
I can prepare you.
And you, Mercury, penetrate them
And join the alloy,
And all together show your leadership.

*[The SEVEN CHILDREN (as planetary substances)
come forward, arranging themselves in a circle around
the Light Blue Figure.]*

LIGHT BLUE FIGURE (V): Yourselves into a garland round,
Mix and mingle all your sound,
Let elements in circle dance!
Turn and follow and advance,
To spheres which now in you return,
Bubble brightly while you burn!

Mix and vanish and be one!
Seven you were and now are none!

SEVEN CHILDREN [*sing*]: We were that
And now are not.
The colour turns in us to light,
The weight turns into sound,
We all in song resound.

We are that
And we were not.
The sound which through the mixture breaks
Is resonant resounding,
Is bravely abounding.

DARK BLUE FIGURE (VI) [*coming forward, to the Seven Children and the Light Blue Figure*]:

Substance preparer,
Give me the substance.
The round wreath of elements
I shall bend to compliance.
I fill the form with its force,
I ripen the stem with its sap.
I can cast the Bell
If the metals flow.

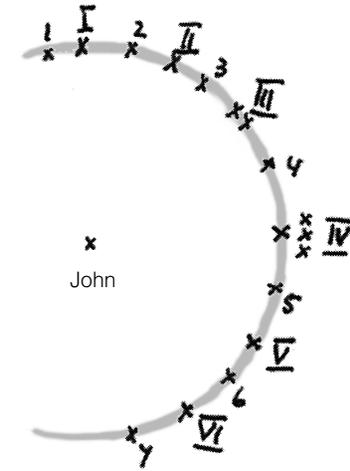
RED, ORANGE, YELLOW and GREEN FIGURE (I, II, III, IV):

You, O Mother, take our mould,
With your children fill it up.

LIGHT BLUE FIGURE (V):

Mother, take the metal substance,
Fully and wholly cast the Bell.

[*The DARK BLUE FIGURE (VI) leads the SEVEN CHILDREN so that each is placed between the six figures, together forming a semicircle. The arrangement is as shown (Arabic numerals denote the seven children). From now to the end of the play all these figures hold hands and form the BELL.*]



BELL: The work is now completed,
The Bell is cast,
The mould is filled.
The heavenly form has earthly bread,
What knowing was becomes command,
The image is revealed.

VIOLET FIGURE (VII) [*earnestly coming forward, carrying a banner*]:

The banner waves,
The Bell now stands,
The cast is hard,
The smelt turns stiff.
Yet can you ring,
O Bell?
Yet can you sing,
O Bell?

For pain and also for gladness,
For joy and also for sadness?

BELL: O, you seventh figure,
Teach us to resound!
Iron-hard we are and cold,
We will not accustomed grow.

We want to be ever new!
 We would sound out bright and clear,
 And as words come to birth
 In the mouth of the Earth.

VIOLET FIGURE (VII):

Like my banner given over to the wind,
 You have not yet come into being!
 Seek for your Bridegroom, O Bride,
 O Order, seek for your ribbon!
 To and fro you must venture and sway,
 To be stiff and cold is to falter and die.
 You can only resound if you have the will
 And your life with sacrifice fulfil!

BELL: We will, we will,

O let us a banner be!
 Banner in the wind,
 Waving and pointing,
 Light-filled and clean!

*[A BLACK FIGURE (VIII) with a spear rushes
 towards John, aiming it at his heart.]*

BLACK FIGURE (VIII): As Loki once

Did Baldur engulf,
 As Hagen too
 Did Siegfried overcome,
 As night destroys the day,
 And death brings end to life,
 So have I the darkness thickened
 And wish for nothing
 But to strive for this!
 The blood of Seth
 In me does rise again!
 The spear is power
 And now does take its course
 And strikes you, Ioannes,
 Right in the heart!

*[BLACK FIGURE (VIII) drives the spear
 into John's heart. JOHN sinks down,
 struck to death.]*

BLACK FIGURE (VIII) *[raising aloft the bloody spear triumphantly]*:

The Bell may not sound,
 May not ring!
 The earthly word
 I alone shall sing
 And be its bearer all by myself.
 It is subject to the sting of death
 And not to any bell ringing!
 It is condemned to become cold
 And never be warmed in song.
 Ioannes is dead,
 Creation felled!
 The sting does win,
 Life has perished!

*[VIOLET FIGURE (VII) raises the banner
 as if guarding against the spear.]*

Your dignity, O Bell, now show,
 Sound forth, O Bell, the tone you learned!
 Away from you your burden throw,
 Be the reward which Creation has earned!

*[The BELL begins to move, with the figures forming
 it sounding first lightly and then
 becoming louder.]*

BELL: Ding, dong,

Ding, dong,
 We are the voice,
 We are the flame.
 Ding, dong,
 Ding, dong,
 We are the language
 Of lion and lamb.
 Ding, dong,

Ringling are we,
Ding, dong,
Like the brazen sea.

VIOLET FIGURE (VII): The Bell resounds,
And you, Ioannes,
Who are dead and full of sacrifice,
Arise and be a Christian
In the realm of mankind's great Bell!
Be her Tongue,
Full and strong,
And ring out clearly in her,
And be the You in the We!

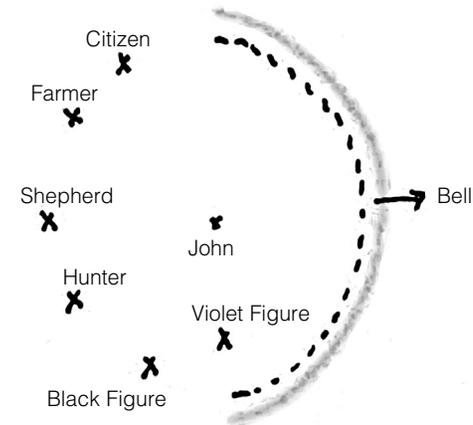
[JOHN awakens, rises up and tries to reply,
but he is mute.]

BELL: Ding, dong,
Ding, dong,
Ioannes, join in!
Be the tongue in our song.
Be the life in our existence.

VIOLET FIGURE (VII): Woe unto us,
Ioannes is dumb!
Frozen has the Word become.
Woe unto us,
Death stalks around under the sky,
Full of sorrow and wish to die.

BELL: Ding, dang,
Ioannes is dumb,
Dong, ding,
Poisonous and grim,
Ding, dang,
Ioannes is dumb.

[Four others appear: HUNTER (IX),
SHEPHERD (X), FARMER (XI) and
CITIZEN (XII), arranged as follows.]



HUNTER (IX): When I hunt the wild beast,
I am hunting my own pain.
When I hit the wild beast,
I am hitting my own heart.

SHEPHERD (X): When I graze the foreign herd,
I am grazing my own grief.
When I sorrow for the Earth,
I sorrow with our time.

FARMER (XI): When I plough the field's clods
I plough the ground of soul,
When I harvest ripened sheaves,
I am cutting my own wounds.

CITIZEN (XII): When guarding myself behind walls
I guard this being, Me,
When my life does ever tremble,
I live divining You!

HUNTER (IX): I hunt!

SHEPHERD (X): I graze!

FARMER (XI): I plough!

CITIZEN (XII): I protect!

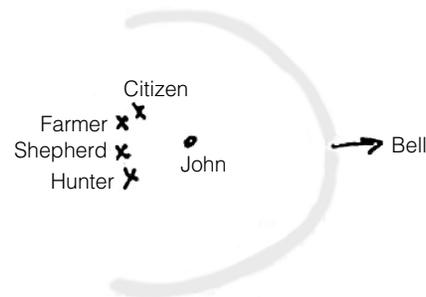
HUNTER (IX), SHEPHERD (X), FARMER (XI), CITIZEN (XII):

Preservers are we,
Nought else.
Bearers of the dark,
Diggers of the shade,
And yet
Seekers of the light!

[The four turn towards John, who looks at them expectantly. They hold out arrow, crook, sickle and key. JOHN points mutely at all these objects and is suddenly able to speak again.]

JOHN: Bow and arrow,
Crook and sickle,
And the strong power of the key
Have unsealed for me the Word
And I once again am free.
Ah, now the Bell's tongue may I be,
Because you, Hunter, have wounded yourself,
Because you, Shepherd, have grazed yourself,
Because you, Farmer, have ploughed yourself.
And the Citizen with the key
Has guarded and preserved and thus
Unsealed the Word for me.

[HUNTER (IX), SHEPHERD (X), FARMER (XI) and CITIZEN (XII) approach John. Arranged as follows, together they form the tongue or clapper of the bell.]



The clapper shape:



JOHN, HUNTER (IX), SHEPHERD (X), FARMER (XI)
and CITIZEN (XII): Then let us be the Tongue

In the Bell of mankind
And ring out
The tides of this Earth!
Let us be the anvil
For the hammer of conscience,
That all earthly suffering
And all earthly misery
By us may be redeemed.

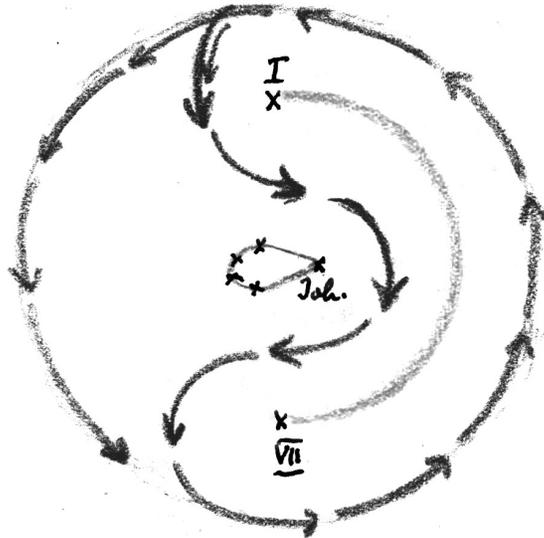
ALL [*in the outer circle of non-actors*]:

Yes, let us be the Tongue
In the Bell of mankind
And the anvil
For the hammer of conscience.
And through the darkness
Light will shine anew,
And the rigid Earth
Will be moistened by dew.
Yes, let us be Tongue
And anvil.
Then the Bell again will ring
And all human hearts will sing
And fill with light
This earthly shrine.

BELL [*singing*]: Ding, dong,
Lion and lamb
Again resound
In brotherly round.
Ding, dong,
Wise in song,
Throats now sing
In a new wedding.
All hands grasp each other,
Enemies clasp each other,

Brothers find themselves,
Sisters bind themselves,
Bell is now ringing,
Star-circle singing.

[The outer circle of non-actors now passes through between Bell and Tongue in the following arrangement.]



ALL [in the processing circle, singing]: The Bell chimes out to us
The days and the hours;
The Sun points out to us
The years and the rounds.
Our heart is shaking,
Our breast is quaking;
Ah, we are to health restored,
Are words in the mouth of God,
Are tongues in His own ringing,
Syllables in His singing.

[During this procession and song the chiming of the Bell is melodiously inserted.]

BELL: Heart is now bell-sound,
Breath is all light,
Mother does Son embrace,
In her delight.
Ding, dong,
Lion and lamb,
Again resound
In brotherly round.
Ah, we are to health restored,
Are words in the mouth of God,
Are tongues in His own ringing,
Syllables in His singing.

[After the outer circle has closed again, JOHN goes to the Black Figure who has till then stayed alone outside the circle.]

JOHN: Your poison was distress,
Your sting was death.
Yet the Bell
Has upraised
What you into darkness
Had woven.
In its chime
The sombre brood of the sting
Turned into light.
Now step into this order
And be again my brother.

[JOHN leads the Black Figure into the rank of the Hunter, Shepherd, Farmer and Citizen.]

ALL [Bell, Tongue and Circle]:
Glorious sounds the Bell of Time,
And its song
In sunlight rises;
Our heart now lifts up
In delight,
Upward to the eternal Son.

Glorious sounds the Bell of Time,
And we follow
Its summoning call,
Going striding
Ever upwards,
Jubilating in our song.

And we clasp each other's hands
And we kindle
Fire of soul.
Powerful and
All-tremendous
Brands are lifted up on high.

Glorious sounds the Bell of Time.
Let the fire
Grow never cold,
Let our hearts
No age impair,
That light through all the Earth may shine.