

Death loves drinking and gambling: Macabre photos from Vaudeville play on the 'mortal perils' of alcohol

The modern obsession with binge-drinking and raucous partying has prompted various governments to issue public health warnings in recent years.

But these fascinating images from a 1900s Vaudeville play shows that this kind of advertising is nothing new.

The theatrical production, inspired by an old English ballad entitled 'Death and the Lady', warns against the mortal perils of drinking and gambling.



The perils of drink: Death enjoys a glass of red wine with the Lady who looks more than a little disturbed



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Beginning: At the start of the scene the Lady enjoys a drink with a gentleman friend as Death looks over them



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Death stare: The Lady looks daunted as Death abandons their card game and creeps up behind her

In the sequence Death appears to love quaffing red wine with the Lady as they indulge in a risqué game of cards.

But things take a turn for the worse after their flirtatious encounter and the Lady begins to look alarmed by Death as he surrounds her.

Vaudeville was a theatrical genre of entertainment popular in the United States and Canada from the early 1880s until the 1930s.



Flirting with death: The Lady leans over the card table and smiles at Death while putting her hand flirtatiously close to his arm



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Dancing with death: The Lady looks disorientated she clings on to her glass of wine and Death takes her hand

Each show was made up of popular and classical musicians, dancers, comedians, impersonators and one-act scenes from plays.

The Historical Ziegfeld Group, who provided these images, explains that: 'Touring performers were always searching for material that would play well in the sticks.

'Here Joseph Hall, the Brooklyn born photographer, captured the sequence of the action, providing a peculiarly detailed and rare view of the progress of a single Vaudeville performance.'



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Too late: The Lady looks afraid after her night of gambling and quaffing wine with Death



Terrifying: Death towers over the Lady as she sips her drink