F. ČEČNÝ

LIGHTING THAT CREATES THE SCENE AND LIGHTING AS AN ACTOR

In recent years theatre scholarship in response to stage practice has begun to devote its attention to the production of plays in which unusual lighting effects are employed. Contemporary Czech practice has proffered various experiments, more or less successful, one of which is well-known outside the country: the Laterna Magica, first seen at the World Exhibition in Brussels in 1958.

Theatre scholars are not yet able, I believe, to give a satisfactory answer to the question of the origins of this type of staging, a development facilitated by the modern technical explosion. It is a fact, however, that from the early years of the century there have been many attempts in different countries, first to create a setting by use of kinetic lighting, and when this was established to substitute lighting for the live actor. I believe the first major success in Europe to establish the so-called "light theatre" was achieved in the 1920 productions of Erwin Piscator, which made a synthesis of all that was known about stage lighting at that time.[1]

In this paper I am going to tell you about the work of two Czech lighting designers who made unusual advances in stage lighting techniques in Czechoslovakia during the 1930´s. I refer specifically to E. F. Burian and M. Kouřil and their Theatregraph, which was first introduced in Prague in 1936 in the production of Frank Wedekind´s *Spring´s Awakening*.

Emil František Burian (1904-1959)[2] was the most significant director in the Czech avant-garde theatre between the two wars. In the context of European theatre he belongs to the younger group of avant-garde directors along with Brecht, Ochlopkov, Cocteau, Artaud, Frejka, Stupica, and others, while Meierhold, Tairov, Vachtangov, Baty, and Schiller were members of the older group, their teachers. Burian´s work culminated in the thirties at a time when the German avant-garde theatre was decimated by Nazism, when the work of the Soviet theatrical avant-garde had declined as a result of administrative interference stemming from Stalin´s cultural policy, and when the opportunities for avant-garde theatrical production in many other countries were also considerably reduced. The cultural and political atmosphere in Czechoslovakia allowed its theatrical avant-garde at this time

[1] For the basic facts about the varied utilization of lighting, particularly in the German theatre, see F.KRANICH, *Bühnentechnik der Gegenwart II*, Munich - Berlin, 1933. See also S.SONTAG, *Film and Theatre*, Tulane Drama Review, II (No. 1, 1966). For Piscator´s experiments see E. PISCATOR, *Das politische Theater*, Berlin, 1929. The theoretical aspects of lighting in the modern theatre are dealt with by D. BABLET, *La lumière au théâtre*, Théâtre populaire, No. 38, 1960.

[2] OBST, M. - SCHERL, A., *K dějinám české divadelní avantgardy* (On the history of the Czech avant-garde theatre), *Jindřich Honzl - E. F. Burian*, Praha 1962; SCHERL, A., *E. F. Burian*, Berlin, 1966.

relatively more freedom than anywhere else in Central Europe to develop further the avant-garde heritage of the twenties, and thus to play a significant role in the history of the avant-garde theatre in Europe as a whole.

In 1933, E. F. Burian, an all-round musical and theatrical talent, established an avant-garde theatre in a small concert hall in the center of Prague - the Mozarteum. It caught on particularly among left-wing intellectuals and young people. Burian had been active in theatrical life since the mid-twenties, and had gathered around him young artists, dissatisfied, just as he was, with the ideational and artistic profile of the theatre of the time. Foremost among the designers with whom he worked was the architect Miroslav Kouřil (1911 - 1984) who became an outstanding theoretician of scenography after the Second World War. In 1957, M. Kouřil, with the close cooperation of architect Josef Svoboda, founded the Scenographic Laboratory, now known as the Scenographic Institute, which he still directs.

From 1933 to 1941, Burian worked out his idea of the theatre on a small concert platform, 6 by 4,5 meters, which provided him with an acting space no bigger than 32-34 square meters. If for any reason he needed more space on the stage, it had to be found at the expense of seats in the auditorium, of which there were a mere 383.[3] Burian´s theatre was a typical *théâtre pauvre*, very much like the European experimental theatres of today.

Burian was an advocate of "synthetic theatre," a concept which was theoretically elaborated by scholars of the Prague Structuralist School, primarily by Professor Jan Mukařovský.[4] According to this theory, which I can only outline briefly here, theatre is a synthesis of many arts. A stage performance is a structure composed of several elements - acting, music, setting, lighting, etc. - all of which have a certain relation to each other. It is not the sum of parts casually attached to each other, but all of the elements have a close mutual relation and these relations are constantly changing. The artistic and conceptual effect of a performance depends on the deliberate manipulation of the relations between the individual elements.

This theoretical principle, derived from avant-garde theatrical practice and reminiscent of it, was of prime significance for Burian´s creative work as a director. Indeed, characteristic of his work in the thirties was a subtle

[3] BURIAN, E. F. - KOUŘIL, M., *Dejte nám divadlo* (Give us Theatre), Praha 1939, pp. 5-6.

[4] J.MUKAŘOVKÝ´s theoretical studies on the theatre are to be found in his books *Kapitoly z české poetiky I* (Chapters on Czech poetics), Praha 1948 and *Studie z estetiky* (Studies in aesthetics), Praha 1966. A selection of Mukařovský´s articles was published in the GFR in 1967 (MUKAŘOVSKÝ, J., *Kapitel aus der Poetik*, Frankfurt am Main, 1967; *Kapitel aus der Aesthetik*, Frankfurt am M., 1970), in USA (see *A Prague School Reader on Aesthetics, Literary Form and Style*, Ed. P. L. Garwin, Washington, D. C., 1964; J. MUKAŘOVSKÝ, *Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value as Social Facts*, trans. M. E. Suino, Ann Arbor 1970), in Italy (see J.MUKAŘOVSKÝ, *La funzione, la norma e il valore estetico come fatt sociali, Semiologia e sociologia dell arte*, Torino 1971) etc. BURIAN´s basic articles on the theatre are to be found in his book *O nové divadlo* (The new theatre), Praha 1946. See also his article *O nový divadelní prostor* (The new space in the theatre), Stavba XIII, 1936, No. 5, and *Divadelní syntesa* (A theatrical synthesis), Život XV, 1937, No. 3-4.

interplay of changing relations between the elements of stage structure, or the substituting of one element for another. Thus, for example, he might temporarily substitute lighting or music for the actor, or the actor might serve as scenery, lighting as stage settings, etc. During this period the musical element has special significance in Burian´s productions, no doubt because of his own talent and education as a musician; lighting was equally important.

After his first experiments with lighting in the "synthetic theatre," Burian together with Kouřil proceeded to synthesize his own experience with that of foreign theatres in his use of the Theatregraph in his production of Wedekind´s *Spring´s Awakening*. He used the same principle in an improved form in his dramatization of Pushkin´s *Eugene Onegin* (1937). This discussion, however, will treat only the production of Wedekind´s play premiered on March 3, 1936.

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Typical of Burian´s repertoire were dramatizations of poetic and prose classics of Czech and world literature, dramatizations which he prepared himself, and therefore the staging of dramatic text was an exception for him. As was true of all his productions, Burian´s staging of Wedekind´s play reflected his ardent desire to help transform the world in the spirit of socialism. The production was an attack on a society which twists the physical and spiritual growth of young people. Burian wanted it to be "a voice crying out in times as terrible as those in which we are forced to live".[5]

For his production of *Spring´s Awakening* Burian adapted the text [6] in order to bring it closer to his avant-garde aesthetic conception and to his

[5] BURIAN, E. F., *Proč dáváme Wedekinda* (Why we are producing Wedekind). D 36, 1935-1936 season, Vol. 7.

[6] BURIAN's textual adaptation of Wedekind's *Spring's Awakening* would repay independent study. His alterations concerned mainly the composition of the play, transforming the original three-act play of short scenes into a two-part theatrical work. The first part, opening with Melchior Gabor and Morris Stiefel talking about the meaning of life (orig. Act I, Scene 2) and ending with Melchior's seduction of Wendla (orig. Act II, Scene 4) was devoted to the sexual maturing of the young characters, and was delicate and lyrical in mood. The second part, opening with Mrs. Gabor's letter (orig. Act II, Scene 5) and ending in the added scene in the reformatory where Melchior defends himself behind bars is mainly concerned with the stress situations experienced by young people, unable to find a solution. In this part the mood is satirical and critical.
The changes in the composition of the play, enabling greater concentration on the problems dealt with and adapting it to the director's personal touch, were achieved primarily by Burian's shifting of the order of the scenes and the addition of four short scenes of his own. He broke up some of Wedekind's scenes and omitted Jan Rilow's monologue (orig. Act II, Scene 3), the scene in the reformatory (orig. Act III, Scene 4), and the final scene in the cemetery (orig. Act III, Scene 7). Burian also omitted some passages in the text. The story of the headless queen was made into a six-verse ballad by the poet František Halas and set to music by Burian. Burian transferred some of the interior and city scenes to the open air and into natural settings to emphasize the unity of maturing in man and in nature more than Wedekind had done. The story of the young people now evolved primarily in the lap of nature, from early spring through late spring and summer to the autumn.
Burian reduced the number of characters by omitting inessential episodes (the porter Habebald, Pastor Kahlbauch, Uncle Probst, the locksmith, men and women in the vineyards). He also omitted the Man in the Hood because his adaptation of the final scene transformed it into a protest against the existing social order. The characters who appeared in the original reformatory scene were also dropped (fellow deliquents, Dr. Prokrustes).On the other hand, the film projections introduced a few new figures to the play.
Comparing Burian´s adaptation of Wedekind´s play with the changes he made in other plays he produced, we come to the conclusion that in this case they were not great; they merely tended to sharpen, according to the spirit of the day and the spirit of the modern theatre, those tendencies which were already present in Wedekind´s play.
The translation used for the production was that of F. V. KREJČÍ, published in Prague in 1923. Burian´s adaptation of the play and his director´s notes are preserved in the E. F. Burian Cabinet, National Literature Museum, Praha; title page: Frank WEDEKIND, *Spring´s Awakening*. A Tragedy of Youth. Dramatic version by E. F. BURIAN, T 1798, 90 pp. Partly MSS, mostly from the 1923 edition of Krejčí´s translation, with Reiner´s manuscript notes on the music on the odd pages, as well as detailed notes on the actors´"business" in the hand of L. SKRBKOVÁ, assistant producer. There are some notes in REINER's and SKRBKOVÁ's writing on the even pages too.

socialist philosophy. Wedekind´s literary style was not foreign to him, for although the play was written in the early 1890´s it strikingly foreshadowed the further development of playwriting and the theatre. The point that Burian tried to drive home in his production was that the whole of society is to blame for the tragedy of young people, whereas Wedekind saw the culprit in the educational system and in the morality of the petty bourgeois family. Burian´s alterations in the content are thus more decisive than those dictated by aesthetic considerations alone. On its contemporaries, the performance had the effect of a powerful, shocking protest.

For the staging of Wedekind´s play Burian and Kouřil used two low platforms and joined them by a footwalk on which stage props were occasionally placed - chairs, a lounge-chair, a bed - by actors or stagehands. The rear of the actual playing space was enclosed by a velvet drop made of two overlapping pieces so that the actors could appear imperceptibly out of the dark background. To the right, in front of the backdrop, was a narrow, semi-transparent screen on which slides could be projected from the wings on the left of the scene. Throughout the performance the playing space was cut off downstage by a large transparent screen framed in the same plane as the proscenium portal and measuring about 6 x 4 m. Slides or 16 mm films were projected onto this screen from the boxes above the heads of the audience. The screen was a transparent grey scrim stretched tight, giving an almost imperceptible haze to the scene, and offering a clear, though not bright, image when a slide or moving picture film was thrown onto it; the audience could thus follow both the image on the screen and the parallel action behind it. The lighting was arranged so as not to make the screen too solid by reflection of the light thrown onto it. The white or colored organdie which was commonly in use at that time was rejected because it was thicker and more "solid" in effect, and because it "gave living action the effect of

mystery, indeed unreality".[7] With the stage arranged in this way, spotlights, slides, and film projection could be used separately in various combinations or simultaneously.

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Let us turn first to the use of lighting to model the setting and the actor. From a technical point of view it was already characteristic of Burian to make the figures on the stage - or groups of figures - stand out by the use off the spotlight. We have pictorial evidence of this use of lighting. Often, however, and this is also true of *Spring's Awakening*, Burian used the spotlight to bring out more details of a figure or a group on the stage, making them stand out in the surrounding darkness when he wished to emphasize them. This allowed the actors to appear suddenly "out of the darkness" and enter directly into the action.

The scene as Burian created it by his use of spotlights was kinetic in the true sense of the word, a constantly changing scene of light, changing in color and intensity. It created a changing space within the abstract darkness, a space in which the kinetic performance of the actors took place. Together with the acting it helped to give spatial location to the two platforms joined by the footwalk.

In this stage production another no less important function of spotlights emerged: by the narrowing down of the field of light the figure on the stage was modelled with a definite aesthetic and conceptual aim in view. To put it another way, the lighting helped the actor to perfect the characterization or even the stylization of his part. The spotlight helped to emphasize the essential points in a given piece of acting, and to hide in the background what was not important. This hierarchy of importance was constantly changing. The lighting also helped to establish the scale of importance of the actors at a given moment in the action, and made it possible to change this hierarchy rapidly. At the same time, the light helped to stylize the characters, for a sensitive lighting technician like Jiří Mandaus,

[7] KOUŘIL, M., *Procitnutí jara, Kapitoly z automonografie* (Spring's Awakening. Chapters from an auto-monography), Acta scaenographica 8 - VI. On the principle of the Theatregraph see, by the same author. *Nový jevištní materiál*, D 36 1935-1936 season, Vol. 7; *Tvar a funkce* (Form and function), Stavba XIII, 1936, No. 5; *Dramatický prostor* (Dramatic space), Život XV, 1937, No. 3-4; *Divadlo a film* (The theatre and the cinema), Amatérská kinematografie, May 1936. See also KOUŘIL, M. - BURIAN, E. F., *Divadlo Práce, Studie divadelního prostoru* (The theatre of the Work, The essay about the stage space), Praha 1938, pp. 46, 51. For a more serious study of the Theatregraph see GROSSMAN, J., *25 let světelného divadla* (25 years of the light theatre). Acta scaenographica, Vol. 58, March 1961, 8 and 58 Vol., April 1961, 9; HILMERA, J., *Poetický princip v moderní české scénografii* (The poetic principle in modern czech scenography), Acta scaenographica 3 - VII; GILLAR, J., *Miroslav Kouřil a scenografie D 34 - D 41* (M. Kouřil and the scenography of the D 34 - D 41 theatre), thesis 1966, in the archives of the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University, Praha; GILLAR, J., *Theatregraph D 36 - D 41*, Divadlo 1967, March.

who worked with Burian, was able to help the actors round off their gestures. With lighting set in this way, and with the slides and film projection, the actor was made to respect composition and timing already fixed during rehearsals to a greater extent than ordinarily.

This manner of working with spotlights had a fundamental significance in Burian's conception of Wedekind's play. By picking out the figures of the actors, of specific details, spotlights effectively emphasized the feeling of isolation young people hold towards society, their feeling of being unsettled, of having a precarious position in the world and in life itself. Because the action took place behind the screen, audiences appeared to be seeing actors in a faint haze which corresponded with the way these young people experienced life.

Critics of that period confirm that the effect of the acting behind the transparent gauze screen was that of delicate, poetic images much like dreams. "The stage space becomes a space of airy sights and visions," wrote theatre critic Jindřich Vodák, "gradually emerging from mists and deep haze as though from drowned, spellbound distances."[8] Critic Irma Fischerová remarked that "the stage is constantly hidden behind a veil, placing it further off in imaginary spheres".[9] Others found that the "light veil of mist"[10] helped to make the action "less earthbound,"[11] so that the actors resembled "illuminated apparitions in a dreamy haze".[12] This effect was intensified, as we shall see, by the use of slides and film projection.

As a matter of fact, although this way of using lighting was not common at that time, it cannot be considered the invention of Burian and Kouřil. It becomes more interesting when we consider it in conjunction with the projection of slides and films. The image projected onto the front screen - and occasionally on the narrow, rear screen at the same time - means that both light phenomena are perceived simultaneously by the eye of the viewer, creating conceptual and aesthetic tension.

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Burian's adaptation of *Spring's Awakening*, which substituted natural exterior settings for some of Wedekind's interior and city scenes, opens in early spring with an evening scene by the water. This opening lyrical scene is created by a slide showing an old willow tree by the water projected onto the front screen. It creates a metaphorical background to the conversation

[8] jv (VODÁK, J.) *Wedekindovo Procitnutí jara v D 36* (Wedekind's Spring's Awekening in the D 36), České slovo, 6.III.1936.

[9] if (FISCHEROVÁ, I.) *Věčné žaly puberty* (The eternal sorrows of puberty), Národní osvobození, 5.III.1936.

[10] RUTTE, M., *Wedekind 36*, Národní listy, 5.III.1936.

[11] AMP (PÍŠA, A. M), *Wedekind v D 36* (Wedekind in the D 36), Právo lidu, 5.III.1936.

[12] A.V. (VESELÝ, A.), *Procitnutí jara* (Spring's Awakening), Pražské noviny, 4.III.1936.

between the two students, Morris Stiefel and Melchior Gabor, during which they compare their initial erotic experiences. A film shot of clouds was to be projected on the front screen. It is a pity that the photograph does not record any acting, but we are able to observe acting in the scene in the classroom, which was suggested first by a slide showing stuffed birds from the school museum and then by one showing dead butterflies. One of the greatest scenes in this production is the meeting of Melchior and Wendla in a flowering meadow, created by the projection of a picture of marguerites on the front screen. Melchior´s room was suggested by the projection of a window. The final scene in the reformatory, when Melchior is defending himself against the accusation of blame for Wendla´s death, was created by the projection on the front screen of bars made from a photograph of a cut glass plate. There are other slides which were used to set the scenes, but they are less pertinent to our discussion because they were not used in combination with the acting.

The use of slides to set the scenes made rapid transformations possible. The scene came slowly out of the darkness, or suddenly, and disappeared in the same way. In some scenes several slides were projected at once. All the slides used were black and white photographs of actual objects.[13] The use of color filtres was an exception for catkins, butterflies, a wild rose. The purpose served was not - and in this Burian and Kouřil were openly in dispute with Piscator - to create the stage setting in the accepted sense, replacing painted or architectonic scenery.[14] The aim was to create a metaphorical scene. The detail in question is always deliberately overexposed, many times larger than in real life, and has metaphorical validity. For the most part these metaphorical details are taken from nature. The selection reveals the influence of Surrealism and of Freud, which affected both Burian and Kouřil during this period.

The choice of natural details, typically Czech, helped to bring this German play closer to Czech audience - the willow tree, marguerites, and dogrose are very characteristic of the Czech countryside. These scenic metaphors heightened the lyrical mood of the production, a mood which was emphasized also by the actors through the musical aspect of speech. Music played an intricate and essential part in the whole performance, further heightening the lyricism. Spotlights picked out and plastically modelled actors in the dark, in defined areas of the stage.

The addition of slide projections placed the action in a given locale or environment, concretizing it, either for an entire scene or for only a few

[13] The photographs used for the slide-scene were the work of J. FUNKE, A. HACKENSCHMIED and F. KALISTA. The author of the slide of marguerites was Č. ZAHRADNÍČEK.

[14] "... The earlier treatment of film material merely illustrated a panorama (e.g. in the work of Piscator)." KOUŘIL, M. - BURIAN, E. F., *Divadlo práce, Studie divadelního prostoru*, Praha 1938, p.46.

moments of it. In certain cases it was possible for an actor to adopt an attitude toward a projected setting, as when Wendla, lying among the marguerites, appeared to be caressing them, or the unhappy Morris, seated on a chair in Melchoir´s room, faced the footlights as though looking out through the (projected) window, or when Melchior, in the final scene, tried to break the lightbars of his prison window.

The actor is of course constantly in some relationship, conceptual and aesthetic, to this projected scene. He is always an element in the image which is faintly projected, even onto his body, an element incomparably smaller than the detail being projected. This creates an unusual tension between the static detail and the dynamic whole, between the inversed dimensions of the two, and finally between the solidity of the whole and the shadowy quality of the detail, which is used in a complex way to affect the viewer both conceptually and aesthetically.

In their treatment of spotlights, and even more in their use of the slide-projector, the director and designer rejected the Renaissance and Baroque conception of perspective to which audiences were accustomed.[15] The treatment of detail, usually of metaphorical significance, which was influenced by film technique, enables the viewer to perceive the theatrical reality in a new, unmechanical, and creative way. The acting enters into an unusual relationship to the overexposed scenic detail and is thus "made strange"; the metaphorical setting enhances the significance of his stage action and at the same time heightens its aesthetic effectiveness.

Details from nature are always appropriate to the biological processes taking place in young people, and at the same time contrast with them, for the process of maturing in nature is harmonious, not painful; it is natural, so to speak, and of an entrancing beauty. On the other hand, in the short scene of a lesson in natural history which Burian added to the play, the slide-projected, visual metaphor is utilized to provide a satiric effect. As a teacher, Knochenbruch (Kostilam in the Czech text) is talking, lovely colored, dead butterflies from the school museum are projected onto the front screen. The projection of the stuffed birds from the museum, in another classroom scene, served a similar purpose.

It was not a new thing in the thirties to create a setting by means of spotlights and slide-projections.[16] Piscator had introduced the projection of

[15] "...Perspective also changes, deserting the painter´s perspective of the Renaissance and Baroque eras and creating a new perspective not by means of pictorial dimensions (e.g. projections) but by the means of the changing relation between the projected image and the living figure." KOUŘIL, M., *Studie I*, D 40, 1939-1940 season.

[16] The earliest evidence of the use of slides in the Czech theatre dates from the year 1900, when "optic images" presenting great moments of Czech history were projected during the last act of Smetana´s opera *Libuše*, accompanying Libuše´s prophecy, in the National Theatre production directed by E. Chvalkovský. The pictures were the work of M. ALEŠ. See the reproductions of these drawings in the book by V. HEPNER, *Scénická výprava na jevišti Národního divadla* (Stage setting in the National Theatre), Praha 1955. As far as we know, the slide projections

documentary photographs or drawings - for instance, those of Grosz - to set the scene. The original contribution of Burian and Kouřil was that of bringing the scene thus created into close relationship with that created by the spotlights. Unlike Piscator and the Soviet experimenters, Burian and Kouřil did not use projections to provide a documentary scene but to make a metaphorical one. In our view they succeeded in breaking up the perspective of the stage inherited by the twentieth century from Renaissance and Baroque cultures.

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The evolutionary contribution of Burian and Kouřil appears in all its originality only when we consider the use of film projections, the third element of the Theatregraph.[17]

Special shots taken during rehearsals of the play were used at several key points, and then projected onto the front screen (6 x 4 m) only. Unfortunately the film itself, about 120 m in length, has not been found yet (1969), and so we can study the use to which it was put only from the surviving photographic material, the director's notes, and reviews.

The film image used in the Theatergraph can be considered a kinetic film decor whenever actor's action is taking place on the screen. In several cases the film has an explicit space-forming function (e.g. a flowing torrent). Kinetic lighting decor created by spotlights, sometimes by slides, is multiplied by this film decor. But in most cases these film projections have a more complex meaning. The first shots, such as clouds and a torrent, projected at the very beginning of the production, can be considered both decor and metaphor of actors' action just proceeding it.

However, the film projection for the most part takes over the part of actors, especially in extremely important situations. In two cases the film takes up the actors' actions and carries on with them. The scene in the haybarn where Melchior seduces Wendla was presented in the form of a film projection; a close-up of Wendla's face covered the whole screen, followed by the boy's hand tearing at her dress, a momentary flash of the girl's breast, and then the whole screen was covered with lily buds, slowly

were used for the first time for scenic purposes by K. H. Hilar in the production of Krasinski's *The Profane Comedy* (1918) and Fischer's *Herakles* (1920) in the Municipal Theatre in Prague.

[17] For the basic facts about film projections in the Czech theatre before the Theatregraph, see J. KUČERA *Film na českém jevišti* (Films on the Czech stage), Život XV, 1937, No. 3 - 4. As J. Kučera introduces first occasion on which a film was projected onto the stage was in 1921, in the Municipal Theatre, Vinohrady, Prague, during a performance of Štolba's comedy *Crime in a Mountain Inn*, produced by F. Hlavatý. The film image served as scenery. As a matter of fact, film in the Czech theatre - in small theatres in Prague - was used for theatrical purposes in the first decade of the 20th century. I. POPELKA, *Filmové prvenství Bohuslava Martinů* (B. Martinů's pioneer work), Acta scenographica VII - IX, deals with the attempts of Bohuslav Martinů at the end of the twenties to make use of film projection in opera.

opening to full beauty.[18] The death of Wendla was expressed in large scale detail with a rose bloom slowly falling. In addition, a red-colored slide of dog-rose was projected onto the front screen, increasing the excitement of the moment, and at the same time a slide of delicate lace was used for projection onto the back screen.

Furthermore, on two occasions the film image took the place of the actors, while they spoke their lines into a microphone in the wings. The first occurred in the added scene, during which Morris Stiefel learns by degrees from Professor Sonnenstich that he has failed in three subjects. The voice of the Professor in the loudspeaker says: "Morris Stiefel, you have failed in Latin - mathematics - physics!" Each of the three last words was accompanied by a shot of the same angry teacher's face.[19] First, the profile is seen on the left, then the half-profile on the right, and finally there slowly appears between them a close-ups of the angry teacher, full face. In the second instance, close-ups of the faces of the main protagonists accompanied the words of the accusations made against them which were hurled at the audience - at the whole of society. Shots of the boys' and girls' hands are also projected. The text for this added montage was inserted into the scene between the Gabor parents and was therefore particularly effective:

It was your crime!
You are guilty!
You and your principles, your laws, your prejudices!
You and only you are guilty!
You!
Do you hear?
You! [20]

In another instance the film projection accompanied the actor antithetically. In Wendla's death scene, which Burian opens with Wendla's short monologue in the blossoming garden, taken from Wedekind's Act II, Scene 6, the actress lay on her deathbed, and her monologue was heard in the context of a film projection showing Wendla, happy, strewn with flowers.

[18] A description of this film technique is given in an unsigned article entitled *Frühlings Erwachen ganz anders*, in the paper Die Stunde (Wien), 7.III.1936. See also V. TILLE: *Divadelní měsíc* (The month in the theatre), Literární noviny VIII, 1936, No. 13. Other details are from Č. Zahradníček.

[19] ZAHRADNÍČEK, Č., *Technické triky v Oněginu, Aneb člověk míní, redaktor mění...* (Technical tricks in Onegin, or: Man proposes, the editor disposes), Amatérská kinematografie II, 1937, No. 3.

[20] Quoted from BURIAN's adaptation of Wedekind's *Spring's Awakening*, p. 81.

Film projections on occasion also took the place of characters who were not enacted. The death scene at the end of the play, for example, ended with a shot of a door handle grasped by the fat hand of the midwife whose arrival had been foreshadowed by one sentence in the dialogue.[21] A host of hands were shown pointing at Morris in ridicule. One of the last shots showed a hand tearing the inscription from Wendla's grave, while below it were the terse figures of deaths from abortion among young girls.

At other moments the use of film recalls offstage characters who are being discussed on the stage of one to whom the thoughs of the characters - and of the audience - are turning. This occurs in the scene where the parents of Melchior Gabor are talking about Wendla. Her face on the screen came closer and closer until only the accusing eyes were seen. At the conclusion of the production, this shot of Wendla's eyes faded into a slide projection giving the number of the Czechoslovakian anti-abortion law - 144.

As is evident, Burian and Kouřil used film projection in many varied ways. The projection was a part of the scenery when projected during action of the actors on the stage. In the opening scenes it had the task of helping to create the scenery. In the second part of the production it became primarily a dramatic factor. It took over and consummated action of the actors and accompanied their oral performance. In one case it objectified the theme of a dialogue proceeding on the stage between two dramatic characters.

Film technique was used as a medium of dramatic art. As Kouřil rightly pointed out, the performance would remain intelligible even if, for some reason, such as a technical hitch, the film did not appear.[22] The film was given a dramatic function which neither disturbed nor weakended the theatrical character of the performance. The film itself had no meaning, although it might have aesthetic value, but it acquired meaning in the context of the performance as a whole. Without the acting the film would have had no significant meaning.

The film projections (made by Čeněk Zahradníček, 1900-1989),[23] like the slide projections, also functioned as poetic metaphors created from overexposed realistic details. They were shots of human bodies in the neutral context of the stage. Josef Gregor has calculated that the figures on the screen were five times life-size.[24]

[21] "... projected the image of the door-handle and the fat hand of the midwife who, pompous and common, is the dividing line between the life and death of little Wendla." V. R. (R. VACKOVÁ) *Tragická symfonie mládí* (A tragic symphony of youth), Národní střed, 5.III.1936.

[22] KOUŘIL, M., *Světelné divadlo - móda či nutnost ?* (The light theatre - fashion or necessity?), Film a divadlo, VIII, 1964, No. 6.

[23] "The film composition is the work of the producer E. F. Burian and Č. Zahradníček." KOUŘIL, M., *Divadlo a film*, Amatérská kinematografie, May 1936.

[24] GREGOR, J., *Die Entstehung eines neuen Theaterstils*, Der Sonntag, Beilag des Wiener Tag, N. 130, September 1936.

In Burian's production of *Spring's Awakening* the action was carried primarily by the actors, and at certain moments by the film projection. Unlike the actors, whom the audience perceived as whole entities even if the spotlights emphasized only certain details, the acting projected by the film was perceived only in details. This film-acting enabled the audience to see the performance both in the traditional way of the theatre as a whole, and in the way of the cinema - in detail. The viewer had the unusual opportunity of combining two methods of perception in the course of one stage performance. The film projection enabled him to see the acting from angles and in dimensions impossible in the usual proscenium theatre, and therefore deepened and intensified his experience of the acting.

The treatment of light, which we have been discussing, played a significant part in determining the rhythm of the production. The alternation of film and straight acting was not regular: in the first part of the play the acting predominated and the film took over at one or two points only, actually only at the end; in the second part the two alternated more frequently, at shorter and shorter intervals, until, in the concluding scenes, the intervals were very short indeed. Thus, the film projections helped to rhythmize - and thereby to dramatize - the crisis, the peripetia, and the catastrophe. The rhythmization of the evening was also helped by the music, arranged by Karel Reiner from the works of Ravel, Debussy, Milhaud, Beethoven, and Scriabin. The outcome was a performance that achieved its ideational and aesthetic objective by a very calculated, sophisticated attack upon the spectator.

The best appreciation of the general impression created by the use of this Theatregraph came from the theatre critic Karel Engelmüller:

> The rapid succession of images and settings, together with the use of light to model the characters on the stage, and with the accompaniment of subdued music, accomplish true wonders here. The action seems to go on in a vision of budding, pulsing, blossoming spring, in waves of blossom, through the apparition of accusing, terrifying eyes and faces, in an alternation of light and darkness, out of which scenes and images emerge one by one.[25]

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Burian's and Kouřil's production of Wedekind's *Spring's Awakening* arose extraordinary interest among Czech and foreign critics. Such treatment of lighting was then considered an innovation.

The contribution of Burian's and Kouřil's Theatregraph did not consist of making the use of slides and film projection in one production. Likewise, it did not consist of using the light (film) in the function of an

[25] ENGELMÜLLER, K., *Divadlo D-36 v Mozarteu, Procitnutí jara* (The D 36 theatre in the Mozarteum, Spring's Awakening), Národní politika, 5.III.1936.

actor. All this was already being used in the experimental productions of Erwin Piscator and other directors in the 1920's. The contribution of both artists can first of all be seen in the organic exploitation of all kinds of lighting in a theatrical production. In the case of film projection the Theatregraph succeeded in taking full advantage of cinematic techniques as a pure theatrical medium. Thus, the specifics of film were used for theatrical aims. The film in Theatregraph does not stick out as an autonomous and somehow incongruous element of the production, but becomes an organic part of the theatrical structure. All the uses of stage lighting - spotlights, slides, and film - were linked together, brought into complex and flexible relationship, contributing, together with other elements of production, to the expression of the director's ideal and artistic goals. Burian's and Kouřil's project also contributed to the application of single lighting elements. The metaphoric scenery using slides and the kinetic film scenery was a step forward, compared with the lighting documentary, basically illusionistic, of Piscator's scenery.

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As we have already noted, the Theatregraph was used in two productions staged by Burian in his D theatre, productions in which he attempted to develop the principle. In *Eugen Onegin* he used a much larger number of screens, a procedure which can be considered the forerunner of the Polyecran developed by Josef Svoboda and Emil Radok (1958). He also increased the part played by film projections. The director and designer of the Theatregraph, however, were too experimentally minded to stop there. They probably also realized that they had gradually exhausted all the possibilities of the "light theatre" at the stage of technical development then obtaining. Nor should we forget that work with film was not cheap. The increased part played by the element of film also began to threaten the specifically theatrical character of production.

The principles of the Theatregraph were taken up again in the fifties, at a much more advanced technical level, by Josef Svoboda and Alfréd Radok in the Laterna Magica (1958)[26] and by Svoboda and Emil Radok in the Polyecran (1958). Neither of these two forms, however, although they grew out of the theatre and take account of the theatrical element, are really theatre in the true sense of the word.

The Czech theatre soon took advantage of the possibilities discovered by Burian and Kouřil in their experiments. Thanks to the Theatregraph, projection as a theatre technique soon became firmly accepted. Josef Svoboda (b. 1920) used projection techniques to set the scene in Radok's

[26] For the Laterna Magica see e.g. the article of that title in the *Tulane Drama Review* 1966, Vol. 11. No. 1, (T33).

production of Šamberk's farce *The Eleventh Commandment* (1950), and his stage setting for the Vienna (1968) production of Topol's *End of the Carnival*, directed by Krejča, made use of slide-projections. Nor did the realization that the film can take the actor's place fall into oblivion. Recently, for instance, Svoboda made use of this principle in his setting of Radok's production of Gorki's *The Last Ones* (1966), and he used the principle of Polyecran in the production of Topol's *Their Day* (1959). The designer Antonín Vorel (b. 1920) even used the Polyecran principle for Pásek's production of Wedekind's *Spring's Awakening* in Brno in 1968. The use of spotlights to built up the setting, which is common theatrical practice in Czechoslovakia, is also a legacy of Burian's and Kouřil's pioneer work in the thirties.

Innovations in Stage and Theatre Design, New York 1972, p.126-145