

create what might be seen as multiple possible worlds, as what seem to be the dreams and fantasies of the performers intersect with their onstage behaviour in a way that undercuts attempts to draw clear distinctions between the material and immaterial, the real and the virtual. Chapter 9 surveys some of the prolific output of Canadian director/performer Robert Lepage, renowned (and sometimes excoriated) for his eclectic use of video and enthusiasm for technical wizardry, which turns the stage into a magic-box of tricks. While sometimes video functions as primarily another tool in the box, it will be seen that certain underlying themes around displacement and transformation often inform the way in which he deploys video and other technologies.

Rather than being structured around such case-studies, this book might have been structured around a series of issues or topics, with illustrations taken from a wider range of examples. I have taken the present route partly because of my experiences teaching this area. I have found my students more interested in exploring the close development of complete productions and seeing how broader critical and theoretical questions inform their understanding of them, rather than primarily theoretical discussion based on 'cherry-picking' brief illustrative moments from diverse work, usually taken out of context and aimed at buttressing an author's theoretical stance. My hope is that through exploring the diverse paths taken by this range of practitioners a greater understanding of different strategies and purposes for working with film and video in theatre will emerge, along with some sense of the key critical issues. Given that there has been little detailed documentation of much of the work, and given that the dramaturgy of the sort of intermedial work on which I mostly focus involves complex interactions between performance, text, scenography and recorded material, the individual case-studies include quite descriptive analyses. These can never, of course, reconstitute the experience of watching the performances, nor do they attempt this. It is hoped, however, that they convey a sufficient sense of the overall productions to gain some fruitful insights into how film or video functions in them, and that these will feed into a more differentiated understanding of the potential range of ways in which these may be employed in theatre more generally.

1 Magic to Realism: European Pioneers

Discussions of the use of film in theatre generally begin with German director Erwin Piscator's politically inspired experiments from the mid-1920s onwards. Closer investigation reveals, however, that within a decade of the Lumière brothers exhibiting the first films in Paris in 1895, theatre practitioners were employing film. This chapter will initially illustrate how experiments that pre-dated Piscator established certain lines of subsequent development, often anticipating tropes which re-emerge in more recent work; we will see how the arguments of an early evangelist for such work, the German stage historian Franz Kranich, anticipate later practitioners. We will then explore how Piscator built on the earlier experiments, and in particular, how the Marxist dialectics that informed his political beliefs lay behind the dialectic he set up between stage and screen, leading to a more dynamic interaction than seen previously.

Georges Méliès

Before the appearance of purpose-built cinemas, films were often shown in music-halls and vaudeville theatres, in mixed programmes that also included comedy turns, magic demonstrations, songs and dances. As films began to treat fictional scenarios rather than documenting real-life events, many key figures in cinema's early development emerged from popular theatre. It is not surprising then that the earliest example I have found of a film specifically created for use in a theatrical production was produced in 1904 by Georges Méliès, a pioneer of cinema, who began making films while running a theatre of illusions and spectacle, the Théâtre Robert-Houdin.¹ Having exhibited

his early fantasy films in his theatre since 1896, Méliès was commissioned by the Folies-Bergère to make a film for one of its revues. Ten minutes long, it was subsequently released for cinematic showing, with the title *Le Raid Paris-Monte Carlo en Deux Heures*.

The film employed the cast of the Folies-Bergère in a spectacular comic 'road movie', featuring a character based on Leopold II of Belgium, who was notorious for his love of fast cars and women, as well as his penchant for accidents. As the king sets off for Monte Carlo, his car backs over a policeman, flattening him. While the car carries on, the bystanders reinflate the policeman with bicycle pumps – until he explodes. Arriving at the Paris Opéra, the king is met by a crowd including the famous music-hall performer Little Titch. Speeding through the countryside, he causes general mayhem – knocking a postman off his bike, spread-eagling market-traders and their wares, crashing over a cliff and so on, until he finally makes a grand entrance into Monte Carlo. The film is the ancestor of many a comic car journey in subsequent movies.

Although there was continuity of sorts between the performers on film and the stage cast, the film's placement in a revue suggests it probably operated as an independent episode, as opposed to being more closely interwoven with an onstage narrative. Nevertheless, already it illustrates certain motifs that recur in subsequent discussion of the use of film in theatre. An argument quickly emerged for film's capacity to expand theatre's range both spatially and temporally. In the 19th century spectacular theatre an episode such as this as could have been staged, albeit in limited fashion, using a diorama and illusionist acts. Film, even one mostly shot with a fixed camera in a studio with painted backdrops, could transport the spectators more smoothly through a range of landscapes, with editing allowing easy movement from one elaborate crowd scene to another. Moreover, it enabled 'trick' sequences such as the inflation of the flattened policeman or various crashes and explosions to function more seamlessly. Film also more easily compressed the events of the trip into a ten-minute sequence. The idea of driving from Paris to Monte Carlo in two hours was a fantastic *reductio ad absurdum* of the king's passion for speed, and its compression into a ten-minute film underlined the hectic pace even further. The sequence also married two of the latest technologies, which were still sources of fascination for popular audiences: film and the car. Incorporating an episode such as this, the Folies-Bergère was advertising itself as up to date for its popular audience. We will see this urge to reflect the 'contemporary' recurring frequently as motive or

justification amongst later practitioners – from Erwin Piscator in the 1920s, through Josef Svoboda in the 1950s, to Marianne Weems and Robert Lepage in the 1990s.

In 1905, Méliès also created a film for *The Pills of the Devil*, a production at the Châtelet Theatre, the theatre for which Jules Verne wrote *Around the World in 80 Days*. It was famous for its *féeries*, fantastic panto-style performances.² Much of their attraction lay in the spectacular settings and scenes of transformation and illusion, for which Méliès had previously provided various magic tricks and special effects. *The Pills of the Devil* centred on a Faustian plot that included plentiful comic fantasy scenes featuring a trickster Mephisto who leads his modern Faust, an English scientist named William Crackford, a merry dance. Its twenty scene changes, fifty special effects and countless trick costumes epitomised the house-style.

Méliès created another fantastic journey film to be inserted into this phantasmagoria. A devilish coachman driving an elaborate coach drawn by a skeletal white horse carries Crackford up Mount Vesuvius, from where they are blasted into orbit. They gallop through the heavens, passing stars, comets, the Sun, the Moon, and the planet Saturn (with a little man popping out of it), until they finally run out of heavenly road and take a headlong plunge down to Hell. Coach, horse, and passengers spin vertiginously downwards, although Crackford shows great aplomb in using his umbrella as a parachute.³ Onstage, Crackford proceeded to sup with the Devil, before being taken off to be roasted. Méliès himself went on to develop this brief insert into a fuller, fifteen-minute treatment of the whole story, distributed under the title *The Merry Frolics of Satan*.⁴

Although it is not recorded exactly how the transition from the end of the film into the subsequent scene was achieved, the production probably provided an early example of a practice seen a few years later in Germany and frequently in subsequent work, whereby a filmic figure emerges on stage as if he has just walked out of the film into the 'live' world.⁵ We might imagine Crackford walking on folding up the umbrella that softened his (filmed) landing. Even today, with sophisticated audiences long inoculated against the 'magic' of cinema, there is often a comic frisson at such moments of crossing from one world into the other, moments that seem to defy both spatial and temporal logic. There is something of the 'uncanny' in such transitions from the world of film into the 'live' world, as they draw attention to the virtual nature of the cinematic image and the performers who populate the screen, reminding us of the alchemical transformation which lies at the

heart of cinema. With Méliès' background in magic theatre and his frequent use of routines of transformation, disappearance and re-appearance, he is unlikely to have passed up the opportunity to play magically with such a transitional moment.

Méliès himself played Satan – many of his films featured him playing Satan as a trickster figure, often in versions of the Faust legend. With analogies between devilry and magic well established in the popular imagination, Méliès seems to have extended the links to film itself – figuring film's capacity to capture images, destroy and recreate characters, and make them disappear or transform, as something diabolically magical. It is noteworthy that several present-day practitioners, including Elizabeth LeCompte, Marianne Weems and Robert Lepage, have also turned to the Faust legend and that they and Forkbeard Fantasy reference Méliès in their work.

Although these are the only recorded examples of Méliès creating film specifically for theatrical productions, his significance in the development of film techniques and the way he has been located in film criticism invite further consideration here, because of the light they shed on later uses of film and video in theatre and the debates surrounding them. Many fundamental techniques of film-making and editing derive ultimately from Méliès' early experiments, including:

- substitution splicing, whereby one image is seamlessly replaced by another;
- multiple exposure for dissolves between different images;
- matte shots, which allow different shots to exist side by side within the frame – as, for example, in *Le Portrait*, when Méliès filmed himself in conversation with a talking portrait of himself;
- model shots – filming miniature model sets as background to action which is then superimposed upon them.

As Elizabeth Ezra (2000) has demonstrated, Méliès also developed an approach to inserts that anticipates later developments. She illustrates his use of

- subjective inserts – images seen in dreams or hallucinations;
- explanatory inserts, as in close-ups of an object or person to underline their importance;
- displaced digetic inserts – scenes from another time or place.

Although such techniques have been almost naturalised in dominant film practices, many were developed initially as part of the toolkit Méliès used for transferring the magic he practised in theatre into film. In the present context, we might observe that in the work of later theatre practitioners who use film or video, the relationship between recorded material and theatrical action might often be described in such ways. Film or video inserts allow spectators access to a character's subjective view of the action, or serve to underline a character's responses through the use of close-up, or depict action from elsewhere or another time. At the level of 'shots', we will also see film or video being used to provide multiple images of characters, to allow characters to talk to images of themselves, and so on.

Within cinema history Méliès was often portrayed as some sort of primitive, whose work was too theatrical, too wedded to tricks and spectacle to be of interest to theorists and historians of classic narrative cinema. More recently, however, the tendency to view earlier film from the perspective of classic narrative cinema, assuming a sort of teleological shift from the 'primitive' to a more 'proper' form of cinema, has been criticised and Méliès has been reassessed. Tom Gunning argues that he should be viewed in the light of a 'cinema of attractions' tradition, adopting the phrase from Eisenstein, who originally developed the idea of a 'theatre of attractions'. Gunning highlights the work's 'fascination in the thrill of display rather than the construction of a story', arguing that what narrative content there is functions 'as a kind of frame for the film's true subject: the process of appearance, disappearance, transformation and reappearance' (Elsaesser, 1990, 100). Suggesting that there is more of a balance between narration and spectacle in Méliès, Ezra argues that 'several of his films highlight the illusory nature of the realist aesthetic of mimesis'. Drawing on Jean Mitry's view that 'the real is nothing other than a form of the fantastic to which we have become accustomed', Ezra contends that consideration of Méliès highlights the misleading nature of the conventional opposition between fantasy and documentary, fiction and fact, spectacle and narration (Ezra, 2000, 4).

As we begin to trace the history of how recorded media have been used in theatre, the relevance of this debate over a theatre practitioner who became a pioneer of cinema and was perhaps the first to incorporate film into theatrical production will become clear. Much of the negative reaction to what might be seen as a 'theatre of attractions' approach in some of the work under consideration parallels certain

cinema historians' reservations about a 'cinema of attractions'. Paradoxically, the cinema historians' suspicion of the 'theatricality' of Méliès' work finds a perverse echo in critical writing about multimedial and intermedial theatre that finds too much 'spectacle' and variation of focus in it, an attitude behind which one senses a preference for the clarity of classic narratives that also informs the dominant tradition of film history. Moreover, just as earlier critical treatment of Méliès was concerned with patrolling the borders of film and distinguishing it from theatre, so some writers on theatre desire to patrol its borders and repel suspected incursions from recorded media. In contrast, others argue that the play with appearance and disappearance in much contemporary multimedia and intermedial work and the mixing of genre influences challenges assumptions about, and the privileging of, a realist aesthetic in much discussion of theatre.

Early experiments

The tendency to portray Piscator as the inventor of the use of film in theatre owes much to his own 1929 book *The Political Theatre*, which documents powerfully the struggles he endured while developing a theatre that was as provocative politically as it was aesthetically. While Piscator did indeed employ film in more challenging ways, his often self-justifying account effectively ignores German precursors and contemporaries whose work he must have known. Before discussing Piscator, it will be worthwhile to take note of these and other examples elsewhere in Europe.

Much of the evidence for German precursors appears in a less well-known study whose first volume was published in the same year as Piscator's book. Franz Kranich's *Bühnetechnik der Gegenwart* (*Contemporary Theatre Technology*), an exhaustively detailed two-volume treatise, drew primarily on practices in German theatres, which at the time led the world in equipment and technological experiment. Noting that fifteen German theatres were already fitted with projection facilities, Kranich makes considerable reference to productions throughout Germany that employed film. In Volume II (1933) Kranich writes with apostolic zeal about film's theatrical potential, often espousing approaches seen as innovative when they were adopted by practitioners of the 1980s and 1990s. He argues that modern spectators, accustomed to the speed of cars and planes and the rapid changes of scene in films, no longer have patience for the long

scene-changes associated with 19th-century theatre (1933, 127). Anticipating William Dudley's argument seventy years later, he suggests such changes of location could now be achieved using film, without awkward breaks in the dramatic illusion. He also argues that film could provide new ways of depicting onstage characters.

While Kranich draws mostly on work from the 1920s, he also mentions some earlier experiments. One has clear parallels with Méliès. At the Hamburg Operetta Theatre in 1911, the revue *Round the Alster* began with a film showing the arrival of Neptune at the docks in a submarine, followed by footage of the two main characters fleeing through the streets of Hamburg up to the theatre's entrance. As the film faded out, the two performers burst out of the orchestra pit onto the stage, followed by their pursuers (*ibid.*, 132). The submarine's appearance parallels that of the car in *The Adventurous Automobile Trip* as a technology that was still excitingly new for spectators.⁶ As with Méliès, film also shows characters travelling through familiar places, reflecting the element of thrill early filmgoers felt at just seeing somewhere familiar captured on screen. More particularly, the film here extends the offstage space of the stage: where the proscenium normally operates as a border to delimit the world of the play and the rest is left to the spectator to imagine, this device links the real world of the theatre's particular location with the supposedly fictional world of the stage.

Another early use for film was to cover scene changes. For example, in 1911 in a production at the Posen City Theatre, film depicted a performer climbing out of a window at the end of a scene and followed him off into further action while the set was being changed – again, film extends the fictional space beyond the space of the stage (*ibid.*, 151).⁷ Kranich suggests such use of film is particularly appropriate to revues, operetta, farces, and Christmas plays.

Kranich also describes early scenographic use of film in a 1913 production of Hoffmann's opera *Undine* in Stuttgart: film of waves was used in one scene and film of a waterfall in another (*ibid.*, 132 and 313). He notes that this was already-existing film, rather than footage especially shot for the performance. Such usage was a logical development from 19th-century dioramas and the use of continuous slide projections described in André Antoine's account of a Saxe-Meiningen production in 1888: 'After an extraordinary torrential rain, obtained by means of projections, I was disturbed to see the water stop abruptly, instead of letting up slowly' (Nagler, 1952, 582). The scenographic use of film to depict waves, clouds, landscapes, flights, and

railway trains was taken further in subsequent years at State Opera theatres in Dresden and Berlin, then elsewhere. In most instances these were probably 'actuality' filmstrips that could be readily purchased in the early days of film.⁸

Discussing productions from the 1920s for which film was especially shot, Kranich begins with what in fact was a 'fake' use of film – in Georg Kaiser's *Side by Side*, produced in Berlin in 1923. A central character was a sleazy would-be filmmaker. To set the atmosphere, the curtains opened onto projections of credit titles, along with a list of Kaiser's plays. For subsequent scenes location titles were projected, accompanied by flickering light produced by running a blank film through a projector, so that the titles appeared to be projected film. A 1928 production of Ludwig Fuldas' *Filmromantik* in Hanover echoed this, but used real film to show title credits as the curtains opened – a device subsequently used by Robert Lepage, for productions such as *Elsinore* (1994) and *La Casa Azul* (2003).

Kranich praises a Stuttgart production of Busoni's *Doctor Faustus* because 'for the first time a film was made the timing of which was tied exactly into the music' (1933, 132). Although it probably depicted some of Faust's visions, frustratingly, Kranich provides no details of the film used; but he does describe the attempt made to integrate the film and its projection into the overall design, so that it had the effect of a vision rather than a piece of film. The projection screen was covered with a gold wash and then a thin scrim placed in front of it; the filmstrip itself was tinted with brown and yellow; and the window of the projection box was given a yellow wash. (We should remember that film was generally in black and white, although a certain amount of colouring by hand might be done.) Additionally, clouds were projected onto the scrim, to blur the figures so that they would not seem too unrealistic.

After noting other operas that employed film, Kranich enthuses about the marvellous opportunities for the opera director, making detailed proposals for employing film in Wagner. He discusses its potential for spectacular scenes such as the storm in *The Flying Dutchman*, arguing that film could provide the answer for smaller theatres lacking the funds and technology demanded by 19th-century approaches to spectacle. He suggests film also provides an economical way for such theatres to present sequences requiring a large cast.⁹ He also asserts that film provides a more artistic solution for scenes that place unusual demands on live singers – such as when the Rhinemaidens are seen swimming in *Rheingold*. He suggests that singers should

deliver their songs standing in the wings, while film depicts their action.

Kranich adopts a fairly pragmatic approach to how film might enhance the spectacle in opera and in popular forms such as revue and farce. He shows little interest in the sort of ideological potential Piscator was exploring contemporaneously and his domination by a realistic aesthetic leads him to have reservations about its use in mainstream drama. Addressing technical issues to do with lighting, the size and nature of the screen, and the use of sound, he claims the mythic scope of opera can accommodate more effectively the merging of the filmic and stage worlds. Although he acknowledges the powerful montage effects sought by Piscator, Kranich is much concerned with disguising the rectangular nature of the screen and with ensuring that there is not too sharp a contrast in lighting when film appears – since this draws attention to the fact that film is being used. Blurring of the incorporation of film into productions is more achievable with the more painterly settings of opera, with their air of fantasy. For all that Kranich initially espouses the greater 'realism' film lends to scenery and spectacular moments, there is then, paradoxically, still an underlying concern that its introduction in more realistic dramatic productions may seem disruptive, and that the 'filmness' of film needs to be disguised.

Before examining Piscator's work, mention should be made of other key productions during this period in Paris, Berlin and Moscow. The first is surprisingly not mentioned by Kranich: Yvan Goll's surreal *Methusalem*, which premiered in Berlin in 1922.¹⁰ This satire of bourgeois life, in the style of Alfred Jarry's Ubu plays, is a rare early example of a text that includes instructions for the use of fantastic film sequences. Although the film for its German production has not survived, some remarkable footage shot by Jean Painlevé for its 1927 Paris production has, and my discussion will focus on this production.¹¹ Mostly known for his startling natural history films, Painlevé was an associate of the Surrealists and included Antonin Artaud in his cast for the *Methusalem* film, which consists of five separate sequences.

Goll's play begins with a domestic scene establishing the shoemaker manufacturer Methusalem and his wife as a Pa and Ma Ubu couple; they are grotesquely fat, with the cigar-smoking Methusalem wearing bandages over a gouty leg and his wife Amalia wearing a filthy apron over a silk dress, along with strings of diamonds. Following an absurd exchange of banalities that anticipates the beginning of Ionesco's *The Bald Prima Donna* 30 years later, Methusalem falls asleep and dreams. The window of the house becomes a screen for the

first film-clip, a subjective insert. Here Painlevé's film diverges from Goll's directions. Goll suggests a film of Methusalem picking up a woman in the street and taking her to a restaurant. As they dine, the woman's identity changes constantly – to his cook, a prostitute, the wife of a business associate, and so on. When Methusalem addresses them, a text-bubble should appear with the words, 'Oh my darling, no matter who, Be to me faithful, be to me true, Always wear a Methusalem shoe' (Goll, 1980, 83).

Such a sequence combining Methusalem's erotic and capitalist fantasies would have been ideal for some substitution splicing shots in the style of Méliès (whom the Surrealists greatly admired). Instead, Painlevé's film focuses more on Methusalem's business dreams, in the process locating the production securely in Paris. Initially, Methusalem's corpulent belly is shown turning into a crudely constructed globe, around which one of his shoes flies. His name then appears in bright lights on a series of Parisian landmarks, including the Stock Exchange, the Eiffel Tower, and the Théâtre National Populaire. A Surrealist in-joke appears at this point, as a placard appears on the theatre door: 'RELÂCHE pour dernières répétitions de Hamlet'. While the meaning – Closed for dress rehearsals of *Hamlet* – links the scene forward to the next sequence, the capitalised RELÂCHE will have recalled the Surrealists' infamous 1924 multimedia performance that jokingly bore the name RELÂCHE.

The next dream sequence begins with Josephine Baker's understudy at the Moulin Rouge (as the title proudly announces) energetically dancing the Blackbottom on top of Yorick's grave. Thereafter, Painlevé adheres more closely to Goll's directions, as Methusalem barges in on a rehearsal, grabs Yorick's skull and replaces it with a Methusalem shoe and takes over as director. Following this, Methusalem plays a general briefing his officers. The three officers (including Artaud) are farcical figures with fake moustaches, while Methusalem waves about a floppy rubber sword.

As Methusalem wakes from his dream, he 'snorts, groans, wriggles about restlessly' (ibid., 84). Subsequent scenes include one in which stuffed animals stage a revolution against human rule, and scenes introducing Methusalem's thrusting young businessman son Felix (who has a copper megaphone mouth, a telephone receiver nose and a typewriter hat), his dreamy ninny of a daughter and her revolutionary student lover. When Felix discovers the student has impregnated his sister he challenges him to a farcical duel, which is interrupted by the next film sequence, of a funeral, again shown through the 'window'.

The coffin is carried on Painlevé's own Bugatti, while the cavernous-eyed Artaud plays the bishop leading the mourning procession with exaggerated piety. The mourners follow behind pushing scooters, until the procession collapses in disorder as the chief mourners begin brawling. Although the film appears on the window/screen, there is no attempt at a *trompe l'œil* approach – presenting it as though the activities were just being seen through the window. The change of location and shifts of point of view of the action make it clearly an extradiegetic insert, just like the subsequent wedding scene.

As the film ends, Felix and the student begin insulting each other again, only to be interrupted by a further film sequence, this time of a wedding procession of bourgeois citizens prancing along in the style of the Monty Python School of Silly Walks. Again, a supposedly solemn event is undermined by a brawl. The play resumes with the duel once more, resulting in Felix killing the student and the latter's soul flying up to heaven in the shape of an overcoat – before the student himself jumps up and tips his hat and departs! Later, after the resurrected student shoots Methusalem, the play ends with a brief coda in which he and the daughter are shown destitute on a park bench, a banal couple with their baby, discussing frankfurters and dreams of bourgeois success.

At a narrative level, neither film insert is integrated in the same way as the subjective insert of the dreams in the first scene; they seem to appear at random, as part of Goll's general commitment to what he calls Alogic. Originally mounted with designs by Georg Grosz, *Methusalem's* surreal Alogic and revue-style farrago of scenes and characters happily accommodated such incursions. Indeed, given the Surrealists' fascination with film (particularly the fantasy tradition which emerged out of Méliès' work) and their experiments in both film and theatre, it's surprising that Goll's experiment was relatively isolated. Mention has been made already of RELÂCHE, a notorious collaboration between Erik Satie, Francis Picabia, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp and others, but it is not fully comparable.¹² The event had a revue format, which accommodated a variety of happenings, including a fireman pouring water in and out of a bucket all evening, a naked couple posing as Adam and Eve, obscene songs and an alternative ballet. During the interval a film called *Interval* was shown. It showed a bearded male dancer in a tutu dancing on a glass floor, from below which he was filmed; Duchamp and Ray playing chess on the roof of the theatre; and a parodic version of a funeral, in which a camel-drawn funeral carriage, covered in advertising posters and hung with various foods, processed through an amusement park. The style of the

film parodies contemporary newsreels of state funerals. After the coffin fell off the hearse a grinning corpse sat up inside it and THE END came up on screen. Echoing earlier examples, the performers burst through the screen to resume the live performance.

A similar eruption through the screen also occurred a year earlier in Moscow, in Sergei Eisenstein's stage production of Ostrovsky's 1868 satire of the Russian bourgeoisie, *A Wise Man*.¹³ The film shot for this was the first that Eisenstein directed – his enjoyment of the process contributed to his subsequent transition from theatre into cinema. Inspired by Meyerhold, Eisenstein stripped down Ostrovsky's comedy of manners text and gave it a circus-like performance. The arena stage was set up like a circus-ring, with a trapeze and high wires, vaulting-horses and so on. There were strong influences from *Commedia dell'Arte* and plentiful acrobatics and clowning. For example, when the character Glumov attempts to seduce a woman, he does so while walking a tightrope, symbolising the underlying emotions of the situation; at other times characters would end a sentence with a somersault. At one point Glumov's diary comes alive as a film. The film continues the circus approach, with substitution shots enabling a clown to transform magically into a donkey, and later into a field gun. It also contains a spectacular chase sequence, in which Glumov, as a masked bank-robber, climbs a high tower and leaps off into his accomplices' car. The performer then bursts through the screen and onto the stage.

Eisenstein's interest in circus, clowning, and music-hall reflected both an aesthetic and political interest in popular culture, which was complemented by the dynamism associated with early Soviet film – cinema was seen as the art-form of a dynamic new society. These interests fed into his arguments for a theatre of attractions built around a series of 'turns' or 'acts', as opposed to one based primarily on dramatic narrative for sustaining interest. He wrote:

Instead of static 'reflection' of an event with all possibility for activity within the limits of the event's logical action, we advance to a new plane – free montage of arbitrarily selected, independent attractions – all from the stand of establishing certain final thematic effects – this is montage of attractions. (Seton, 1952, 62)

As we have seen, this term was later adapted by cinema theorists discussing early cinema, which they contrasted negatively with classic realism. Although Eisenstein developed the idea in a more dialectical fashion – note the idea of it 'establishing certain final thematic effects',

the notion of 'arbitrarily selected independent attractions' continues to inform much present-day intermedial work.

Investigating Soviet theatre further, we might expect to find film used elsewhere, given the wealth of experiment undertaken by directors and writers such as Meyerhold, Tretyakov, Evreinov, Mayakovsky and so on. Meyerhold and others did assert that theatre needed to become more cinematic, and slide projections, cinematic lighting and montage often appeared in their productions. For example, Meyerhold's productions of Tretyakov's *Earth Rampant* (1923) and of *The D.E. Trust* (1924) included cinema-style captions for scenes along with projected quotations from figures such as Lenin and Trotsky. His 1926 production of Gogol's *The Government Inspector* included projected scene-titles, and lighting created the isolating effect of close-ups at certain moments, while scenes were played on a series of pre-set 'trucks' which appeared in the set's central doorway – in order to achieve the pace of film editing as it moved from scene to scene. Meyerhold claimed, 'Thanks to the methods of staging ... we have been able, in the language of cinema, to shoot the principal scenes in close-up' (Braun, 1979, 218). Spencer Golub describes how Evreinov saw a kinship between his theatrical work and the cinema and argued that 'the future of theatre was in talking pictures' (Golub, 1984, 144). In a 1925 play, *Radio Kiss*, Evreinov called for a 'film within a play' rather along the lines of Goll's *Methusalem*, but the work was never staged. In view of these and other examples, it seems surprising that actual film does not appear more often on the Soviet stage. This may have been affected by the constant shortage of film stock in the Soviet Union during the 1920s, or it may have reflected a political climate that became increasingly hostile to avant-garde experiment in the later 1920s, as Socialist Realism became installed as official doctrine in the arts. Whatever the case, the next practitioner considered, Erwin Piscator, was perhaps justified when he rejected claims that his work had been strongly influenced by Soviet practitioners such as Meyerhold.

Erwin Piscator

In the examples of early work discussed so far, film was used in three main ways: scenographically; to create narrative sequences, often involving actions which would otherwise be difficult to achieve as effectively on stage; and for purposes of spectacle, comedy or 'magic'. Building on such antecedents, Piscator was the first director to integrate