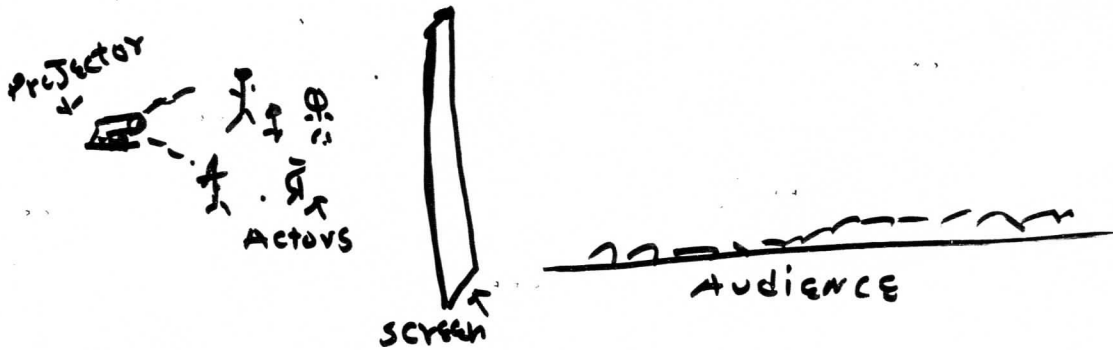


Long.

Plays comedy is verbal. When you dont understand the language you of course miss the humorous stories that Schweik tells.

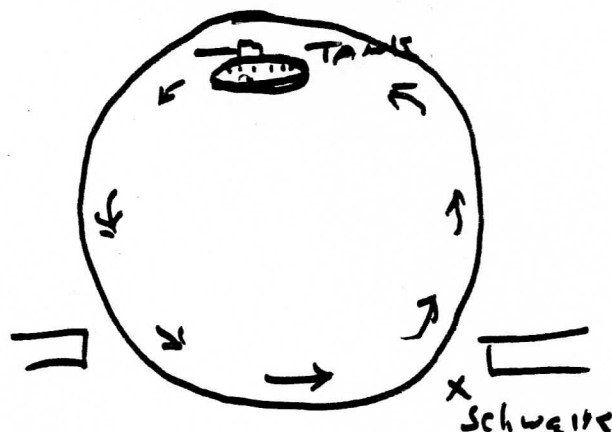
You do of course see how he exasperates the Nazis around him. Two wonderful scenic effects. The first and last scene:

Scene one: Silhouette effect. Monstrous figures of Hitler, Goering, Himler and Goebels projecte on screen: Actors move in position- gesture of each personage typical of that person. Hitler places finger on globe and puff of smoke comes from touched place. Music is wild and Wozzeck like. Sung beautifully, madly, viciously:



The sillhoutte screen effect appeared three times during the play. Once Hitler and Goebbels, Goerring and Himmler-- A second appearance showed hitler with a radial pencil leaning on a table on which the map of the world was placed. Goerring, carring and gesturing with a telescope stood on the other side of the table...And last of all in the snowy Stalingrad scene, Hitler alone, massive, but confused going in circles--see only his feet and then he disappears.

The second brilliantly staged scene was the march on Stalingrad during a blizzard. I saw the first movement of the massive (entire stage) rotating stage. It was all white- including the backdrop, and Schweik's costume, as he walked with a dog which didn't seem to be in the same storm because he was untouched by the snow, was spattered white with frost. A motorcycle enters (sounds used from record--Grotowski would hate it or not be interested in it) whited, frozen rider--Schweik cheerily helps him off...Schweik keeps walking as the stage rotates...it stops when a sign is held out from the proscenium telling him that Stalingrad is the other way. The stage then rotates in the other direction and he walks again, accompanied by the recorded howling of wind.....Suddenly there is a spot on him alone as he walks for a few moments and then when the lights come up again a TANK is seen upstage, its threads rotating moving around the periphery of the circular stage...It has frozen figures seated on top of it..It makes an entire circle as Schweik stands off the rotating stage to view it. It is a thrilling sight on stage..This is not "poor theatre" but rich and GOOD theatre! When it gets to its original position the spot comes on Schweik again and they manage to get it off silently..The moment Schweik takes a nap on the cold ground he dreams of the warmth of his friend's wedding..4 actors, each dressed as bride and groom--that each set of the 4--are wagoned on for the short scene..Near the end Schweik stands downstage of the proscenium and the Hitler figure is seen on the screen...



The other scenes took place in the beer garden which contained an old fashioned "Playola" which when hit would light up (flowing river and all) and a rickety piano would be heard.

The office of the inquisitor was plain- with Schweik chained to the walls (spotted because so many stood there before him) for a short while. A park scene- with path and well trained dogs. A scene when Schweik had to work near the railroad yard had the Brecht image of the soldier eating his rations--a fat ugly looking soldier--Brecht called this picture STUPIDITY..and used its image here. Schweik talks to the soldier confusing him as to the numbers the soldier was to have remembered for a troop transport of Nazi soldiers.

Martin Florchinger as Schweik was nonchalant and non-committal as Schweik would be. A superb and cool performance. A comic masterpiece.

