

Satan's Best Ceremony: The Identification of Three Films by Jan Kříženecký

The year 2018 brought, among other state anniversaries, some notable jubilees reminding us of the dawn of Czech film. We celebrated one hundred and fifty years since the birth of the pioneer Jan Kříženecký (real name Jan Nepomuk Josef Norbert Kříženecký; 20. 3. 1868 Prague – 9. 2. 1921 Prague), and also one hundred and twenty years since this inventive man made his first films in 1898, thus laying down the cornerstone of our national cinema. It is not only for these anniversaries that all of Kříženecký's surviving films from 1898 to 1911 were transferred by the Národní filmový archiv to a digital format and accompanied by a soundtrack, in order to make them available to today's viewer.

The digitization project also created an opportunity for film historians to focus on the corpus of Jan Kříženecký's works and view it in high definition picture quality. Thanks to new technologies, surviving film materials were easier to identify, and they also could be assembled into their original shape and reconstructed according to the time lines of captured events (this was especially the

case for Sokol rallies or events accompanying anniversary exhibitions). And after more than a century, these processes enabled the correct identification of three pictures — *To nejlepší číslo* (The Best Number), *Satanova jízda po železnici* (Satan's Railway Ride), and *Svěcení základního kamene jubilejního kostela sv. Antonína v Praze VII.* (Consecration Ceremony for the Foundation Stone of the Jubilee Church of St. Anthony in Prague VII) — of which film historians incorrectly noted the year of making and knew them only by incorrect names.¹⁾

The Best Number

At the now non-existent Smíchov station, several young ladies and an older gentleman, among other people, are hastily boarding the train. Everything is being supervised by the conductor (played by Alois Charvát), who, after the departure of the train, takes his hat off, and happily heads for the camera, smiling widely into the lens.

1) I would like to thank the following colleagues from the Národní filmový archiv for their cooperation with the identification of these three films: among others, Jiří Anger, Ivan Klimeš, Eva Pavlíková, Eva Urbanová, and Soňa Weigertová; also, Markéta Trávníčková from the History of Theater Department at the National Museum in Prague.

This is the synopsis of a short feature film, which survived in the Národní filmový archiv collection in the original negative,²⁾ with the Lumière perforated film strip³⁾ spanning 15.2 meters (in a standard projection format, this film would last a mere half a minute). The film has been known only since 1995 under the name *The Best Number* and was dated to 1907, or rather 1902.⁴⁾ Thanks to the film content itself, newspaper articles from the era, and the memories of actual participants, it was possible to correctly date this short film to 1906 and link it with the project *Satan's Railway Ride*, which up to then was considered lost.

On Monday, October 6, 1902, the Smíchov Arena hosted the premiere⁵⁾ of “an epic farce with librettos with 4 parts and an interlude”,⁶⁾ *The Best*

Number by Julius Freund, translated by Josef Kubík, and directed by Josef, or actually Jan, Kubík.⁷⁾ This would not be anything that extraordinary, if the classified section of the newspaper, including the theater posters, did not advertise that “the light scene in part I will be performed with the assistance of a cinematograph and its extraordinary boards, manufactured for that sole purpose, by the Lumier [sic!] company in Lyon”.⁸⁾ In the early stages of cinema, when film was being transformed from a simple technical invention, evolving from a cinema attraction towards its narrative format, while discovering its means of expression as well as trade and artistic use, this was considered an unusual use of film in a classical stage play.

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- 2) Aside from the camera negative, there are three duplicate negatives, one duplicate positive, and two prints stored at the Národní filmový archiv.
 - 3) The film stock by the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière is different from the classic standardized materials, mainly by its shape and the number of perforations (sprocket holes), which is why it cannot be used on regular projectors.
 - 4) Collective of authors, *Czech Feature Film I 1898–1930* (Praha: Národní filmový archiv, 1995), p. 123. It is here that the material was connected with this name for the first time and the noted estimated year 1907 was later corrected to 1902.
 - 5) For more on Prague's Smíchov Arena, which between 1891 and 1934 stood between Palacký and Railway bridges and was used during this period as a summer scene for the Švanda Theater, in the possession of the descendants of Pavel Švanda from Semčice, see Eva Šormová (ed.), *Česká divadla: Encyklopedie divadelních souborů* (Praha: Divadelní ústav, 2000), pp. 488–493.
 - 6) Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 42, no. 275 (1902), p. 3. This play, originally *Eine feine Nummer*, started stage rehearsals at the end of September. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 20, no. 263 (1902), p. 6.
 - 7) Based on the period sources it is not entirely clear whether the play was produced by its translator, stage designer and actor Josef Kubík (18. 2. 1877 Prague – 8. 1. 1949 Prague) or by his father Jan Kubík (18. 11. 1849 Prague – 6. 1. 1913 Prague). During the years 1896–1907, they were both involved as actors as well as directors at the Švanda Theater and at the Smíchov Arena. To confuse matters more, there are two surviving theater plaques of this play at the History of Theater Department at the National Museum. On the first one, without a date, Jan Kubík is printed as the director, while on the second one, dated March 19th, 1904, the son Josef Kubík (Národní muzeum, Divadelní oddělení, Sběrka divadelních cedulí a plakátů, inv. no. H6C-37150, H6C-6171). Just as confusing are the notes from the period newspaper, with Josef and Jan Kubík being noted as director of the piece for the same time period. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 22, no. 59 (1904), p. 9. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 44, no. 79 (1904), p. 5. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 22, no. 79 (1904), p. 8. The advertisements from 1902 usually noted the director as J. Kubík. For more on the activities of Josef and Jan Kubík, see Eva Šormová (ed.), *Česká činohra 19. a začátku 20. století. Osobnosti; I. díl A–M* (Praha: Divadelní ústav – Academia, 2015), pp. 531–535. See also note 15.
 - 8) Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 42, no. 275 (1902), p. 3. The play was also described as an “epic farce with cinematographic scenes”. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 20, no. 295 (1902), p. 21. “The attraction of this farce are its light scenes, made by a French company Lumier [sic!] from Lyon.” Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 20, no. 288 (1902), p. 26. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 42, no. 280 (1902), p. 6. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 42, no. 284 (1902), p. 6. Národní muzeum, Divadelní oddělení, Sběrka divadelních cedulí a plakátů, inv. no. H6C-37150.

The content and format of the film interludes during the play *The Best Number* were described by Olga Fastrová in her critique:

In order for the [theater administration] to save the farce, they invented cinematographic scenes, which depict the end of the prelude. This would not be so bad; any attraction can be interwoven into a farce, as long as it's connected with the plot and its presence is somehow explained. Sadly though, in the third intermission, the cinematographic scenes are back and they do not depict a scene from the play, but exercises of the Hulan battalion, bridge openings, and other such events.⁹⁾

The above-mentioned film interlude at the end of a prelude, called *Skandál v divadle* (Scandal at the Theater), was filmed especially for this play. One of the performers, the actor Alois Charvát,¹⁰⁾ was reminiscing about this picture, and this is what he remembered about playing the interludes during the play:

In October [1902], the play *The Best Number* was shown, where film was used for the first

time. Towards the end of the first act, a havoc overtook the stage, everyone was rushing out of the theater, and what was taking place in front of the theater, was sort of happening on the film screen, lowered where the theater curtain normally is.¹¹⁾

Clearly, Charvát's depiction of the film does not correspond with the above description of the surviving content, which was originally attributed to the play *The Best Number*, or with any other film material stored in the Národní filmový archiv collections. Similarly states also a report from 1904, when a play "with its cinematographic scenes depicting a scandal in the Theater Varieté and its consequences caused a lively sensation".¹²⁾

The play, reportedly popular with audiences,¹³⁾ was being re-shown during October and at the beginning of November 1902 and again, accompanied by cinematographic scenes, on February 28, 1904, and re-shown in March.¹⁴⁾ We will most likely never know who was the author of the idea and who made the decision to insert this film into the intermissions of the farce, whether it was its translator and director Josef Kubík or perhaps his father Jan Kubík,¹⁵⁾ or the owners and conces-

9) Fastrová continues: "Shocked, we asked, how does this relate to the plot? We are not denying that it is only for the cinematograph, that the audience is coming to see *The Best Number*, but we are thinking: if this piece is performed only for the sake of such cabaret shows, then let us lose that piece altogether and play only that cinematograph and those inserted, beautiful couplets à la 'Eulalie', and above the theater gate they could place an inscription, 'Švanda's Theater Varieté'. The reviewers would no longer be getting angry, and the theater administration would not have to force upon itself such a despicably serious repertoire. And all involved parties would again be contented. — OVÁ [Olga Fastrová], "Švandovo divadlo", *Divadelní listy*, vol. 3, no. 18–19 (1902), pp. 487–488.

10) In the prelude, alongside Charvát performed Jan Zdrůbecký, Joza Hadrbolecová, Marie Groszová, Antonín Krpálek, Bohumil Višek, Ladislav Špirek, Jožka Vanerová, and Antonín Milý.

11) Alois Charvát, *Ze staré Prahy (Divadelní a jiné vzpomínky)* (Praha: Nakladatel Leopold Mazáč, 1926), p. 202.

12) Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 22, no. 59 (1904), p. 9.

13) Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 42, no. 279 (1902), p. 4. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 20, no. 279 (1902), p. 6. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 20, no. 281 (1902), p. 30.

14) Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 22, no. 59 (1904), p. 9. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 22, no. 65 (1904), p. 6.

15) On doubts about the director, see note 7. Interestingly, Josef Kubík already wrote for the Smíchov Arena in 1898, and it was a play with a film topic, *The Bohemian Biograph*, which was described as "a series of monumental photographs". Josef Kubík continued to insert film into his theatrical directorials in following years, for example during the light opera *To se musí vidět!* (That Must Be Seen!) from July 18, 1914, at the Smíchov Arena.

sionaries, the descendants of the founder Pavel Švanda from Semčice.¹⁶⁾

Another uncertain question remained: who was the author of these film inserts? Most likely it was Jan Kříženecký, as there are several clues guiding us to his authorship.¹⁷⁾ So far, we have been unable to prove that there was a local in the Czech lands prior to 1906, besides Kříženecký, who owned a Lumière camera (Cinématographe), and was actively involved in filmmaking. Undoubtedly, the short (only a few meters long) film in front of the theater with Czech actors had to be made in Prague. It is unlikely that a foreign cameraman from the Lumière company would travel all the way to Prague to film this segment, not to mention the financial burden associated with such an action. The aforementioned participation of the Lumière company from Lyon in the project was most likely limited to providing the raw negative material, lab work, and a supply of prints, whereas the filming itself was managed by Kříženecký in Prague. For that matter, the filmmaker already opted for this method back in 1898 at the Exhibition of Architecture and Engineering at the Prague Exhibition Grounds, where he introduced his Czech cinematograph for the

first time, and as we shall see, he did so later on as well. As noted in Olga Fastrová's critique, there were others, unrelated to the plot, inserts, news flashes, and reports, such as exercises or bridge openings.¹⁸⁾ Kříženecký, too, filmed similar pictures, and his report *Slavnostní vysvěcení mostu Františka I.* (Grand Consecration of the Emperor Franz I. Bridge) was made in 1901.

Aside from the period press,¹⁹⁾ a considerable footprint of Kříženecký's involvement was produced by a surviving theater plaque for *The Best Number*, announcing that "the cinematograph for the light scene show in the interlude was borrowed by and is directed by J. Pokorný."²⁰⁾ Together with an office colleague and a former classmate, Josef František Pokorný (30. 3. 1869 Prague – 18. 6. 1917 Prague), Jan Kříženecký purchased (with the help of a loan from his father Josef Pokorný, Sr.) in May 1898 a Lumière Cinématographe.²¹⁾ Together they operated the Czech Cinematograph pavilion at the Exhibition of Architecture and Engineering, mentioned earlier. Evidently, Pokorný, as a partner, had, during the first years after the end of the exhibition, the right to operate a Lumière machine and was then able to show Kříženecký's films during theater plays in

Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 16, no. 228 (1898), p. 4. *Pražský ilustrovaný kurýr*, vol. 7, August 28, 1898, p. 9. The play is later on incorrectly named and noted in literature as *The American Biograph*. For comparison, see Vladimír Birgus, "Počátky využití filmu na českém jevišti", *Panoráma*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1977), pp. 36, 40.

16) For more on the creative pathways of Pavel Švanda, jr., from Semčice, Karel Švanda from Semčice and others, see Eva Šormová (ed.), *Česká činohra 19. a začátku 20. století. Osobnosti; II. díl N–Ž* (Praha: Divadelní ústav – Academia, 2015), pp. 1074–1083.

17) For argumentation, aside from others, see Zdeněk Štábla, *Český kinematograf Jana Kříženeckého* (Praha: Československý filmový ústav, 1973), pp. 178–182, 245–246. Birgus, "Počátky využití filmu na českém jevišti", pp. 36–42. Luboš Bartošek, *Dějiny československé kinematografie I. díl. Némý film 1896–1930. I. část* (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství — Univerzita Karlova, 1979), pp. 27, 142. Luboš Bartošek, *Náš film: Kapitoly z dějin 1896–1945* (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1985), pp. 32, 37, 38, 364, 365. "Životopis Jana Kříženeckého", *Filmový přehled*, <http://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs/person/127419/jan-krizenecky>, [accessed 27 September 2018].

18) — OVÁ [Olga Fastrová], "Švandovo divadlo", pp. 487–488.

19) "The cinematograph for this scene was again borrowed by and production is directed by J. Pokorný". Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 22, no. 59 (1904), p. 9.

20) The plaque is dated March 19, 1904. The second surviving theater plaque but without a date only contains a sign "The light scenes produced by a cinematograph machine provided by the Lumier [sic!] company in Lyon". Národní muzeum, Divadelní oddělení, Sběrka divadelních cedulí a plakátů, inv. no. H6C-37150, H6C-6171.

21) A Lumière Cinématographe, owned by Kříženecký, served as a camera, a printer, and also as a projector.

the Arena. Pokorný's younger brother and an exhibition co-worker of the Czech Cinematograph, Vincenc Pokorný (5. 4. 1875 Prague – 5. 11. 1968 Prague), provided a significant testimony to the National Technical Museum in Prague in October 1952:

With mister architect Jan Kříženecký, we played these films [from the architecture and engineering exhibit] several more times later on, and always as a part of a different entertainment program only, for example in the Měšťanská beseda in Prague, at the Národní dům at Vinohrady, in the Smíchov Arena, in "Orfeus" at Královské Vinohrady and perhaps other places too, but I do not remember where exactly.²²⁾

It cannot be entirely dismissed that the above noted screening in the Arena could have been managed by Vincenc Pokorný, incorrectly noted

on the theater plaque and in the newspapers as J. Pokorný.²³⁾ However, the assertion that Josef or Vincenc Pokorný were actively engaged in cinema in the following years, aside from the exhibition work in 1898, or were actively shooting films, has not yet been confirmed. All these actions were performed by the photographer Kříženecký himself.²⁴⁾ *The Best Number* can therefore be attributed to Jan Kříženecký.

Film screenings (for example, street news from Prague) were being shown on Czech theater stages for the first time in 1896 and then regularly during the years 1899–1907 in the Karlín Theater Varieté, but they complemented various entertainment programs without any connection to the other parts of the program.²⁵⁾ *The Best Number*²⁶⁾ is at this point considered to be the very first domestic use of film as an independent attraction as well as a staging resource linked to the play's plot.²⁷⁾ Currently, the film insert *The Best Number* is considered to be lost.

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- 22) Cited according to Ivan Klimeš, "Český kinematograf v Královské oboře 1898", *Iluminace*, vol. 10, no. 1 (29) (1998), pp. 203, 205. Vincenc Pokorný, "Počátky českých kinematografických filmů", Národní muzeum, Divadelní oddělení, Sbirka divadelních cedulí a plakátů, inv. no. 338 (unprocessed). See also Pokorný, [P. T. National Technical Museum], Praha, 3. 2. 1953, inv. no. 403 (unprocessed).
- 23) According to his brother's memories, shortly after the end of the Exhibition of Architecture and Engineering, Josef Pokorný left Prague and settled in Moravian Ostrava as a builder. Prior to his death, he also worked in Sarajevo.
- 24) For more on the cooperation between Jan Kříženecký and Josef and Vincenc Pokorný, also to be included is Kříženecký's brother-in-law Ferdinand Gýra (18. 3. 1861 Prague – 15. 6. 1933 Prague), and on operating the Czech cinematograph at the Exhibition of Architecture and Engineering, see Zdeněk Štábla, *Český kinematograf Jana Kříženeckého*, Klimeš, "Český kinematograf v Královské oboře 1898", pp. 165–208, Ivan Klimeš, *Kinematograf! Věnc studii o raném filmu* (Praha: Národní filmový archiv – Casablanca, 2013), pp. 24–39.
- 25) Further, these were pictures filmed by a foreign cameraman. Zdeněk Štábla, *Data a fakta z dějin čs. kinematografie 1896–1945. I. svazek* (Praha: Československý filmový ústav, 1988 [internal print]). Zdeněk Štábla, "Kinematografické projekce v Čechách a na Moravě v letech 1896–1897", in Jana Šamonilová (ed.), *Texty čs. filmového ústavu č. 13 / Historické sešity č. VI* (Praha: Československý filmový ústav 1979 [internal print]), pp. 52–54. Štábla, *Český kinematograf Jana Kříženeckého*, pp. 113–114, 181. Birgus, "Počátky využití filmu na českém jevišti", p. 36.
- 26) Even the critics of the era noted the incorrect naming of the play: "Noted, by the way: in the Czech language, the placement of a definite article 'to' ['the'] before a 3rd degree adjective is completely redundant and unacceptable. How could the theater administration allow such a horrible Germanism, even on the theater plaque and to line Prague's streets with it! All those, who know their Czech language well, were simply terrified by that green plaque." — OVÁ [Olga Fastrová], "Švandovo divadlo", pp. 487–488.
- 27) This is how the play is understood even in Czech theater historiography. František Černý – Ljuba Klosová (eds.), *Dějiny českého divadla III. díl. Činohra 1848–1918* (Praha: Academia, 1977), pp. 372, 581. Šormová (ed.), *Česká divadla*, p. 490. Milena Nyklová, "O moderním herectví", *Záběr*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1978), p. 7. Birgus, "Počátky využití filmu na českém jevišti", pp. 36–42.

Satan's Railway Ride

In the first half of July 1906, the press reported that the Smíchov Arena was putting on a new English fantasy play consisting of three parts and eight scenes with new decorations, costumes, props, many extras, and also a ballet, *Satan's Last Trip*. The play by James Harry and Edward Goulton, translated by Vilém Táborský, was directed by actor Antonín Vaverka (31. 10. 1868 Prague – 2. 6. 1937 Prague). By the beginning of August, stage rehearsals were underway, the final rehearsal took place on August 3,²⁸⁾ and the piece premiered on Saturday, August 4, 1906.²⁹⁾ At the end of July it was already reported that, for the purposes of the play, “a large cinema scene by the Lumière company”³⁰⁾ was created. The Smíchov Arena used the same approach as in the case of

the play *The Best Number*, four years prior. As repeatedly reported by the period news, “the cinematographic scenes by the company Limiers [sic!] from Lyon ‘*Satan's Railway Ride*’ evoked a stormy applause.”³¹⁾ It was at this point that the film insert earned its new, separate name, *Satan's Railway Ride*, which was supposed to depict “a picture of the platform in Podlesí”³²⁾ in part II.

Thanks to newspaper reports, there are several descriptions of this film insert available, including its description, cast and plot:

A cinematographic scene, portraying Satan together with his procession, captured by a photographic machine, precisely at a moment of boarding a train at the Smíchov station, with train conductor Mr. Charvát.³³⁾

28) Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 191 (1906), p. 8. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 191 (1906), p. 4. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 202 (1906), p. 6. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 202 (1906), p. 7. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 204 (1906), p. 3. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 205 (27. 7. 1906), p. 7. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 209 (1906), p. 7. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 210 (1906), p. 4. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 210 (1906), p. 7. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 211 (1906), p. 3. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 212 (1906), pp. 4, 6. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 212 (1906), p. 8.

29) Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 213 (1906), p. 9.

30) Aréna na Smíchově, “Satanův poslední výlet”, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 207 (1906), p. 5. Here also is a short synopsis of the play.

31) Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 220 (1906), p. 7. For comparison, see Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 248 (1906), p. 2 (appendix). During the following days, the box office was emphasizing that every show, except for the premiere, is sold out and that the audience is attending in high numbers. Particularly, the film insert is “enjoying a roaring applause” or “boisterous applause”. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 280 (1906), p. 8. Also, among others: Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 214 (1906), p. 9; Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 230 (1906), p. 3; Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 230 (1906), p. 7; Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 232 (1906), p. 4; Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 253 (1906), p. 9.

32) Aréna na Smíchově, *Pražský illustrovaný kurýř*, vol. 15, no. 220 (1906), p. 8. See also Aréna na Smíchově, *Pražský illustrovaný kurýř*, vol. 15, no. 224 (1906), pp. 7, 10. That the film insert is named *Satan's Railway Ride* was repeated several more times. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 220 (1906), p. 7. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 221 (1906), p. 4. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 228 (1906), p. 2 (appendix). Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 230 (1906), p. 7. Exceptionally, the name *Satanův výlet na svět* (Satan's Trip into the World) appeared. See Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 224 (1906), p. 3. Aréna na Smíchově, *Pražský illustrovaný kurýř*, vol. 15, no. 224 (1906), p. 10.

33) Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 219 (1906), p. 3. See also, Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 219 (1906), p. 7. Aréna na Smíchově, *Pražský illustrovaný kurýř*, vol. 15, no. 219 (1906), p. 10.

A cinematographic scene, portraying Satan, hijacking several village girls onto a train [...]. Persons getting on and off the train are mainly actors, and the rehearsals of the scenes required tiresome practice and considerable cost.³⁴⁾

Contributing towards the success of the play is also the cinematographic portrayal of our rail station, depicting the departure of village girls with Satan to Prague.³⁵⁾

One transformation is even taking place with the help of cinematographic pictures of a real locomotive, train cars and passengers.³⁶⁾

As already announced, the cinematographic scene "Satan's Trip into the World" was commissioned at the Lumières [sic] company in Lyon. However, since the order was, due to some oversight at the customs office, delayed, the new scenes were taken at a local train station by a renowned specialist, Mr. Antonín Pech, a photographer from České Budějovice, who developed all these materials himself, and both scenes will be shown during today's performance, which is what lends the performance its special curiosity.³⁸⁾

The noted descriptions correctly correspond with the actual synopsis of the surviving film, the plot of which is described above. Thus, the film material known as *The Best Number* from 1902 was safely and unequivocally identified as *Satan's Railway Ride* from the summer of 1906.

Due to issues with customs tax on the developed film material, the film insert *Satan's Railway Ride* was not shown together with the premiered play on August 4, 1906, but during its fifth run on August 9.³⁷⁾ A detailed explanation was provided by the press six days later:

Therefore, two identical films were created to accompany the play, and both were shown during the re-runs from August 15 and throughout fall 1906 until the last show in February 1907. The newspaper clearly states that the second version was filmed by Antonín Pech (21. 10. 1874 Čižice [near Pilsen] – 20. 2. 1928 Prague).³⁹⁾ *Satan's Railway Ride* is Pech's first known professional cinematographic work, even though it was originally assumed that he ventured into his film, entrepreneurial, production, cinematographic, and directorial activities later, after his move from České Budějovice to Prague at the end of 1907.⁴⁰⁾

34) Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 221 (1906), p. 4.

35) B., "Švandovo divadlo na Smíchově", *Divadlo*, vol. 4, no. 20 (1906), pp. 449–450. Here also is a short synopsis of the play.

36) R., "Satanův poslední výlet", *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 228 (1906), p. 2 (appendix). Here also is a short synopsis of the play.

37) "But the delayed delivering of the film [from the Lumière company in Lyon] was due to some oversight at the customs office, and it wasn't until yesterday's play that the picture was reproduced and was liked very much." Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 219 (1906), p. 3. See also, Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 219 (1906), p. 7. Aréna na Smíchově, *Pražský illustrovaný kurýr*, vol. 15, no. 219 (1906), p. 10.

38) Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 224 (1906), p. 3. Aréna na Smíchově, *Pražský illustrovaný kurýr*, vol. 15, no. 224 (1906), p. 10.

39) Pech's participation in the filming was, compared to the involvement of the Lumières, advertised only a few times, but is indisputable. See, for example, Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 228 (1906), p. 2 (appendix). Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 228 (1906), p. 4 (appendix). Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 230 (1906), p. 3. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 24, no. 230 (1906), p. 7. Z kanceláře Smíchovského divadla, *Národní politika*, vol. 26, no. 231 (1906), p. 7. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 232 (1906), p. 4. Aréna na Smíchově, *Národní listy*, vol. 46, no. 233 (1906), p. 6.

40) On the activities of Antonín Pech, one of the pioneers of Czech cinematography, including his participation in *Satan's Last Trip*, see Bartošek, *Dějiny československé kinematografie*, pp. 27–30, 142. Bartošek, *Náš film*, pp. 32,

The remaining question, though, was the authorship of the first, original version of the film. Although the press consistently listed the Lumière Brothers factory in Lyon as the creator of the film insert, the circumstances repeatedly pointed to Jan Kříženecký for authorship. Aside from the fact that he had already collaborated with the Arena (Smíchov, transl. note) on a similar project in the past, and was practically the only cameraman in Prague, the surviving film material also testifies to his authorship. In addition, it was found among Kříženecký's estate. Further, as already noted, it was endowed with the Lumière perforation — and thus had to be filmed only with a Lumière Cinématographe, which the creator owned. Again, it is unlikely, that the Smíchov scene was filmed by one of Lumière's foreign cameramen — or that perhaps it was filmed abroad. The Lyonnaise company's involvement was again limited to providing only the film materials, lab processing, and a return delivery.⁴¹⁾ These assumptions were eventually confirmed by currently unpublished manuscript memoirs from the director of the farce *Satan's Last Trip*, Antonín Vaverka, which were written probably sometime during the 1930s under the title *Mé vzpomínky od Zlaté Prahy až po americké hvězdy* (My Memories from Golden Prague to American Stars):

In 1906 I directed an epic light opera, *Satan's Last Trip*, where I played the main character. During the shoot I was pondering an idea, that the train station scene should be true in the eye of the audience, that it should have larger dimensions and should offer more than just a feigned world. This idea captivated me greatly, and so I immediately created, well created /since there was nothing similar in the libretto/ a new scene, which I livened up by many comi-

cal features, but basically, scenic format, which fused moving pictures with live speech from the stage, literally theater with film, which was my directorial idea for an epic light opera, and which our then artistic director Dr. Karel Švanda immediately encouraged. For this purpose, I set off to the State Railways headquarters, where I presented my request, which actually was not only approved as for the time and the place, without counting not even a penny, but they also supplied me with two large heated locomotives for these purposes. Soon after — one afternoon — between two and four o'clock, when the Smíchov train station tracks were free, I was able to start directing my first film! By my side and under my directorship, the following people starred: Alois Charvát as the devil and my secretary, also, school girls Magda Škrdlíková, Věra Skalská, etc., the school janitor was V. Jan Zdrůbecký, his wife Zdrůbecká, etc. By the machine stood Ing. [Jan] Kříženecký. The weather, time of day, scenes, and shooting went swimmingly, so that I finished all the filming at the designated time, and Ing. Kříženecký had the whole thing successfully in the box. Back then the film shipped to Paris to be developed, and much to my dismay it happened that it did not arrive back on time and I was forced to rent two "trains" from the National Theater in order to keep the date of the *Satan's Last Trip* premiere. Finally, for the fifth re-run, it "arrived" from the Paris laboratory, and for the first time "arrived" on screen of the Smíchov Theater Arena. This film-theater novelty lived to see several dozen re-runs in sold out houses and evoked such enthusiasm that two clever financiers noticed it and came to me with an offer to employ me for similar plays. I do not even recall why I did

37–40, 364–365. Štábla, *Český kinematograf Jana Kříženeckého*, pp. 117–182, 245–246. Jiří Havelka, *Kdo byl kdo v československém filmu před rokem 1945* (Praha: Československý filmový ústav, 1979), pp. 138, 139, 192, 200, 275 (manuscript).

41) Actually mentioned in period press concerning the delivery delay due to customs issues.

not pay more serious attention to them. Perhaps because I could never really calculate for myself! With *Satan's Last Trip* I became indeed the first film director, actor and a pioneer of an idea /mine/ to fuse theater and film here... in Prague!⁴²⁾

Of interest in Vaverka's memoirs is the absence of any mention of the filmmaker Antonín Pech's participation and of the existence of the second version of the film, which is currently considered lost.⁴³⁾ Thanks to all these sources, the Národní filmový archiv was able to mark the film with the title *Satan's Railway Ride*, denote the year of making as 1906, award the authorship to Jan Kříženecký, and place the picture in a catalogue of Czech feature films.

After some experience with productions of *The Best Number* and *Satan's Last Trip* at the Smíchov Arena, film inserts became an integral part of theater plays and started to appear as early as the nineteen aughts and more regularly after 1918 as part of Prague's and later also regional Czech stages, and continue being used up to this day.⁴⁴⁾

Laying of the Foundation Stone for the Palacky Monument in Prague vs. Consecration Ceremony for the Foundation Stone of the Jubilee Church of St. Anthony in Prague VII

On October 25, 1908, at Bubny Square (today's Strossmayer Square), accompanied by many attendees and dignitaries, the Prague archbis-

42) Antonín Vaverka, *Mé vzpomínky od Zlaté Prahy až po americké hvězdy* (manuscript), Národní filmový archiv, f. Vaverka Antonín (1868–1937), k. 1, sig. I/c, inv. no. 11, 22–23. Vaverka's memoirs were prepared by Ivan Klimeš (thanks to him for pointing them out) and the Národní filmový archiv for publication in a critics' edition. Vaverka was, however, wrong when he identified himself as the first film director and a pioneer of the idea of theater and film fusion, as is proved by a four year older play *The Best Number*, which was shown two years prior to the premiere of *Satan's Last Trip*. It cannot be ruled out that Josef or Vincenc Pokorný again cooperated during the shooting or showing of this picture.

43) Equally puzzling is the absence of any mention of Jan Kříženecký's participation in the newspapers from 1902, 1904 and 1906. On the contrary, the involvement of the Lyonnaise and not Parisian company of the Lumière brothers was exaggerated, however, in this case most likely due to advertisement reasons. It is possible that Kříženecký did not want, as a city building official, to connect his name with the suburban folkloric theater and musical scene. As a matter of fact, the creator had already used pseudonyms earlier, during previous productions, e.g., in 1899 with the spelling Jan Křížanský. See Štábla, *Český kinematograf Jana Kříženeckého*, pp. 98–99.

44) Prior to 1918, the film was supposed to be used in the production of *Expresní vlak do Nizzy* (Express Train to Nizza; premiere on August 31, 1913, at the City Theater of Královské Vinohrady), *Pán bez kvartýru* (The Gentleman Without a Residence; 1914 at the Theater Varieté — supplementary film *České hrady a zámky* [Czech Castles and Palaces]), or *To se musí vidět!* (July 18, 1914, again at the Smíchov Arena). After 1918, at first in the '20s, for example at the Vinohrady stages (a play *Pan* on February 26, 1919, *Zločin v horské boudě* [Crime in a Mountain Hut] on June 5, 1921, *Spací vůz Praha–Paříž* [Sleeping House Prague–Paris] on June 7, 1924), at the Industrial Palace (*Nová Oresteia* [The New Oresteia] in April 1923) and in the Dada Theater (*Poutník* [The Wanderer] on April 11, 1928). The film was also used in a creative way during the '30s by E. F. Burian in productions at his theater D 34. After 1945, director Alfréd Radok and scenographer Josef Svoboda (*Šamberk's Jedenácté přikázání* [Eleventh Commandment] at the Theater of State Film in 1950), whose work on these production techniques, together with their colleagues, culminated at the end of the '50s with *Laterna magika*, where the multimedia fusion of theater and film became its foundation principal. A whole other story in theater is the use of slide shows (At the National Theater in Prague since 1900). See Birgus, "Počátky využití filmu na českém jevišti", pp. 36–42. V. Birgus, "Filmy Čenka Zahradníčka v Burianových inscenacích", *Panoráma*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1976), pp. 48–61. Zdeněk Hedbávný, *Alfréd Radok. Zpráva o jednom osudu* (Praha: Národní divadlo – Divadelní ústav, 1994). Eva Stehlíková (ed.), *Alfréd Radok mezi filmem a divadlem* (Praha: AMU – Národní filmový archiv, 2007). Černý – Klosová (eds.), *Dějiny českého divadla III. díl*. František Černý – Adolf Scherl (eds.), *Dějiny českého divadla IV. díl*. Činoherní divadlo v Československé republice a za nacistické okupace (Praha: Academia, 1983). Vladimír Just, *Divadlo v totalitním systému* (Praha: Academia, 2010).

hop and cardinal Lev Skrbenský from Hřiště is approaching the unfinished foundations of the St. Anthony of Padua church. After a brief preparation and a prayer, the archbishop and his suite consecrate the foundation stone and place it within the church foundation. A consecration of the entire length of the foundation walls follows. After the ceremony, the religious dignitary gets into a carriage and leaves.

This is a description of an actuality from Jan Kříženecký's estate, which is also looked after by the Národní filmový archiv.⁴⁵⁾ Originally, this material was stored under the name *Kladení základního kamene k Palackého pomníku v Praze* (Laying of the Foundation Stone for the Palacký Monument in Prague), dated to 1898. In this year, a foundation stone to Stanislav Sucharda's large monument to František Palacký was placed at the Palacký Square in the New Town, Prague. After all, this event is captured by yet another Kříženecký picture, *Slavnost zakládání pomníku Františka Palackého* (Foundation Ceremony of the František Palacký Monument).

Several circumstances counter the assertion that the film is depicting the laying of the foundation stone for the Palacký Monument.⁴⁶⁾ Neither press articles nor other literature mention the existence of several records of the foundation stone placement to this memorial. The surrounding housing area in the picture is different from the waterfront and the area near Palacký Square, and also the vastness of the construction site is not proportional to the size of the monument. Furthermore, the recorded archbishop does not resemble Cardinal František Schönborn, who would

otherwise, shortly before his death, have attended this consecration in 1898. Of use was the option to examine the film in greater detail in high definition resolution, where a sign on a fence in the background of one scene read "Stavba Jubilejního k-" ("The building site of the jubilee ch-"; the remainder of the sign — the word "kostel" ["church"] — was covered by a column). Provided that the film was indeed made in 1898, it was plausible that this could be the Jubilee Church of St. Prokop in Žižkov, the foundation stone of which was placed on October 30, 1898, on the occasion of Emperor Franz Josef's fifty years on the throne.⁴⁷⁾ However, the surrounding housing area does not match.

Considering the era, another issue is the excessive length of the film. The Lumière Cinématographe owned by Jan Kříženecký in 1898 was able to contain only seventeen meters of material. Later, probably not until 1907, it was adjusted and able to contain eighty meters, which is the approximate length of the film.⁴⁸⁾ The picture is comprised of several shots, taken at various locations, and the cameraman is already using panorama, turning the camera on a tripod from side to side horizontally. Such expressive means in Kříženecký's films from 1898 have not been found — back then, records were reduced to short, one-shot static takes. This difference is even further noticeable in comparison with *Foundation Ceremony of the František Palacký Monument*, which should be depicting the same event.

The key step to identifying the film was the recognition of the house numbers 966/11, 967/12, and 990/4, which still stand at Strossmayer Square in Prague VII, Holešovice, in the neigh-

45) The film's duplicate negative as well as the duplicate positive and combined prints in lengths 72 and 69.6 meters are stored at the Národní filmový archiv. At the end of the film material, there is an approximately 5-second panorama scene of the Old Town Square (view from the Old Town Hall towards Dlouhá Street), which has nothing in common with the previous event.

46) The incentive that this was not the correct event came from the Institute of Art History at the Czech Academy of Sciences.

47) "Kostel sv. Prokopa. Římskokatolická farnost Žižkov", <http://farnost-zizkov.cz/?p=3475> [accessed 7 October 2018].

48) Štábla, *Český kinematograf Jana Kříženeckého*, pp. 26, 29, 70, 125–129, 137–140.

borhood of the Church of St. Anthony of Padua. The foundation stone of the Jubilee Church of St. Anthony of Padua in Holešovice was consecrated by Prague archbishop and cardinal Lev Skrbenský from Hříště. The event took place on October 25, 1908, at 9 a.m.,⁴⁹⁾ on the occasion of celebrating Emperor Franz Josef's sixty years on the throne.⁵⁰⁾ Prior to this, the building foundation, underpinnings, and pillars up to the height of the future church floors had already been built and were visible in the film during the consecration.⁵¹⁾ Aside from the archbishop, in attendance was also Prague Mayor Karel Groš, many distinguished officials and members of the monarchy, as well as representatives of clerical orders, the armed forces, public figures, and also ordinary citizens. After prayers and the consecration, the foundation stone was set inside the left pillar of the church apse together with the commemorative deed in a copper case. The consecration of the church walls followed.⁵²⁾ Hence, the film does not depict the consecration of the foundation stone of the František Palacký Monument, but the

consecration of a foundation stone and the foundations for the Holešovice church.

Ten years later, at the Anniversary Exhibition of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce (May — October 1908), Kříženecký repeated his formula from the Exhibition of Architecture and Engineering. Together with his colleague Maxmilián Kock, he opened a "cinematographic theater" The Royal Biograph Co. in a travelling cinema of Louis Praiss and his own "advertisementgraph" right in the open air of the exhibition grounds. Aside from the scenes for and about the exhibition, he also showed brief reports from Prague.⁵³⁾ The film depicting the consecration ceremony for the foundation stone of the Church of St. Anthony of Padua was most likely shot and shown during the last days of the exhibition, which finished a mere six days later.

The film was given an artificial name,⁵⁴⁾ *Consecration Ceremony for the Foundation Stone of the Jubilee Church of St. Anthony in Prague VII*, and dated to 1908.⁵⁵⁾ This name was used by a period newspaper⁵⁶⁾ to label the given event and corre-

49) "Nový kostel v Praze", *Plzeňské listy*, vol. 44, no. 241 (1908), p. 4.

50) That is why the church used the adjective "jubilee".

51) The neo-gothic church by the architect František Mikš was, due to lack of money, not built until 1912–1914 and consecrated by Archbishop Skrbenský, coincidentally on the day of the sixth anniversary of the placement of the foundation stone, October 25, 1914. "Slavnostní posvěcení jubilejního chrámu sv. Antonína v Holešovicích-Bubnech", *Věstník obecní Královského hlavního města Prahy*, vol. 21, no. 19 (1914), p. 367. "Historie farnosti. Farnost svatého Antonína z Padovy", <https://www.svatyantonin.cz/historie-farnosti> [accessed 7 October 2018]. Made for this occasion, and still preserved, was a short, four-and-a-half-minute long picture *Vysvěcení kostela sv. Antonína* (Consecration of the Church of St. Anthony, 1914).

52) "Ku svěcení základního kamene jubilejního kostela sv. Antonína v Praze VII.", *Národní politika*, vol. 26, no. 293 (1908), p. 2. "Svěcení základního kamene jubilejního kostela sv. Antonína v Praze VII.", *Národní listy*, vol. 48, no. 293 (1908), p. 3. "Slavnost položení základního kamene k jubilejnímu chrámu v Praze VII.", *Národní listy*, vol. 48, no. 295 (1908), p. 2.

53) Stábla, *Český kinematograf Jana Kříženeckého*, pp. 145–174. "Životopis Jana Kříženeckého", Filmový přehled, <http://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs/person/127419/jan-krizenecky> [accessed 27 September 2018].

54) Jan Kříženecký's films were never firmly named. During various screenings at exhibitions, they would be announced using different titles. This was also happening in the period newspapers, that is if the film title was mentioned at all. The film materials themselves did not contain any titles. The working method to name a film by one name in the very first subtitle came into practice gradually and in Czech film did not start until the nineteen aughts.

55) Even the original film material title, *Kladení základního kamene k Palackého pomníku v Praze* (Laying of the Foundation Stone for the Palacký Monument in Prague), was artificially named and incorrectly attributed. Therefore, a film with such a name most likely never existed.

56) "Svěcení základního kamene jubilejního kostela sv. Antonína v Praze VII.", *Národní listy*, vol. 48, no. 293 (1908), p. 3.

sponds the most with the content of the picture. We had no idea about the existence of a film on the consecration of the church in Holešovice as part of Jan Kříženecký's collection. It was also never mentioned by any period newspaper, commemorative article, or period study.

Jaroslav Lopour

The Best Number

Epic farce with songs and dance of four parts with prelude (interlude Scandal and the theater, 1. Tajnosti hájů v Opatii (The Secrets of the Meadows in Opatia), 2. Hrůzostrašná noc (Terrifying Night), 3. Sešli se před soudem (Rendezvous at Court), 4. Maškary v nesnázích / Smíření na redutě (Mascarades in Trouble / Atonement in Reduta). Original name *Eine feine Nummer*. At the Smíchov Arena, 1902 and 1904.

Written by Julius Freund, free adaptation by Leopold Krenn and Carl Lindau, translated by Josef Kubík, music composed by Victor Holländer and Leo Fall, directed by Josef Kubík / Jan Kubík, orchestra conductor Jaroslav Hess, scenes Josef Kubík, film insert *The Best Number* Jan Kříženecký.

Cast: Jan Zdrůbecký (pastry chef Dominik Princ), Joza Hadrboľcová (Emma Langeová alias Princess Lahora / Ella Langová alias Princess Lahova), Alois Charvát (artist August Strudel alias Prince Sahib), Marie Groszová (artist without contract Berta Pejsková/Rejsková), Emanuel Krpálek / Otakar Ledvinka (director), Bohumil Víšek / Emanuel Krpálek (stage manager Bouček), Ladislav Šírek / Josef Kramer (Sada Jacco), Jožka Vanerová / Klára Košařová (Kavakami), Antonín Milý / Karel Fučík (police officer), Marie Švestková (Božena, Prince's wife), Václav Beneš / Josef Kubík (judicial candidate Jaromil Daneš), Bedřich Splavec / Jan Ferramonti (banker Mayer), Jan Potocký / Antonín Křepela (baron Jiříčka from Jiříčkov), Jaroslav Sedláček / Václav Beneš (spa doctor Dr. Krejčí), Otto Starý / Otakar Ledvinka (Earl of Peckenthal), Václav Görner / Eduard [Ferdinand] Valečka (hotelier), Alois Ludvík (porter), Ruda Hállová-Kubíková (young fisherwoman Ninetta), Otakar Ledvinka / Tomáš Jiroťka (fisherman Beppo/Peppo), Jindřich Klasný / Alois Ludvík (fisherman Niccolo), Emanuel Krpálek (theater agent Skokan), Tonča Strobachová (maid at Daneš Malča), Josef Kubík / Jan Kubík (councilman Truhlíček), Karel Potocký /

Josef Kysel (associate judge Houba), Karel Tůma / Karel Fišer (associate judge Vosátko), Alois Strobach (court assistant Čečetka), Žofie Boušková (Max Strudel's son), Eduard [Ferdinand] Valečka / Vincenc Klouček (controller Tichý), Václav Drobný (Volavka), Tomáš Jírotka (dance master Novotný), B. Zahradková (lady), Antonín Krása (committee).

Premiere 6. 10. 1902; known re-runs 7. 10., 8. 10., 10. 10., 11. 10., 12. 10., 13. 10., 15. 10., 17. 10., 19. 10., 26. 10. 1902, 2. 11., 9. 11. 1902; show re-started 28. 2. 1904; known re-runs 5. 3., 6. 3., 13. 3., 19. 3. 1904.

The light scenes produced by a cinematograph machine were provided by the Lumière company in Lyon.

The cinematograph for the light scene shows in the interlude was borrowed by and directed by J. Pokorný.

film insert), 10. 8., 11. 8., 12. 8. (two shows), 14. 8., 15. 8. (two shows, for the first time with the second film insert), 16. 8., 17. 8., 19. 8. (two shows), 21. 8., 22. 8., 23. 8., 24. 8., 26. 8. (two shows), 28. 8., 30. 8. 1906, 6. 9., 8. 9., 9. 9., 14. 9., 16. 9., 30. 9. 1906, 4. 10., 7. 10., 11. 10., 12. 10. 1906, 4. 11. 1906, 9. 12. 1906, 17. 2. 1907.

Satan's Last Trip

Epic fantasy farce of three parts and eight scenes. Smíchov Arena, 1906–1907.

Written by James Harry and Edward Goulton, translated by Vilém Táborský, music composed by William Bell, direction Antonín Vaverka, scenes František Petránek, hall in Monaco made by E. J. Reichert, costumes Jan Reiss, stage props Josef Koukal, light effects directed by Vilém Kinčler, choreography Františka Hergetová, film inserts *Satan's Railway Ride* Jan Kříženecký and Antonín Pech.

Cast: Antonín Vaverka (Satan), Alois Charvát (comedian Alois Charvát, Satan's helper), Věra Skalská (village girl Hanička), Magda Škrdlíková / Marie Šimanovská (village girl Anička), Marie Zdrůbecká (Satan's wife), Jan Zdrůbecký (teacher Tobiašek), Jindřich Edl (Krušina from Krušinov), Marie Šimanovská (Márinka), Alois Dražil (bored English man) and others.

Premiere 4. 8. 1906; known re-runs 5. 8. (two shows), 7. 8., 8. 8., 9. 8. (for the first time with the