

# theatre . s k

## SET DESIGN

The works of Slovak set designers significantly influence and impact the development of the Slovak theatre in a decisive manner. The artistic quality of these works reaches beyond Slovakia and gains international attention and awards. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Slovak National Theatre is also the anniversary of the Slovak set design. The establishment of the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava is closely associated with the first attempts at creating the set decorations. In its infancy, the set design as a profession lacked backing and the Slovak theatre made do with artists, painters and architects from the Czech artistic environment.



Set design: **Ludovít Hradský**  
William Shakespeare: **HAMLET**  
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava  
4 February 1925  
Directed by Miloš Nový  
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project

The basic pillars of the Slovak set design were primarily laid by architect **Ludovít Hradský**, whose work influenced its formation and the following development. His most significant set design work was the scenic design for Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in 1925. He used architectural principles to create a functioning set.

In the 1930s, the development of set design was also influenced by the scenic concepts of a Czech architect, set designer and teacher **František Tröster**. His monumental stage elements presented in various dynamic and perspective views.

The occasional hosting of set designers changed by the arrival of **Ladislav Vychodil** to the position of the resident set designer of the Slovak National Theatre. Vychodil contributed to the foundation of the College of Set Design at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, which he headed for many years. He created a concept and built professional craft shops for the production of world-class stage decorations and costumes. He educated three generations of set and costume designers, through whom his message and heritage live to this day.



**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: EUGENE ONEGIN**  
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 8 March 1952  
Directed by Nikolai Severianovich Dombrovski  
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project

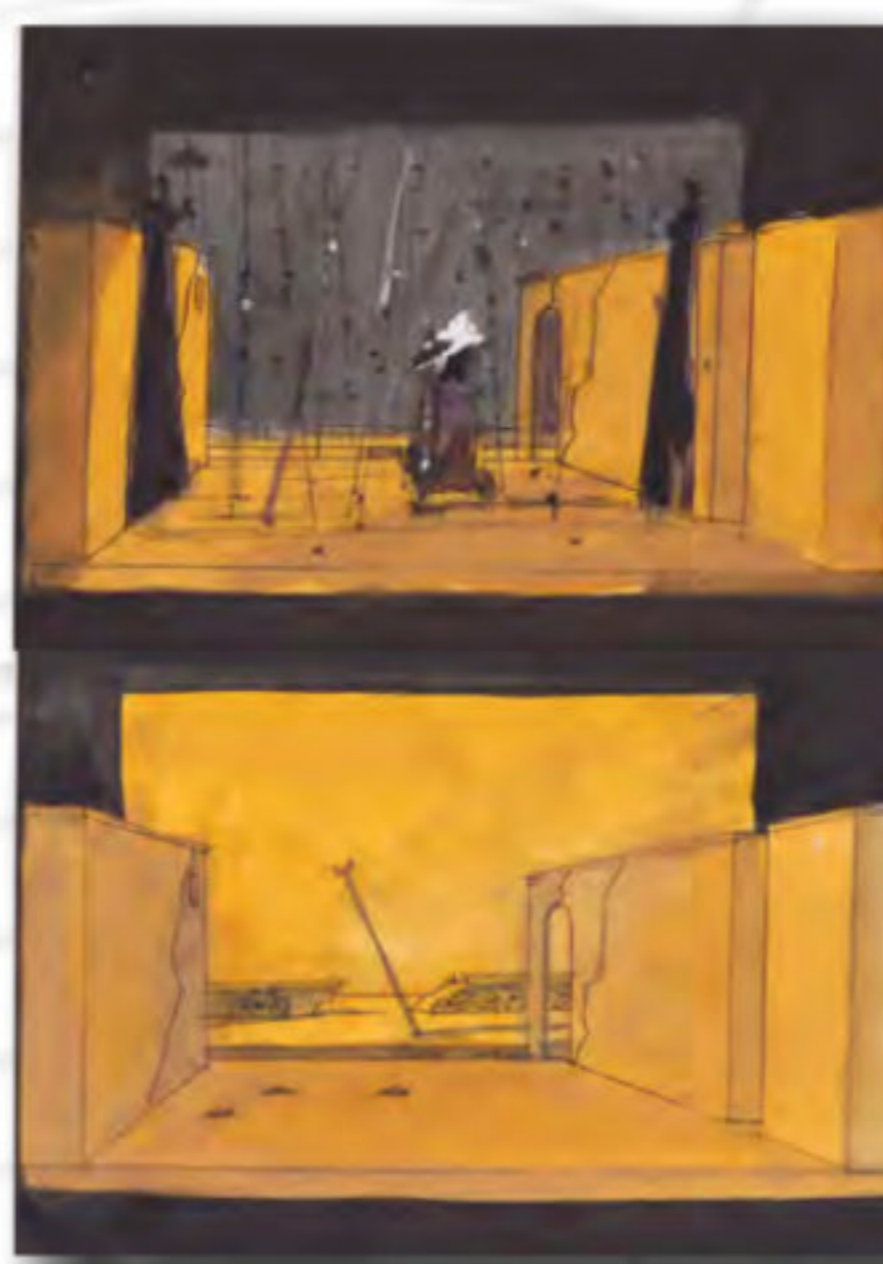


Set design **Otto Šujan**  
Franz Lehár: **THE MERRY WIDOW**  
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 14 December 1985  
Directed by Branislav Kriška  
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project

**Otto Šujan, Ján Hanák and Pavol Mária Gábor** were among the first three graduates of set design in Slovakia. Otto Šujan understood the scenic space through architectural visualization. One of his basic principles included the connection of the stage with the audience.

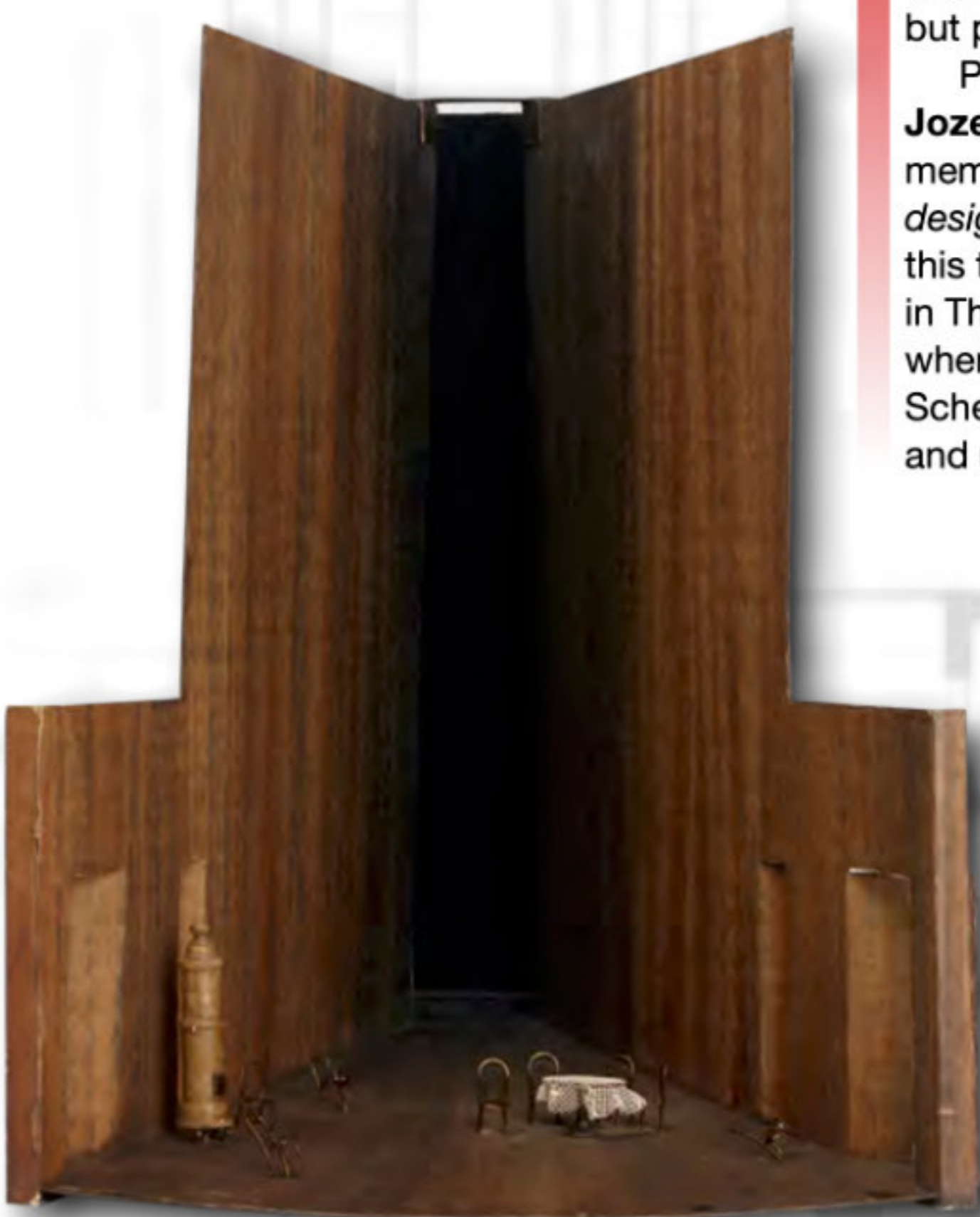
**Vladimír Suchánek** often used monumental concepts and spatial modelling. He created an impressive scene for the Dostoyevsky's play *The Idiot* (Slovak National Theatre Bratislava, 1965), where he used colour in a simple, but plastic space.

Prominent Slovak set designers **Jozef Ciller** and **Ján Zavarský** are the members of the so-called *action set design* generation. Their scenic works of this type in their purest form appeared in Theatre Goose on a String in Brno, where together with director Petr Scherhauer they created remarkable and unconventional scenic solutions.



Set design **Ján Zavarský**  
**Federico García Lorca: YERMA**  
Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra 14 December 1996  
Directed by Marián Pecko  
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project

Autor scénického návrhu **Vladimír Suchánek**  
Fiodor Michajlovič Dostojevskij: **IDIOT**  
Slovenské národné divadlo 9. 10. 1965  
Réžia Pavol Haspra  
Foto Múzeum Divadelného ústavu / Projekt Digitálne múzeum

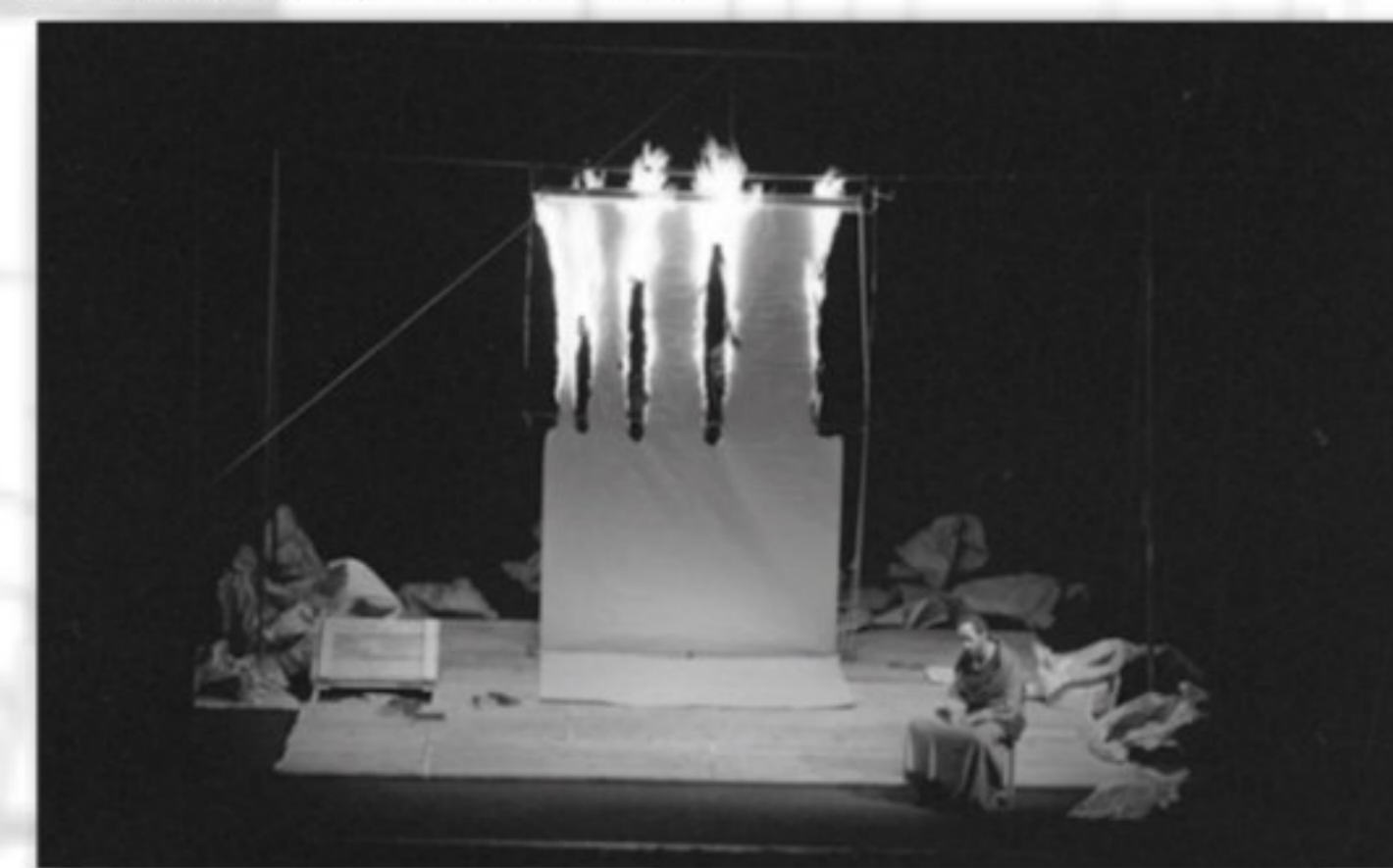


Vychodil's students also included **Štefan Hudák**, **Tomáš Berka** and **Milan Ferencčík**. The multi-talented **Tomáš Berka** was the set designer for the New Scene Theatre in Bratislava where he created many posters that significantly influenced the development of the Slovak theatre poster. In addition, he composed scenic and film music. The scenic design of **Štefan Hudák** was heavily characterized by collage and assemblies created from real objects. **Milan Ferencčík**, particularly in cooperation with director Jozef Bednárík, developed a style of significantly accentuated artistic vision.



Scale model **Tomáš Berka**  
Vanda Facunová – Gustáv Kyselica – Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: **ABOUT PEOPLE, FLOWERS AND DOGS**  
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 3 July 1982  
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project

Set design **Jozef Ciller**  
**Bertolt Brecht: LIFE OF GALILEO**  
Theatre of the Slovak National Uprising Martin (today Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin), 19 January 1979  
Directed by Ivan Petrovič  
Photo Jaroslav Barák/Theatre Institute Archive



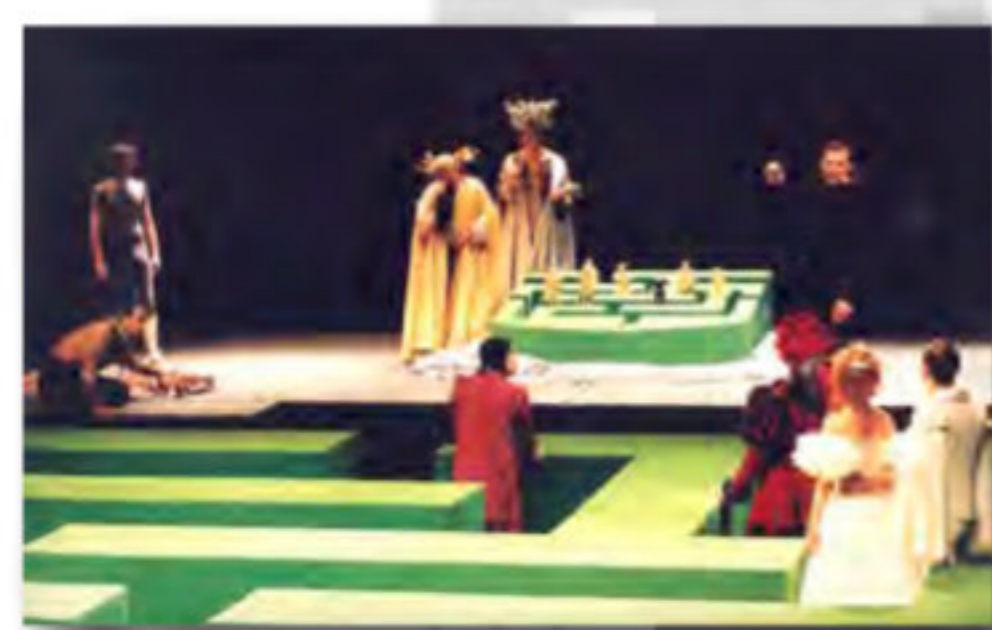
Set design **Štefan Hudák**  
**Ivan Stodola: THE SHEPHERD'S WIFE**  
Alexander Duchnovič Theatre Prešov 27 June 1998  
Directed by Jaroslav Sisák  
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project

Scale model **Milan Ferencčík**  
**Eugen Suchoň: THE WHIRLPOOL**  
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 9 December 1999  
Directed by Juraj Jakubisko  
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project



The scenic concepts in the creations of **Aleš Votava** were colour, space and light. His imagination lied in striking colour compositions, achieving remarkable spatial illusions.

**Boris Kudlička** cooperates with world renown directors. He created scenes for famous opera houses in Washington, New York, Frankfurt, Prague, Tokyo and others. His works are characteristic in their modern scenic expression, totally abstract design and monumental understanding of theatrical space



William Shakespeare: **THE TEMPEST**  
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 13 May 2000  
Directed by Peter Mikulík  
Photo Jana Nemčoková/Theatre Institute Archive



Christoph Willibald Gluck: **ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE**  
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 5 December 2008  
Directed by: Mariusz Treliński  
Photo Jozef Barinka/Theatre Institute Archive