

Dezső Kapás: The Beautiful Life of Kázmér Rezeda  
(Vig Theatre, first presented on February 8th 1976)

Gyula Krudy (1878-1933) has been a unique figure in Hungarian literature. His enormous lifework cannot be classified into any category. A sight or movement started long sequences of thought and bizarre associations and references in his mind. He moved forward and backward in time at will when this was not at all a general phenomenon in literature; he merged realistic, symbolic and historical figures. His language was characteristic: colourful and picturesque, his sentences were winding in endless epical structures.

Dezső Kapás staged in the Vig Theatre Krudy's play, The Red Post-Chaise eight years ago, and at the time the performance had been a subject of heated debates. This time the basic material was Krudy's last novel, The Beautiful Life of Kázmér Rezeda (original title: This happened in 1914), and some other works of the same author. The inscenation proved his profound knowledge of Krudy's style and his careful and thorough adaptation. The action spans two years from 1912 to 1914, outbreak of the first

world war, and deals with the adventures of the journalist Kázmér Rezeda, one of Krudy's favourite heroes. The scene is peacetime Budapest with its pretty women, pimps, big bourgeois, bars, whorehouses and cynical or dreamy weak characters incapable of any action.

It is terribly difficult to put Krudy's novels on the stage: The Beautiful Life of Kázmér Rezeda is no exception. The value of Krudy's writings lies in their epic character, their descriptions, interior monologues, streams of thought, accumulated adjectives and comparisons which cannot be turned into dramatic forms. Krudy's world had to be built up with other means: the scenery, costumes and other paraphernalia evoke his descriptions and some of his interior monologues have been built into the text.

The scene is covered with draperies as in museums or waxworks to protect the exhibits from dust, and the accessories of the "show", contemporary objects or persons emerge from underneath them. Every time the objects or persons start to function in the play the huge pendulum clock in the middle of the scene stops, as if to convey a self-critical vision of Krudy, and coming back to earth. László Drégely's scenery presents a complete stock of Krudy-requisites.

The performance's best quality is the refined and homogenous tone of acting. Iván Darvas is most probably the ideal Kázmér Rezeda; Éva Ruttkai makes of Fruzsina Császár's somewhat mosaic-like figure an entity and Irén Psota as guest actress creates the play's most human figure in the role of Johanna-Johnny.