

## THE HELLERAU THEATRE by Paul Claudel

The theatre is a huge rectangle, with no fixed stage. The walls and ceiling are made of white cloth, behind which banks of electric lights are set out in a regular arrangement. No source of naked light is visible. All the lights are run from the back of the house by a console that allows a single person to create all the variations and all the different distributions of light and shadings that seem necessary. The ceiling, which breaks up into movable screens, more or less functions as a battery of light-projectors. Light is directed by that set of screens, and therefore acts as desired, either directly and transparently, or by reflection, and lends itself to



every imaginable combination of intensity, movement, and direction. Instead of the brutal glare of the footlights, which flattens the actors against the backdrop and makes every stage picture into a gaudy tintype as discolored as it is loud, here we have a kind of milky, Elysian atmosphere that restores the third dimension to its neglected place of honor. It makes every body into a statue, whose planes, shadows, and relief's are brought out and molded as if by the hand of some consummate artist. There too, just as music does in the Dalcroze method, light animates and brings to life the being whom it envelops; it enters into collaboration with him. Light here is a creation animated by an unencumbered vitality, by a higher order of life; it is a far cry from the pale outlining of empty, painted simulacra that we are used to seeing on the stage."