



*The Barbican Theatre—new home of The Royal Shakespeare Company*

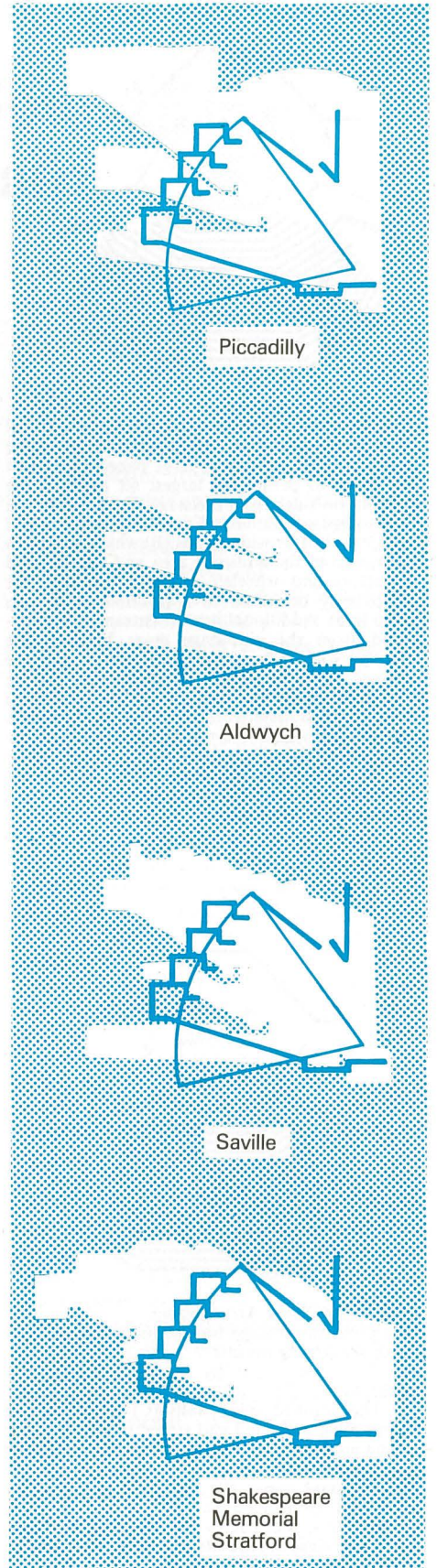
which do not overhang the levels below); the width of the hall is unusually large and its depth back to front is correspondingly small, so that the atmosphere is more intimate than would be expected. The height between the lowest level of excavation and the sculpture court was limited and this caused problems over obtaining a volume within the hall large enough for good acoustics. The problem was solved by taking into the auditorium the structural depth of the beams which would normally be concealed above a ceiling. The massive concrete beams of the Barbican Hall are exposed and visible, but their hard smooth surfaces were themselves acoustically dangerous because they could give rise to echoes. To overcome this risk and to encourage diffusion of sound clouds of plastic spheres, some of them containing

lights, were hung high up in the roof spaces and they are a distinctive part of the architecture of the hall; An acoustical model, constructed of heavy varnished timber, was made to study the effects of these spheres and other acoustical properties of the hall.

The Theatre is the most architecturally original space in the Centre. The number of seats is almost exactly the same as in the Olivier Theatre and the form of the stage is very similar in both, but there any resemblance between the two theatres ends, for the Barbican theatre is designed with the single objective of placing all the seats as close to the stage as possible; in the event none of the 1166 seats is further than 65 feet from the 'point of command' at the front of the stage. The galleries, of which there are three, contain only two rows of



*Test concert given by the L.S.O. to an invited audience.*



This diagram shows the Barbican Theatre in Outline Section superimposed on 3 London Theatres and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon all of which have about the same seating capacity.