

Stars in their Courses

Most of us have, at some time or other, started collections of varying types – from the schoolboy, with his football cards, to the genuine collector, spending thousands of pounds acquiring first editions, or priceless antiques.

A collection that costs little to accrue has an added attraction, when most of the world is poor, and getting poorer. Many years ago, I started a collection of theatre programmes, which I shall hand on to my grandchildren to enjoy.

There is no need to attend all the performances, in person, once your mania is known. Most people are willing to hand over used programmes – after all, most of them find their way into the waste-paper basket, once the performance is over.

Apart from monetary value, old programmes offer a great deal of interest to the reader. Plotting the career of a star, from 1934, when I started my collection, to the present day, I find that Muriel Pavlov was a child star with the late Marie Tempest, in *Dear Octopus*, as far back as 1938. And Rex Harrison, Roland Culver and Robert Flemyng, and Kay Hammond, after training at the Liverpool Playhouse, which has given us so many stars, appeared in *French Without Tears*, at the Criterion Theatre, in 1934.

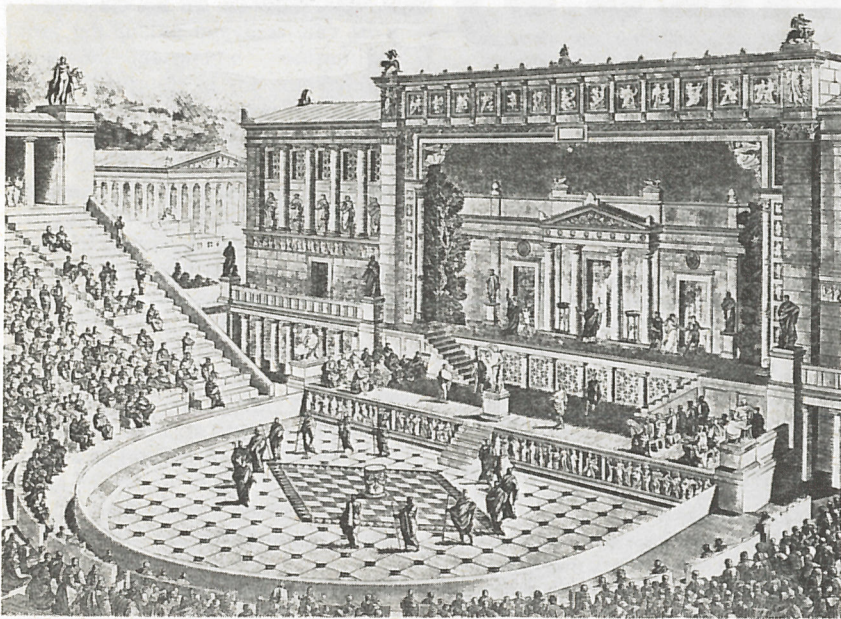
Television has brought so many of these stars into our sitting rooms nightly, so it is doubly interesting to read in the “theatre notes” of how many actors who are now household names began their careers. Peter Barkworth had a small part in *Roar Like a Dove*, in 1957, and in the same year Megs Jenkins, who also started at the Liverpool Playhouse, starred with Arthur Lowe, in *A Dead Secret*, at the Piccadilly; while a very youthful Moray Watson was in *The Grass is Greener*, one of the late Hugh Williams’ plays, at St. Martin’s Theatre.

When she was a very young actress, Juliet Mills played in *Five Finger Exercise*, at the Comedy, in 1958, and Edward Woodward was in *The Rattle of a Simple Man*, with Colin Douglas and Sheila Hancock, in 1962. Wilfred Hyde White and Wendy Craig were together in *The Wrong Side of the Park*, Derek Nimmo, Ronnie Barker, Una Stubbs and Moira Lister were all in London productions as long ago as 1959.

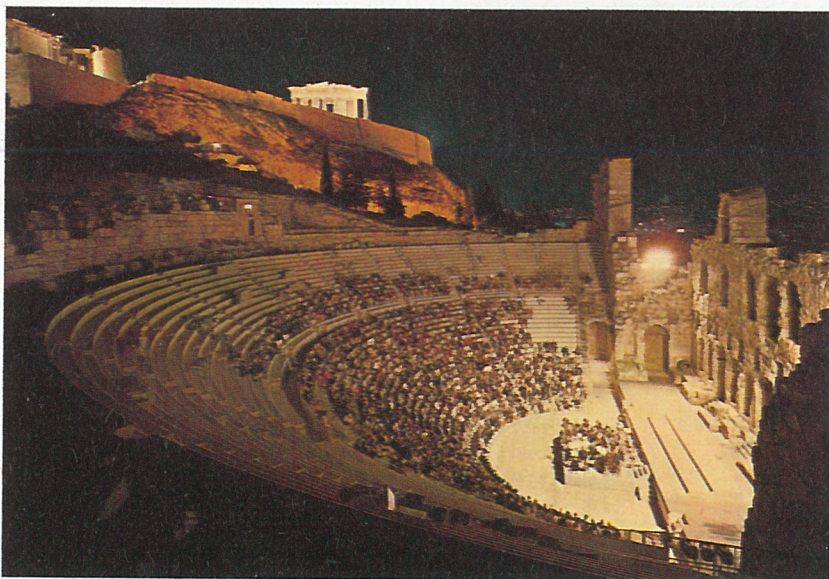
Eileen Gray



Theatre of Dionysus



Was the Theatre of Dionysus like this?



The Odeon of Herodes Atticus