

Maureen Hurst runs the office.

The practice has been kept small as a matter of deliberate policy.

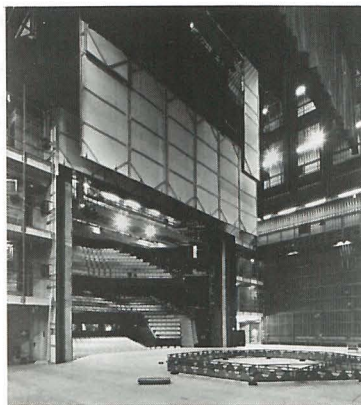
## SCHOOLS

In the early days work came from clients in Britain. The GLC sought advice for the technical systems for the Cockpit Theatre in 1966 followed by other education authorities, the Ayr and Falkirk Colleges of Education in 1969 and Dundee College in 1975. Also in 1975 the New University of Ulster commissioned the concept development, brief and technical planning for a 420 seat public theatre and in 1979 Oundle School required a feasibility study and design and technical planning advice. In 1985 the University College of Wales in Swansea required concept development and preparation of the brief for a 350 seat adaptable theatre-cum-conference-cum-concerting hall and advice on management, planning and technical design.

Probably the most interesting of these educationally orientated projects came in 1981. This was the commission from the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club and the Hong Kong Government to devise and produce the design brief for the accommodation for the newly founded Academy of Performing Arts. Facilities for teaching drama, dance, music and technical arts to 700 full time students had to be provided, plus a main opera house, drama theatre, studio theatre, orchestra studio, recital hall and TV studio suitable for use both by the students and by visiting professional companies. The design brief was used for an Architectural Competition for which Carr & Angier acted as technical assessors and subsequently, theatre Consultants with wide ranging responsibilities for general and technical details. This project was completed in 1985.

## PROFESSIONAL THEATRE

Work for professional theatre and opera has included the Clwyd County arts Complex, Mold in 1976. This has a 570 seat theatre, a 250 seat studio theatre, a 130 seat cinema, a CCTV studio and supporting facilities. In 1974 Carr & Angier were consultants for the ill fated Edinburgh Opera House, abandoned before construction started, though two further projects for the Edinburgh Council, the Royal Lyceum in 1978 and the Kings Theatre in 1982-5 were successfully completed. The next big commission was for Plymouth City Council who required a multi function centre for major national touring companies, a resident repertory company and for concerts and conferences. With architect Peter Moro and other specialists a variable capacity theatre was devised with a moving ceiling and variable acoustics. In 1984 Swansea City Council decided to develop the Grand Theatre, Swansea, to form an Arts Centre. Carr & Angier undertook the original study for the total provision for the Arts in Swansea and developed it into its present three-stage plan involving rebuilding the



*The stage and auditorium of the Theatre Royal, Plymouth, during preparations for the opening performance in May 1982.*

*Photo: Martin Charles/Architectural Press*

stage tower in phase 1 around the original structure while still in daily use, improvements to the dressing rooms and finishing off the stage alterations as phase 2, and finally renovation and restructuring of the auditorium to improve sightlines and acoustics and stage lighting.

Most recently, Carr & Angier have completed work on studies for technical facilities for an Arts Centre in Seoul, Korea; planning for major renovations to the 680 seat Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham; and have been appointed technical co-ordinators for the Leeds Playhouse after advising the winning team in the Architectural competition for this work.

## CONCERT HALLS AND CONFERENCE CENTRES

Carr & Angier are also in demand for consultation in the field of Conference Centre and Concert Hall design. They were involved in planning and technical installation design for The Maltings at Snape in 1970 (Twice! The fire which destroyed the building immediately after the first opening gave them the rare opportunity to repeat and add further improvements to an already much praised design.); technical planning, design and installation at the Harrogate Conference Complex in 1982; design concept development, planning and design and supervision of the technical installation for the Cardiff Concert Hall, also in 1982; a development study for a concert hall for Peterborough begun in 1984; and preparation of briefing information for convention use, large scale performances and specialist technical installation design for the Hong Kong International Exhibition and Conference Centre.

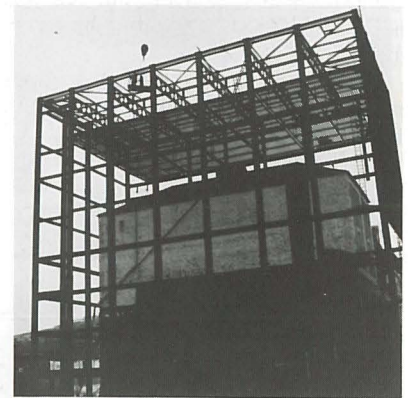
## RESPONSIBILITIES

Perhaps the easiest part of the work of a theatre consultant for the outsider to understand is the responsibility for technical installation. Flying, lighting, stage management and sound, have to be properly provided for and are clearly the province of the theatre consultant. Dressing rooms, scene docks, prop stores, and workshops have to be equipped and someone has to make sure

that the architect, mechanical engineer, electrical engineer and other members of the project design team are properly briefed. This leads to the questions—who decides on the number of dressing rooms, whether an on-site workshop is, in fact, necessary and other fundamental decisions of this type? Normally, these will be some of the more important duties of the theatre consultant.

Imagine you are an influential member of a big city council. You want to improve the city's amenities and reputation in the field of arts and theatre. There is local money available and more from central government and the EEC. How much will it cost to do something worthwhile, and who will pin down on paper all the details that have to be approved before the scheme can begin? The answers, of course, come from a committee, but among the experts advising the committee there has to be an expert on theatre. You employ a theatre consultant.

Naturally, in the world of politics, big ideas often begin without any thought of detailed solutions. The big idea may only be to outdo a neighbouring city, or perhaps



*The Grand Theatre, Swansea, in January 1983, showing the new Fly Tower being constructed around the existing stage house whilst performances were still continuing without interruption. Photo: Carr & Angier*

there is real demand for more and better theatre, ballet, opera or music. Somehow the committee has to organise its priorities, check over the detailed consequences and estimate costs. If touring ballet is important, which companies might be available and what facilities will they require? If the idea is to provide a new home for the already prestigious local symphony orchestra how many performances can they find audiences for and what should be done to make the building attractive to other uses to boost the overall revenue? These and many, many other serious questions have to be answered and most of the answers will require the expert knowledge of the theatre consultant.

This article is not about the art of theatre consultancy but it is important to realise how deeply the consultant may have to go in investigating the basic needs of the client. Martin Carr usually deals with this aspect of the partnership's work and he stresses the importance he attaches to the theatre consultant's contribution to getting agreement on policy before detailed planning is attempted. However, once policy has been settled the partnership expect to be closely