

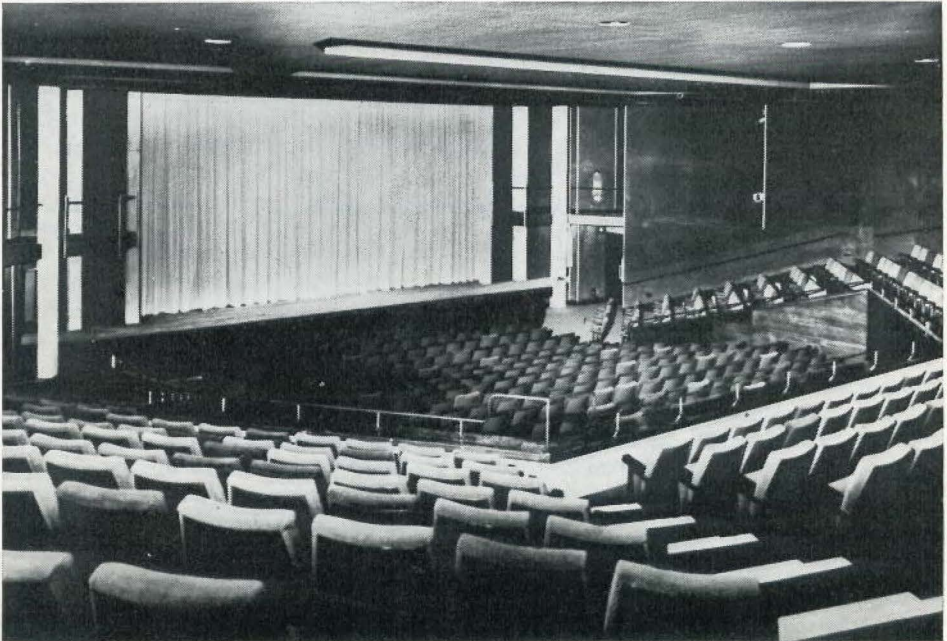
hurry on to the third of our theatres.

The situation at Swindon is quite different. Both Peter Dews at Birmingham and Colin George at Sheffield had strong ideas as to what they wanted their existing repertory companies to move into. Also Swindon has a population of 100,000 compared with the million and half million respectively of the other two. The Wyvern theatre has to be the centre of the cultural activity of the town; there is no other. In consequence it houses the Arts Centre as well and forms the first section of the Civic Centre which is part of a plan to shift the town centre away from the famous railway workshop area. Those who like me only know Swindon from the railway line get a big surprise.

It would appear that this is no case of a reluctant local council being compelled to fork out for someone else's enthusiasms—quite the contrary—the driving force came from within the Council itself. The Wyvern

theatre assumes such a varied programme that it is literally multi-purpose but wisely not multi-form. If of the two theatres described earlier I seem to prefer the thrust stage, and I do, then equally I have no hesitation in saying that Swindon is right to go for a proscenium in this the latest version of the touring theatre. This term must not be misunderstood for there are workshops, and amateur shows at any rate will originate in the town. The stage has to provide facilities to make its visitors feel at home. It simply is not reasonable to expect one night or even weekly stands to have to cope with an out-of-the-way type of stage. Alwin Nikolais puts it well "What my company wants is a standard theatre." There are 652 seats and a proscenium 35 ft. wide by 20 ft. high—we have collected a number of theatres of round about this capacity.

The auditorium of the Wyvern provides its own solution to carrying this number of



*Wyvern Theatre, Swindon.*