

Billingham, let me recommend this slim screen hanging in the obvious position—where the Number One spot bar can be brailed underneath it.

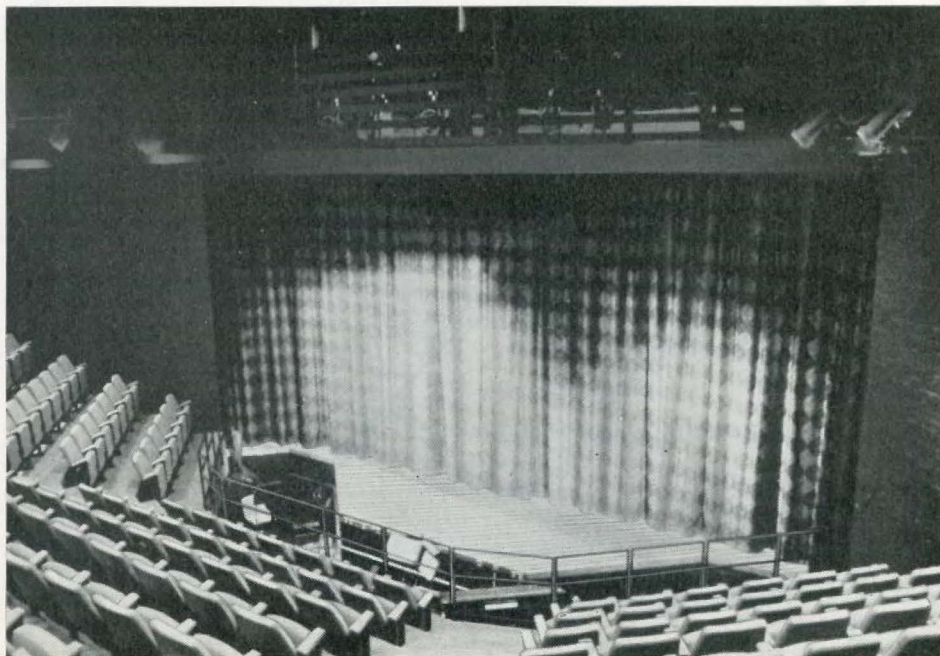
The main auditorium has 497 seats in a single-tiered sweep of 15 rows and is in the fashionable, dark-walled, severe style with intense downlighters on the seats. As a good lighting man should, I have always advocated this style but am now frankly beginning to have second thoughts, for as I get older I am increasingly willing to put up with some stage lighting scatter if the auditorium will let me enjoy those anticipatory magic moments when we await as an audience the rise of the curtain.

But on the whole, this building works for me because it is in *scale*. There are no costly excesses in one department at the expense of another. It is perhaps significant that its Theatre Consultant (John Wyckham) was for many years a Production Manager responsible for achieving maximum artistic success while keeping one eye on the clock and the other on the budget.

This is a theatre with a true purpose and it is truly purpose built.

On the other hand, I am not quite sure of the purpose of the Brunton Theatre in Musselburgh. It has two features in common with the MacRobert; they were both built largely as a result of bequests (hence their names) and they are both built to those high technical standards which show how far we have come in the past ten years or so—the Consultant in this case being Martin Carr.

The Musselburgh theatre is a very ingenious building: the stage uses its corner siting to produce wing-space in an imaginative way which augurs well for the Edinburgh Opera House, soon to come from the same drawing board. It is a nicely-scaled, imaginative, workable building, but (and I'm afraid it's a large *but*) it just screams out for a resident company to develop its potential. But Musselburgh has a population of about 18,000 and is only six miles from Edinburgh; our theatrical awareness is developing fast—but not that fast!



Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh.