

Correspondence

Cockpit-in-Court

Dear Sir,
Mr. Iain Mackintosh in his article *Theatre History and Theatre Architecture* published in your June issue (Vol. 29, No. 2) kindly refers to my recent findings relating to the Cockpit-in-Court at Whitehall Palace which was remodelled by Inigo Jones on the instructions of Charles I in 1629 and opened on November 5th 1630 by the King's Men.

In the footnote on p. 60 the reference to this recent work is given as *Elizabethan Theatre*, a collection of Essays and Papers published in 1969. This is incorrect. The findings, which tie drawing No. 27 in the Library of Worcester College, Oxford to this theatre and establish both the date of its opening and the fact that it possessed no "inner stage" were first published in *New Theatre Magazine*, VII No. 2 (Spring) 1967 pp. 26-35, under the title "The Cockpit Reconstructed". This article was subsequently reprinted in *Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage*, 1969.

In view of the importance of the detailed information we now possess about this playhouse to all future study of Shakespearean playhouses, your readers may find it useful to be provided with an up-to-date handlist of recent scholarly comment on the drawing and the building. In addition to my own article quoted above there is Prof. D. F. Rowan's essay "The Cockpit-in-Court" in *Elizabethan Theatre* (ed. D. Galloway, 1969) and W. D. Knyper's article, "Two Mannerist Theatres" in *New Theatre Magazine*, XI, No. 3 (Summer) 1969. There is also Professor G. E. Bentley's lengthy discussion of the building and its uses both before and after the Restoration in Volume VI of *The Jacobean Caroline Stage*, pp. 267-84, (1969).

One problem which has hitherto defied solution about the exact lay-out of the building relates to the staircases, for the Jones/Webb drawings are ambiguous about whether they ascend or descend and where they terminate. However, with the assistance of the Dankerts painting of the exterior of the building I have now been able to resolve this problem and have set out my new findings in Vol II (Part 2) of *Early English Stages* to be published this autumn.

Since we now possess a full set of architects drawings (complete with scale) of the interior of this theatre, a painting of the exterior, and a full list of the interior fittings it is obvious that if any playhouse of the period warrants full-scale reconstruction it is this one.

Yours sincerely,

GLYNNE WICKHAM
*Professor of Drama & Dean of the
Faculty of Arts, University of Bristol.*

Academic Theatre

Dear Sir,
I am sorry that Mr. Percy Corry's article "Academic Theatre" in the last issue of *TABS* has misrepresented the facilities of the Allardyce Nicoll Studio and has not paid attention to certain factors that governed its design and equipment. Mr. Corry says that "Flexibility was again a stated requirement", but this was only one of the requirements. The architect and theatre consultant and the staff of the Drama Department at Birmingham were also concerned with economy in a studio theatre serving an academic department. The complicated punched-card system and the 100 dimmer channels were designed so that three productions could be prepared during the slack time of vacations and manned with only one technician. The Studio was provided with elaborate projection equipment in order to allow the performances of a variety of plays to have appropriate visual settings without the cost of three-dimensional scenery and without the labour involved in changing that scenery. Indeed, the Drama Department hoped that the Studio would be able to play some part in devising techniques of presentation that would be far cheaper in man-hours than those productions dependent on conventionally constructed and painted scenery.

There are one or two errors in the article which I would like to take this opportunity of correcting. Its name is not the Allardyce Nicoll Drama Studio but the Allardyce Nicoll Studio. For proscenium or open end-stage, more than half of the seating is *not* on the flat floor. Not all the six permanently tiered rows have fixed seats and so by the use of rostra it is possible to have all but two or three rows of seats appropriately tiered.

Mr. Corry concludes by suggesting that the Allardyce Nicoll Studio has been lavishly equipped. Rather, in my opinion, it has been designed economically. There is no flies-tower and no wing-space. Sophisticated lighting installation allows for economy of manpower in operation and enables the Studio to specialize in cheaply created settings using lighting equipment still comparatively new in the British theatre.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN RUSSELL BROWN
University of Sussex
(formerly Head of the Department of
Drama and Arts Birmingham University)

Correction

In our June issue a footnote on page 60 referred to Professor Glynne Williams. It should of course read Professor Glynne Wickham.