



*View from new control room before completion of 1972 alterations; system DDM control desk in foreground.*

saw in the Barbican model of Autumn 1966\*.

Instead of waiting five years (for the completion of their new London home) before they can have the pleasure of trying out that stage, they are doing it now—in so far as the existing building at Stratford permits. The new arrangement shows well in the photograph of the model. The various surfaces may not be faced as shown. The photograph suggests to me the ruthless imposition of fair-faced . . . but it is just possible that I have a thing about that. In any case, as we have seen, it has become a Stratford tradition to make changes to the facing material and the like in the forestage area each season. It is probably intended to suggest marble on this occasion since the new Shakespeare season is to consist of all the Roman plays and I have a private hope that all those Romans will wear togas!

We need only concern ourselves with the permanent changes. The theatre's own 30 ft. proscenium of 1932 is still there. It cannot be removed since it holds up the grid—and much of the rest—but the two new great wing walls, with the suggestion that they are free standing, disguise that particular

frame. Whether they do it by substituting another one—a giant triumphal arch to dwarf everyone—remains to be proved.

The stage floor now runs right across the width of the auditorium from wall to wall and entrances can be made from around both the on-stage and off-stage edges of the wing walls. The most obvious changes are to the balconies on the side walls. There is a completely new balcony to be known as the Gallery boxes. This suggests extensions of the gallery itself but in fact they are not and have their own separate access. Below this the extension of the existing balcony slip boxes of 1951 right over to the forestage is only semi-permanent; it is a scenic feature to be used as the play demands. The Peter Hall "papering of the walls with faces" adds about seventy-six seats but his plan of the cheapest seats being in the front rows has not been possible at Stratford—presumably the groundlings are up in the gallery slips. The fan shape of the Barbican auditorium is of necessity absent.

The gradual if shallow occupation of the side walls by audience is significant indeed. A new stage floor runs downstage of the existing lifts right out into the auditorium and is fitted with hydraulic tilting mechanisms so that a range of rake can be

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