

TABS

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CONTENTS

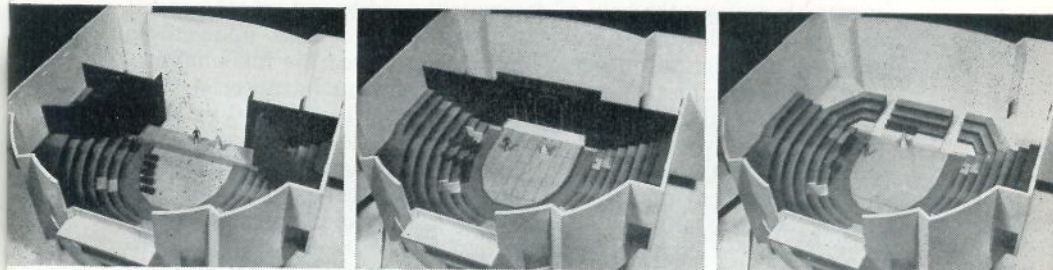
	Page
Editorial	
Light on Stages	2
Summer Lecture Programme	3
Australian Demonstrations	4
The Switchboard Operator Problem	4
Goodbye "Gellies"	4
For Australians and Canadians only	5
Half a Century Away	5
Chichester—England 1962	6
The Cambridge Festival Theatre—by Norman Marshall	7
Lighting at the Cambridge Festival Theatre—by Frederick Bentham	14
American Postscript	16
A Lighting Plot	18
Chichester Festival Theatre—by Peter Jay and Christopher Stevens	20
Two Unconventional Theatres in Australia—by Dennis Irving	26
Reviews	30

Recorded Lecture No. 3—Light on Stages

This is reviewed on page 30 and may now be booked subject only to a registration fee of one guinea. This fee is donated to the A.B.T.T. (Association of British Theatre Technicians), whose aim is to provide discussion on, and to disseminate information about, theatre planning and equipment in the widest sense.

The discussion between Stephen Joseph, Percy Corry and Frederick Bentham ranges over the differing forms of theatre and styles of production round which controversy rages nowadays. The speakers make a general survey illustrated with 74 slides, mostly specially taken in colour.

The lecture runs just under 90 minutes and now includes a short interval at the 60-minute mark. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that these recorded lectures are not substitute lectures, rather they are the unique product of the opportunities afforded by their own technique. What one has here, available for use with groups large or small anywhere, is a lively discussion among three authorities (four in fact, for Alfred Emmet of the Questors joins in). Incidentally, we note that this recorded lecture technique, first used by Strand Electric in 1957, has this season been adopted by Kodak Ltd. to describe colour photography techniques.



Monochrome versions of three of the colour slides which occur in the new recorded lecture No. 3. They show the latest model of the Questors Theatre.

Summer Lecture Programme

These lectures will be given at our Head Office Demonstration Theatre, 29 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2, and will begin at 7 p.m. precisely. The doors of the Head Office showrooms will be opened at 6.30 p.m. (30 minutes before each demonstration). The new layout and arrangements will make it easy for members of the audience to try for themselves all the common pieces of equipment, "Cinemoid" colours, etc., before taking their places in the theatre.

Admission to demonstrations is free, but tickets are necessary and can be obtained by sending a **stamped addressed envelope** to 29 King Street.

Wednesday, April 25th

"Light on Stages"

Recorded Lecture No. 3 featuring Stephen Joseph, Percy Corry and Frederick Bentham. There will be an opportunity for a discussion afterwards.

Wednesday, May 30th

"Basic Stage Lighting"

Talk by Frederick Bentham with demonstrations.

Australian Demonstrations

The annual series of lecture/demonstrations at the Russell Street Theatre, 19 Russell Street, Melbourne, is to be held under the direction of Dennis Irving during the week beginning Monday, September 3rd, 1962. Among the lectures to be given will be the new Recorded Lecture No. 3 called "Light on Stages". For full particulars and bookings apply to Strand Electric, Melbourne.

The Switchboard Operator Problem

In a speech at a press reception given by the founder members of the Society of British Theatre Lighting Designers, Mr. Joe Davis, their Chairman, said: "Our job as Lighting Designers would be impossible without the help of the switchboard operators who spend long periods plotting complicated moves, and it is upon these operators the lighting designer relies to produce his final lighting picture. Their help and competence are very much appreciated by us. They are a highly skilled body, but difficult to find and we hope to use a search warrant to find more people interested in this work and then help train this rare breed." His remarks do spotlight a very real problem of today. Already one is thankful that modern lighting controls reduce the search to finding one man instead of several, but that man must be alert and dexterous. However, switchboard operation cannot be regarded as a lucrative occupation for a man with a family who wants to get on. True, the work is fascinating, but only sometimes; at others in a long run, even with many cues, it is far from inspiring. Yet the man who can stand boredom possibly for years is expected to scintillate in the stresses of rehearsal when the plot he is working is being composed and is liable to change every other minute. Further he may have learnt his job at a time when that theatre is sleep-walking through a run.

The television studio claims some operators, the appeal being the pay and hours in some cases, and ambition in others. Ambition has taken a couple of real virtuoso West End operators to seek their fortune outside this country in the last few months. Some would say "punched card" is the answer, but even the best system (Strand KTV!) does not render the rehearsal problem any easier; in any case, automation does not bode well for a live theatre. A live theatre will have to do something about live operators.

Goodbye "Gellies"

For over half a century Gelatine has been used as a colour filter for stage lighting. Unfortunately Gelatine is inherently unstable, and is unsuitable for use with some types of modern lighting equipment. During recent years therefore the use of Gelatine has steadily declined, whilst its successor, "Cinemoid", has greatly increased in popularity, and is now extensively used in this country and abroad.

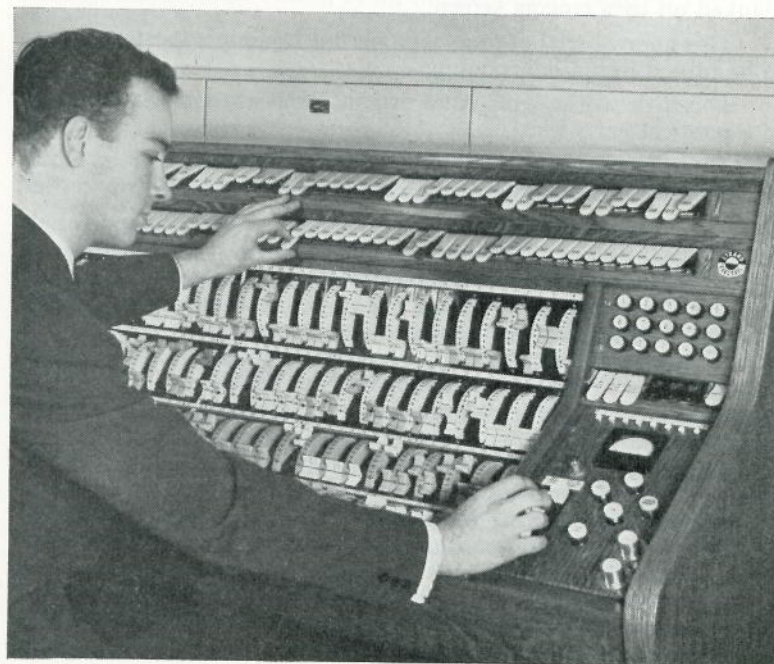
The falling demand for Gelatine has, however, had its inevitable consequence and manufacture has become uneconomic. We shall not therefore be able to obtain further supplies, but reasonable stocks of some colours are still available, details of which will be sent on application.

For Australians and Canadians Only

As many readers will be aware, TABS does not aim to be included among the mass of literature which finds its way, unasked, through the letter box and thence, by the shortest route, to the waste paper basket. Consequently every few years we make a survey and require present recipients to say they wish to continue receiving TABS. We are only too pleased to send TABS to everyone who wants it, but we do wish to make sure that it is really wanted. Will readers in Canada and Australia, therefore, who have received this issue and wish to continue to do so please notify Strand Electric Limited, 261 Davenport Road, Toronto 5, or Strand Electric (Australia) Pty. Ltd., 212 Graham Street, Port Melbourne, Victoria, respectively.

Half a Century Away

The photograph below shows the new Strand system CD lighting control which went into service at the Strand Theatre, London, on St. Patrick's day. Very appropriately, since Phillip Sheridan (our engineer supervising the job) shown in the photograph, is the grandson of the Phillip Sheridan of Dublin who 50 years ago was electrician at this very theatre. It was while at the Strand Theatre that he got together with Arthur Earnshaw, electrician at the Duke of York's Theatre, to found the Strand Electric in 1914. When Phillip Sheridan



returned from the First World War he took up his old job in the Strand Theatre, as in fact Strand Electric was incapable of supporting him full time. In 1922 Arthur Bouchier produced *Treasure Island* at the Strand with the wave effects which some still consider the most remarkable optical effect ever made. There followed Wembley Exhibition in 1924 with Strand lighting for the Zeebrugge display in the Admiralty theatre and much else besides. From then on Strand Electric were well on their way. When Phillip Sheridan died in 1936 his son, J. D. H. Sheridan, the present Chairman, took over as Managing Director.

Chichester—England 1962

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle, where the National Theatre has only a movable foundation stone to show for decades of discussion.

This earth of majesty, where the latest government pronouncement states a date for completion impossible to achieve and a combination of theatre and opera unable to be reconciled.

This other Eden, where London's first new West End theatre for 31 years becomes a cinema within months of its opening.

This fortress built by nature, in which London's finest stage is blanked off by a cinema screen.

This happy breed of men, who permit London's mostest cinema to be turned into a ballroom.

This little world, where new provincial theatres are at the mercy of a political party line.

This precious stone set in a silver sea, whose premier Opera House is still working mainly with equipment of the 1930s or earlier.

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England, might now claim the envy of less happier lands. For in Chichester there is now to be found a remarkable theatre. Only yesterday it seems one suddenly heard of a "Festival theatre", another one of "those projects". "Little do they know," one said sagely. Yet here we are a few months later with the building nearly completed and ready for Sir Laurence Olivier's first season. What a theatre too. Firstly it is unique in the fact that its seating layout makes it quite unsuitable for films. Secondly it is not a proscenium theatre but an arena. The resemblance to the Stratford, Ontario, theatre is very great, yet they are far from the same because this stage will not rely on the same permanent structure year in, year out. As the architects' sketches show the stage possesses considerable flexibility in itself. In addition designers such as Sean Kenny and Roger Furse have been commissioned for the first season. Peter Jay and Christopher Stevens describe the building and its facilities in this issue and in September we hope to deal with the productions themselves.

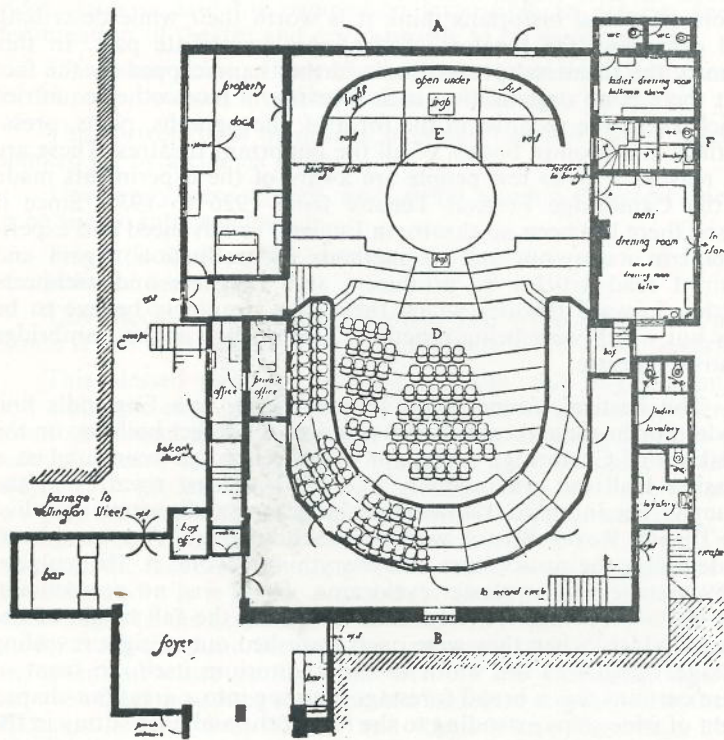
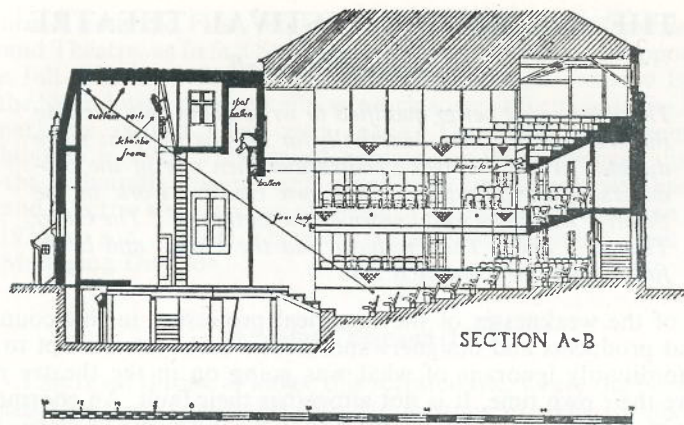
THE CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL THEATRE

by Norman Marshall

There is no one better qualified to write about this exciting theatre than Norman Marshall, for he was the first stage director at the Festival Theatre and then one of the producers. Quite apart from his own creative work in the theatre, he will be well known as the author of "The Other Theatre" and "The Producer and the Play," and is the first chairman of the A.B.T.T.

One of the weaknesses of the theatrical profession in this country is that producers and designers and theatre architects are apt to be extraordinarily ignorant of what was going on in the theatre just before their own time. It is not altogether their fault. An enormous amount of literature is available about the Elizabethan stage, the Restoration stage, the 19th-century stage and the methods of production on these stages, but it seems that many years have to elapse before theatrical historians think it is worth their while describing and discussing the theatres of the more immediate past. In this country the theatrical profession is further handicapped by the fact that there is no organisation such as exists in most other countries which keeps the records, in the form of photographs, plans, press-cuttings and prompt books, of all the important theatres. These are the reasons why so few people are aware of the experiments made at the Cambridge Festival Theatre from 1926 to 1933. Since it closed there has been no theatre in England so advanced and experimental in its lay-out and its methods of production. Again and again I read articles by producers and designers and architects putting forward theories which they quite genuinely believe to be new but which were being practised 30 years ago at the Cambridge Festival Theatre.

The Festival, founded by Terence Gray, was England's first modern open-stage theatre. Gray acquired a derelict building on the outskirts of Cambridge which for many years had been used as a Mission Hall but was actually one of the oldest theatres in the country. The intimate, 18th-century horseshoe auditorium, very like the Theatre Royal, Bristol, was left intact by Gray. What he did was to demolish the proscenium and everything beyond it. He replaced it by a stage with a plaster cyclorama. There was no proscenium. But there were huge front curtains stretching the full height of the theatre which, when they were open, vanished out of sight revealing a stage which was the width of the auditorium itself. In front of these curtains was a broad forestage merging into a great fan-shaped flight of wide steps extending to the feet of the audience sitting in the front row, abolishing any boundary line between actor and audience. The curves of the circles in the auditorium extended well beyond the furthest steps so that an actor on the forestage or on the steps



Plan and section of Cambridge Festival Theatre.

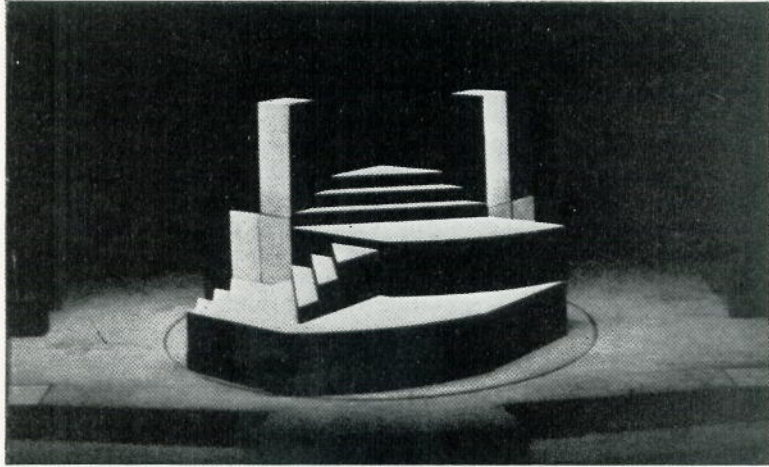
had part of the audience to the right and to the left of him as well as in front of him. There were six entrances for the actors leading directly onto the forestage and its steps—two aisles through the stalls, entrances on either side of the forestage and two stairways leading down from what used to be the boxes on the dress circle level. In addition to the ordinary exits through the wings there was a D-shaped rostrum fitting the cyclorama which could roll forward to give an extensive entrance from under the stage. Yet another entrance was provided by a stage trap. Consequently it was possible suddenly to have a huge crowd swarming onto the stage from every direction in no more than a few seconds.

The Festival Theatre was a repertory theatre so one may reasonably wonder how often it was possible to stage a play employing a huge company. The answer is that while the Festival had a large permanent professional company it constantly collaborated with the local amateur societies to stage plays which required crowds and a large number of small parts—plays such as *The Insect Play*, *The Rumour*, *Peer Gynt*, Greek tragedy and some of Shakespeare's historical plays. In addition to the acting company there was a ballet company of twelve dancers directed by Ninette De Valois which was used as the mainstay of the choruses in the Greek tragedies as well as in many other plays. From time to time a week's programme was devoted entirely to ballet. It was this little company which afterwards moved to Sadlers Wells and finally became the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden.

The Festival was not an all-purposes theatre. On the contrary, it was founded to wage war upon naturalism—what Terence Gray described as "the old game of illusion and glamour and all the rest of the 19th-century hocus pocus and bamboozle". In other words, its mission was to attack the realistic tradition of acting and production which the English theatre of that time had brought to a pitch of almost photographic perfection. It was impossible to put a naturalistic box set upon the Festival stage. Indeed, Terence Gray had deliberately taken pains to ensure that it would be impossible.

But alas—and herein lies a warning—Terence Gray eventually abandoned the Festival Theatre after eight years because he could find no more plays suited to his stage and no author had come forward with a worthwhile play written for the anti-naturalistic Festival stage. When he gave up the theatre one or two other managements tried to carry on with a conventional repertory of plays after having done their unsuccessful best to convert the theatre back into a proscenium theatre. Soon it became derelict and infested by rats which devoured the front curtains until no more than a few shreds remained. Now it is a store. But one can see the influence of the Festival Theatre in the lay-out of the theatre at Stratford, Ontario; in the open stage which is set up each year in the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh for the Festival; and in the new theatre about to be opened at Chichester. All three theatres are inspired by Tyrone

Guthrie who for some time was one of the Cambridge Festival producers. None of these theatres is in any sense a copy of the Cambridge Festival Theatre, but all three are influenced by the Cambridge theatre and embody, in some form or another, many of the essential features of the Cambridge stage.

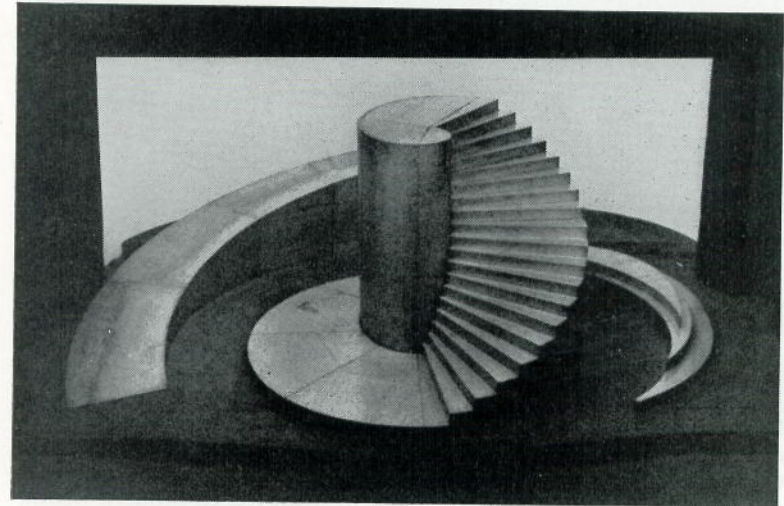


*Terence Gray's setting for Richard III.
Festival Theatre, Cambridge, 1928.*

As to the methods of production at the Festival, they were so experimental, so ahead of the times so far as the English theatre was concerned, that I can honestly say that I have yet to see a single so-called "experiment" or "innovation" in the English theatre which was not seen many years ago at the Festival. For instance, in the production of *Oliver* at the New Theatre the lanterns on the spot-bars are deliberately exposed to view. This is an old, old device of the Continental theatre of the 'twenties when so many producers were self-proclaimed "anti-illusionists", believing it to be their mission to destroy the illusion of actuality and constantly remind the audience that they were not spying on reality but were in a play-house watching a performance. Personally, although at the Festival from time to time I practised these anti-illusionist devices because it was part of the policy of the theatre, I never succeeded in convincing myself that there was any very good reason for them. Terence Gray, in his own productions, went much further than revealing just a few stage lanterns. For instance, at one time he was so determined to make it as difficult as possible for his audience to play the game of make-believe that he removed the wings from the stage so that throughout the performance the audience could see the actors waiting to make their entrances, the stagehands standing about, the

prompter with the book in his lap, the electrician at his board, the props for the next scene standing in a corner. When I go to the Mermaid Theatre and see all the mechanics and technicians of the stage similarly revealed to the audience I feel it is quite like old times.

Another stage in Gray's war against realism in the theatre was his abolition of props. His defence of this was convincing enough. "To hand a man a purse, to open and read a document on the stage, such things must be small when performed with the real objects in the actor's hands, the expressiveness of the action is confined by the dimensions of the object handled. Only by discarding the actual article can the gestures of giving or of reading be rendered really significant. Only then does it cease to be a waxwork reproduction of life and become artistic interpretation. To crown a king with a crown of lead can never be effective as theatre art; to crown him with a magnificent gesture might be exceedingly moving." This method certainly was effective when applied to props of great significance, such as a crown or a document, but when used in a play by Ibsen the result became distractingly like a game of dumb crambo, and far too much of the attention of the audience was spent in guessing what props were indicated by the various gestures of the actors.



Setting for The Antigone of Sophocles produced by Terence Gray, May 1931.

In the centre of the Festival stage there was a small revolve. It had been deliberately designed so as not to cover the entire stage or to be used for the changing of elaborate settings. On this turntable Gray often built a setting consisting of platforms, steps and

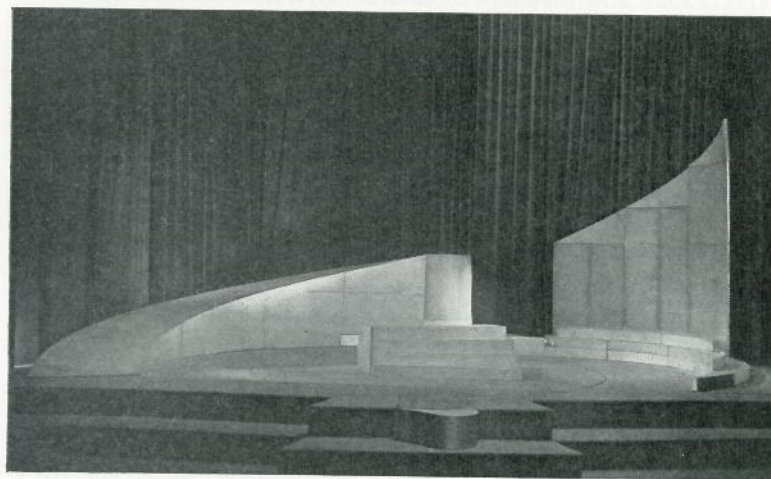
ramps, isolated in the centre of an otherwise bare stage. From time to time the turntable revolved to show different aspects of the setting. Although these settings were completely unrealistic they were given a certain number of architectural features and decorations to suggest the mood and period of the play. The multiple levels, the ramps and steps, made possible an extraordinary variety of grouping and movement which continually drove home with great vividness the dramatic relations of the characters to one another at any moment in the play. The lighting was, of course, used completely unrealistically to emphasise the changing moods of the play and to concentrate attention on essentials, leaving the inessentials relatively invisible.



The Alcestis of Euripides produced by Terence Gray at the Cambridge Festival Theatre, November 1931.

The Festival provided an almost ideal stage for Shakespeare because of the intimacy between actor and audience. Many of the Festival's Shakespearean productions were in modern dress at a time when this kind of production was rare in the English theatre—and here again one can trace the influence of the Festival on Tyrone Guthrie's work. A particularly successful re-dressing of a Shakespearean play was *Romeo and Juliet*, transferred to modern Spain. Those were the days when Rudolph Valentino was the most popular of all film stars and was usually in films with a Spanish locale when he was not pretending to be a sheik. Gray's theory was that the Elizabethans associated Italy with heat and passion, but the equivalent to a modern audience was Spain, rather than Italy. A Shakespearean production of Gray's which really shocked some of his

audience was *The Merchant of Venice* which had been repeatedly asked for because it is a favourite for examination purposes. But it bored Gray, and in his opinion would bore all the more intelligent members of his audience. This is a point of view which at least has some justification. If Gray had produced *The Merchant of Venice* attempting to conceal his boredom, the production would inevitably have been dull. His method of avoiding boredom was, paradoxical though it may sound, frankly to confess his boredom. For instance, when Portia embarked upon "The quality of mercy . . ." speech, the entire court relapsed into attitudes of abject boredom and the judge whiled away the time by playing with a yo-yo, a toy which happened to be in vogue at the moment. The speech itself was deliberately delivered in a listless tone of voice as if the actress was repeating it for the thousandth time. The setting for most of the play was the banks of a canal in Venice with houses built up on either side. The middle of the stage was the canal, on which the characters moved to and fro in miniature gondolas. One scene was played with Shylock sitting on his doorstep fishing. In the final scene Shylock entered playing a barrel organ, and the whole treatment of this character as an object of ridicule, dirty, smelly and greasy, was probably very much in the Elizabethan manner.



Setting for Shakespeare's Henry VIII produced by Terence Gray, February 1931.

The most satisfactory of Gray's productions of Shakespeare was, I think, *Henry VIII*. It was played on a set of great beauty and dignity consisting simply of a tremendous aluminium ramp rising steeply in a great curve until it vanished out of sight high above the stage. The actors, dressed in formalised costumes suggesting the court figures in a pack of cards, made their entrances down this

ramp from above. The constantly changing lighting, glowing on the aluminium, was of extraordinary beauty and effectiveness, heightening the different moods of the play like an accompaniment of incidental music. Until the end of the play Wolsey wore stilt-like cothurnus beneath his robes which made him tower above the other characters. This effect of height and dominance was further emphasised by constantly placing him on slightly higher levels than the rest of the characters; but when his fall from power came, he no longer wore the cothurnus and literally seemed to wither in stature, an effect once more emphasised by clever grouping, so that he became a beaten and cringing figure delivering the "Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition" speech not in the usual sonorous tones, but as a whining attempt at self-justification.

The Festival was one of the last great examples of patronage in the English theatre. Terence Gray was a rich man and he was prepared to spend more money on the theatre than could be taken at the box office. Today such a theatre could only be run with the assistance of a grant immeasurably larger than any given to the present repertoires. Terence Gray always refused to apply for any kind of financial assistance because he believed that it would inevitably affect the policy of his theatre. "It is not for me," he said, "to fulfil academic expectations and maintain standards of tradition. I seek the unexpected reaction, the unanticipated pleasure, the irresponsible wrath, the readjustment of values." In a letter taking farewell of his audience he wrote: "Cambridge has supported our work magnificently, for we have compromised with none and pandered to nobody's prejudices. Whatever we believed to contain truth and to be worth saying or doing we have said or done without hesitation; for a theatre that considers everybody's feelings, seeks to please all and offend none, will get nowhere, for it can have no policy."

* * *

LIGHTING AT THE CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL THEATRE

by Frederick Bentham

The stage lighting installation was designed by Harold Ridge and the electrician was Leslie Steen. The stage lighting played a role in production, the importance of which cannot be over-exaggerated. The following summary by Mr. Ridge of the plot for *The Immortal Hour* will give the reader some idea of how it was used.

"The pillars were emerald green with the centre steps in gold and the throne scarlet and gold. The cyclorama was flooded with orange. The steps were lit from the spot-batten with light yellow. The thrones were lit from the spot-batten with a mixture of red and blue. A spot-light on the batten immediately above the thrones projected a pool of white light on the throne steps. The central entrance at the back was by a flight of steps from the cellar to stage level, lit by a vertical shaft of green, coming from a focus-lamp below.

At the beginning of the scene the acting-area was flooded with amber and was gradually dimmed after the entrance of Midir. As the scene progressed and Midir influenced Etain and drew her towards the central steps away from the King, the light changed very gradually to green, this in turn fading as the two mounted the steps at the entrance. By the time they had reached the top they were standing in a pool of green light, then as they descended into their own "realm" the light from the pit was increased so that they were, in effect, swallowed up in a blaze of green light. This was dimmed gradually as they disappeared from view, leaving the stage almost in total darkness, a concentrated white spot being brought up rapidly on the dimmer to pick out the King as he stood on the steps of his throne, until Dalua's shadow passed over him and he falls dead."

Yet for all its importance the installation was basically simple as the schedule shows:

Front-of-house spots ...	6 × 1,000 W focus lamps	6 dimmers
Compartment batten ...	3 colours	3 dimmers
Spot batten ...	5 × 1,000 W focus lamps	} 7 dimmers
	2 × 500 W " "	
Stage dips ...		6 dimmers
Cyclorama top ...	20 lamps in 7 colours	10 dimmers
Cyclorama pit ...	3 colours	3 dimmers
		35

When one considers that the old seven-colour Schwabe glass system would probably be replaced today by three colours, thus halving the number of top cyclorama circuits, it can be seen that we are comparing some 30 dimmer circuits with the hundred or so that would be expected for such a theatre today.

The economy in lighting can be better understood if we consider the front of house. In spite of the large fore-stage there were only six 1,000-watt spots of the old focus lamp type (intensity equivalent to six 500 watt Patt. 23s). Inevitably, this early installation provokes the question: Is all the lighting we use today really necessary?

There are two answers. The first is that we have become accustomed to a very much higher level of artificial light nowadays, not just in the theatre but in all fields as well. There is a parallel here in respect of sound amplification. The second answer must be that a totally different style of lighting was used. When one revolted completely against the tyranny of the flat flooding from battens and floodlights one liked to be aware of the spotlights and rather preferred the visible pools of light with the clear-cut shadows. Such lighting would be very direct in its effect and may well turn up again but using much higher wattage lamps. Indeed it is still lingering on (and may be seen) in my own colour music shows.

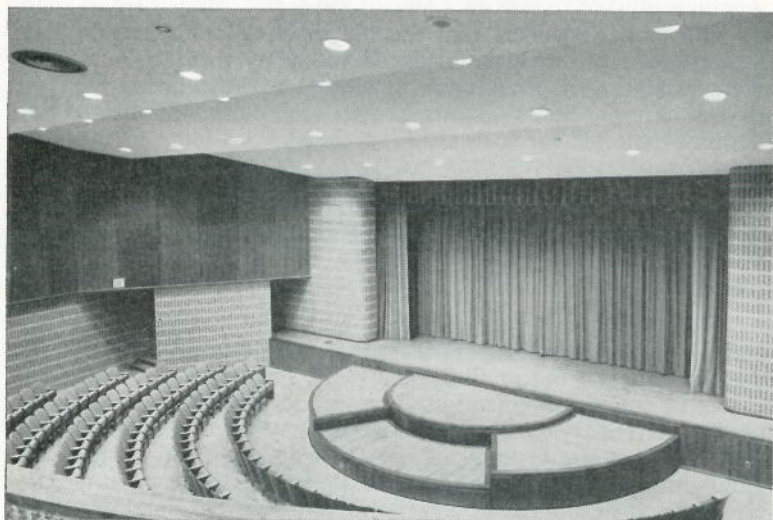
Come to think of it, one of the sets I use might well be a survival from the Festival theatre era. Not surprising, because Ridge's book *Stage Lighting* (the one with a green-grey cover published in 1928 by Heffer) was my bible. Curiously enough I find that I use only 36 circuits.

Today's lighting is cast in a different mould, banks of spotlights painstakingly build up mosaics of light, the component beams and shadows of which are hardly seen and are interpreted as a general picture to provide emphasis here and soft pedal there. Today's lighting changes themselves, though often frequent and complex, pass unnoticed by the audience, they are deliberately subtle. In the clamour for a new, more direct theatre form, one wonders if there may not one day be a return to a more direct fashion in lighting.

Be that as it may, the low lighting levels and small number of circuits used at the Cambridge Festival should encourage those whose lighting resources must of necessity be slender, for really marvellous work was in fact done there.

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AMERICAN POSTSCRIPT



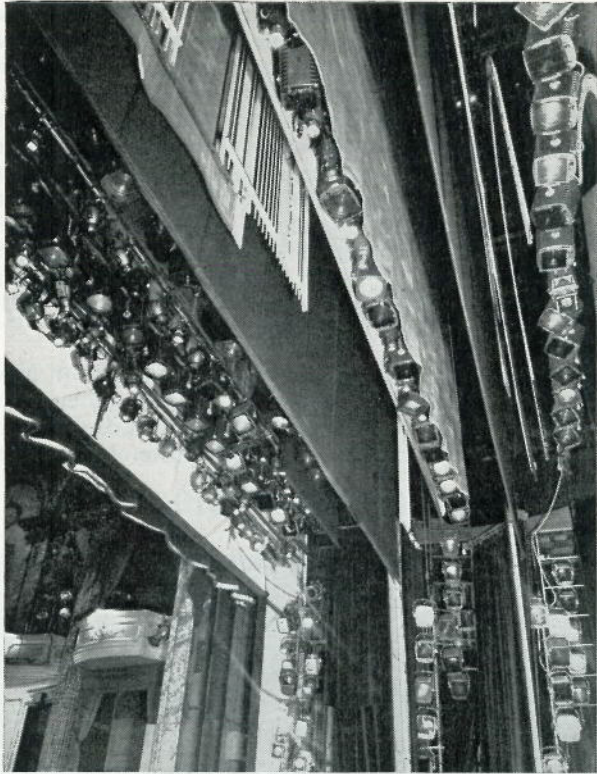
This theatre at the Harpur College, Binghamton, was briefly referred to in the September 1961 issue of TABS in which there was a survey of various American stages visited by Percy Corry earlier in the year. The photographs now published arrived too late for inclusion in that issue.

By any standard, he says, this a sumptuous theatre, excellently designed and equipped. It could serve to emphasise the difference

between American and British attitudes towards provision for drama in colleges, schools, etc. This theatre would be gratefully welcomed by any of our professional repertory companies and regarded as beyond the limit of possibility by our amateur Little Theatres. It would probably be criticised by the more starry-eyed advocates of "flexibility". The stage is "conventional" since it has a proscenium. Its floor area is as large as it should be; there is counter-weighted grid equipment; there are excellent workshops and back-stage facilities. Its apron could be regarded as unconventional in that it consists of four separate lifts, providing an apron of varying levels, when required. All lifts can be synchronised; when an apron is not required the auditorium floor can be extended or the lifts can descend still lower and form an orchestra pit.

Binghamton is a comparatively small community in New York State and the college is very new, being only recently completed. Its main emphasis is on the so-called liberal arts: it is certainly true that the arts are liberally provided for. One has grateful memories of the visit.





A LIGHTING PLOT

We have been asked from time to time to publish a lighting plot in *Tabs*. Thanks to Joe Davis we are able to reproduce one which, although before either he or Strand Electric had exerted any influence on lighting is nevertheless not without interest. Mr. Davis came across this lighting plot in the Theatre Royal, Brighton. The drama *Lights o' London* was by George R. Sims and, according to John Parker,* was first presented at the Princess's Theatre in London on September 10th, 1881. One month later, October 10th, 1881, *Patience* by Gilbert and Sullivan opened the new Savoy theatre, the first to be lit entirely by electricity. The death knell sounded, albeit rather gently, for gas stage lighting and the way was opened for the complicated lighting plots we know today and well illustrated by the above photograph of one of Mr. Davis's recent West End productions.

**Who's Who in the Theatre*, published by Pitman

THE LIGHTS O' LONDON.

GAS AND LIME LIGHT.

ACT I.

Full up to commence. Full Set.
 White lengths and ground-rows at every available place, full up to commence.
 Green lengths and ground-rows at every available place, turned right down to commence.
 Lamp over gate to light.
 3 White Limes from L.H. to flood stage at cue—poor all my life.
 1st check to Gas.
 Change White Limes to Yellow.
 —good luck go with you.
 2nd check to Gas.
 Change Yellow Limes to Red.
 —I wish to see your face no more.
 3rd check to Gas.
 Turn off Red Limes.
 Gradually turn up green floats, lengths, and ground-rows.
 —God knows when we shall meet again.
 Turn on Green Limes for moonlight

ACT II.

Sc. 1.— Full up. 2
 2 lengths outside window in R.P.
 1 length outside bar L.H.
 Fire burning on hearth R.H.
 Red Lime through ditto.
 Sc. 2.— Checked. Full Set.
 Green floats and green mediums.
 Green lengths at every available place.
 3 Green Limes from L.H. to flood stage.

ACT III.

Sc. 1.— Full up. 1
 Sc. 2.— Full up. 3
 Fire lighted at back R.C. 1 length outside.
 Window at back L.C.

ACT IV.

Sc. 1.— Full up. 4
 Fire lighted L.H. Lengths outside c. opening.
 Chandelier lighted hanging in c.
 Sc. 2.— Checked. Between 1 & 2
 Green floats and green mediums.
 Sc. 3.— Checked. Full Set.
 Green floats and green mediums.
 Green lengths at every available place.
 Lengths at back of cloth to light up illuminated windows.
 3 Green Limes from L.H.

ACT V.

Sc. 1.— Foot lights full up to commence. Full Set.
 Green mediums on battens.
 2 Gas arms to Greengrocer's shop alight.
 6 lamps outside Public House L.U.F. alight.
 6 Gas brackets alight with glober on, inside Public House. Street lamp hanging from wing R.L.E. Check foot lights as Gas in Shop and Public House turned out.
 When rise goes up—Turn on 2 Green Limes from L.H. to strike across stage.
 Sc. 2.— Full up. 2

CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE

by Peter Jay and Christopher Stevens

The Chichester Festival Theatre will open in July this year under the direction of Sir Laurence Olivier. The conception is based upon what, before Leslie Hotson's * researches, used to be thought to be the Elizabethan theatre form, and has been directly inspired by Sir Tyrone Guthrie and the Theatre at Stratford, Ontario. The funds for the building are being raised by public appeal, and it is hoped that by the time the theatre opens the whole sum will be in hand and the enterprise can start operation with no burden of debt.

The arrangement of the stage and auditorium is shown in Fig. 1. The audience (1,360 seats) is disposed on three sides of the stage, while on the side behind the stage there is a demountable wall which can form a vestigial proscenium to be used for an "inner stage", and a removable balcony. The hexagonal shape was chosen in preference to a circle for structural simplicity and economy, and because it is expected to give better acoustics. It was felt to be most important that actors and audience should be seen to be contained within one space.

The whole auditorium is lifted off the ground which gives space for the foyer and dressing rooms underneath, and avoids any excavation, as shown on the section, Fig. 2. The structure of the building is extremely interesting in that the auditorium is supported on six massive concrete ribs, one at each corner, and a substantial part of it cantilevers beyond the front of the foyer to form a covered entrance; this overhanging section is supported by the tension of the roof cables which bear against a concrete ring beam at the level of the back row of seats.

The roof is supported by steel cables carrying a hexagonal girder, formed from steel tubing, which in turn supports the roof. These steel cables span between the corners of the auditorium. The hexagonal girder will remain exposed to view and will be used to carry the lighting equipment which is described further on.

From the foyer, access to the auditorium is by two staircases to the front tiers and a further pair which divide at the level of the first landing and each lead to two entrances into the auditorium at upper tier level. There is a gallery on each side of the auditorium, which is continuous with, and reached from, the upper tiers, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2. It is intended that actors should use these same staircases for entrances and exits when the action requires. There is, of course, direct access from the dressing rooms to the stage as well.

The stage itself is shown in greater detail in a series of sketches

* *Shakespeare's Wooden O*, by Leslie Hotson. Hart Davies, 30s.
This enthralling piece of detection sets the Elizabethan Theatre firmly in-the-round as a logical successor to the medieval "pageants". A transverse axis of stage with tiring room below and curtained "houses" at each end has the high price seats on one side sheltered from weather and the glare of the afternoon sun while the "stinkards" cram into the pit on the other side and are surrounded by boxes.

ERROR

alongside Fig. 1, from which it may be seen how flexible this particular stage form can be. The balcony and removable screens forming the rear wall will be provided as part of the architectural scheme, while the balcony at the upper level runs round to meet the audience galleries so that it will be possible for an actor to make an entrance through the auditorium and pass round on to the stage either at the lowest or the highest level. Exits can, of course, be made in the same way so that the building offers ample scope for imaginative production.

However, additional scenery may be used for many, if not all, productions, and the space under or above the stage balcony can be covered in with curtains or screens at three levels. These platforms and screens must be constructed more solidly than conventional stage scenery, which may lead to difficulties during the first summer season; it is intended to present a repertory of three plays, with a change of programme between matinees and evening performances on the same day, and it will be necessary to change the setting in a period of two or three hours.

There are ten dressing rooms within the building and during the first season at least, some of the company, and the wardrobe may have to be accommodated in tents. Later, when funds are available, it is hoped that a dressing room and workshop block will be built.

Since there is no proscenium wall to isolate the stage from the auditorium this itself forms the environment of the play and it has not been treated as an entirely separate entity, as is usual in more conventional buildings; rather the intention has been to create a space which has the customary richness of an auditorium and yet is neutral in mood so that it does not intrude on the play.

It was at first intended that the lighting and stage manager's control boxes should be in the positions marked X and Y in Fig. 1, tucked in underneath the galleries where they join the upper tiers of the main auditorium. It was later decided that the stage manager and electrician must be in immediate contact with each other and have a central view, so that a twin control box is now being built at the back of the auditorium, in the position marked Z. Access to this box can be obtained only by passing behind the audience, and it remains to be seen whether this disadvantage will outweigh the other advantages of a central position.

A special lighting bridge spans across the centre of the hexagonal roof girder while this girder itself has walkways all the way round so that the central portion of the roof forms a sort of grid, to which access will be obtained by means of Jacob's ladders. Most of the lighting equipment and all the high-level plug boxes will be mounted on this grid and it will be possible to angle and colour the spotlights between performances from the grid alone.

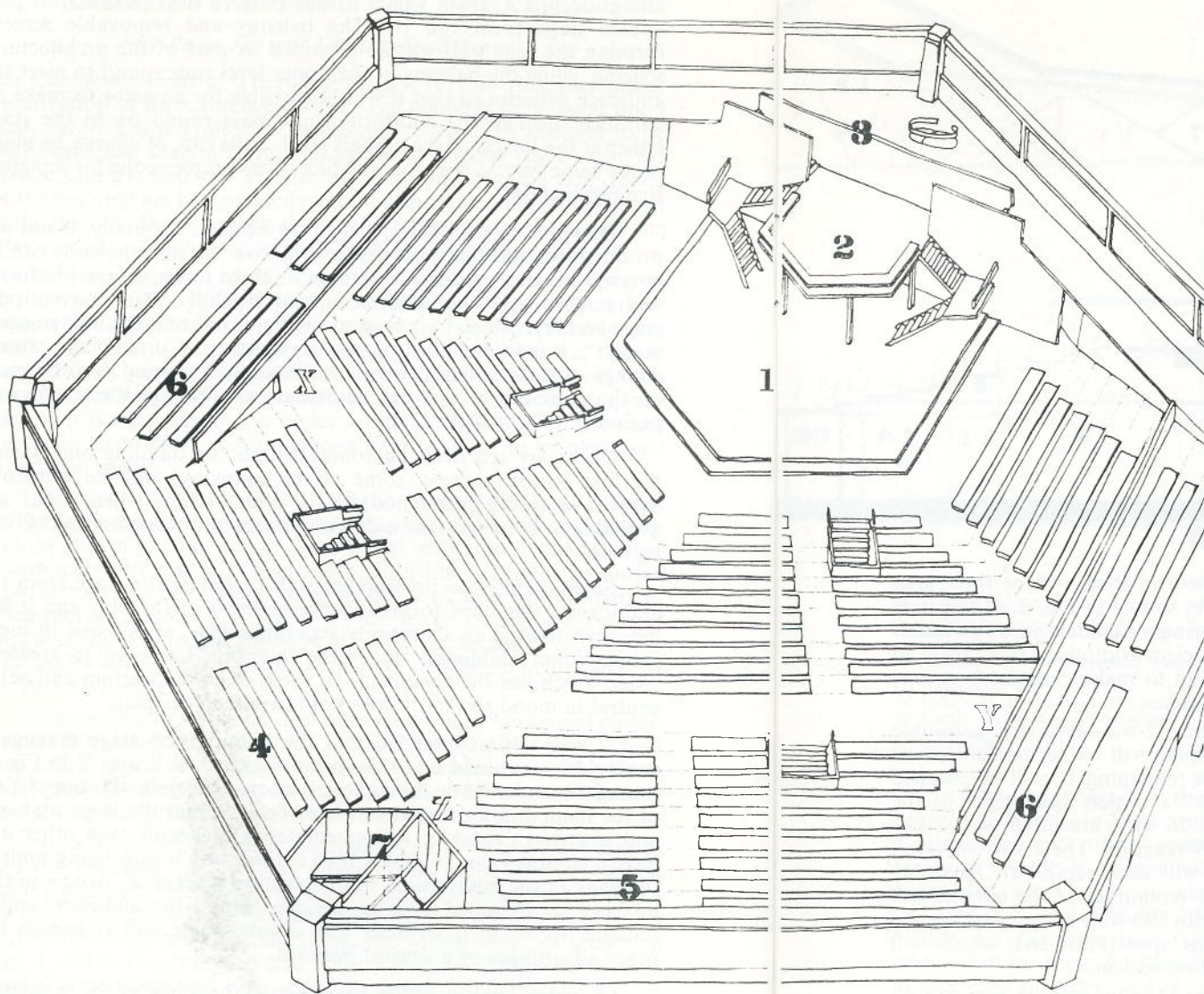


FIG. 1

- (1) Stage.
 (2) Demountable balcony—back wall.
 (3) Musicians.
 (4 and 5) Seating: upper tiers 60 ft. from stage.
 (6) Side galleries.
 (7) Lighting control.
 (X and Y) Early positions for separate lighting and stage managers control.
 (Z) Twin control box replacing X and Y above.

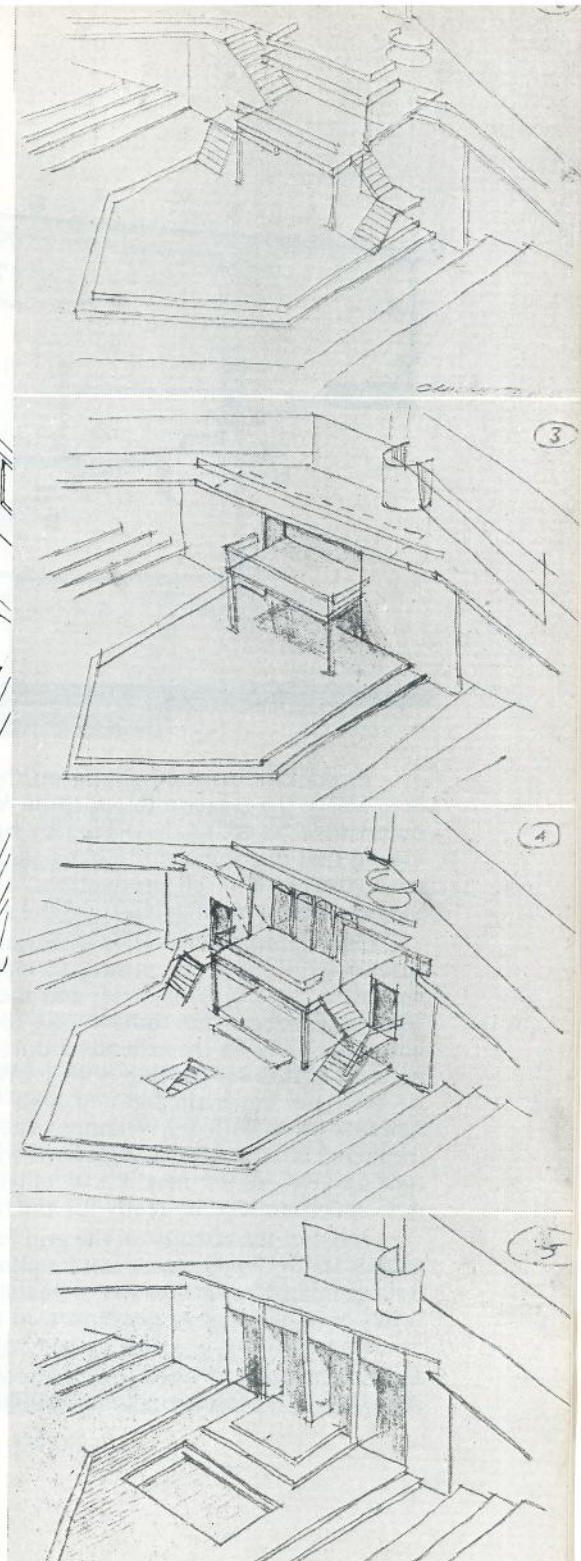
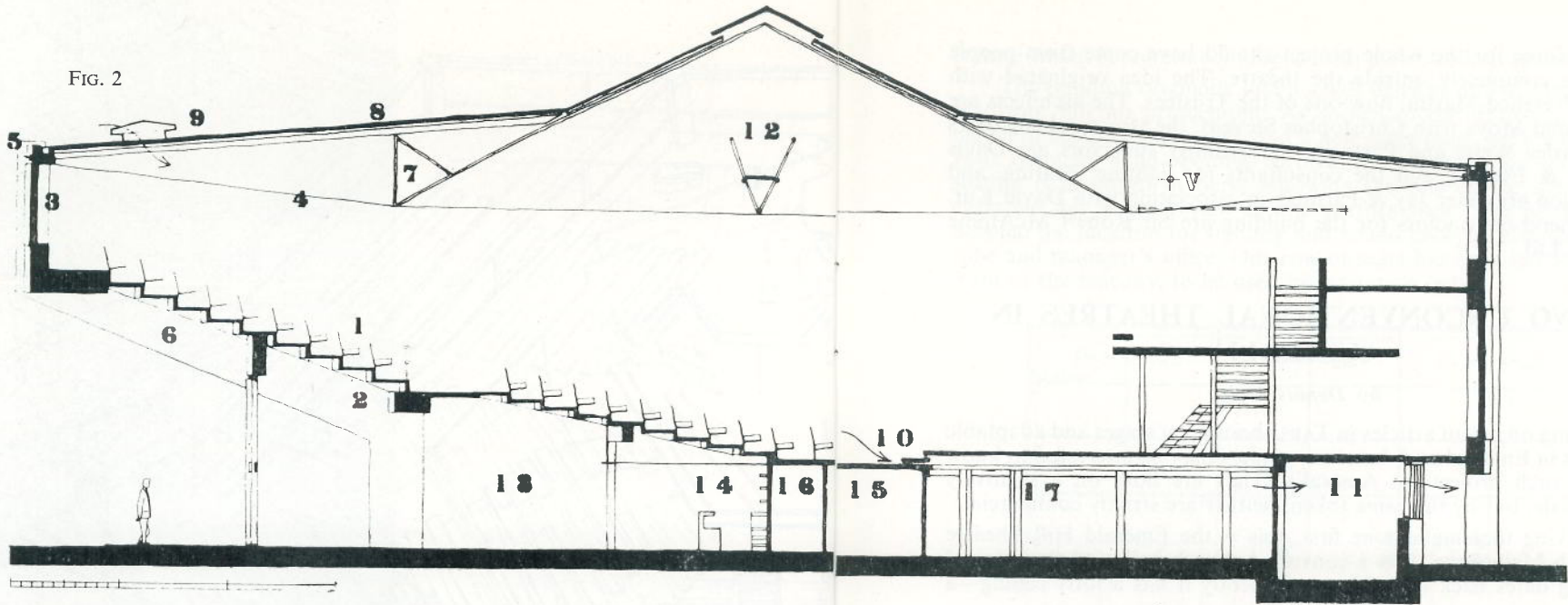


FIG. 2



KEY (FIG. 2)

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) Stepped floor of precast reinforced concrete. | (9) Ventilation inlet fans. |
| (2) Supporting structure of in situ beams and columns. | (10) Vent extract through stage riser. |
| (3) Non-structural walls of special insulating concrete planks. | (11) Vent plant room. |
| (4) Roof cables. | (12) Lighting bridge. |
| (5) Cable anchorages at corners of building. | (13) Foyer. |
| (6) Cantilever ribs supporting upper tiers. | (14) Bar. |
| (7) Lattice girder of steel tubes. | (15) Dressing rooms. |
| (8) Roof covering. | (16) Corridor. |
| | (17) Stage basement. |
| | (V) Lighting spotbars. |

In addition to the lighting on the grid there will be three spot bars above the stage in the position V, shown in Fig. 2. It will only be possible to get at these bars by bringing ladders into the building, so that it is intended to hang sufficient equipment from them to cover the needs of all productions, and to make changes from one to the other by replugging from the grid.

The lighting control is a Strand 72-way type LC saturable reactor with one scene preset; 60 circuits will be permanently connected to sockets in the grid, and the remaining 12 will be patched from a panel in the control box to 38 outlets backstage, in the entrances, and on the balcony front; 26 ways are fitted with 2 kW reactors and the remainder with 1 kW reactors. The 2 kW ways will be used for the main lighting, and will each serve two Patt. 243 lanterns fitted with 1 kW lamps. The remainder of the circuits will feed pairs of Patt. 23 or 123 lanterns with 500-watt lamps, pending the introduction of the new 1 kW mirror spot (Patt. 263) which will not, unfortunately, be ready for the first season.

Most of the circuits on the grid lead to four sockets, one pair on each side, so that lanterns can be paired side by side or across stage as required. The spotbars over the stage will be fitted with flexible hoses brought back to plugboxes on the grid.

This description of the lighting set-up can at present be no more than a statement of intention, but after the first season it is hoped to report on what has actually been done.

In a theatre of this kind the stage manager is completely isolated from the cast and can keep control of the production only by means of telephones and other communication equipment. There will be the usual broadcast system relaying from the stage to all dressing rooms and tents, and an intercommunication system with talk-back and cue light from the control box to all key positions. These include the staircases into the auditorium, as when actors make entrances from these positions they cannot hear what is being said on stage and must be cued in.

This building is the first of its kind to be constructed in this country and it will not be possible to predict its potentialities and limitations with any certainty until a large number of plays has been presented. However, at a time when so many theatres are being closed and demolished it is encouraging that a new one of a novel form should be built, and perhaps even more significant that the

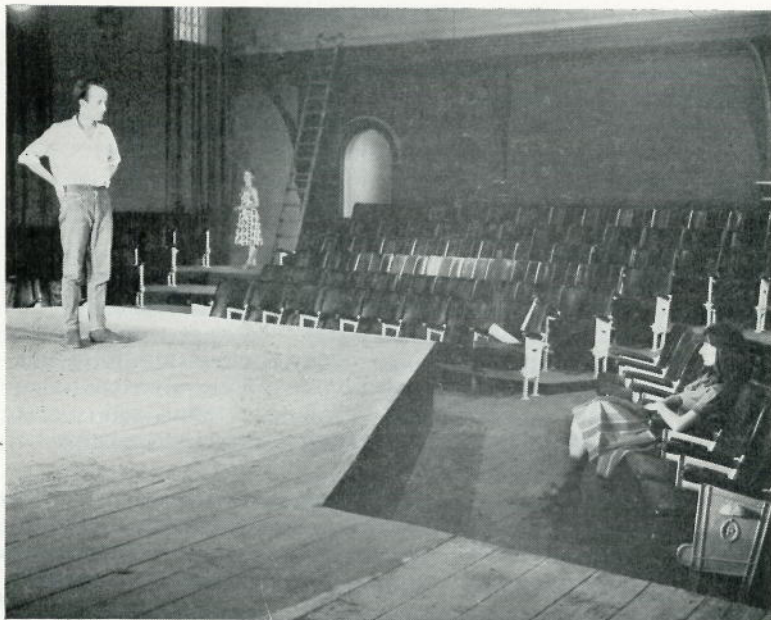
driving force for the whole project should have come from people who are completely outside the theatre. The idea originated with Leslie Evershed-Martin, now one of the Trustees. The architects are Powell and Moya with Christopher Stevens, the structural engineers are Charles Weiss and Partners, the quantity surveyors are Davis Belfield & Everest, and the consultants for lighting, heating, and ventilation are Peter Jay & Partners in association with David Kut. The general contractors for the building are Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons Ltd.

TWO UNCONVENTIONAL THEATRES IN AUSTRALIA

by Dennis Irving

Following on recent articles in TABS about open stages and adaptable theatres in England and America, readers may be interested to know of two such projects in Australia. They are both on a relatively small scale, but by the same token, neither are strictly commercial.

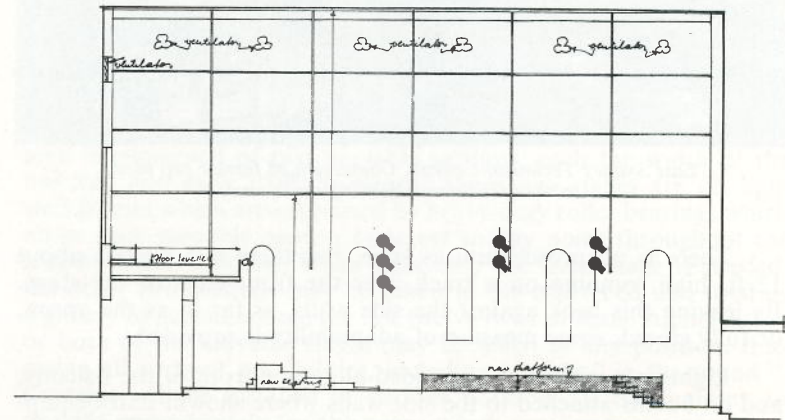
Taking the smaller one first, this is the Emerald Hill Theatre in South Melbourne. It is a converted church hall, and the original building dates back to 1877; consequently it has a lofty ceiling—a



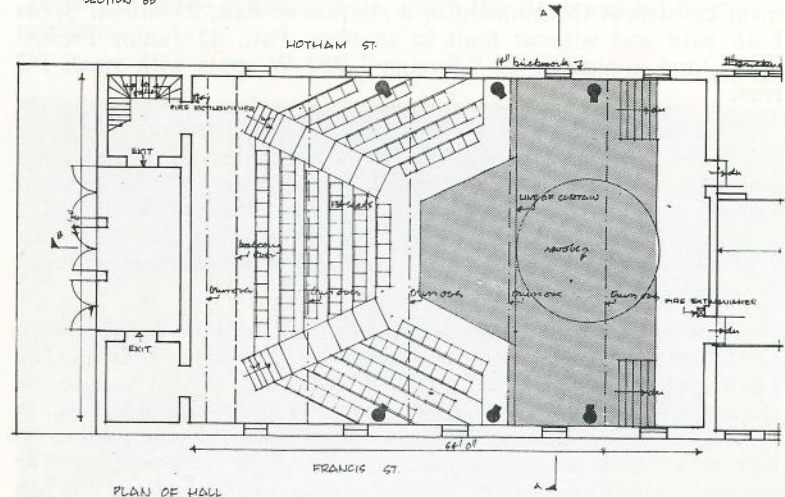
The Emerald Hill Theatre, Melbourne, is a converted church hall.

feature which is regrettably absent from most modern architecture.

The building originally had a small balcony and a rudimentary platform, but no proscenium. As shown in the drawing, the old platform has been discarded, and a new stage built, having a central 18-ft. diameter hand-operated revolve, and a trapezoidal apron. The seating is arranged in tiers, following the line of the apron, and everyone has a good view of the performance. The balcony has become the location for lighting and sound control, also the wardrobe and manager's office. One row of seats has been left along the front of the balcony, to be used by invitation only.

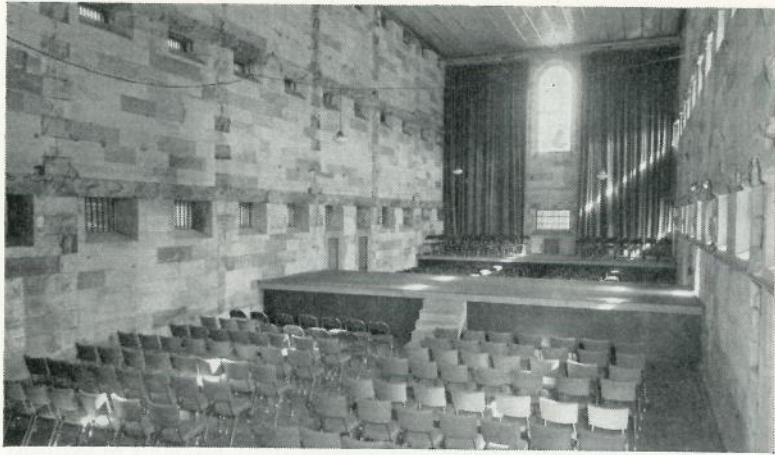


SECTION BB



PLAN OF HALL

Plan and section, Emerald Hill Theatre, showing new stage area shaded, and lighting positions.



East Sydney Technical College. Conversion of former cell block to theatre. Interior looking south-west.

There is no proscenium as such, but there is a curtain about 12 ft. high, running on a track over the front edge of the stage. By leaving this back against the side walls, as far in as the apron, or fully closed, some measure of adaptability is provided.

Lighting positions are provided along the front of the balcony, and on booms attached to the side walls where shown. Extra equipment can be attached to the roof trusses when required. The equipment consists at the moment of a mixture of Patt. 23 Mirror Spots both with and without built in shutters, Patt. 45 Junior Fresnel Spots, and a number of "foreign" 250 W spots with small PC lenses.

The whole project is being carried out by a band of enthusiasts led by Mr. Wal Cherry, and the work of converting the building undertaken by voluntary or conscripted labour. At the time of writing, the theatre is due to open in March 1962 and it is intended to present a repertoire of six plays cycled for about one week each over six months, then starting again with another repertoire and so on.

The other, more ambitious project is at the East Sydney Technical College, in what was originally the Darlinghurst Goal. The Darlinghurst Goal (originally built in 1840) was handed over to the education authorities for conversion into a technical college in 1921, and during the intervening 40 years almost every building on the site has been converted to serve some educational purpose. The women's cell block was not touched until approximately 1950 when the cells were gutted. A little later slates were removed from the roof to repair other governmental buildings in the city with the result

that the original timbers began to deteriorate in the weather and the building quickly became one of the largest pigeon lofts in the city areas.

The women's cell block is one of several cell units that radiate spoke-like from the central round building that was constructed as the goal chapel. It is approximately 115 ft. long, 30 ft. wide and 32 ft. high. The large sandstone blocks were approximately 3 ft. long, 1 ft. in depth and 27 in. thick. There were three tiers of stone cells and a total of 78 cells originally designed as double cells, each to accommodate two women. Only a narrow passage ran along the centre of the long axis of the building. Some far sighted people suggested that the block be converted into a small experimental theatre, and with funds obtained by public appeal and from the State Government, the conversion is now almost complete.

The eastern end of the building is semicircular in shape and in this section is a fixed stage with three entrances. The remaining stage area is composed of two movable sections, each the width of the building and each 12 ft. in depth. These two stages are on light steel frames which are supported by heavy-duty roller bearings which allow each movable section to travel to any point throughout the length of the building. When thus only the fixed stage is needed, the other two sections may be taken to the other end and used as a gallery to accommodate the last twelve rows of seats. Again, either or both of the movable stages may be taken to any position, thus giving all sorts of possibilities, including playing "in the round". Curtains will be installed in various positions of the building to provide appropriately for the needs which any producer may have. There will be no superstructure above the stage and no fixed proscenium.



A view of the converted cell block looking north-east.

The photographs were taken before any permanent lighting was installed, hence the opal glass fittings shown therein should be disregarded. The house lighting is now, by means of a number of special wall units, housing 150 W mirror-backed lamps, fed through the stage dimming system via a changeover relay.

The stage lighting layout consists of six Patt. 23N mirror spots, eight Patt. 23 mirror spots and two Patt. 243 (1,000 W) spots. In addition, there are a number of outlets around the walls, and a pair of Patt. 23's on stands.

Control is by means of a Strand 18-way saturable reactor system (S.R.) feeding the various circuits via a small cord and patch panel. The dimmer rack and patch panel are in a small room behind the stage, and the control panel is fitted with a flexible cable and multi-pin plug, which can connect to any one of the three control points.

It is interesting to note that all who have used the building (for its new purpose that is!) agree that the acoustic qualities of the building are excellent—in the writer's experience, it has that "live" feeling which can so much improve any theatrical performance. A very effective past production was *Oedipus Rex*, in which the uppermost door in the semi-circular end was used as an entrance, with a curved stairway built, running down the stage level.

We are indebted to Mr. Crisp, Principal of the East Sydney Technical College, for information and loan of photographs.

* * *

REVIEWS

Light on Stages

Bentham, Corry and Joseph

Recorded Lecture No. 3

"Wherefore, sweetheart? What's your metaphor?" . . . Aguecheek's question might well be applied to the title of the third in the series of Recorded Lectures which the indefatigable Strand Electric "back-room boys" have just produced. In fact, although much is said and shown about lighting the stage, this lecture is largely concerned with shedding light on the vexed problems of acting areas of all kinds and their relationships with audiences. To the average member of an amateur dramatic society this sequence of slides and dialogue may well come as a revelation and it should also prove invaluable to the more technically-minded for use as an introduction to the possibilities of breaking out from the confines of the conventional picture frame stage. The running time of the lecture—almost 90 minutes—is rather long, particularly as there is a tendency towards lack of form in the discussions, in spite of careful and exhaustive editing, and I would support the suggestion made during the discussion following the "premiere" that an interval should be allowed for when arranging a showing to a "lay" audience. The tendency for the discussions between Stephen Joseph and Percy Corry to develop into a "cross talk" is inevitable when two people with such diametrically opposed views are brought together and I was filled with admiration for Frederick Bentham's skill in acting as "referee." None the less, it did occur to me at several points during the later part of the lecture that the slides were infinitely more valuable than anything which was being said about

them and that they could probably be usefully employed for a more advanced treatment of the subject (I mention this, not as criticism, but as a suggestion which might lead to an even wider use of the visual material).

The lecture falls roughly into two parts, the opening being an examination of lighting problems in the proscenium theatre (including valuable sequences on the elimination of some of the horrors of "borders" and the importance of the audience's view of the stage floor), while the later sections are devoted to an attempt to sort out the vexed questions of nomenclature of various types of acting area leading to actual examples of different kinds of stages from "space" to "centre" drawn from all over the world. Incidentally, what an admirable idea to bring Alfred Emmet in to talk about his famous flexible theatre. The colour slides by Paul Weston were excellent throughout; some of the monochrome pictures from other sources seemed almost to have been chosen to be as bad as possible! I find it difficult to believe, for example, that the one of John English's Arena Theatre was the best available and I should like to think that this, and one or two others of Stephen Joseph's company, will be replaced in due course with pictures which can at least stand comparison *photographically* with the rest of the material. I can understand that slides made from existing prints will suffer in quality, but surely for such an important lecture as this access to the negatives could have been had for the English examples? This is a rather niggling point, but the fact remains that the experimental staging was done less than justice by the somewhat poor quality slides.

Apart from these few small points I found myself in enthusiastic agreement with the discussions all through and I feel sure that this lecture will open up new ground when it starts on its travels round the country. It also points the way to exciting possibilities for the development of the series . . . once the escape has been made from the comparatively narrow confines of stage lighting as such to broader concepts of stage theory and practice we are liable to be even more deeply indebted to the "old firm".

J. A. MITCHLEY, *Essex County Drama Adviser*

Adaptable Theatres, edited by Stephen Joseph, 15s. 9d. post free from Clarvies, 1 Greenwood Gardens, N.13.

The proceedings of the Association of British Theatre Technicians' Conference last June* on Adaptable Theatres have now been published—in a large quarto volume of 100 pages. The editor is Stephen Joseph and the proceedings will not only be valuable to those who attended or would have liked to attend this, the first international conference of its kind to be held in England, but also to all those interested in theatre planning, whatever the scale. Indeed this book is a valuable addition to the literature on the theatre building itself. It is a feature of the Adaptable Theatre that it must of necessity spotlight the many forms a theatre can take, since, theoretically at least, it is adaptable to all of them. Each of these forms, the proscenium stage, the arena stage, theatre in the round, was discussed in detail and against an international backdrop. Thus we can read of Ian Albery in a West end *picture frame*, Hull Miller staging in *space*, Derek Martinus in *the round* at Croydon; and Herbert Marshall in goodness knows what in India. Indeed this last paper was, contrary to the present writer's expectations, a fascinating **highlight** of the conference. Add to these full-scale contributions by Peter Hall, Sean Kenny, Michel St. Denis, Stephen Joseph, John English, Peter Moro, and then throw in Eric Jordan and his fire-fighting friends on the Continent discussing safety and fire regulations, and a couple of real authorities on lighting, and one can see that this the bumper volume of the year and an absolute must for everyone's shelves. By the way it *does* deal with Adaptable Theatres as well. In it are featured our homely new Questors theatre, the two million dollar Loeb Centre, Harvard, U.S., Mannheim, Germany, a Swedish enterprise—adaptable theatres all.

FREDERICK BENTHAM

*See TABS, Vol. 19, No. 2, September 1961 for a personal review of the conference itself by Disley Jones.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Seven Ages of the Theatre. Richard Southern. Faber and Faber 36s. net

This is a very important book. Dr. Southern ranges widely through history and in different countries in order to explain the phenomenon of drama and the significance of the stage and the theatre which houses it. This might be the **beginning of a more enlightened idea of theatre for many a student** in this country where a restricted notion of theatre is encouraged by books and by the narrow experience of theatre available through the profession. Readers of Dr. Southern's earlier books will expect his stylish thoroughness—which can sometimes be infuriating, particularly when he seems to miss the point, as when he refers to "certain actual earthworks built as theatres and standing to this day", referring to the Cornish rounds which were probably not built as theatres at all but, surviving from an earlier period and built originally for another purpose, were nevertheless used by the Cornish for their plays—illustrating the eternal **ingenuity of actors when faced with no matter what place to act in. Again, Dr. Southern cannot remain a detached historian, but comes down strongly, at the end of his book, in favour of the three-sided platform stage (which most people wrongly call an arena stage, and he calls an open stage).** Further, he does not mention the Chichester Festival Theatre—presumably because it had not been planned when the book went to press, but he does cover the open-stage theatre proposed for Harlow where (it is my guess) no such adventurous theatre will be built, since amateur operatic activities and a flourishing ballet school, combined with the conservatism of local authorities, make an opera house a more likely prospect. I wish the authorities at Harlow, and in other places where civic theatres are now being contemplated, would read this book. It may not be perfect history, it may not be entirely unprejudiced in the face of present-day trends, it may have blemishes of style, but it does carry ideas and information that are much needed here, in this country, now, when we are beginning to consider the possibility of building new theatres.

STEPHEN JOSEPH

Shaw the Villager and Human Being. A Biographical Symposium. Narrated and Edited by Allan Chappelow. Charles Skilton 42s.

To the serious Shavian disciple this book, edited by one of them, will probably be of interest mainly for its excellent collection of photographs. It should justify its title, however, by adding something to his knowledge of Shaw as an ordinary mortal. It will add a great deal to the knowledge of those whose opinions about Shaw were gained from a **superficial acquaintance with his work, and a recollection of the figure created by news-hungry journalists, aided or impeded by a publicity-conscious G.B.S.**

Here we have the figure of the rather shy but friendly, kindly and generous villager who did not inflict his V.I.P. status on his neighbours. One is impressed by housekeeper, gardener, cook and chauffeur; postman, policeman, publican and parson; and a host of others who shared with him the seclusion of the small community of Ayot St. Lawrence. A few critical comments are made by Shaw's more sophisticated neighbours, but to most of the contributors, the literary activities of the world-famous genius were remotely unfamiliar: they apparently judged him as a wealthy resident who could be relied on to contribute generously to village funds, and to the cost of repairing the ancient Church; as one who was slightly eccentric, but who moved freely among them and became interested in their private lives, and in their children. To many of them he was Mister Shaw; but it is claimed that by some villagers he was referred to—not addressed, of course—as "Our Bernie"! That could be quite eloquent tribute.

PERCY CORRY