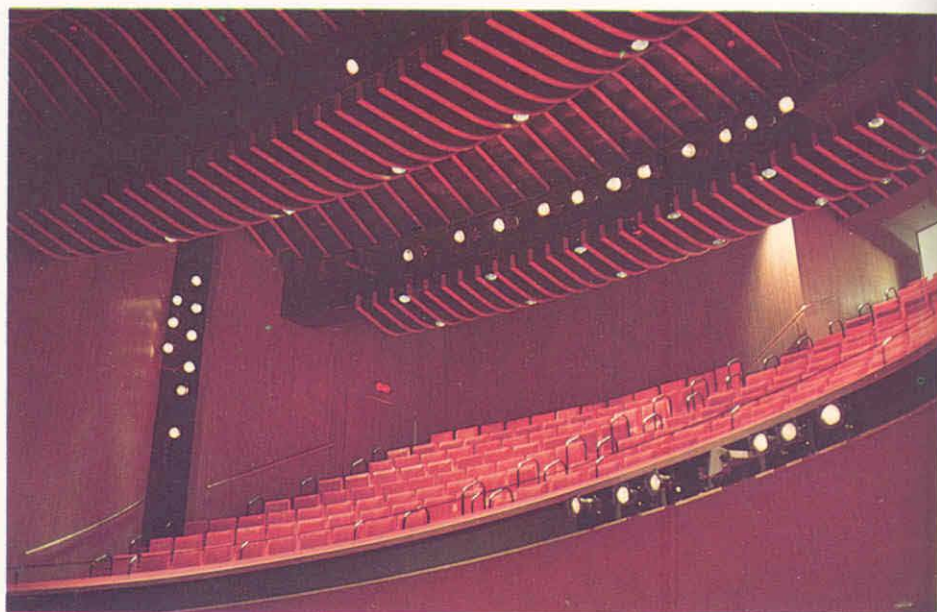


# New Sydney Theatres

Speak of new Sydney theatres and the Opera House immediately springs to mind. Recent years, however, have seen a great deal of other theatre building in Sydney including two commercial theatres (*Her Majesty's* and the *Theatre Royal*) and two thrusts (a conversion—the *Nimrod* and the purpose-built *Seymour Centre*).

The *Theatre Royal*, incorporated in a new development block is a traditional proscenium house with a scarlet and gold auditorium which is lushy, plushy, and comfortable. Capacity is just over a thousand, varying a little according to whether the orchestra pit (formed by a lift) is in use. Proscenium is 22 ft. 10½ in. (6.97 m) high and 37 ft. 10 in. (11.56 m) wide. With an average wall to wall width of 81 ft. 6 in. (24.80 m), there is a particularly useful dock space on stage left. The last of the 58 single purchase counterweight sets in 34 ft. 6 in. (10.53 m) from the proscenium wall and there is a further twenty feet or so of depth available beyond. Lighting control is by a 120-channel MMS with push-button channel access and both manual and rate playbacks. The foh lighting positions—three bridges plus two slots on each wall—are particularly good. The inventory includes 150 spotlights plus the latest tungsten halogen cyclorama lighting by Ianiro Iris floods and Pallas groundrows.

The *Seymour Centre*, which was made possible by a bequest from Mr. Everest York Seymour, is administered by the University of Sydney. It is situated on the perimeter of



*Theatre Royal*

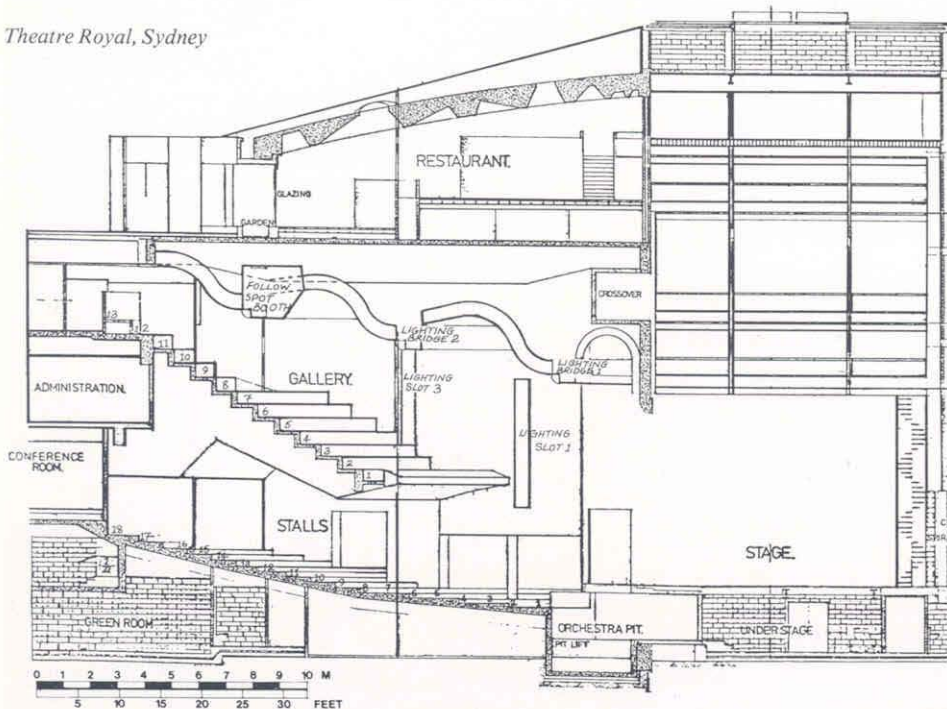
the University campus, close to the city centre. The self-contained complex houses three fully-equipped theatres, rehearsal studios, extensive backstage facilities, offices, a recording studio, cinema facilities, display areas, bars and a restaurant.

The principal performance space and the one illustrated here is the *York Theatre* intended primarily for the presentation of drama. It seats 783 in amphitheatre formation around a thrust stage and no seat is further than 16 metres from the centre of the thrust. The interior is finished simply with the surround of the auditorium walls and stage walls lined with dark stained rough sawn wood. The open steel framework supporting the roof is fully exposed within the theatre and painted deep blue. This toning is carried through into the auditorium carpet and seat upholstery.

The thrust consists of three main sections: the rear thrust, the central thrust, and the



*Theatre Royal, Sydney*



outer thrust. The rear thrust is fixed and 2 ft. 8 in. (0.81 m) higher than the central thrust which is also fixed. The outer thrust is at the same level as the central thrust. The major portion of the stage floor of the front of the outer thrust can be removed in sections to uncover the understage. This may then be used as a pit or for entrance/exit stairways on to the stage. Both the central and outer thrust can support a series of modules to bring the entire thrust stage to the same level.

In the centre of the rear thrust an electrically powered two-level rising stage provides a platform at any level or a lift to carry props and scenery to/from the storerooms below.

Upper level balcony acting areas 10 ft. 2 in. (3.1 m) above the stage are located on both sides, above and to the side of the rear thrust, each revealed by two sliding panels. With the lift in its uppermost position and by bridging from this raised platform to the balconies, a free-form Elizabethan stage arrangement can be