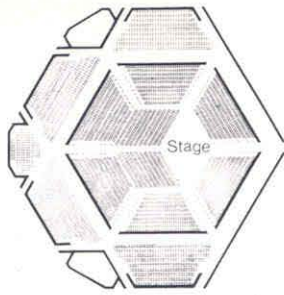
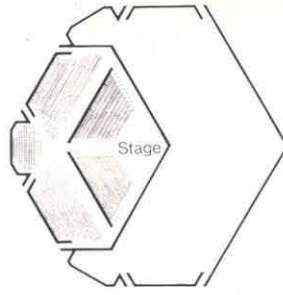


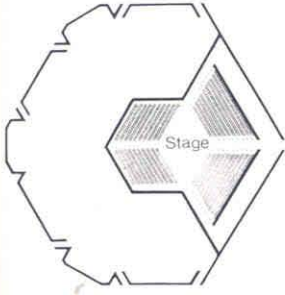
2360 seats without gallery
3822 seats with gallery



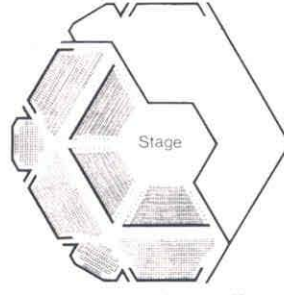
3208 seats without gallery
4442 seats with gallery



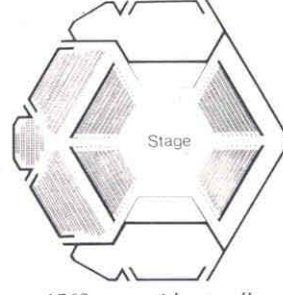
1140 seats without gallery
1814 seats with gallery



1008 seats without gallery



1750 seats without gallery
2818 seats with gallery



1768 seats without gallery
2442 seats with gallery

techniques involving a thrust through the proscenium zone. Various audience circulation areas are also used for performances and experiments have been made in widening audience involvement by utilising all corners of the theatre premises in what could be described as an open ended festival of simultaneous happenings.

Brecht's *Berliner Ensemble* inhabits a

lovely old ornate turn-of-the-century theatre in the operatic tradition of illusion. Architecturally it represents everything that Brecht reacted against—but somehow the Brecht production devices, particularly the short curtains whizzing along their head high wires, seem all the more positive in contrast to the auditorium's rather wildly rococo decoration.

Two of the many possible ceiling configurations in the adaptable *Grosser Saal* of Berlin's *Palast der Republik*. Some of the other possible auditorium/stage relationships are shown above in diagrammatic form.



Operetta is presented at the *Metropol* where, despite a small wingless stage, a typical week's repertoire includes *Gipsy Baron*, *Showboat*, *Sweet Charity*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Sorotshintzy Fair*, and two concerts by the Berlin Symphony Orchestra.

The *Theater der Freundschaft* has a children's theatre company playing of course, in repertoire often with two performances (different plays) each day.

All these theatres are old theatres and they are all tenanted by ensembles. There is a feeling of interaction between architecture and ensemble—theatre buildings are just as human as actors and the influence of each on the other is very character forming. The result is that all these delightful old theatres and their ensembles have individual house styles.

The *Palast der Republik* is something completely different. It is a today version of a hereditary ruler's palace: in a democratic republic all the people are the rulers and this is their palace. The internal furnishings have something of the richness of the rococo, even baroque: the floors, the foyers, the murals, the chairs, and especially the lighting fittings have an air of expensive ostentation. And why not? The *Palast der Republik* is somewhere to go for a night out. To have a meal in one of the three restaurants; to visit the *Weinstube* or *Bierstube*; the milk bar or the coffee bar; to bowl, to dance, or to disco. Or attend a performance in the *Grosser Saal*, an adaptable performance space with seating configurations variable in shape and size up to 5,000. Apart from an adaptable floor, there is an infinitely variable geometry ceiling with many possibilities including masking-off the balcony level. This theatre has no ensemble: it is for the special event or short run of performances by a touring company. The *Palace of the Republic* also contains the *Theater in Palast* for more intimate events including "evenings with satire and music".

The *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* theatre magazine *Theater der Zeit* lists the programmes of 93 stages in 43 cities. With a population of less than 17 million, theatre obviously plays a big part in the life of the citizens of the DDR. This is hardly surprising if the standard elsewhere in the country reaches anything approaching the standard in Berlin.

FR.

The editor visited Berlin with a party of Scenographers, Technicians and Administrators from the Society of British Theatre Designers and Association of British Theatre Technicians. In an intensive week of theatre visits, performances and discussions, he was able to visit personally (both sides of the curtain) the theatres mentioned above. For the sake of completeness, mention should be made of the Berlin theatres which time excluded from the itinerary: *Maxim Gorki* (Drama), *Friedrichstadtpalast* (Light Entertainment) and the *Puppentheater*.