

the German Federal Republic, Great Britain, Holland, Italy and Sweden. The essential practical information is clearly presented so that a visitor will be able to find what he needs with the minimum of delay. But the main body of the book is a brief but informative excursion into the history of the main movements in European ballet as seen through the collections which the author visited. Emphasis should be placed on the factor of personal investigation. It is this which gives the book its distinctive flavour and which sets it apart from Gilder and Freedley's *Theatre Collections in Libraries and Museums* and the more recent and much larger *Performing Arts Collections* by André Veinstein. The result is a book which is not only readable as well as consultable, but is also, within its limited field, more useful to the student than the formal guides. The author has been there and can tell you what you will find, how you will find it and what snags you are liable to encounter. In a world in which time matters, it is important to know that the Music Library at Vienna contains material of immense interest but that care must be taken to avoid wasted journeys, and that at the British Museum, one of the principal sources of theatrical material in this country, the delays, inconveniences and difficulties of obtaining material are serious barriers against research.

It is good to find recorded here the help which the International Federation for Theatre Research was able to give to Mr. Brinson. The task of opening doors for scholars in any country in which they want to work is gradually being recognised as one of the most important features of the Federation's work.

I.K.F.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Elder Olson. *Tragedy and the Theory of Drama*. Wayne State Univ. Press, \$2.95.
 Margaret Wood. *Plays for Christmas and Easter*. Heinemann, 8s. 6d.
 Hugo von Hofmannsthal. *Three Plays*. Translated, with an introduction by Alfred Schwarz. Wayne State Univ. Press, \$2.95.
 Leslie E. White. *A Manual on Spoken English*. Cassell, 9s. 6d.
 Richard Courtney. *The School Play*. Cassell, 16s.
 John Hudson and Peter Slade. *A Chance for Everyone. A Progressive Drama Course*. Cassell, Pupil's Book 1, 4s. 6d. Teacher's Book 1, 15s.
 Euripides. *Helen*. Edited with Introduction and Commentary by A. M. Dale. Oxford Univ. Press, 28s.
 David Halliwell. *Little Malcolm and His Struggle against the Eunuchs*. Faber, 7s. 6d.
 Henrik Ibsen. *The Master Builder*. English Adaptation by Emlyn Williams. Introduction by Martin Esslin. Heinemann, 9s. 6d.
 E. M. Broner. *Summer is a Foreign Land*. Wayne State Univ. Press, \$4.95.

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3. —, *Seven Men* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1920). Half-tone mounted plate of "L. 'Savonarola' Brown," imaginary author of "Savonarola." Original owned by Alfred A. Knopf.
4. S. N. Behrman, *Portrait of Max* (New York, 1960), p. 141. Multiple sketches of "L. 'Savonarola' Brown," imaginary author of "Savonarola" in *Seven Men*. Large full-length portrait in foreground; smaller one with hat and coat in background; three sketches of "Brown's" head; and five caricatures worked into the "s's" of the inscription. Inscribed: "Savonarola, Act III, Slow but Sure." Intended as supplementary illustration to entry above. Original at University of Texas.

CHRISTOPHER WREN'S THEATRE ROYAL

by DONALD MULLIN AND BRUCE KOENIG

THE type of English public playhouse used by Shakespeare and his contemporaries changed but little until the forced closing of the theatres in 1642 by the Puritans. With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Charles II did not permit a general reopening of the theatres, as was expected, but instead gave a monopoly of the production of plays in London to two of his courtiers, Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew. These men were not interested in the type of theatre from which English drama had grown, but were solely concerned with the introduction into England of the type of baroque scenic spectacle long common in France and Italy. Such use of scenes and machines demanded a theatre design different from that of the open cockpit type familiar to us in the Globe and the Swan, and from the platform stage as used at Blackfriars. A form was needed which could provide a stage large enough to accommodate the scenes and their associated effects, and one which was enclosed so that the scenes could be protected and could be presented to the greatest effect under controlled lighting.

The Royal patentees opened in temporary quarters, but soon moved to permanent buildings designed specifically for the new medium. Davenant built the splendid Dorset Garden Theatre for his Duke's Company, and Killigrew the Theatre Royal, Bridges Street, for his King's Men. The plot of ground upon which Killigrew built was a former riding yard, located between Bridges Street and Drury Lane. The architect and the exact form of the Bridges Street theatre are unknown, although the building has been attributed variously to Sir Christopher Wren, John Webb, and to the influence of Inigo Jones.¹ The original structure burned in 1672 and was replaced by a new theatre in 1674, since referred to as the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

1. A view on this has been expressed by one of the authors in "The Theatre Royal, Bridges Street: A Conjectural Restoration," *Educational Theatre Journal*, XVIII, 3.

Christopher Wren was traditionally accepted as having designed the new building, although, until this century, there was no evidence that he had done so. In 1913 tradition was partly upheld when Hamilton Bell discovered an unsigned architectural section of a theatre amid the uncatalogued Wren drawings in possession of All Souls, Oxford. The drawing was labelled merely "Playhouse," with a date that had been scratched out, and had been torn twice across as if at first discarded. It has been assumed by succeeding generations of theatre historians that this architectural section is that of the Theatre Royal of 1674, and undoubtedly a Wren design.²

Knowledge of the building's original state is relatively slight. We do know that Wren's theatre remained essentially unaltered until 1762, and that even the basic structure survived until condemned in 1791. In the latter part of that long period numerous sketches were made of the building, and it is from these that much of our knowledge derives. These sketches, however, show the structure after numerous changes had been made, and give us no precise information on the theatre as Wren planned it. Aside from the Wren section, the only other illustration contemporary with the opening of the theatre in 1674 is a plate illustrating a scene from the opera *Ariane*, given at Drury Lane the *première* season.

In spite of this rather scanty material several conjectural restorations have been made of Wren's Theatre Royal, the most familiar of which are those of Richard Leacroft and Edward Langhans.³ Both of these restorations are based upon the Wren section, with that of Leacroft also being influenced by the sketches of the brothers Adam made in 1775. While original sources are fragmentary, and later changes modified the structure almost beyond recognition, there exists a continuous record of the state of the playhouse in memorabilia from the period, and in sufficient detail that, when studied alongside the available illustrations, will give us an accurate view of the theatre at each stage of its development.

Contemporary Illustrations

The frontispiece to the published edition of the opera *Ariane* shows us a pilastered proscenium front, a stage with a curved apron that has straight ends, and a scenic vista terminating in a backcloth representing London Bridge. While the artist seems to have taken a few liberties with what probably was shown on the stage, the illustration is the only one we have of any part of Wren's theatre with the exception of the architect's own sketch. The *Ariane* frontispiece has been dismissed summarily by many historians due to the inclusion of a proscenium arch when we know that Drury Lane had none, and also due to the representation of the pilastered front as being located directly at the edge of the apron rather than back from it, in line with the first stage box. Nicoll objected to this "highly fantastic" illustration not only for these reasons, but also because the scene is shown as though the

2. Hamilton Bell, "Contributions on the History of the English Playhouse. Part II, on 3 Plans of Sir Christopher Wren," *Architectural Record*, 1913, 359-368.

3. Richard Leacroft, "Wren's Drury Lane," *The Architectural Review*, CX, 43-44; and Edward A. Langhans, "Wren's Restoration Playhouse," *Theatre Notebook*, XVIII, 3, 91. The reader is also reminded of the reconstruction of Dr. Richard Southern, plate 28 in his *Changeable Scenery*, which is similar to that of Mr. Leacroft.

buildings were three dimensional rather than composed of flats.⁴ This was, of course, merely a convention of the period. In spite of the lack of apron space in this sketch, studies of theatrical illustrations from the period indicate their general accuracy.⁵ Those same pilasters, moreover, may not be illustrations of Wren's three-dimensional ones, but merely painted canvas rigged especially for *Ariane*.

The Wren section tells us that the theatre had three galleries, each containing four rows of backless benches. The two lower galleries circled around the sides of the house, forming boxes, while the uppermost did not. Access to the galleries was gained by a flight of stairs at either end of a narrow foyer. Ten backless benches were fitted in a sloping pit. Behind the stage opening almost half the building was given over to the scenic area, which included not only space for the scenes but also green rooms and dressing rooms. The stage was raked, and a curved apron extended out into the pit, two proscenium doors being on either side with boxes above. More may be interpolated from the section with varying degrees of risk. Other evidence must be sought to confirm any supposition thus drawn.

The Influence of the Original Playhouse of 1663

The Theatre Royal, Bridges Street,

... was destroyed by fire, on Thursday evening, 25 January, 1671-2. The fire was a disastrous one: beginning under the stairs at the back of the playhouse, it burned down half the building and all of the stock of scenery and costumes. From there it spread, urged on by a southwesterly wind, to the adjoining houses towards Drury Lane.⁶

The half of the building that remained standing included the foyers and the galleries. It is highly likely that these undamaged parts were incorporated into Wren's new structure, especially since the rebuilding was a scratch affair with a shortage of funds. Any discussion of the theatre of 1674, then, must necessarily take into account the possible form of the theatre of 1663. A possibility for this form is illustrated in a Wren sketch (81, All Souls), which one of the authors has suggested is a drawing for alterations carried out at Bridges Street in 1665-6. The galleries indicated therein and the galleries that may be interpolated readily from the Wren section of Drury Lane are identical.

*

A restoration of the theatre of 1674 cannot be made without reference to alterations made to the building in the latter part of the 17th and in the 18th centuries. Only by making a satisfactory identification of each of these alterations will it then be possible to strike them from the known plan of the structure in 1791, and thus remove us back to the playhouse as Wren planned it.

References to Alterations and Other Notes

1696. Speaking of the theatre before changes made by Christopher Rich in 1696, Colley Cibber stated, in 1740, that

It must be observ'd, then, that the Area or Platform of the old Stage, pro-

4. Allardyce Nicoll, *The Development of the Theatre*, 1937, 163.

5. Kalman A. Burnin, "Eighteenth Century Theatrical Illustrations in the Light of Contemporary Documents," *Theatre Notebook*, XIV, 2.

6. Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, 1928, 253.

jected about four foot forwarder, in a Semi-oval Figure, parallel to the Benches of the Pit; and that the former, lower Doors of Entrance for the Actors were brought down between the two foremost (and then only) Pilasters: in the Place of which Doors, now the Stage-Boxes are fixt. That where the Doors of Entrance now are, there formerly stood two additional Side-Wings, in front to a full set of Scenes, which had then almost a double Effect, in their Loftiness, and Magnificence. By this Original Form, the usual station of the Actors, in almost every Scene, was advanc'd at least ten foot nearer to the Audience, than they now can; because, not only from the Stage's being shorten'd, in front, but likewise from the additional Interposition of those Stage-Boxes, the Actors (in respect to the Spectators that fill them) are kept so much more backward from the main Audience, than they us'd to be.⁷

1698. A visitor from France, Henri Misson, mentioned in his *Memoirs* that

The pit is an Amphitheatre, fill'd with Benches without Backboards, and adorn'd and covered with green Cloth . . . Farther up, against the Wall, under the first Gallery, and just opposite to the Stage, rises another Amphitheatre . . . The Galleries, whereof there are only two rows, are fill'd with none but ordinary People, particularly the Upper one.⁸

Misson's second "amphitheatre" is the first gallery, while his use of "Gallery" is restricted to the two uppermost levels of seating.

Aside from the cutting back of the stage by Christopher Rich in 1696, no other alterations were made between the opening and 1747, aside from a refurbishing and redecorating of the boxes in 1715.⁹ A hint of an experiment with pit seating, however, was given in 1734, when

The author of *A Critical Review of the Public Buildings* (1734) thought that the Drury Lane did not have a frontage which would "require grandure or magnificence." He added that its interior seemed to "be best calculated for the convenience of the Speaker and Hearer," with the exception that the "division in the middle" . . . was an absurdity and that the "decorations on the Stage" left something to be desired.¹⁰

It has been suggested that the "division in the middle" referred to the introduction of a central aisle into the pit to facilitate entrance and exit, but no other comment upon this survives, nor did the central aisle.

1747. In a letter to William Pritchard, David Garrick noted that

I am just Com(e) from the House, We are ye midst of alterations & Mortar . . .¹¹

1749. This is explained by John Powell in *Tit for Tat*, as

the first gallery was enlarged to admit more, and a transformation was made of that part adjoining to the Box Lobby into a standing place for the Quality, that they might pay before they go in.¹²

1750. Before the theatre was reopened in September,

a new passage was opened from Russell Street into the boxes, followed two years later (21 November, 1752) by a passage opened into Bridges Street for the convenience of the ladies coming in Coaches.¹³

The Bridges Street entrance, long the principal one, was reached originally through a narrow alley.

1753. The *Public Advertiser* noted that the theatre was painted, gilded and decorated with new Scenes &c.¹⁴

7. Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*, 1882, 339-340.

8. Henri Misson, *Misson's Memoirs and Observations in His Travels over England*, 1740, 219-220.

9. Emmet L. Avery, ed., *The London Stage*, 1960, Part 2, I, lxix.

10. Avery, Part 2, I, xxv.

11. David M. Little and George M. Karl, ed., *The Letters of David Garrick*, 1903, I, 89.

12. Stone, *The London Stage* Part 4, I, xl.

13. Stone, Part 4, I, xli.

14. Stone, Part 4, I, xli.

1762. The proprietors of the Theatre Royal decided to enlarge the theatre once again, and

... Mr. Garrick very judiciously observed that the plan of reformation must be preceded by a considerable enlargement of the playhouse; and if it could be so contrived, that the space before the curtain might contain as many persons as had formerly filled the pit, boxes, galleries, and the stage, nobody would have any pretense to murmur. Mr. Lacy was of the same opinion, and he concurred with his partner in the prosecution of the scheme; and having a taste for architecture, he took upon himself the enlargement of the theatre, which was completely finished in the year 1762.¹⁵

1771.

... the interior was newly painted and decorated before the opening of the 1771-1772 season.¹⁶

With this the minor changes came to an end. After the close of the season of 1775, Garrick called upon Robert and James Adam to "re-construct the theatre and add a new facade."¹⁷ From the period of the reconstruction we have engravings made by the brothers Adam while engaged upon the work, William Capon's drawing of the interior of Drury Lane in 1792, before its demolition, and related materials in memorabilia appearing after the theatre had opened once more. The Adam engravings include a view of the interior from the stage (the scale of the figures is out of proportion to the size of the hall, however), and a plate depicting the decorative treatment given to the ceiling, which indicates the house as having been fan-shaped. The latter is the only scaled drawing of any part of the theatre we have between 1674 and 1794. By a study of the ceiling plate in conjunction with the interior view, it is possible (by reverse projection) to determine the scales of the latter sketch. The width of the proscenium is calculated to be thirty feet, a figure supported by "work lines" remaining in the Capon sketch of 1792, which shows the proscenium with thirty divisions within the opening, presumably feet. An unscaled Adam drawing for a decorated proscenium, though not labelled, is found by the same method to have an opening and box heights in proportion to the thirty foot figure of the Adam interior, corresponding also to the box heights given in the Wren section.

The fan shape of the house, clearly shown in the Adam sketch as well as the ceiling plate, and referred to in George Saunders's *Treatise*,¹⁸ is assumed by some restorers to have been the original form of Wren's playhouse, and not a change introduced by the brothers Adam. Changes that we know were made by these architects include: raising the ceiling twelve feet so that the third gallery could be carried around to the sides; replacement of Wren's heavy pilasters with smaller columns; addition of new passages to the boxes; general alteration of trim and decoration to conform with neo-classic taste; the addition of a new façade.

The reconstruction was completed within four months, the theatre opening anew September 23, 1775. Between this major alteration and the closing of the building in 1791, the only additional changes were those made by William Capon, the theatre's scene painter, who removed all the Adam composition work and ornament and placed painted decora-

15. Thomas Davies, *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick*, 1808, I, 382-383.

16. Stone, Part 4, I, xli.

17. Arthur T. Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, 1922, I, 30.

18. George Saunders, *A Treatise on Theatres*, 1790, 84.

tion in their stead. On June 4, 1791, the old theatre was finally judged unsafe and condemned.

*

A recapitulation and explanation of the changes made in Wren's theatre may be summarized and conjectured briefly.

1696—The stage is cut back four feet, from a "Semi-oval" to a straight front.

The downstage entrance doors are removed and boxes installed in their stead.

Comment. Previous conjectural restorations have presupposed a continuously curved apron, unbroken from side to side. It is our contention that the *Ariane* sketch does represent the original front, and that the cut-back was made logically, as far as the straight portion in the frontispiece sketch. This makes the "Semi-oval" protrusion four feet in depth at its widest point. The removal of this part of the apron was obviously a means of providing space for an orchestra elsewhere than on the stage. There was no music room, as in the Bridges Street theatre and Dorset Garden theatre.

1747—The first gallery was enlarged, along with the Box Lobby.

Comment. Previous conjectures have assumed that the entire interior of the Adam Drury Lane resulted from the brothers' reconstruction, other alterations not being taken into account. The brothers certainly worked with the structure they inherited, and this equally certainly included the changes of 1747. The Adam sketch shows obvious changes from the Wren section, in that the number of rows in the first gallery was increased from four to nine, in the second gallery from four to ten, and in the pit there was a reduction from ten to nine. If we abandon the rigid position that all illustrated changes were the result of the plans of the brothers Adam, we may then more properly assign these changes in degrees to their appropriate inspiration. Since the changes of 1747 included no addition to the building, but only alteration of available space, some redistribution of the visible components must have resulted. The removal of one row from the pit and a pressing of the remaining rows somewhat closer together would have allowed the front of the first gallery to have been advanced into the pit area. Some of the space thus gained in the first gallery was then allocated to the lobby area. Certainly one entire row across was added to the first gallery, possibly two, by judicious manipulation of the bench seats.

1750-52—New passages were opened from Russell Street and from Bridges Street.

Since these did not involve additions to the central structure they need not concern us here.

1762—The theatre was "considerably" enlarged under the direction of Mr. Lacy.

Comment. Only two possible additions to the seating could have been made at this time, both shown in the Adam sketch. Firstly, the second gallery was obviously extended out to meet the one below, allowing possibly two extra rows the full width of the theatre. These certainly would have accommodated most of the patrons who normally would have sat on the stage. While this is some addition, it is hardly "considerable," and it may have been at this time that the next step implied in the Adam sketch was taken; that, secondly, of eliminating the second

gallery lobby entirely, running seats completely back to the front wall of the theatre, leaving only stairwells at either corner. This would have allowed a total of six additional rows, a "considerable" enlargement in any playhouse.

1775—The theatre is reconstructed by the brothers Adam, including a new façade, a raised ceiling, extended galleries, pit passages, and, presumably, a widening of the house to a fan shape.

Comment. The new façade enabled the box lobby to be contained therein, thus allowing the first gallery to be extended back to the original front wall line, giving us the total of nine rows visible in the Adam sketch. Raising the ceiling allowed an additional row of boxes to be installed above those previously supplied by Wren. The raising also allowed the third gallery seating to be pushed back against the front wall, in the manner of the first and second galleries, a step prevented previously due to the sightline problem presented by the old ceiling line. At least one previous conjectural restoration assumes that the widening of the house was not done under the brothers Adam, but was a part of Wren's original design. The great increase in receipts made possible by the additional seating added during the Adam reconstruction must have come not only from the extra rows mentioned, but also from a rearrangement of the interior in another way. It is our contention that this widening took place under the direction of the brothers Adam, precisely because undivided bench seats could accommodate more patrons than the boxes would have lost by raking back the side walls.

Previous Conjectures

The conjectural restoration of Edward Langhans, while faithful to the Wren section, has some distinct peculiarities, as its author admits. Mr. Langhans attempted a ground plan that would be true to Wren in every respect, and did so, but without at the same time labouring to place his components in a logical manner. While Wren's sketch does show the pit benches to be arranged in straight lines, as laid out by Mr. Langhans, all evidence points to the fact that the plan was not followed when the building was completed; witness Colley Cibber's remark that the apron was originally in a "Semi-oval Figure, parallel to the Benches of the Pit." Mr. Langhans provides no access to the boxes other than a central doorway to the rear of each gallery, requiring box patrons to scramble over rows of gallery seats to reach their own. The pillars supporting the galleries are arranged in a manner to reflect the Wren section, but in no wise are calculated to hold up the upper galleries with either safety or sense. The more extreme of these pillars are tucked away behind the last of the pilasters, where they serve neither a structural nor an aesthetic function. He also ignores the evidence of the *Ariane* sketch and leaves the theatre with an apron continuously curved.

Although somewhat more practical, Mr. Leacroft's restoration nevertheless presents some difficulties. He contradicts Wren in the positions he chooses for joining the foyer wall with the side walls of the boxes, having juggled elements in those corners to make the sketch conform to his conception, rather than the other way around. As noted, he furthermore assumes the fan shape to have been selected by Wren

rather than by the brothers Adam. Benjamin Wyatt, architect of the 1812 playhouse, had made an exhaustive study of the old structure, and presumably was in possession of plans or other information now lost. He stated flatly that

the original theatres in Drury Lane . . . were all flat sided . . . Their sides were parallel or diverging little from each other.¹⁹

Mr. Leacroft also elected to place the extreme outside gallery pillars in a position devoid of purpose, and again the apron curvature suggested by *Ariane* is rejected. In this restoration there is, at least, access to the boxes by means of narrow passages from the foyers.

A restoration must be compatible with all the materials of evidence extant. Only by building the Wren theatre in reverse, by enumerating then striking out changes made by 1775, are we able to arrive at a ground plan for the theatre of 1674 that is satisfactory.

The ground plan proposed by the authors is compatible with the Wren section in every detail except that of the arrangement of the pit seating, a feature generally agreed to have been arranged differently from the Wren proposal. The plan does not reject the *Ariane* frontispiece, but rather uses it to arrive at a degree of curvature (carried through the pit seating and the galleries) that is compatible with the Wren sketch 81, supposedly of the Theatre Royal, Bridges Street, a requirement that must be met. The plan does not assume that the illustrated Wren pillars at the ends of the galleries are full-round, but has converted these supports into pilasters with a decorative if not practical function. The Adam sketch shows six pillars, but only after a widening of the house had required extra supports to be mounted at the angles where the galleries raked forward to meet the line of the boxes. No conjecture has been made of the arrangement of spaces behind the scenes except in a most general way, for no details exist upon which to base a plan.

BOOK REVIEWS

Conceptions of Shakespeare, by Alfred Harbage, Harvard University Press, 1966. 36s.

In this small volume of somewhat miscellaneous contents, lectures given in 1964, articles reprinted from learned journals, etc., two items should be of interest to theatre historians. "These Our Actors" is concerned with the traditional Shakespearean performances of the past; "Weighing Delight and Dole" (with the scales tipping heavily on the side of Dole) is about the rise and influence of the Shakespearean director. From this chapter, despite the warm praise of the productions of Bridges-Adams, one is left with the impression that as a playgoer Professor Harbage has been singularly unfortunate. Many of the things he says needed saying. They might have been said with a fairer recognition of the good work which has been done in the theatre of our time. To suggest what his own ideal director would be like, he turns to another

19. Benjamin Dean Wyatt, *Observations on the Design for the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane*, 1813, 34.