A New Fortune and Shakespeare Studies

On January 8th, 1959, a new theatre was commissioned by Edward Albee, the famous English actor who played Marlowe's Achilles, and rivaled the great Richard Burbage, Shakespeare's leading man at the Globe. Together with his father-in-law, Hanslowe, he planned this new theatre to challenge the glories of the Globe—indeed the contract constantly refers Peter Streete, the builder, to the arrangements at the rival house as model for this. There is, however, one striking difference. Topographical views of London show the Globe as roughly circular, but this theatre was to be square; the open galleries of the "frame" or auditorium were to rise in three stories about a courtyard fifty-five feet by fifty-five. The contract goes on to specify "a Stage and Wings large enough to be made, erected and set up within the side frame and which Stage shall contain in length forty and Three feet of lawful space and in breadth to extend to the middle of the yard of the said house," that is to say, the open stage was to be large, forty-three by twenty-seven feet six inches.

Christened the Fortune, Albee's theatre opened in the autumn of 1900 to last some sixty years, by which time the dramatic logic of such open stage theatres had become outmoded. Some three hundred years later again the University of Western Australia will celebrate Shakespeare's quarter-century-centenary by opening a New Fortune, faithfully and elegantly realizing the dimensions of prime dramatic importance in the old Fortune contract, to give us not only one of the world's few Elizabethan reconstructions, but also the most mount garde theatre in Australia. As an Elizabethan playhouse it is paralleled only by a handful of theatres in America, of which I have yet to trace one so authentic. As an open stage theatre, it stands as a small-scale companion to the three great experimental houses inspired by Sir Tyrone Guthrie and Miss Tarae Mokeswitch at Stratford (Ontario), Chichester, and (most recent and most beautiful of them all) the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre at Minneapolis. The factor common to old and new is a peculiar actor-audience relationship. As you look down from the galleries of the New Fortune to the great stage below, you stand in exactly the relationship to the actor that Albee desired in order to create the gorgeous and terrible world of the Elizabethan imagination. The intimacy of that relationship is disturbing; for you will see a creature unlike yourself. He has no scenic background—no ordinary, reassuring setting to suggest the world you know, nor any world you can take for granted. He is a stranger, richly clothed, splendid of speech—and he stands there almost near enough to speak, to touch, attaining incomparably a life that dwarfs yours. Or, from the actor's point of view, the immediate proximity of the audience on all sides brings the challenge described by Mr. Walter Kerr, the eminent New York drama critic, as he felt it while standing on the open stage of the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre...

... there is only one thing for the actor to do: he has got to reach out and scoop up that raring auditorium, taking it willingly into his confidence and virtually into his psyche, if he is not to be overwhelmed by it. It is a clear, powerful pressure that cannot be successfully resisted or shied from; it must be accepted, and then dominated. Its virtue, from the actor's point of view, is that it will teach him to dominate, rather than merely execute, or possibly evade, his audience. He has got to take a great big breath... and then exhale with a rush of energy that will carry him, voice and foot, around the ensnaring arm of eyes on a single, sustained impulse—without loss of momentum.
1. Overleaf: Hamlet in rehearsal at the New Fortune seen from the third spectator gallery hard against the stage-house. Photograph by Ray Irons.

The New Fortune yard, stage and permanent framework of the stage-house as seen from the second gallery.

4. Festival Theatre, Stratford (Ontario) (completed 1957), replacing a tent theatre opened in 1953.

The auditorium, stage and stage-house of the Chichester Festival Theatre, England (completed 1961). The balcony stage and staircases are removable.

5. Tyrone Guthrie Theatre, Minneapolis (completed 1963), with adaptable stage-house. The Three Sisters in rehearsal.
6. William Poel's reconstruction of the Fortune on the stage of the Royalty Theatre for Measure for Measure, 1893.

7. The stage of the Shakespeare Festival Theatre, Ashland (Oregon).

8. A scene from Twelfth Night at the Guildford festival Theatre, Ashland (Oregon).


10. A Flemish booth theatre with cloth canopy.

11. Lower section of the "Messaline" title-page. Note the angled sides of stage and stage-house.
12 & 13. Reconstructions by C. Walter Hodges from the Fortune contract with (above) all that is known of the stage and stage-house.

14. Sketch of the New Fortune by the architect (Mr. Marshall Clifton) showing the stage set up with tiring-house after J. C. Adams.
or any breakdown of command. Or he has got to . . . fastens himself so intensely to a line of thought, however quickly spoken, that the multitude from whom he cannot escape will help him in his search for the next word. However it is to be resolved, the task is a huge one, but the actor is going to be bigger for having had a try at it.

Clearly, there is a world of difference between such an actor-audience relationship and what Sir Tyrone calls the dissociative relationship of the conventional modern theatre. There the stage is deliberately distanced behind the proscenium arch to suggest the illusion of a self-contained world going on its own business, with the audience looking in and overhearing as at a peep-show. If this concept is akin to the Elizabethan theatre, must it not also distort the very nature of Shakespearean drama? It seems to have done so for that great champion of realist drama, William Archer. Failure to realise that the Elizabethan actor-audience relationship is different in kind from that of the modern illusionist theatre underlies a confusion in his approach to Romeo and Juliet:

After the pairing of Romeo and Juliet, what could be more natural, one may almost say inevitable, than that Juliet should throw herself down on her bed in tears? But it does not occur to Shakespeare. Probably there was no bed visible, the action passing behind the balustrades of the Upper Stage. There was nothing for Juliet to weep upon; and the gesture is an essential part of the effect. Shakespeare had to fall back upon words, and make her say:

Oh, Fortune, Fortune, all men call thee fickle.

If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him
That is removed from faith?

Archer cannot help seeing the scene as a defective piece of illusionist theatre. But the nature of the Elizabethan stage, like the very fact thatJuliet speaks verse, rules out any illusion that we are overhearing the grief of an actual girl in the privacy of her bedroom. As Sir Tyrone Guthrie feels, the actor-audience relationship posits a distinctively formal dramatic experience—one which may well draw its life at a deeper, more elemental level of the imagination:

... the stage is planned upon the theory that illusion is not the aim of performance. The shape of the auditorium, in which the spectators are constantly and inevitably aware of the presence of other spectators, is a con-

15 & 16. Experimental designs for the New Fortune by Mr. Peter Parkinson, based on (above) the "Messalina" title-page and (below) the die Witt sketch.
A reminder that the performance is what it is: a ritual in which actors and spectators are also taking part.

Unlike Artaud, Sir Tyrone has the benefit of firsthand experience, for he describes here, not an imagined performance in an imagined reconstruction of the Elizabethan theatre, but the actual conditions of performance in the Festival Theatre at Stratford, Ontario, which he designed specifically to embody and extend the conventions of the Elizabethan production. His notion of ritual—suggested in the context of Elizabethan theatre—certainly appeals to us; but, with equal certainty, investigation of this kind points the way ahead.

Questions in Shakespeare studies, ranging from the fundamental to the concrete—points of scholarship, are waiting upon experiment in the Elizabethan theatre, and for lack of such theatre the work is hardly begun. We know very little, for instance, of Shakespeare's stagecraft—yet this visual and physical dimension of his dramatic genius is continuous with and essential to his verbal poetry. Several theories exist, but they are tentative and tentative hypotheses have necessarily been discussed in some absence of practical experiment. Complicating the issue is our very limited knowledge of the Elizabethan stage. What did the railed stage-house look like? How was it used? Here again speculation has run riot, an unfounded idea of the Elizabethan theatre against practical possibility. These are among the most important and most open questions in Shakespeare studies today—and the New Fortune is the only theatre in Australia where they can be investigated. It is a piece of equipment which the University of Toronto may mount, and which could do much to promote dramatic scholarship of international quality.

While we may confidently expect the New Fortune to attract scholars, its immediate importance lies in the teaching of Elizabethan drama. The interdependence of play and theatre is now commonplace of dramatic studies. The task of the dramatist is to create an imaginative world in the theatre, and, clearly, the nature of the theatre for which he writes must condition the working of his imagination. When critical interpretation of a text is carried on with no reference to the theatre, some impoverishment—perhaps marginal, perhaps radical—is bound to result. Indeed, I am inclined to question whether certain texts—those of Restoration comedy, for instance—may be properly described as student pieces, without an adequate theatre production for reference. The meaning of any statement will depend on the tone of voice in which it is uttered, the meaning of Wycherley's The Country Wife, for example, is inseparable from its style and vitality in the theatre. Again, the artificial cadence makes such a play a test case; only intelligent action and a realistic stage direction can bring it to the accepted aim. Conversely, of course, had it to be made, chiefly by Shakespeare. Scenes were run together or cut, and of those remaining some were played out front before a series of painted drop-curtains while big "realistic" set-pieces for the remainder were set up behind. The result was often enjoyable, but bad on Shakespeare. No less than the Shakespearean extravaganzas of the Restoration, these were free adaptations suited to the taste of the time rather than serious recreation, as Shaw saw more clearly than any:

"Much as the Shakespearean orgies at His Majesty's Theatre have interested and amused me, the fact is, it was not until I witnessed one of Mr. Tye's productions at Shakespeare's that I realized the powers of the stage as it should be used.

This is a thing which cannot be imagined in the theater. One may in theory know all about stage business and scenery, but one has no knowledge of the show until one sees it. But even when it is an experience of a reconstructed Elizabethan stage all that one knows comes to life so vividly in terms of style, quality and perfection of conception that one is left feeling that the business is the Humphrey and directed by the actor with an understanding entertainment. And it is astonishing how well each name and each scene comes alive.

The first move towards faithful recreation of Shakespeare came with William Poel's now legendary series of productions for the Elizabethan Stage in the 1930s. In the face of much hostility and ridicule, he demonstrated the virtues of a bare, unadorned stage and the potential of what he had used. It is pleasant to recall that one of his earliest experiments was an attempt to reconstruct a scene from the stage of the Royalty Theatre for the production of Measure for Measure. His work was continued by the late August Monck at his famous little Meddlemump Theatre in Norwich, where the Elizabethan stage was incorporated into the scenes. The blank incomprehensibility of realizing such a director's play in the Meddlemump house has given the productions of Measure for Measure a new lease of life. Even the most casual observer of the Elizabethan stage will be impressed by the care taken to reproduce the Elizabethan atmosphere, of which Measure for Measure is the epitome.

The experimental ventures bore their first fruit at the Meddlemump Theatre, and this Shakespearean critic in his Preface to Shakespeare—a superb union of scholarship and stage-sense. In his productions he subsumed the picture frame to the demands of Shakespeare by presenting within it a very simple, abstract picture which, with quick and simple adjacent scenery, made the setting for the action. This is more or less how we are accustomed to see Shakespeare today, and how the West End still presents him—on the Old Vic Mr. and Mrs. Stratford have gone a step further by building an open stage out in front of the proscenium arch. But many of us, no doubt, impatient, even this latest arrangement is still an unsatisfactory make-shift; for Shakespeare is still saddled with a picture frame behind the stage for which he has no use.

So long as the picture frame remains, some kind of picture has to be put inside it. Nothing can be simpler and more abstract than curtains; but either long, thick folds or elaborately draped curving folds, make a very emphatic and often unacceptable pictorial statement. Also it is illegal and annoying if a stage which has been designed as a peep-show, has all the mechanisms—stages, pulleys, lighting apparatus—for creating visual interest, in so denoting its whole function. Also, assuming that a satisfactory set of scenery is provided, no relation to an audience, a picture which is also a picture, a more difficult problem to find the thing that is, a simple, dignified, modest, empty house which is neither the business to Humphrey and directed by the actor with an understanding entertainment. And it is astonishing how well each name and each scene comes alive.

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late actor-audience relationship of the Elizabethan. Certainly the same arrangement does so at the Chichester and Stratford. The stage penetrates to the centre of the building from the back of the theatre, where the shallow space of the auditorium stretches away like a large, shallow sports arena. The actors burst in on the distance as the walls of the arena. The new character of the house—a new brutalist structure of concrete and exposed steel girders—may mean something to do with its chilly, impersonal atmosphere, but the real trouble, I think, is a faulty assessment of conditions at the Elizabethan theatre, as comparison with the New Fortune reveals.

Scholarly attention has focused so much on the Elizabethan stage (of which we know little) that the auditorium (of which we know more) has been largely ignored. The Elizabethan disposition of the audience emphasized, of course, the three tiers of galleries. These, we have good reason to believe, derived from the bull and bear-baiting arena—incapable of raising stages to enable the management to switch to bull-baiting if the theatre fell on evil days. During these sports, of course, the yard would be imperative as auditorium, and during plays, I suggest, the yard would tend to be regarded more as overflow space for spectators—least and least important—than as auditorium proper. A glance at the Fortune plan shows, too, that those areas of the yard back up against the stage were anything but private positions. The six-foot-wide cubicles on either side of the stage must have been uncomfortable if, as recent scholarship suggests, the stage stood some six feet high. But in that case, would positions immediately in front of the stage have been so much coveted. Add to this some persuasive speculation that the yard may have been used at times for the play's actors, and it would seem a fair conclusion that the higher price of accommodation in the galleries did not reflect the convenience and comfort of a seat so much as the optimum relationship between stage and audience—a conclusion fully endorsed by a walk about the New Fortune. From the best position in the yard (well back from the stage) the spectator enjoys little of the three-dimensional interplay of movement on the spatial area of the stage which most of the galleries are so well placed to provide—the unique quality of the Elizabethan theatre.

Chichester, to my mind, has neglected this lesson of the Elizabethan theatre disastrously. Only from the first few rows immediately surrounding the stage—positions corresponding to the Elizabethan yard—do the scenes seem within close reach. Elsewhere in the saucer-shaped auditorium, one may overlook the stage but only at an even greater distance than Alleyn thought desirable at the Fortune, where the great mass of the audience overhung the cock-pit stage. At Minneapolis, on the other hand, photographs suggest a better approximation to the crowded informality and intimacy of the Elizabethan theatre. Though seating more than 1,400, the steeply raked auditorium with its irregular balcony does appear to bring the audience on familiar terms with the stage.

Turning from these free interpretations of the Elizabethan theatre to a considered reconstruction, we find precisely the same preoccupation with the stage and neglect of the auditorium as at the Chichester Festival Theatre. Here there is no spectator gallery and, as the overlay of the Fortune's dimensions upon its ground plan would suggest, the size of the auditorium is grossly disproportionate to the stage area for any sense of Elizabethan authenticity. No doubt the same considerations have been at work here as at Chichester—commercial necessity. Though attached to an Institute of Renaissance Studies under Professor Margaret Bailey of Stanford University, Ashland remains an occasional festival theatre, designed specifically to present only a limited range of plays. Like Chichester and Stratford (Ontario), it must attract large audiences over a short period to cover overheads. The result is an astonishing combination of spaciousness and intimacy. The most remote corner of the huge stage seems almost within touching distance from any point in the house, and the lightest, most conversational tone carries with complete clarity to the third gallery. This was notably not the case at Chichester where, as the critics complained to a man, the actor easily becomes inaudible when he turns his back.

Two immediate points of scholarly interest arise from the simple architectural facts of the New Fortune. First, the capacity of the Elizabethan theatre has been a subject of incommensurate debate. If we are to believe de Witt, a priest of the English in London in 1609, the Swan could pack 3,000 into its three galleries and yard. Did de Witt mean to write 400, as some suggest? On the other hand, modern calculations that the Swan galleries alone could house 3,400. A widely accepted modern estimate sets the Globe's capacity at 400 in the galleries plus 800 in the yard, and a figure well in excess of 2,000 has been suggested for the Fortune. The New Fortune galleries are not as deep as the Fortune, and it will not be easy to correct for the difference in calculating the capacity of the house. It is possible, however, to offer a figure of sufficient authority to close this small but productive debate.
in Shakespeare studies. Without resorting to precise calculation it can be said at once that these large figures seem much exaggerated. On a comparison with the Globe distribution, 500 could not possibly be got into the New Fortune yard, and with different dimensions and Elizabethan crowding allowed for, I doubt if a full house at the old Fortune ran much over 1,000.

A second point, of much wider significance, concerns Elizabethan theatre design. Indeed, we must consider the superabundance of posts supporting the galleries and—more important—the two huge posts supporting the stage. Some have been puzzled to find that the Elizabethan theatre buildings were no sticklers for visibility. The explanations generally offered is that the permanent Elizabethan stage used scenic effects far less than the modern theatre and so some neglect of sight-lines was permissible. This hardly solves the problem. Elizabethan theatres were designed under the guidance of theatre men and actors like Alleyn who knew what they wanted. Through the last quarter of the 17th century a series of plays was being built: the Theatre (1577), the Curtain (1578), the Rose (1587), the Blackfriars (1596), the Globe (1598), the Fortune (1600). Naturally, each would have incorporated the most satisfactory features of its forerunners and attempted improvement elsewhere. Beyond a doubt the later theatres were the result of a rich experience of early and careful, intensely practical planning. Nothing could bear this out more forcefully than a visit to the Fortune, with its magnificent stage and its excellent actors. The suggestions very clearly principles of design—none of them are sculptural, not simply visual. One has a keen sense of the three-dimensional, embracing auditorium as well as stage. The huge stage-panes are at present—will be entirely welcome. As centres to play upon, they will not be distractions in a visual theatre, but stage equipment in a sculptural or choreographic one. The fact that stage-panes have been so commonly seen as puzzling obstruction evidence of indifference to theatre design, underlines once more that Professor Coghlan’s contention that theatrical knowledge is no substitute for experience. As scholars we may be determined not to bring stage-picture notions to a non-pictorial stage; but it takes a glance at the theatre to expose our failures, and in doing so to reveal a new kind of theatrical experience—Shakespeare’s kind.

Today we are accustomed to being part of a total dramatic space—as the French very properly put it to “enter” the theatre. Unconsciously we are heavily conditioned to expect a theatre to focus our eyes and attention in the manner of the proscenium-arch stage. That is, I feel sure, why the problems offered by the tiring-house fencer (the wall at the back of the stage) have not been fully discussed in Elizabethan studies. It is a fact that we are not so accustomed to accept the existence of curtained inner stages and upper screens in Elizabethan theatres. It is also the cause of our reluctance to accept the existence of curtained upper stages and upper screens in the presence of the tiring-house. In spite of the paucity of hard scholarly evidence. The curtained scenes seen in the plays of Shakespeare and Marlowe are often mentioned; but that is not so with the upper stages and upper screens in the presence of the tiring-house. The curtained scenes seen in the plays of Shakespeare and Marlowe are often mentioned; but that is not so with the upper stages and upper screens in the presence of the tiring-house. It shows the tiring-house continuous with the spectrorium galleys on each side. The lower galleys are of the same raised area and are flanked by doors; the middle gallery passes through the scullery with curtained “upper stage” flanked by windows, and topped on the next floor by a musician’s gallery. The structure is realised so persuasively in Elizabethan half-timbered that it outside scholarly circles it is widely assumed that the Adams' Globe rests on direct evidence, solves all problems, and so is definitive. It is nothing of the kind. It is not, heavens economy and stage-panes have the merit of de Witt, but the rest is placed together to give poetical expression.
to all contemporary stage directions. As such it
represents a very considerable scholarly achieve-
ment, and in theory it succeeds almost to perfect-
ion. It is less than these, however, in one or
two well known and, in my view, revealing
cases. Of these the most interesting concerns
Antony and Cleopatra, a Globe play.

How is Antony’s death-scene to be managed
in the Adams reconstruction? Cleopatra has
written her part in her monument “above”.
Dennett is not below, and Cleopatra to
“Look out of the other side your monument
where the dying Antony is being borne in by
his guard. The woman then hands Antony onto
the monument, where the famous death-scene
takes place. The directions involve two obvious
technical decisions for the Adams reconstruction.
Where is the “other side” of Cleopatra’s monu-
ment? The first floor playing-area has only one
side facing onto the stage. Second, how is Antony
to be hauled up, at least to balustrade level
of the upper stage? The monument problem
may be solved, not very convincingly, if Cleopatra
were to talk with Dennett first from, say, the
window over the right entrance door, then rush
with her wrent across the front of the upper stage
to the window over the left door to see Antony carried
in. These three steps can be lifted up to Cleopatra’s level?
And where is the vitally important death-scene to be played? Dr. Adams
suggests that Antony be placed on the shield
attached to a rope run up to the pulley in the
heavenly canopy and dangles from Cleopatra’s window. She and her maids then haul it
on the right side then guided on the other whether can be guided into the window and rested on the sill.
In this position, says Dr. Adams, the scene might
be made more credible.

Respect for the author’s enormous and patient scholar-
ship can hardly restrain here one’s sense of
the ridiculous; nothing could point more clearly
at the unbridled tastelessness of the
Adams reconstruction. For his editor, the vast
field—dusk accurate reference to practical theatre.
Dr. Adams has his reasons for the handy presence
of the rope as thin, at a pinch, we may
take them for the possibility. We may overlook, too, the diffi-
culty of attaching a rope in such a way
that Antony would not rise at a ludicrous angle or in
a diagonal pendulum arc. But would any actor
be able to utter, “I am dying, Egypt, dying,”
half way through a window on his back? Would
any dramatist tolerate, let alone enjoy, this difficult
position? We may overlook this, but it
suggests that, after all, every possible reference
to “above” or a curtained enclosure is allowed for.
Is it not worth noting though that the stage setup
in the Swan sketch and Fortune contract is in favour
of a tapering proscenium arch, which at once cuts
down the size and reduces it visually to a mere exten-
ion of the inner stage area. One would hardly
be surprised to find that, after all, every possible
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It is interesting to notice how thoroughly the
Adams reconstruction implements the visual
logic of the Adams stage and stirs up the stage
and in the inner stage reveals at once the true nature of these places and in my
view the bastardized, unlike character of his whole acting area. For all the striking
features, clearly attended to by the Fortune and Swan contracts, seem
to dominate the scenery and by eyes and ears.
As for the “swan”-shaped stage—so good reason, one would think, for Dr. Adams
to assign so many important functions to this part of the stage. And one
must say that the proscenium arch is not solely those conditions by the proscenium
arch to interpret the canopy and stage-pillar in a similar sense. The de Witt sketch shows a scene
in a fairly close to scene while the whole diameter of the arch separates him from other
actors. In short, there is every practical reason to regard
the proscenium arch as frame for the actors,
both inside and outside. The actors are all
in the middle of the audience. From this point of view, the proscenium
arch serves as a sort of a service area.

This reading of the de Witt sketch gives weight to Mr. C. Walter Hodges’ argument
for the traditional brick stage as origin of the Eliza-
debeth stage and tiring-house. These little fit-
up stages of street and market-place consisted of
an open platform surrounded on three sides by
the audience and backed by a curtained entrance
or booth from which the actors issued on
stage—exactly the principle implied, as I suggest,
by the costumery of medieval theatres, in Mr. Hodges’ view, may have consisted
of no more than such a stage set up within a bull
or bull-baiting area. The little platform would have
developed into the high chamber, or the booth
in the solid tiring-house; and I would are to think of the little cloth canopy as commonly seen in
17th-century dress and the “tent”-shaped picture stage
makes an interesting parallel with the heavens
of the Elizabethan stage. In his series of transitional stages, however, Mr. Hodges
even structures the integration of the tiring-
house with the frame to bring him back to the
Adams Globe. Yet the Swan stage, as he himself
points out, shows the flat tiring-house façade pro-
ing quite unmistakably both curve of the
frontage forms in the areas. Further, the
wording of the Fortune contract, quoted earlier,
calls for the erection of a stage and tiring-house
within the frame, and the Hope contract specifies
the auditorium separately from the stage and
tiring-house. The combined authority of the
De Witt drawing and the two contracts is very strong;
and if even as late as 1615, the date of the Hope
contract, there were still tiring-houses with walls
separately erected in the areas, “fit and convenient
to all things, beds for players to lie in, and
for the sake of shows.” But, as Mr. Hodges
points out, it is difficult to believe that in 1597 the
e archaeologically built stage façades as the
tiring-house would have it, and as Mr. Hodges has it
again in his charming sketch of the Fortune.

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of the areas, this limitation must apply no matter where the enclosure is set. Nor, probably, should we imagine very much taking place inside the enclosure. An analysis of all the plays presented at the Globe has shown that, at this theatre at least, extended action never took place within. It was used for entries, ensembles, discoveries, not as a self-contained stage, and of those discovered, all except corpses at once came forward into the acting-area. There is a parallel here with the Restoration theatre, where the stage direction to "come forward" onto the stage so often follows discoveries of actors among the painted scenery behind the proscenium arch; it would seem that the Elizabethan tradition of actors playing within the auditorium still survives. The enclosure, in short, should not be thought of as a recessed stage, but as apparatus for specialized effects, to be brought in and out of the arena action at the drawing of a curtain.

Much the same considerations apply to the acting-area "above". The Globe plays again show that self-contained action never took place here; it was always related to the action below. While this need not hold for other plays, it suggests a probable attitude among dramatists, and a logical one in an arena theatre. Like the curtained enclosure, this upper stage would be best related spatially to the acting-area proper by building it as far forward as possible—a consideration reflected at Chichester and Stratford (Ontario) in the decision not to recess the balcony stage, but to build it out as a promontory. At Minneapolis, however, a more flexible scheme has been adopted—perhaps as a result of experience at Stratford (Ontario) where, according to Mr. Leoacart, the inevitable obscuring of stage entrances (as noted above) must interface with dramatic tension. Minneapolis avoids this permanent disadvantage by providing for movable structures to vary the shape of the wall behind the stage. This, too, is substantially the solution we have adopted at the New Fortune.

In building the New Fortune as a piece of research equipment, we needed a stage flexible enough to make possible all the arrangements envisaged for the purpose. A conventional Adams stage-house may be bolted on to the small Seed-typ stage-house built out; on the other hand, the tiring-house may be turned into a flat space by being in the auditorium. Only one indelible feature has been included, a four-foot balcony extension of the first-floor gallery corresponding to the Adams upper stage. It is also stripped down to seven feet above the platform (the balustrading can be lifted out) to make possible Mr. Hodge's solution to such difficulties as the raising of Antony—that it was possible to manhandle a lady up from below. It was safe to include this forward projection, we felt, since the Adams upper stage would be for possible recessed without it. We have also had the advantage of having a good deal lower than the five feet advocated by Mr. Hodge and others. While agreeing with him that the groundling probably had the stage at eye-level, we have conformed with comfort and set it at eye-level if audiences seated in the yard. This, unfortunately, has exposed us to a difficulty foreseen by Mr. Hedges at Bankside—a water-table so high as to make an excavated cellar under the stage extremely difficult. We have a cellar, a low one, or perhaps very damp in winter, only just deep enough to make workable the trapdoor at centre stage. So it will not be possible to test Dr. Leslie Hotson's theory that the tiring-house was built under the stage. Since he seems to have encountered almost total disbelieve among his fellow scholars, the loss is probably not great. At yet we have no heavens canopy and the set of seven units, though designed, is yet to be provided. These could not be costed in with the building and must be financed from other sources.

We have reviewed briefly a few of the more pressing problems in Shakespearean stage substructure. I can make no pretense to have included all the evidence; one has to give a balanced account of the evidence of the evidence. We have, in the New Fortune, attempted to investigate problems and test hypotheses. This University could become an important centre of Shakespearean scholarship, and in the future the New Fortune will play a part in that. No one in the School of Shakespearean scholarship are peculiar and important of a scholar or a sense of learning. But they would be intimately involved if not for the larger end view—the illumination and enrichment of understanding. The New Fortune may be, I tell you, a small thing. We have the Elizabethan anti-house and stage methods, but such things are important only as they lead us towards the expressive stage on which all the scholars and living students will work. If the New Fortune can create the imagination and make more vivid Shakespeare's dramatic image, it will need no justification.

But let us end as we began, with an eye to future. Mr. Walter Kerr has headlined his article "The Tyrone Guthrie Theatre," "Wave of Fug in Minneapolis". The New Fortune will not be an Elizabethan museum-piece, but a living theatre staging classic drama of the kinds, from the ancient Greeks onwards, that
with—but let us hope—plays of today. By next year, writes Mr. Kerr,
.. some form of the open stage, and the banked auditorium, will have invaded New
York City, with the opening of the temporary Vivian Beaumont structure that eventually
is to be incorporated into Lincoln Center. Here, in yet another design, it will form a
new test. Not so accommodating Molière and Shakespeare, who wrote for the close-quar-
ters stage, but of finding out how useful and/or
liberating it may be for contemporary
American playwrights.

Perth is equipped for the vanguard of theatrical
experience with the New Fortune. Let us hope
that its great bare stage, as it becomes known
throughout this country, will not fail to attract
Australian dramatists towards the newest and
oldest way of writing plays. This is no extra-
gust hope. Drama throughout the western world
shows clear signs of moving in this direction.
The day will surely come at last when the Aus-
tralian playwright will want again to embrace an
audience with sheer word and action in a vivid,
compelling world of the imagination as once his
forbear did at the old Fortune.

1 The contract for the Fortune and Hope theatres are
both reproduced below to G. Walter Hodges in The
2 The contract for the Fortune and Hope theatres are
both reproduced below to G. Walter Hodges in The
3 Quote by L. Styn The Elements of Drama, 1905.
515.
5 A Study of Drama at a University, by D. C.
James, 1925.
6 ap. cit., p. 46.
9 See C. Walter Hodges, op. cit., Ch. 3.
10 Ibid., see the Glynne Wicks, ed. English Stages
11 Dr. W. T. K. Wicks, ed. Shakespeare as a

For Prompt Attention...