AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE IN GREAT BRITAIN FROM 1948-1968

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
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ALLEN SIDNEY WHITE
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This is to certify that the

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Allen Sidney White

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of the requirements for**

Ph.D. **degree in** Theatre

E. C. Reynolds
Major professor

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ABSTRACT

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE NATIONAL THEATRE IN GREAT BRITAIN
FROM 1948 TO 1968

By

Allen Sidney White

In spite of England's dramatic heritage, the National Theatre only recently became a reality. Advocates struggled for over one hundred years until, in 1949, the National Theatre Act was passed, authorizing 1,000,000 pounds for the project. However, it required another fourteen years before the National Theatre became a reality.

The purpose of this study was to trace the development of the National Theatre from 1948 to 1968. An examination of events leading to the establishment of the National Theatre demonstrated that the present organization evolved from the development of public and private attitudes, relationships, between the government and the theatre as well as attitudes of theatre workers toward the whole notion of a subsidized National Theatre.

Four questions were central to the study: (1) Why were a number of seemingly reasonable plans for a national theatre not implemented? (2) What events transpired between 1949, when Parliament authorized 1,000,000 pounds to subsidize the project, and 1963, when the National Theatre company was formed? (3) What has been the nature of the National Theatre productions? (5) How successful has the company been during the first five years of operation?

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England's National Theatre emerged from two distinctive schemes. The first plan called for a means of honoring Shakespeare as the national poet in the form of a statue while the second plan promoted the idea of a living, national theatre.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare was paid tribute with an annual festival at Stratford-upon-Avon. From this adoration of the national poet, came the first concrete proposal for national recognition of Shakespeare made in 1848 by Effingham Wilson. At approximately the same time a group of professional theatre people were actively engaged in plans to establish a national theatre. In 1946, after years of debate, these two factions joined forces for the purpose of honoring Shakespeare in the form of a national theatre.

The National Theatre Committee approached the government for financial assistance and in 1949 Parliament passed the National Theatre Act authorizing 1,000,000 pounds. Although the London County Council had donated a site for the theatre on the south bank of the Thames, the project was delayed for another fourteen years. There were two major reasons for this delay: (1) many people questioned the location of a national theatre in London and (2) the Treasury refused to release the money promised by Parliament, which was, in any case, insufficient to meet the rise in costs of a national theatre. The first problem was resolved by the National Theatre Commitee's plans for a touring policy, which guaranteed National Theatre exposure to the entire nation. The financial problem was solved temporarily when the Greater London Council agreed to share equally the costs of the National

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Theatre with the government; however, the issue of subsidy continues to be a point of contention.

Operating from the Old Vic theatre in Waterloo Road, the National Theatre inaugurated its first season in 1963 with Sir Laurence Olivier as artistic director and Mr. Kenneth Tynan as literary manager.

Four general conclusions were drawn: (1) The National Theatre has successfully fulfilled its stated objectives of presenting a spectrum of world drama, to the country with one of the finest companies in England. (2) The company has purposefully not developed a particular production style. (3) Most of the company's success can be attributed to the inspiration provided by its artistic director. (4) One can only speculate on what changes would occur in the present policy should Sir Laurence Olivier be replaced but it seems safe to assume that the company is firmly established and would survive an administrative change.

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AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE IN GREAT BRITAIN FROM 1948 to 1968

By

Allen Sidney White

A THESIS

Submitted to

Michigan State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Theatre

1970

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their help in preparing this study, I should like to thank Denys Lasdun and Partners, designers of the National Theatre in London, John A. Carlsen, Press Officer for the National Theatre and Dr. Paul Meyers, Curator of the theatre collection at the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center. I also wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Sidney Berger, who gave generously of his time and advice especially during the early preparation of the manuscript, and to Dr. E. C. Reynolds for his guidance throughout the course of the study. Finally, a special thanks to my two children and wife, Mickie, for their continuing support and patience.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND INTRODUCTION

The history of the struggle for a national theatre in Great Britain has been faithfully recorded up to the passage of the National Theatre Act in 1949 by Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth.[1] The purpose of this study is to bring up to date subsequent historical data pertaining to the evolution of the national theatre since the passage of that significant Act of 1949, by assembling, recording and making available information concerning the national theatre's development in Great Britain from 1948 to 1968.

One of the major objectives of the National Theatre, according to its present director, Sir Laurence Olivier, is to ". . . organized provincial and foreign tours without impoverishing its home theatre. . ."[2] The study, therefore, attempts to determine the significance of the National Theatre's productions as they relate to other theatrical activity in England such as the commercial theatre and other subsidized companies as well as the impact made with foreign tours.

A further purpose of the study is to investigate the operational procedures of the company since its inception in 1963 in an effort to determine its managerial and artistic objectives and the manner in which these objectives have or have not been implemented in the first five

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[1]Geoffrey Whitworth, The Making of a National Theatre (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1951).

[2]The Times (London), August 18, 1964, p. 11.

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The concept of a national theatre in Great Britain has been variously defined by numerous critics and historians. In the present study a distinction between the concept and the existing theatre company is made by reference to the concept as the "national theatre" and the present, producing company as the "National Theatre."

England has several government-supported theatres in addition to its National Theatre (the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Court Theatre and several provincial repertory companies) but the present study deals specifically with the National Theatre. The concept of a "National Theatre" has been defined most adequately by Felix Aylmer, president of the British Actors' Equity Association, who wrote:

> It is common ground that the aim of a National Theatre should be the provision both in the metropolis and provinces of drama of the highest quality, both classical and modern, performed by a company of actors permanently maintained for the purpose. This means a company necessarily greater in numbers and, if possible, higher in quality than any currently in existence. If the same standard is to be maintained in all departments of the theatre, it also demands a well-planned home where not only the theatre, itself but also rehearsal and training accommodations, scenic and property making workshops, and storage facilities can be housed.[3]

The National Theatre of Great Britain is then that company of actors, technicians, artistic director, literary manager and general administrator responsible to the National Theatre Board, which is comprised of twelve

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[3]Felix Aylmer, "Company and No Theatre, Creating a National Poor Relation," The Times (London), March 13, 1961, p. 21.

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members jointly appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the London County Council (L.C.C.).[4] In the words of the Board's Chairman, Lord Chandos, "The board's job is not to interfere in the artistic direction of the theatre, but wide national policy is a matter for the board."[5]

The history of the national theatre movement in Great Britain covers a period of over one-hundred years. Matthew Arnold, William Archer, Harley Granville-Barker, George Bernard Shaw, W. Bridges-Adams, Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Geoffrey Whitworth, Sir Tyrone Guthrie, Sir Laurence Olivier, to mention only a few, have all lent their support, often at great personal sacrifice, to the promotion of a formal national British theatre. In spite of these and a great many other efforts, the National Theatre in Great Britain did not become a reality until 1963.

Although Great Britain's contribution to dramatic literature of modern times may be disputed in terms of its literary value, it has been significant and her contribution throughout dramatic history has been as great as any country in history, not excluding the Greeks. And yet, given all its rich dramatic heritage and the efforts of great numbers of selfless people, the establishment of a national theatre has been beset by seemingly insurmountable political and financial problems which have prolonged its development and agonized its advocates for over a century.

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[4] "National Stage," The Economist, 203 (April 28, 1962), 338.

[5] "He Who Pays the Piper," The Economist, 223 (April 29, 1967), 442.

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[6] Clive Barne

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Aside from the obvious problem of subsidy, perhaps the national theatre's major obstacle has been the failure of its supporters to establish a clear, well-defined statement of purpose. What, after all, is a national theatre and would should benefit from it? Should the theatre's physical plant be located in London, the nation's capitol, which already has a great number of commercial theatres, or should it be a national repertory theatre with centers located in the provinces? With limited funds available, should existing subsidized theatres experience a cut back in order that another government-supported theatre might come into being? In terms of its artistic aims, what kinds of plays should it present, who should comprise the company and who should govern and direct it? Should a national theatre complement existing subsidized theatres or be in direct competition? These were a few of the every present problems only recently resolved.

In defining the identity of a national theatre, Clive Barnes, then drama critic for the Daily Express, wrote:

> Certainly it is not simply a building. To say it is a company of actors is closer to the truth; but more accurately, it is a predominantly national repertory acted in a specifically national style. It is, for good or ill, the Comedie Francaise, the Berliner Ensemble and the Moscow Art Theatre. These theatres have their good and bad periods, but their continuity allows variations in quality to exist within fixed demarcations of an accepted pattern.[6]

Although many of the early proponents of a national theatre for England debated the issue of what exactly a national theatre should be, they failed to reach a consensus or to surmount their personal prejudices and bring

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[6]Clive Barnes, "England's National Theatre," The Nation, 197 (December 7, 1963), 399.

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a National Theatre into being.

Great Britain has provided governmental support to its museums, libraries and galleries since the eighteenth century, yet governmental support of a national theatre did not occur until 1949 when Parliament passed the National Theatre Act. This act allotted 1,000,000 pounds to the creation of a national theatre; yet it took another fourteen years of political and financial maneuvering, Parliamentary debates and public propaganda to bring to a realization the National Theatre as it exists today--an extremely significant aspect of the theatre's development which has not been previously investigated.

Since the National Theatre staged its first production on October 22, 1963, it has enjoyed national and international acclaim. Although Britain has provided some financial support to theatres such as The Old Vic (new disbanded), the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Bristol Old Vic, several provincial repertory and touring companies, the Royal Court Theatre and Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop,[7] these organizations have been forced to operate essentially along commercial lines. There has been no theatrical organization in England comparable to the National Theatre as it exists today under the directorship of Sir Laurence Olivier.

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[7]John Moody, "The Arts Council and Theatre Finance," New Theatre Magazine, I (October, 1959), 21.

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The formation of England's National Theatre is unique if compared with other national theatres on the Continent. Mr. Edward Dent in his book, A Theatre For Everybody, points out that the older national theatres of the Continent date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "They were created by emperors and kings, by electors and princes, for the entertainment of themselves and their courts and at first quite definitely for the ceremonial glorification of the monarchy."[8] Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

> Theatres were given or taken away from companies upon royal whim; troupes were formed, reformed, or eliminated. Upon Moliere's death, in 1663, his company was merged by royal decree with that of the Marais; and in 1680 the decree forming the Comedie Francaise merged this troup with the Hotel de Bourgogne players.[9]

The older national theatres of the Continent have a further distinction in that many of them began by presenting operas:

> The Paris Opera dates its foundation from 1762, . . . In Germany it was another hundred years before the drama was organized as a state institution. The Italian operas were kept going as court functions; . . . In Germany it was only towards the middle of the eighteenth century that serious theatrical companies were organized. The popular theatre was a sort of commedia dell' arte; the Italian comedians did in fact travel everywhere and wherever they went they influenced the local theatre, both in Germany and in France. Troupes of wandering comedians found royal favour here and there and were engaged by the prince, perhaps to stay on indefinitely with a theatre provided for them to act in; here is the beginning of the National Theatre. It becomes a court institution and its courtly nature is in every case

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[8]Edward J. Dent, A Theatre For Everybody (London: T. V. Boardman and Company, Ltd., 1945), 141.

[9]Vera Mowry Roberts, On Stage, A History of Theatre (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1962), 201.

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[10]Dent, pp.

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> indicated by the arrangement of the seats and standing room; everyone who had the entry to the theatre had his or her proper place assigned in due order of precedence. At Berlin Frederick the Great built the new theatre in 1742 and paid the entire expense of it out of his privy purse; . . .
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> . . . The Dresden Opera may be said to date from the musical establishment founded at Torgau by the Elector Moritz in 1548. It was at Torgau that the first German opera was performed in 1627; the Electoral court did not made Dresden its residence until later in the century. At Dresden as at Vienna, it is the same story; first the Italian opera, then towards the end of the eighteenth century the settlement of a traveling dramatic company, and not until much later, the establishment of an opera house with performances in German.
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> . . . . . .
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> In such countries as Bohemia and Hungary the case is different, because the Emperor Joseph II, . . . was convinced that the best way of managing his dominions was to impose the German language on all of them. This provoked the resentment of the Czechs and Hungarians and led eventually to the establishment of national theatres for both plays and opera too in the vernacular as a political gesture. In the days of Mozart the local aristocracy at Prague had given employment to Italian comic opera companies; in the days of Weber the German opera was more flourishing at Prague than it ever was at Dresden during his conductorship; it was not until long after that that the Czech national opera became a serious artistic rival to the German opera house.[10]

Not only were these older national theatres originated at the behest of a monarch, as Mr. Dent aptly points out, but most are exclusively state institutions much the same as national galleries and libraries, receiving their total subsidy from the state,[11] whereas Great Britain's new National Theatre, although supported by the national government, receives subsidies from the municipal government of London and from private subscribers as well.

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[10]Dent, pp. 141-142.

[11]For a partial listing of national theatres in Europe and to what extent the respective governments support them, see Geoffrey Whitworth, The Making of A National Theatre, pp. 299-300.

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12 Dent, p. 11

13 Irving Ward
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Opponents of a national theatre for Great Britain have continually argued that if England is so very affluent in dramatic activity there is no need or desire for yet another playhouse--an argument that further points to the significance of the British National Theatre when compared with other national theatres throughout the world. Writing in 1945, Mr. Dent stated the situation as follows:

> In England we have had to do everything for ourselves. If we started a national theatre to-day we are not in the same situation as those who started a national Hebrew playhouse and Hebrew opera at Tel Aviv. We have managed our own theatres without either royal or parliamentary help or interference for so many centuries that many people now view with profound mistrust the idea of a state-supported theatre either for drama or for opera.[12]

It may not be vitally important whether a national theatre is created by royal decree, evolved from an opera company or established by a group of interested citizens. It is, however, significant that England, a country rich in dramatic heritage, geographically compact with a group of devoted citizens working for the same cause, experienced a delay of over one-hundred years before the dreams of a National Theatre became a reality.

Irving Wardle, drama critic for The Times (London), wrote in 1967 that the National Theatre has ". . . absolutely refuted the gloomy forcasts of four years ago. It is not, in John Osborne's phrase, a 'ghastly museum.' It has earned its name, and there is now no other theatre in Britain with the same power to enforce basic revaluations of the classics."[13]

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[12]Dent, p. 143.

[13]Irving Wardle, "National Theatre Avoids the Pitfall of Privilege," The Times (London), March 11, 1967, 11.

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[14] Penelope Gil
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[15] Richard Find
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To date the British National Theatre's foreign tours have been extremely successful, with standing ovations in Moscow to a special Antoinette Perry award from the New York Theatre League in America. The drama critic for the Observer of London, Penelope Gilliat, summed up the National Theatre's success as follows: "The brightest spot on England's stage today is held by the National Theatre, which, founded only three years ago, is already the finest and most versatile acting company in the world."[14] A study of the history of this National Theatre--whose postponement, according to Sir Donald Wolfit, ". . . has made Britain the laughing-stock of Europe. . ."[15] and whose success seems apparent should contribute considerably to the general wealth of world theatre history.

In addition to its being an historical account of the development of the National Theatre, it is hoped that the study will indicate the significance of the company's distinctive production efforts in presenting a broad spectrum of world drama at prices a popular audience can afford.

It is further desired that the descriptive account of the National Theatre in operation as reported in Chapter V will serve to stimulate an active interest in contemporary British theatre production and encourage more exhaustive studies related to this phase of theatre in England.

Although the struggle for a national theatre in Great Britain has gone on since the middle of the last century, there is paucity of published literature concerning the subject investigated. The late

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[14]Penelope Gilliat, "Gales of Shock Rips Across the British Stage," Life, 60 (May 20, 1966), 98.

[15]Richard Findlater, "National Theatre Year," The Spectator, 204 (March 18, 1960), 385.

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Mr. Whitworth's book, The Making of A National Theatre, proved to be an indispensable source in the investigation of background material leading up to the passage of the National Theatre Act in 1949. However, Mr. Whitworth's research ended in 1949, a crucial point in the historical development of the National Theatre's history.

In addition to Mr. Whitworth's book, there have been more recent studies concerning the repertory theatre in Great Britain, a comparison of the British and American repertory theatres and an unpublished dissertation dealing with governmental support to theatre in England by R. E. Sheriffs.[16] Although Mr. Sheriffs' study was a valuable secondary source as it relates to financial support of theatre in general in Great Britain, it does not treat specifically the government's support of the National Theatre, nor does Mr. Sheriffs attempt to trace historically the National Theatre's development.

Research was, therefore, necessarily limited to periodicals, newspaper reviews and clippings, governmental documents, Parliamentary debates in both House of Lords and House of Commons, and the published records of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

The terminal date of 1968 imposed an additional limitation on the study since the National Theatre is an ongoing producing organization. However, as previously stated, the study was designed to complement previous research and to furnish materials for future investigation.

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[16] R. E. Sheriffs, "A Historical Study of the Development of Governmental Support to Theatre in Great Britain" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1964).

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Chapter II relates the events leading to the establishment of the National Theatre, beginning with the concept of a national theatre idea in the form of a tribute to Shakespeare during the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. This chapter also reports the history of the first concrete suggestion for creating a national theatre which Geoffrey Whitworth attributes to a London publisher, Mr. Effingham Wilson, in 1847.[17] The various attempts of numerous committees, organizations and devoted individuals to place the concept of a national theatre into the realm of reality are also reported in Chapter II.

In the third chapter the developments which transpired after the passage of the National Theatre Act are recorded in chronological order. In this chapter an attempt is made to describe the many delays which prevented the establishment of the National Theatre until 1963. These delays take the form of public and private reactions to the establishment of a National Theatre, the problems encountered in selecting an artistic director, the debate over a site for the theatre plant, the selection of an architect, and the need for additional funds to meet the cost increases accruing between 1949, the date of the original government appropriation, and 1963. The chapter also provides information concerning the establishment of the National Theatre Board, the South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board, the Building Committee, the support of the Greater London Council

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[17]Whitworth, p. 26.

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Chapter IV relates the ongoing problems in the building of the physical theatre: the selection of a site, the debate over financing the construction, the selection of an architect and the final adoption of architectual plans.

The fifth chapter of the study reports the National Theatre's production activities during the first five years of operation. While no attempt was made to evaluate critically the productions of the National Theatre, reactions to the company's work by critics both in Great Britain and abroad are recorded in as objective a manner as possible.

The final chapter of the study attempts to asses and synthesize material reported in preceeding chapters. The theatre's aims and objectives, as stated by the advocates of the National Theatre, including the present artistic director, Sir Laurence Olivier, and the current literary manager, Mr. Kenneth Tynan, are presented. Based on these stated objectives, some general conclusions are drawn concerning the overall effectiveness of the National Theatre during its first five years of production.

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CHAPTER II

PIONEER PLANS FOR A NATIONAL THEATRE: 1847-1949

In this chapter, covering the earliest of concrete plans for the establishment of the British National Theatre in the middle of the nineteenth century and culminating in the passage of the National Theatre Act in 1949, condensation was obviously necessary. For a detailed account of this approximately one-hundred year period, the reader is referred to the study by Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth cited previously. (See page 1)

The genesis of a national theatre concept in Great Britain can be traced to two independent movements. The first major development was a scheme promoted by Shakespeare devotees, who wanted to pay tribute to the national poet by erecting a statue in his honor. The second movement was organized by a group of professional theatre people who, although not denying the prominence of Shakespeare, were dedicated to the idea of establishing a national theatre.

Although actors and theatre managers of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries adapted and rewrote Shakespeare's plays, they succeeded in reintroducing his dramas to the popular audience and the way was paved for the restoration of his works in the Elizabethan manner of staging and production, which was carried out by William Poel, Harley Granville-Barker and others in the following century. By the middle of the nineteenth century industrious individuals and organizations felt compelled to honor their national poet with a monument and thereby

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The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed an increased growth in the popularity of Shakespeare in Great Britain: Shakespeare clubs, literary groups, societies, committees were formed in an effort to preserve and increase an appreciation of the plays by the immortal poet. In 1864 the British dramatist Tom Taylor read a paper to the Shakespeare Committee in which he outlined a plan for a national theatre, claiming that this was the first plan of its kind. The Taylor claim was disputed by a London publisher, Mr. Effingham Wilson, who, in 1847 had purchased Shakespeare's birthplace on behalf of the Shakespeare Committee and was inspired to propose a plan for the establishment of a national theatre. In a reprint of his statement, dated January 19, 1864, Wilson wrote: "The proposition was originally made in 1848, and discussed in two pamphlets written by me, entitled A House for Shakespeare; a Proposition for the Consideration of the Nation."[1] Mr. Wilson's proposition[2] was warmly supported by Lord Lytton, Charles Dickens, William Howitt, Sheridan Knowles, Eliza Cooke, and Charles Kemble.[3]

This idolatry of Shakespeare was not a new occurrence in England's history: ". . . it began with Garrick's famous and rather grotesque incursion in September 1769, when everything was done to honour the Bard,

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[1]Whitworth, p. 27.

[2]For the complete Wilson proposition, see Appendix I.

[3]Whitworth, pp. 27-28.

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save the performance of his plays."[4] Although Garrick's honoring of Shakespeare may have been closer to a circus celebration than a Shakespearean festival, it did provide a kind of formal recognition of the national poet. Adoration of Shakespeare continued and in 1863, Mr. E. F. Flower, a citizen of Stratford-on-Avon, organized a Shakespearean celebration on the tercentenary of the poet's birth. With the tercentenary celebration in 1864 ". . . acting as a memorial tribute only began, in any important way, . . ."[5] Members of the well-known Flower family of Stratford-on-Avon continued to support the celebration of Shakespeare: "By 1879 Charles Edward Flower, . . . had given enough by his own generosity and raised enough by his own energy to build a theatre on the Bankside; thus he made the Festival possible and than 'an annual'."[6]

By the end of the nineteenth century numerous producing organizations had come into being and although many were short-lived, most challenged existing production methods. With the abolishment of the licensing act in 1843 and the monopoly of theatre production in London, the theatre was once again free from government restraint, excepting censorship by the Lord Chamberlain's office. Many of these new-found groups capitalized on new opportunities afforded them. One of the more prominent groups was the Elizabethan Stage Society headed by William Poel

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[4]Ivor Brown, "Stratford from Without," in Shakespeare Memorial Theatre 1948-1950 (London: Reinhardt & Evans, 1951), p. 2.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

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who devoted much of his effort in promoting revivals of Shakespeare in an Elizabethan manner.

> He was for many years general instructor to the Shakespeare Reading Society, for which he produced a number of plays, and it was with a donation from them, and one from Mr. Arthur Dillon, that in 1894, he founded the Elizabethan Stage Society, whose work had such an enormous influence on the staging and production of Shakespeare in the following century.[7]

The Elizabethan Stage Society existed for eleven years and although it was not a financial success, Poel's work convinced critics and lovers of Shakespeare of the need to stage his plays on an open stage, free from the scenic wonderment of the nineteenth century. Poel's work had a further significance in that it stimulated a group of Shakespearean devotees into forming the London Shakespeare League in 1902.

> For the first time, some men began to have ideas concerning the shape of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, and to realize that the stage as a whole had altered steadily from the time when it had originally been founded in the Middle Ages. . . . The antiquarian researchers operated, too, on the minds of the producers.[8]

Many of the actor-managers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century exploited the fruits of their research and produced Shakespeare with elaborate settings and costumes. More often than not, Shakespeare's plays were presented for the purpose of glorifying the actor rather than the poet and any notion of promoting an idoltary of Shakespeare or a national theatre was all but lost.

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[7]Phyllis Hartnoll, ed., Oxford Companion to the Theatre, second edition, (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1951) 622.

[8]Allardyce Nicoll, British Drama, fifth edition, (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1962, 207-208.

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[9]Dent, p. 51

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> It would be out of place here to describe the Shakespearean productions of Henry Irving, Beerbohm Tree or even those of Granville Barker, for none of these managers ever put on more than a mere handful of the plays. There was good enough reason for this restriction of repertory. Irving put on the plays in which he himself could take the leading part; Tree was perhaps less of a star actor and more of a general manager, following the example of Charles Kean, but in both cases single plays were put on for long runs with the utmost elaboration of scenic effect.[9]

Although Irving may have done little to promote Shakespeare, he must have been extremely sensitive to the need for and requirements for a national theatre. In 1878 he delivered a paper at a meeting of a Social Science Congress in which he outlined the case for a national theatre.[10] Sir Henry was very much aware that theatre and state were inseparable and although his own management of the Lyceum was an extremely successful venture both financially and artistically, it was due to the leadership of a single person. "His death left nothing but a great tradition, a unique personal memory, and a band of devoted followers who one by one themselves would sooner or later pass into the dark."[11] In a lecture delivered in 1898, Irving stated the State's obligation to the theatre as follows:

> The theatre must always be an indirect mechanism of teaching. Its work must be in the main transcentdental; for mere realism is insufficient to stimulate the imagination or to rouse the sensibilities, or the emotions. Now, in order to effect its object, the theatre must be a piece of very complete and elaborate organization. In fact, an inner knowledge of its workings shows it to be one of the

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[9]Dent, p. 51.

[10]See Appendix II.

[11]Whitworth, p. 31.

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> It is hardly sufficient that in the economy of the State such exercises with their economic difficulties should be left entirely to the chance of personal enterprise.[12]

Many of the great actors and managers of the period encouraged and actively argued for the concept of a national theatre in Great Britain. However, the decisive thrust came from prominent literary figures lead by Matthew Arnold, William Archer, George Bernard Shaw and Harley Granville-Barker. An avid theatre-goer, Matthew Arnold, like Irving, recognized the potential of the British theatre. The theatre had an extensive dramatic tradition and a healthy supply of good actors in the late nineteenth century; organization of these resources was all that was lacking. In 1880, after having seen a French production at the Gaiety Theatre in London, Arnold published an article "The French Play in London" which appeared in his Irish Essays. He marveled over the successful organization of the French theatre, a theatre, Arnold felt, in which the actors surpassed the dramatic literature. France had no Shakespeare and, yet, was far ahead of England in establishing a national theatre. Arnold was quick to compliment the British theatre workers of past ages but, again like Irving, he realized that former theatrical success relied upon personalities--an extremely tenuous situation.

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[12]Henry Irving, The Theatre and the State (Boston: Richard G. Badger and Company, 1898). pp. 15 and 17.

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> . . . forget your claptrap, and believe that the State, the nation in its collective and corporate character, does well to concern itself about an influence so important to national life and manners as the theatre. Form a company out of the materials ready to your hand in your many good actors or actors of promise. Give them a theatre at the West End. Let them have a grant from your Science and Art Department; . . . The people will have the theatre; then make it a good one. Let your two or three chief provincial towns institute, with municipal subsidy and co-operation, theatres such as you institute in the metropolis with State subsidy and co-operation. So you will restore the English theatre. And then a modern drama of your own will also, probably, spring up amongst you, and you will not have to come to us for pieces like Pink Dominoes.
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> . . . . . .
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> The theatre is irrestible; organize the theatre![13]

By the end of the century there were two major schemes for organizing the theatre of Great Britain on a national level. The first plan was a worthy memorial to Shakespeare which came to fruition with the building of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon in 1879, previously discussed. A second plan called for an 'exemplary theatre' dedicated to the production of plays on a more concrete basis, as suggested by Irving, and a national repertory theatre with a central organization, as advocated by Matthew Arnold. A great rivalry developed between the proponents of these two schemes. The literary leaders and production oriented people were by no means opposed to the concept of establishing a Shakespearean memorial; they did, however, object to locating a national theatre at Stratford. Part of the proposal for the Stratford theatre aimed at establishing a school of dramatic art:

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[13]Matthew Arnold, Mixed Essays, Irish Essays, Etc. (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1908), pp. 455-457.

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"It is contemplated to build a Shakespeare Theatre in Shakespeare's native town, and it is considered feasible that a School, or University of Dramatic Art, can be established there, with its libraries, class-rooms, houses for instructors, scholarships for students, and special chairs for Professors."[14] In 1875 The Era presented its objections.

> We would, at the outset, implore the prime movers in the scheme to decide definitely, and once for all, if the Shakespeare Memorial is intended as a tribute to mere sentiment, or is destined to have some sound and practical outcome. . . There is but one place in England which should be the headquarters of dramatic art--in London. Only in one place can a Shakespeare Theatre be erected--in London . . . . For years and years we have talked of the institution of an Academy of Dramatic Art. Over and over again in these columns it has been urged that either Government aid or generous private enterprise would establish a dramatic mutual society like the Comedie Francaise of Moliere in Paris, or an art school like the Parisian Conservatoire. Here at last is the foundation of one or other such scheme. . . . Where. . . can Shakespeare's plays be better acted than in London, where we have the very pick of the Dramatic Profession?[15]

Thus began the long debate between London and the provinces--a debate which was to continue throughout the entire history of the National Theatre.

The struggle for the establishment of a national theatre continued into the twentieth century. The various Shakespearean clubs, committees and societies continued to function. In 1903 a new impetus was given to the concept of a national theatre established in London. In that year Mr. Richard Badger, a brewer from the north of England, proposed a plan to ". . . collect by voluntary contributions, a sufficient amount to

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[14] The Era, xxxvii, May 2, 1875, p. 13, cited in Allardyce Nicoll, A History of English Drama 1660-1900 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1959), p. 62.

[15] Ibid.

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16 Whitworth,

17 Ibid. p. 4

18 Ibid. p. 4

19 Ibid.

cover the cost of erecting in London and at Stratford-on-Avon, a statue worthy of Shakespeare's fame."[16] Mr. Badger himself made the first contribution of 1,000 pounds but no additional offers were forthcoming. The following year, Mr. Badger approached the London County Council and secured from that organization the offer of a site for a memorial worthy of Shakespeare, the nature of the memorial was not disclosed. All that was now required was a collection agency. Mr. Badger now offered 500 pounds to aid the appeal and an additional 2,000 pounds for the erection of a statue. The Badger offer appeared in the Times and "within a week of the appearance of Badger's letter, the secretary of the London Shakespeare League wrote off to him offering to establish a committee as that for which he pleaded."[17] A general committee was formed and assigned the task of organizing the scheme and determining the form of the memorial. Five years after Mr. Badger had made his original offer, the Shakespeare Memorial Committee finally resolved "that the form of the Memorial be an architectual Monument including a Statue, and it is suggested that each design be submitted by an Architect and Sculptor in collaboration."[18] Any additional sums above the cost of the monument were to be allocated to the ". . . furtherance of Shakespearian aims."[19]

Plans and hopes for establishing a national theatre failed to materialize. However, not all efforts were wasted. The nation would

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[16] Whitworth, p. 41

[17] Ibid, p. 42.

[18] Ibid. p. 49.

[19] Ibid.

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21 Ibid., p. v

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have a monument to their immortal Shakespeare but, more importantly, the Shakespeare Memorial Committee had been formed which would later become fused with the National Theatre Committee to form the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee. No longer would respective advocates of the two schemes be working at cross purposes but would unite their efforts in fulfilling the objective of creating a National Theatre.

At approximately the same time (1902-1903) that Richard Badger and the London Shakespeare League were attempting to formulate plans to erect a Shakespearean statue, a group of literary men were meeting in London

> . . . to consider what steps could be taken towards the foundation of a national theatre, and its result the appointment of a committee to draw up a scheme. . . The committee consisted of Gilbert Murray, A. C. Bradley, Spenser Wilkinson, William Archer, Hamilton Fyfe, and . . . Granville Barker. It met several times at Spenser Wilkinson's house and discussed at some length. . . the principles that should govern the establishment and conduct of national theatres in general.[20]

This committee, the national theatre committee, continued to meet and argue the concept of a national theatre for Great Britain. Finally, William Archer proposed to Granville Barker that "we must get something on paper. What you and I have to do is to draw up a practical scheme, and these other fellows may amend it if they know how."[21]

In 1904 Archer and Barker privately issued their joint efforts: Schemes and Estimates for a National Theatre.[22] The book, after several

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[20]Harley Granville-Barker, The Exemplary Theatre (London: Chatto and Windus, 1922), p. v.

[21]Ibid., p. vi.

[22]William Archer and Granville Barker, Schemes and Estimates for a National Theatre (New York: Duffield and Company, 1908).

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revisions, was published in 1908 and its sequel, rewritten and brought up to date by Barker alone, was published in 1930. The original, privately issued version, the Blue Book, as the document was called, omitted nothing.[23] The authors had attempted to cover every aspect, anticipate every problem that a national theatre might encounter from play selection to actors' pension plan. The Blue Book received the endorsement of some of the most notable people of the time and became the recognized handbook for the national theatre movement.

> Having read and carefully considered this scheme for a National Theatre, we desire to express our belief that such an institution is urgently needed, and that it could in all probability be successfully established on the general lines here indicated.[24]
>
> Henry Irving — Helen D'Oyly Carte
> Squire Bancroft — John Hare
> J. M. Barie — Henry Arthur Jones
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Not everyone, however, approved the plan proposed by Archer and Barker. The Shakespeare memorialists continued to favor a statue instead of a living theatre.

> They believed, too, that private generosity would not by itself avail to provide the large amount of capital needed to found the theatre, neither were they more hopeful than Barker and Archer had been that an appeal to the Government would fill the void. Yet again, the fear of State control--in return for State-support--was rampant, and a nationalized theatre smacked of socialism, or at any rate of something out of tune with what would not be called the 'British Way of Life.'[25]

Opposition to the Archer-Barker plan was not limited to the Shakespeare memorialists, it was also opposed by the national theatre advocates

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[23] See Appendix III.

[24] Archer and Barker

[25] Whitworth, p. 64.

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[26] C. B. Purd
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[27] Ibid., p.

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themselves. The one person most strongly opposed to the Blue Book was George Bernard Shaw. Shaw opposed, among other things, the power given to the director in the plan. In a letter to Barker, dated December 7, 1908, Shaw wrote:

> . . . the real danger is that the Director will have too much power instead of too little. Anyhow, neither Esher nor any other man experienced in public affairs will hear of the scheme in the Archer-Barker book, as it is quite openly planned to make the Director supreme.[26]

Shaw further objected to the selection of plays declaring that ". . . the selection of plays is obsolete."[27]

> 'It's no good,' he said, 'for no one with the youth and energy to get such a theatre started would do a hand's turn for the sake of such a musty list of plays as you put down. The old drama or the new drama may serve you, but old-fashioned drama's the devil.'[28]

Archer and Barker neglected Shaw's plays in their proposed bill, which may have provoked his condemnation.

In spite of objections to establishing a national theatre, the National Theatre Committee continued to function in deference to the proponents of the Shakespeare Statue scheme. Throughout the year 1908 articles appeared almost daily in the leading London newspapers arguing that the only monument which would adequately honor Shakespeare would be a national theatre. After much debate, these two groups reconciled

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[26]C. B. Purdom, ed., Bernard Shaw's Letters to Granville Barker (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1957), p. 144.

[27]Ibid., p. 145.

[28]Granville-Barker, The Exemplary Theatre, p. vii.

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> A fusion of the two schemes was affected, and a single joint Committee was set up with the avowed object of founding a National Theatre which should include a statue of Shakespeare as a prominent feature of its architecture. Sir Israel Gollancz became the Secretary of this 'Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee', and the project was launched under the highest auspices in the social, literary, and theatre worlds at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in the summer of 1908.[29]

Once the two opposing factions were united prospects for the creation of a national theatre looked much brighter. At first voluntary contributions to finance the building of a theatre were few ". . . until Sir Carl Meyer gave a sum of 70,000 pounds. With this sum a site was purchased behind the British Museum and it acquired some fame during the last war as the site of what was called the Shakespeare Y.M.C.A. Hut."[30]

National theatre supporters were enthuastiastic. It looked as though their hopes of establishing a national theatre would be realized in time for the 1916 tercentenary celebration of Shakespeare's death. In 1909, five years after the Archer-Barker Blue Book was privately issued, the Shakespeare National Theatre Committee outlined its plan for the National Theatre. Although not as detailed as the Archer-Barker plan, it, nevertheless, attempted to justify the need for an organized theatre at the national level.[31]

In spite of opposition to governmental support of the national theatre,

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[29]Hartnoll, p. 560.

[30]Dent, p. 140.

[31]For an abstract of the Shakespeare National Theatre Committee's 1909 Handbook, see Appendix IV.

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[32] Whitworth,

[33] Ibid., p.

[34] Ibid., pp.

> The Committee. . . decided to test the opinion of the House of Commons on the general principle of State Aid; and this debate actually took place on a private member's bill on St. George's Day, the 23rd April 1913. It was opened by Mr. H. J. MacKinder, who moved the Resolution 'That in the opinion of this House there shall be established a National Theatre, to be vested in trustees and assisted by the State, for the performance of the plays of Shakespeare and other dramas of recognized merit.'[32]

This was the beginning of many long and, often times, heated Parliamentary debates. Many of the arguments, both pro and con, would be reiterated again right up to the establishment of the National Theatre in 1963. In any case, the first Resolution presented to the House of Commons in 1913 was defeated. But the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee did not abandon hope, it had purchased a site near the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, which the members hoped would become a training school for a national theatre. ". . . they believed that this concrete evidence of progress might facilitate the further collection of funds."[33]

The Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee suspended operations in the summer of 1914, due to the war, and did not resume normal functions again until 1918. Celebration of the tercentenary of the death of Shakespeare in 1916 came and went and although tribute was paid to the national poet of Great Britain, it was not with a national theatre but merely productions of his plays. After the war, in 1919, the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee became involved in a scheme in which it supported a Shakespeare Company under the direction of Bridges Adams and a Shakespeare Joint Committee was formed.[34]

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[32]Whitworth, p. 100.

[33]Ibid., p. 113.

[34]Ibid., pp. 115-118.

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35 Ibid., pp.

The Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee realized a considerable profit from the rental of the site purchased in 1914 and with the proceeds it supported several activities and organizations devoted to producing Shakespeare's plays during the 1920's and 1930's. In addition to the company at Stratford, the committee now sponsored a company at The Old Vic. Although the committee was fulfilling its stated objective of promoting Shakespeare, it was doing little in establishing a national theatre. However, these activities were important in the historical development of the National Theatre since they called attention to the efforts of the national theatre advocates--the attention of the public as well as the government.

In 1929 a direct appeal was made to the government for funds to support a national theatre. Although no money was provided at that time, the principle of State Aid was accepted. The following is a record of the dialogue between a deputation from the national theatre committee and the Prime Minister:

> THE PRIME MINISTER. I have a great deal of sympathy with the scheme which my hon. Friend has in mind. There are, however, serious difficulties arising partly from the number of similar schemes which are put forward. In present circumstances, therefore, I would only be holding out false hopes if I were to answer otherwise than that I regret that I cannot give a promise of a Government subsidy.
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> MR. HOLFORD KNIGHT. Has it been represented to the Prime Minister that there are various schemes for a National Theatre?
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> MR. JAMES HUDSON. If those who are pressing various schemes would come to an agreement, would the Prime Minister be prepared to reconsider the answer that he has made?
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> THE PRIME MINISTER. I think that my answer is partly an invitation for them to do so.[35]

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[35] Ibid., pp. 142-143.

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36 Dent, p.

The notion that the government might be remotely interested in providing subsidy for a national theatre had not previously been indicated; therefore, this statement, although no concrete offer, established a precedent concerning governmental involvement in a national theatre project.

In spite of the National Theatre Committee's charitable activities, it continued to earn money from the rental of the site and from interest on the deposited funds:

> Some years after the war was over the committee were able to sell this site at a considerable profit, and in addition to that they had considerably augmented their cash balance by the process of compound interest. They were thus able to buy another site which came into the market and which at the time was considered a suitable situation for a National Theatre--a triangular plot of land opposite the main frontage of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Complete plans for a theatre were drawn up by the late Sir Edwin Lutyens and the building might have been erected there by now had it not been for the declaration of war.[36]

Once again, a world war delayed the establishment of a national theatre in Great Britain. During the war little progress was made by the National Theatre Committee; however, the government took some decisive steps in providing funds for the arts in general through the establishment of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (C.E.M.A.).

> This body had been founded in January, 1940, by the Pilgrim Trust and the then President of the Board of Education, Lord De La Warr, as a private committee to meet the immediate problems caused by the sudden isolation of places in the country, the concentration of workers in new centres, and the collapse of all ordinary sources of theatre and music. Within three months the substantial grant made by the Pilgrim Trust was doubled by the Treasury, and after

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[36]Dent, p. 140.

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37 Ibid., p.

38 John Moody
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> two years of strenous work for the organization of music, drama and the other arts the entire management of the Council was handed over by the Pilgrim Trust to the Treasury, the Council itself remaining the same, a small body of persons nominated by the President of the Board of Education.[37]

This Council expended its grants not only on the drama but on music and the visual arts as well. However, it is important in the historical development of the National Theatre in that it was one of the first sources of governmental funds reserved for the support of theatre in England. The C.E.M.A. was also the predecessor to the Arts Council of Great Britain which was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1946. The Arts Council's charter is

> . . . similar to that of the B.B.C., with an annual grant from the Treasury. This meant that though Parliament provided the finance and the Chancellor of the Exchequer nominated the members of the Council, the Council itself had the great advantage of being an independent body free from any direct Government control in its policy, provided it followed the main objects laid down in its Charter. These were to raise the standards of the Arts and to make them more accessible to the public.[38]

The period immediately following World War II was one of activity for the National Theatre Committee. In 1945 the committee made arrangements with the London County Council to exchange the site in South Kensington, acquired in 1938, for a larger one in a central position on the south bank of the Thames. The Old Vic, which had received extensive damage during the war, also approached the London County Council for help and it seemed most feasible to unite the efforts of the National Theatre Committee with those of the Old Vic. In 1946 the Joint Council

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[37] Ibid., p. 122.

[38] John Moody, "The Origins of the Arts Council of Great Britain and Its Present Problems in the Theatre," World Theatre, 0 (1950), p. 15.

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Whitwort

of the National Theatre and the Old Vic was established by an amalgamation of the Shakespeare National Theatre Committee and the Governors of the Old Vic for the purpose of uniting forces in the establishment of a National Theatre.[39] "The National Theatre Committee was to provide the building on the site given by the L.C.C. (London County Council) and the Old Vic was to supply the company."[40]

It should be mentioned here that one of the most influencial organizations in the entire history of the National Theatre was the British Drama League. In 1942 the League issued a memorandum to the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, to the President of the Board of Education and to the C.E.M.A. in which it attempted to dispell doubts about State Aid for the theatre. The memorandum concluded

> . . . there is one theatre which by reason of its resources both moral and material, and its potential status as the imperial symbol of British Dramatic art, will claim on every ground to participate and benefit from the scheme. We refer, of course, to the National Theatre which in view of its constitution and declared artistic policy must clearly be regarded as the model and example of all State-aided British theatres.[41]

The British Drama League's memorandum, although not accepted by the government in 1942, prominently in later legislation dealing with the governmental subsidy of theatre.

> It was presented in person to Lord Keynes by a League deputation to C.E.M.A., who approved it in principle, while in Section 132 of the Local Government Act, 1948, as recommended in our scheme, Local

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[39]Richard Findlater, "The Empty Site," Drama, No. 46 (Fall, 1957), p. 25.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Whitworth, p. 233.

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42 Ibid., p.

43 The Times

44 Ibid., Ma

> Authorities were empowered to provide and maintain theatres and were given a mandate to incure expenditure not exceeding in any one year the product on a rate of sixpence in the pound.[42]

The London County Council, which had donated a site on the south bank of the Thames, and the Joint Council of the National Theatre and the Old Vic were anxious to begin the building of a national theatre. In 1948 the government was approached to provide the funds necessary for the establishment of a national theatre. On November 29, 1948, the provisions of the National Theatre Bill appeared under Parliamentary Notices as follows:

> National Theatre.--Notice is hereby given that application has been made to Parliament in the present Session by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury for an Act. . . under the above short title for purposes of which the following is a consise summary:--
> To enable the Treasury, upon the submission to them by the Trustees of the Shakespeare Memorial Trust. . . of a scheme, and management of a national theatre by way of memorial to William Shakespeare, to undertake to make, sic out of money's provided by Parliament, contributions to the funds of the Trustees in respect of the cost of such erection and equipment.
> To provide that, after the commencement of the intended Act, no person shall be appointed as a new or additional trustee of the Shakespeare Memorial Trust unless his appointment is approved by the Treasury, and that, notwithstanding anything in subsection (6) of section (36) of the Trustee Act, 1925, the number of the trustees may be appointments made under that subsection, be increased beyond four, and appointments may be so made notwithstanding that the number of the Trustees for the time being exceeds three.[43]

After months of extensive debates in both houses of Parliament, the National Theatre Bill was read for the final time and passed on March 3, 1949.[44]

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[42] Ibid., p. 234.

[43] The Times (London), November 29, 1948, p. 1.

[44] Ibid., March 4, 1949, p. 6.

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> . . . Parliament, in a holiday mood, officially acknowledged the existence of . . . the Joint Council, and voted, without a dissentient voice, that 1,000,000 pounds should be set aside for the building of a National Theatre at such time as funds, labour and materials might be available. The robes of the Renaissance Princes fitted beautifully on the shoulders of the speakers in this debate--Labour, Conservative and Liberal alike.[45]

Seemingly, then, the struggle for the establishment of a national theatre in Great Britain was over. The advocates had successfully fused divergent opinions and organizations and won the promise of a 1,000,000 pound subsidy from the government. They had procured a site as well. However, plans were again delayed and it would be another fourteen years before the National Theatre came into existence.

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[45]Charles Landstone, "The Provinces and the National Theatre," New Theatre Magazine, II (October, 1960-July, 1961), p. 15.

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CHAPTER III

EVOLUTION OF THE PRESENT PLAN FOR A NATIONAL THEATRE: 1949-1963

The nearly one-hundred year struggle for a national theatre in Great Britain ostensibly came to an end with the passage of the National Theatre Act in 1949. However, Parliament was remiss in stating explicitly when the 1,000,000 pounds, as promised in the Act, would be available. In addition, the grant, conditionally promised in 1949, was tied to the South Bank site which meant that the national theatre's new patron, the London County Council, had to wait until the government provided the money for the theatre before development of the South Bank could begin.

Following the general plans laid down in Granville-Barker's book, the Joint Council of the National Theatre and the Old Vic planned to erect two stages in the national theatre building. The Council soon realized that this plan would far exceed in the cost the 1,000,000 pounds authorized by Parliament, even if the money were made available. The Council felt that it would be unadvisable to again approach the government for more money so soon.

In spite of the unanimous decision to establish a national theatre, debates continued throughout the eleven-year period from the passage of the National Theatre Act in 1949 to the establishment of the actual company and its first performance in 1963. These debates were not always

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limited to members of Parliament and other governmental officials but were extended to include the public as well as members of the theatrical profession, as will be shown later in this chapter.

One of the first major steps towards the establishment of a national theatre was made in the early part of 1950. At that time the Joint Council of the National Theatre and the Old Vic expanded its building committee to include

> . . . Sir Lewis Casson, Sir Laurence Olivier, Mr. John Gielgud, Lt. Col. Stanley Bell, and Mr. Donald Albery. Together with Mr. Llewellyn Rees, as Administrator of the Old Vic, and Mr. Hugh Hunt as Director of the Old Vic company, these gentlemen (with the exception of Mr. John Gielgud, who was abroad) duly met the existing Building Committee and approved the plans and model for the larger theatre submitted by the architect. But they left the problem of the smaller theatre for further consideration. . . The smaller would cost a further 200,000 pounds at least.
>
> . . . . . .
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> Resourceful as ever, Lord Esher came to the rescue, saying that the dilemma might be solved if the Old Vic were, for the time being, adopted as the second theatre, to be served by the one National Theatre company, thus preserving the flexibility of programme and acting personnel which had always been envisaged under the twin-stage plan.[1]

From the outset, the national theatre plans were tied to the South Bank. As far back as 1948, plans were underway for the 1951 Festival of Britain. The plans included complete redevelopment of the south bank of the Thames which was to become a cultural center. This cultural center was to include a new concert hall which would

> . . . form part of a cultural centre between Hungerford and Waterloo Bridge. The hall will be built on a site immediately

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[1]Whitworth, p. 296.

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[2]The Times (

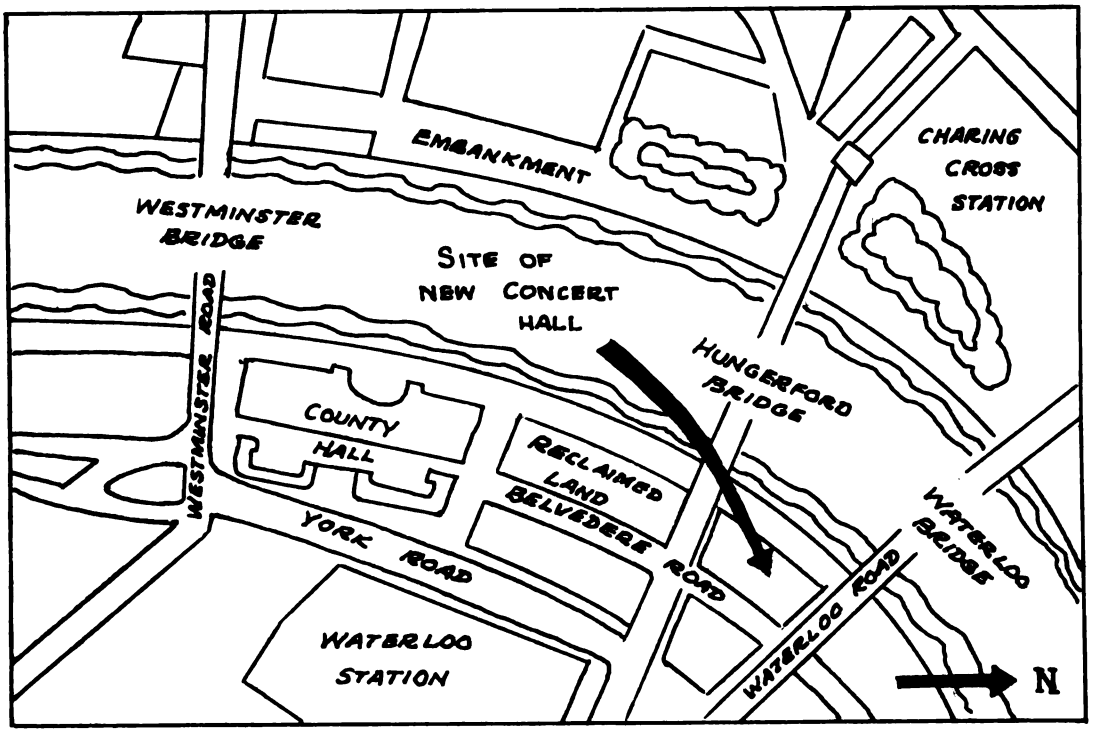

Fig. 1.--Site of New Concert Hall on the South Bank[2]

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[2]The Times (London), October 15, 1948, p. 4.

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3 Ibid.

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> to the north-east of Hungerford Bridge and in the cultural centre will be provided a smaller hall and other facilities for cultural development. . . . The site of the national theatre--a project independent of the Council, which is merely providing the site--will be adjacent to the centre. The concert hall is to be designed by the L.C.C. architect, Mr. Robert Matthew.[3]

The Festival of Britain held in the summer of 1951 was also a festival of theatre.

> In general, the Festival is designed to mark the centenary of the Exhibition of 1851 when the Crystal Palace rose in Hyde Park. Most arts and crafts are represented. The theatre has high place. On July 13 the King will lay the foundation-stone of the National Theatre on a site upon the South Bank of the Thames, not far from either the Bankside of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre or from the reconstructed Old Vic in Waterloo Road, home of Britain's major classical company.[4]

The Festival was a most successful venture for the theatre. Productions were presented throughout the country as well as in London. For the advocates of the national theatre, the Festival of Britain meant progress in the long-delayed plans to establish a national theatre. In June of 1951 The Times reported that due to the King's illness, the Queen would deputize for him:

> The Queen will lay the foundation-stone of the National Theatre on July 13, it was announced by the joint council of the National Theatre and the Old Vic yesterday. . . . The theatre is to be built on the site of the South Bank Exhibition after temporary building of the festival have been cleared. Construction is expected to take about three years.[5]

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[3] Ibid.

[4] J. C. Trewin, "The Festival of Britain," World Theatre, I, No. II (1950), 13.

[5] The Times (London), June 26, 1951, p. 4.

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[6]Ibid.,

[7]Ibid.,

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The following July the general managers for Festival Hall approved the ". . . leasing of a site next to Waterloo Bridge, on the South Bank of the Thames for a National Theatre, in exchange for the conveyance to the council of the freehold of a site in Kensington."[6] The exchange of the South Bank site for one on Cromwell Road by the London County Council in effect contributed a further 185,000 pounds towards the realization of a national theatre.[7]

On July 13, 1951, the Queen, deputizing for the King, laid the foundation stone for the National Theatre on the South Bank site granted by the London County Council.

> It was an important gathering that assembled for the preliminary function in the Royal Festival Hall. The State, the Church; the Arts, the Bankers, the Politicians were all represented. . . . The stone was well and truly laid, and then draped with a black match board covering.[8]

"This was the third ceremony of its kind. The first was in Gower Street, the second in South Kensington, where Bernard Shaw 'turned the first sod'."[9] In any case, it appeared that the national theatre would once again become a realization. The London County Council had provided a site of nearly one and one-half acres of land, Parliament had authorized 1,000,000 pounds for the erection of the building and the foundation stone had been officially laid by the Queen of England.

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[6]Ibid., July 4, 1951, p. 3.

[7]Ibid., July 13, 1951, p. 5.

[8]Charles Landstone, "The Provinces and the National Theatre," New Theatre Magazine, II, (October, 1960-July, 1961), 15-16.

[9]Hartnoll, Oxford Companion to the Theatre, (second edition), p. 670.

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Although the London Council and the Joint Council for the National Theatre and the Old Vic had agreed upon the South Bank site between Waterloo and Hungerford Bridges as the most ideal site available for a national theatre, not everyone was in accord. In September, just two months following the laying of the foundation stone, a leading article appeared in The Times in which the correspondent questioned the practicality of the South Bank site.

> Between the Waterloo Bridge and the Royal Festival Hall is the site allocated to the National Theatre. Whether it is an entirely suitable site for the purpose many people lately have begun to doubt, especially since the erection of the Royal Festival Hall. There is hardly space for two monumental buildings side by side on the small frontage between Hungerford and Waterloo Bridges, and on town-planning grounds it might be better, even at this late date, for the National Theatre to find another site. In any case so fine a river-side site ideally should be occupied by a building that can make the most of the river view, not a building that turns in upon it-self like a theatre. The Royal Festival Hall has justified its river-side position only by giving its river frontage to wide-windowed restaurants.[10]

Editorials such as this in addition to the impatience of the London County Council to get on with the redevelopment of the South Bank area brought about yet another move of the National Theatre site. The government's refusal to release funds for the construction of the national theatre hampered the Council's construction plans of the area since the national theatre site was in the heart of the proposed cultural center. Mr. I. J. Hayward, leader of the London County Council, announced in March, 1953 that

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[10] The Times (London), September 25, 1951, p. 5.

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11 Ibid

> The abandonment by the Ministery of Works of their proposed lease of the part of the site upstream of Hungerford Bridge has enabled the planning of the whole area to be considered afresh, and the Trustees of the National Theatre have been consulted on the effect of this opportunity on their proposals.
>
> As they were encountering difficulties in planning their building on the site, already agreed, adjoining Waterloo Bridge, they have been glad to take advantage of the replanning of the area and agreement in principle has been reached on the use of the site with river frontage adjoining County Hall.
>
> The Queen Mother has been pleased to give her approval to the proposed change. The Royal Fine Arts Committee, who also favour the proposal, are being consulted on the proposed design of the building in relation to the general development of the area.[11]

The new national theatre site, upstream of the Festival Hall area, was more isolated and the interminable delay over building the theatre posed no danger to the visual effectiveness of the whole scheme as it progressed.

Probably the most significant reason for the numerous delays in erecting a national theatre was the result of the disagreement over the geographical location for such an organization and the physical building. Under the National Theatre Act of 1949, the Treasury was empowered to contribute 1,000,000 pounds to the cost of building and equipping a national theatre in London. Specification of London as the designated home of a national theatre presented numerous problems also since many members of Parliament, as well as members of the professional repertory theatre, felt that London already possessed more than its share of theatres. In May, 1953, the proposed national theatre was discussed at a meeting of the Labour Party's Acts and Amenities Committee.

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[11] Ibid., March 4, 1953, p. 4.

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

"There was substantial agreement that London already possessed an adequate number of theatres and that any funds available for building should be devoted either to providing a national theatre in the north or to encouraging interest in the theatre throughout the country."[12]

Members of the repertory theatres, for the most part, favored building a national theatre but they were careful to preserve their own interests. They did not want a national theatre to the exclusion of their own governmental revenues. At the British Drama League conference in the spring of 1953, Mr. Andre van Gyseghume from the Nottingham repertory theatre ". . . urged that support should be given to the professional repertory theatre. The conference passed a resolution urging that a lessening of support for the professional repertory theatre would be injurious not only to the professional but to the amateur theatre."[13]

The following October, the Council of Repertory Theatres met and passed a resolution supporting the establishment of a national theatre. Members at this meeting represented twenty-two theatres, including representatives from the Liverpool Repertory Theatre and the British Old Vic.

> The Council of Repertory Theatres profoundly disapproves of the action of certain M.P.s who are seeking to abandon the building of a national theatre and to divert the money voted for it to provincial theatres. . . The Council believes that the influence and inspiration which the establishment of a national theatre will provide is of primary importance and will be of lasting value to

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[12] Ibid., May 8, 1953, p. 5.

[13] Ibid., March 4, 1953.

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14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

> the British theatre in general and their repertory movement in particular.
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> The Council therefore urges the Government to make the money allocated for the building of a national theatre available for that purpose as soon as possible so that Great Britain may no longer be practically the only country in Europe without a national theatre worthy of its dramatic heritage.[14]

Little progress was made in 1954 to further plans for the national theatre. The government in general and the British Arts Council specifically devoted most of their energies and time to financing the existing repertory system. The Arts Council's annual report, issued in 1954, reminded its readers that what was needed was not only more patronage in the form of money but also more organized control over its dispersement of funds so that every part of the country could benefit equally from the arts. The report suggested local Arts Trusts be established

> ". . . to consider what annual provision in the various arts the city enjoys or lacks at present, to express the needs and capacities of the citizens, and eventually to be even with a dozen of its fellows, a potent factor in persuading Parliament to vote the Arts Council additional funds for sustaining a more even and systematic diffusion of the arts."[15]

In an effort to obtain maximum efficiency in the diffusion of the arts, the Arts Council, under the leadership of the secretary-general Mr. William Williams, proposed a scheme to improve British repertory theatre which could have further delayed, or even abolished, plans for establishing a national theatre. The scheme, first presented by Mr. Williams in 1953, and revived in 1954, called for withdrawal of

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[14] Ibid., October 29, 1953.

[15] Ibid., October 7, 1954, p. 10.

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governmental support from all provincial theatres except for few in major cities which had proved that they could support a run of three to four weeks. This plan would constitute

> . . . a kind of theatre grid for the provinces, a network of associated theatres which might serve as the beginning of better things. This might be done in several ways. It might, for instance, take the form of a cooperative scheme among eight or a dozen theatres in the larger towns. Each constituent theatre in the scheme would be required to put on only four or five plays a year instead of anything from 12 to 24 as at present; after performing its entire repertory in its own playhouse for the first eight weeks of the season the company would visit all the other cities in the circuit, staying six weeks in each and in each putting on all or part of its repertory.[16]

For obvious reasons, managers of the smaller repertory theatres, not included in the scheme, objected as did the proponents of the national theatre and the Arts Council plan never materialized. Once again, the country could get on with the business of establishing its national theatre.

During the mid-fifties little progress was made on plans for the national theatre. Articles appeared in the daily newspapers urging the government to implement the National Theatre Act but always in vain. In 1955, Somerset Maughm donated his collection of paintings of actors to the Trustees of the National Theatre[17] and Lord Esher, chairman of the National Theatre Trustees, at the exhibition of the collection announced that plans for the national theatre were nearly ready for the Fine Arts

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[16]Ibid., October 11, 1954, p. 3.

[17]Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, The Artist and the Theatre, (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1955).

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Commission and "the vision which has inspired so many is about to be realized. . . . after long years of gestation, enough to put an elephant to shame, the National Theatre is about to be born."[18]

But the National Theatre was not born and would not be born for several years to come. In the spring of 1957, Sir William Williams of the Arts Council, resourceful as ever, instituted a new proposal for a national theatre.

> Sir William Williams, secretary-general of the Arts Council, is trying, with some hope of success, he says, to enlist the help of several eminent actors and producers in a scheme to give the public a taste of what it might be like to have a National Theatre Company. His idea is that an ad hoc company might to got together to give a six week's season twice a year with a programme of plays from European classical repertory, including Shakespeare, Tchkhov, Ibsen and Synge. The experiment might perhaps be continued for, say, three years.
>
> Sir William makes it plain that in putting forward the scheme he does so as a private person who believes that the public as a whole hardly understands that a National Theatre is as much a system as a building.[19]

In response to this plan Sir Donald Wolfit wrote:

> There has got to be a National Theatre building. You can't have the commons without the House of Commons; they only use the Church House temporarily. Meanwhile every other country is building itself theatres and we are discarding them. I say, dig the hole and lay the foundation.[20]

One of the prime supporters of the national theatre movement throughout its history has been the British Drama League. The League, like other supporters of the movement, had constantly urged the government

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[18]J. C. Trewin, "The World of the Theatre--Grand National," The Illustrated London News, 226 (April 9, 1955), 660.

[19]The Times (London), May 10, 1957, p. 3.

[20]Ibid., February 23, 1959, p. 12.

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

to grant the money authorized by the National Theatre Act. However, in 1957 it changed its tactics, placing the responsibility upon the Joint Council of the National Theatre and the Old Vic. At its annual conference a resolution to this effect was passed:

> The motion on the National Theatre deplored the delay and requested the council to urge the National Theatre Committee under the joint council of the National Theatre and the Old Vic to take action and immediate steps to bring about the building of a National Theatre 'as a matter of cultural necessity and spiritual faith or resign forthwith.'[21]

At the same conference Sir Donald Wolfit stated:

> There never will be a right time to build a national theatre. We are now told it will cost 1,500,000 or two million pounds to build, but if go on waiting it will never be built. The spiritual life of the nation is at stake.
>
> They would have to stir up the National Theatre Committee and even sweep away that board completely to start again. If we can do that we shall, please God, while I am still alive, see the start of a National Theatre.[22]

Apparently the threat brought some results for in December, 1957 it was announced that Sir Laurence Olivier had been elected to the board of trustees ". . . to try to get the Government to implement the National Theatre Act of 1949, by which 1,000,000 pounds was to be spent on such a theatre."[23]

On the occasion of Olivier's appointment, Lord Esher admonished the government for failing to implement the National Theatre Act but expressed hope for a national theatre in the near future:

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[21] Ibid., November 4, 1957, p. 5.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., December 3, 1957, p. 12.

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24 Ibid

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> I am surprised that the British people are not ashamed at themselves being the only nation in Europe without a National Theatre. We are even behind Africa, where Kenya has a National Theatre. . . Since the War about 200 theatres had been destroyed, shut, or converted into cinemas. In Germany 50 new theatres had been built since the War.
>
> This crisis should be over by then [the Fall] and I have an idea that the Government will be near enough to their general election to welcome some spectular achievement.
>
> If the theatre had been built when the Act was passed, it would have cost 1,000,000 pounds. The delay means it would now cost 1,750,000 pounds. Any further delay and the costs will go up even further, . . .[24]

The case for a national theatre was continued throughout the summer of 1958. The Times (London) published a leading article in which it was pleaded that a national theatre would be a sound business venture: ". . . With the acting talents now at our disposal working on a unique dramatic heritage, such a theatre might draw visitors from all over the world to its summer festivals."[25] In July 1958 a deputation comprised of Lord Chandos, Chairman of the National Theatre Board, Lord Esher, Chairman of the National Theatre Committee, Sir Kenneth Clark, Mr. I. J. Hayward, leader of the London County Council, Sir Laurence Olivier, and the secretary of the National Theatre Trust presented a similar argument to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Heathcoat Armory:

> . . . it is believed that the Chancellor was reminded of the economic advantages which would accrue from a successful and vigorous National Theatre in a country which claims to have the richest heritage of drama to offer to the world. Such a theatre. . . would attract people from all over the western world, and do much to restore the primacy of London as a capital of the arts.[26]

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., July 2, 1958, p. 11.

[26] Ibid., July 3, 1958, p. 7.

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In March of the following year, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. F. J. Erroll, explained the results of that meeting in the House of Commons:

> Two important facts came to light in the discussion which then took place. The first was that the capital cost of the National Theatre building was likely to be as much as 1,750,000 pounds. The second fact was that it would need a continuing annual subsidy which might be as much as 300,000 pounds per annum but which would, even if not as much as that, at any rate be very considerable.
>
> I must tell the House that following this discussion my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer felt obliged to write to Lord Chandos. . . , saying that he could not hold out any hope that we should in the near future be able to make a beginning on the expenditure of nearly 2,000,000 pounds for the National Theatre. As he pointed out, it was a big sum, and a substantial annual subsidy would be required in addition. My right hon. Friend, in his letter, added that the Arts Council was making an inquiry into the housing of the arts at the request of his predecessor, and he hoped that the report which the Arts Council was preparing would indicate priorities amongst the various projects for cultural buildings, and he said that this would give an opportunity for considering the long-term prospects of the National Theatre against the background of a number of competing claims.[27]

Several leading theatre personalities, including the Joint Council of the National Theatre and the Old Vic, wrote to the editor of The Times (London) urging the government to follow the suggestion made by Sir Hamilton Kerr in a debate on State aid to the arts in the House of Commons on January 23, 1959. The suggestion was that

> . . . the 750,000 pounds set aside for cultural purposes in the Television Act of 1954 and which, it is understood, the Independent Television Authority has never called upon, should be diverted either to the additional capital sum now necessary for the erection of the National Theatre or for its initial running costs.[28]

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[27]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 601 (1958-1959), 1221.

[28]The Times (London), February 25, 1959, p. 11.

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Throughout the Fall and Winter of 1958 repeated pleas were made to provide the money necessary for the erection and operation of a national theatre. But always, the government provided reasons for not implementing the National Theatre Act of 1949.

In November, 1958, a general plea was made in the House of Lords for more money to be granted to the arts. Although Great Britain had been relatively generous with her support of the arts in general, she was, according to some members of Parliament and supporters of drama, far behind other European countries in her support of the theatre. The Arts Council Report for 1957-1958 showed that about 70,000 pounds was appropriated for drama. "The drama for the whole of England and Wales, including London, is less than what a small city like Zurich--about the size of Bristol--pays to its Playhouse; and this is in addition to what it pays for a full-time Opera House."[29] In explaining the Arts Council Report in the House of Lords, Lord Silkin reminded his fellow-members of Parliament that "the Arts Council had only 70,000 pounds to allot to drama compared with 14,000,000 pounds which the German theatre received every year in State assistance."[30] Lord Silkin went on to say that he

> . . . had a suspicion that in the eyes of the serious public men who adorned the Government front bench the arts were nothing but entertainment, and could not rank with the important commitments of industrial and governmental life. He did not believe that they saw any difference between Hamlet and My Fair Lady. They did not

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[29]John Moody, "The Arts Council and Theatre Finance," New Theatre Magazine, I (1959-1960), 21.

[30]The Times (London), November 28, 1958, p. 4.

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> believe that one provided a delightful evening and that the other was one of the basic foundations of our civilized life as a great nation.[31]

In spite of the discussions, pleas, threats and insults, the Chancellor of the Exchequer adhered to his decision to await a report from the Arts Council on housing the arts in Great Britain before releasing any funds for the erection of a national theatre. The Chancellor felt that it was imperative to establish a list of priorities before considering any recommendations for the National Theatre. His sentiments were expressed in the House of Commons by the Economic Secretary to the Treasury in March, 1959:

> First, we want to be satisfied that there is general acceptance for concept of building a National Theatre. There are those who argue, both in this House and elsewhere, that the money needed for it would be better spent elsewhere. Secondly, it has been suggested that drama in the provinces deserves a higher priority, especially if the National Theatre would need a large annual subvention. Of that, there is little doubt.[32]

The Arts Council Report, "Housing the Arts in Great Britain," was published in April, 1959. The report was limited, however, to the needs of London, Scotland and Wales. For London the Arts Council assigned three major priorities: ". . . a national theatre, a new medium-sized concert hall, and an exhibition gallery. . ." The Times cited the report as saying:

> . . . that London is in a special position. It has to provide not only for its own population but also for a large extrammural popu-

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 601 (1958-1959), 1223.

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> lation living within a 40-50 miles radius. 'The continuing growth in the population of London and the United Kingdom, and the impressive increase in the number of visitors to this country, particularly since the end of the war, are contributing factors to London's need to present the arts with all the dignity that befits one of the most important cultural capitals of the world.'[33]

The Arts Council Report, in addition to listing a national theatre to be built in London as one of three priorities, even suggested a possible solution to erect the theatre with the limited funds promised by Parliament in 1949:

> It believes that the trustees should revise their plans so as to erect the theatre in two phases. The first would consist of the building of the main stage and auditorium (with a capacity of 1,250-1,350) and essential services, and would be carried out forthwith at a cost not exceeding the 1,000,000 pounds mentioned in the Act. The second phase (to be deferred to a later date) would consist of the completion of the building by providing the second and smaller auditorium, to be carried out when more money made it possible.[34]

The Arts Council, however, could only make suggestions to the government. The government had no obligation to adopt the Council's suggestions, much less finance them.

The following month a deputation from the arts and amenities groups of the Conservative and Labour parties met with J. E. Simon, Financial Secretary to the Treasury of the House of Commons to determine the government's views on the new proposal by the Arts Council. This was the third deputation which had visited the Treasury within a period of six months.

> They came away with the impression that the Government are more likely to favour a proposal to finance a national theatre company which would take first-quality drama to the provinces than to provide

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[33] The Times (London), April 22, 1959, p. 9.

[34] Ibid.

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> . . . Some M.P.'s believe that the Government should go ahead at once with the national theatre project in London, using the 1,000,000 pounds which was authorized by the 1949 Act even if it means completing the building in two stages.
>
> Other M.P.'s are coming round to the view of those who see in the Old Vic the core around which a national theatre company could be built immediately. They suggest that the new national company could be established in advance of its home and could begin straight away with tours to the provinces, thus meeting the argument that the object of State support for drama should be to take good drama to the provinces.
>
> . . . M.P.'s suggested that a national theatre company could be created from the base of the Old Vic if a subsidy of about 150,000 pounds were given--less than is given to opera--and that a chain of about 10 suitable provincial theatres could be helped to survive if grants were given through the Arts Council.[35]

The notion that a national theatre should be an exemplary theatre, thus providing the best the country had to offer in the provinces, was by no means unique. In the late fifties, however, recognition of the provinces came to the forefront once again and the fear that if the National Theatre were located in London it would become just another London theatre was again expressed. The argument, as expressed above, appeared to be a variation of the "Grid System" proposed by Sir William Williams of the Arts Council some years earlier. Many of the conservative elements of Parliament rejected the idea of building a national theatre for several years, proposing just such a system for repertory theatre as that suggested by Williams. In the summer of 1959, the Labour party issued an election pamphlet entitled "The Challenge of Leisure" in which it supported a national theatre but at the same time assured equal benefits

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[35] Ibid., May 8, 1959, p. 8.

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> . . . the founding of a national theatre, to which the Old Vic would be closely linked, could not fail to stimulate good theatre throughout the Country. It would not be just another London theatre, Regular tours of the main provincial centres 'should be a statutory obligation' and suitable theatres outside London are essential. New theatres are also necessary for high quality repertory companies in Scottish, Welsh and large provincial centres not adequately served. These could be linked with the Old Vic in an inter-change scheme 'so that London may be aware of what the provinces are doing, while the other parts of the country enjoy the chance of seeing, in tours of the National Theatre Company, the best that the capital has to offer.[36]

There should have been no fear that London would declare a monopoly on the National Theatre. Part of the entire scheme for a national theatre throughout history had always been to provide the best theatre possible, not only in London, but throughout the United Kingdom through a touring program. This objective was clearly stated by Mr. Levy at the second reading of the National Theatre Bill in the House of Commons as far back as January, 1949:

> "It is, of course, perfectly true that it would be very unfair if this National Theatre was confined to London, even though London is the capital. . . . the plan of this National Theatre is that London should provide the building which is, as it were, the workshop and centre. It has never been envisaged that it shall not be a centre from which extensive tours shall operate."[37]

This same viewpoint was expressed by Lord Esher in a reaction to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1959 who wanted to determine the needs of the provinces before making any decisions regarding the National Theatre.

> It was apparently his view that the National Theatre would attract back to Britain many of the greatest British actors and actresses who

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[36] Ibid., August 31, 1959, p. 4.

[37] Whitworth, p. 269.

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> now pay only fleeting visits here, and that it would be possible then to send out companies of first-class quality on provincial and foreign tours. He made the point that provincial audiences could not be satisfied with second-rate theatre companies in the television age.[38]

By late 1959 and early into 1960 the future of the National Theatre once again looked bright. The political climate in Great Britain was quite favorable toward the establishment of a national theatre. All three parties in the 1959 elections had advocated building the National Theatre. It was also supported by the Arts and Amenities Committees of both the Conservative and Labour parties in the House of Commons. These two committees became a significant force during the sixties in the struggle for a national theatre.

> These two Committees work in complete unison, and as such are unique in the House, rather to the amused bewilderment of the other M.P.'s, who have dubbed them 'the Heavenly Twins'. . . . Much of the improved outlook must go to the 'Heavenly Twins', who really do <u>care</u> about the theatre, and have done much to foster the cause of the Arts in Parliament. They are ably led by Sir Hamilton Kerr for the Conservatives, and Dr. Barnett Stross for Labour.[39]

Late in 1959 Dr. Stross pressed the Chancellor of the Exchequer for a statement on the government's stand on financing and building a National Theatre and again the Chancellor relied on the Arts Council to establish priorities within a total expenditure.[40] This was to be the beginnings of many such deputations to the Chancellor's Office during the succeeding years.

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[38]<u>The Times</u> (London), March 25, 1959, p. 8.

[39]Charles Landstone, "The Provinces and the National Theatre," <u>New Theatre Magazine</u>, II (October, 1960-July, 1961), 16.

[40]<u>The Times</u> (London), November 20, 1959, p. 4.

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[1] Ibid.

The British Actors Equity suggested in its quarterly report, issued early in 1960, that the cost of building a National Theatre would be closer to 2,000,000 pounds than 1,000,000 and this fact must be acknowledged. The report went on to attack the proposal of forming an ad hoc National Theatre Company.

> The proposal to avoid capital expenditure by merely forming a National Theatre Company limited--in both members and repertoire, to perform sometimes in London and sometimes on tour, would, we believe, defeat the whole project. The impossibility of accumulating by this means the material furnishings of each production; the additional cost manufacture on an ad hoc basis; the high salaries that would have to be paid for the same talent where a long term contract could not be offered; the continuous loss of joint experience that would be suffered by joint personnel from the frequent changes of cast called for by fresh additions to the repertoire; these would all combine to prevent the organic growth of a corporate body capable of maintaining the requisite high standard of performance over the extensive field of dramatic literature that should be covered by a theatre claiming to be the leader of its fellows. The company would merely be seen as a homeless Old Vic or Stratford Company--organizations of the utmost value in their own field, but limited by the means at their disposal as no National Theatre should ever be.
>
> To attempt to help the theatre in the provinces by such means would be to fritter the money away. There are better ways. If the whole population is to be asked through taxation to create and maintain a National Theatre, touring would be an essential part of its programme. It is not, however, enough to say that the National Theatre Company (or companies) must tour. There must be buildings fit for them to appear in.[41]

The British Actors Equity's views were presented to the London County Council by Mr. High Jenkins, secretary of Equity in February, 1960. In spite of strong opposition to a London based National Theatre, the Council passed a motion asking the Government to start

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[41] Ibid., January 28, 1960, p. 3.

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building the National Theatre on the South Bank site.[42] Two days later the Chancellor of the Exchequer was again asked for a decision on the question of building the National Theatre. Speaking for the Chancellor, Sir E. Boyle answered: "No. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has recently received from the Arts Council the result of the further study of this subject which he asked them to undertake; and we shall need to consider their conclusions carefully."[43]

By 1960 nearly every political faction agreed that Great Britain should have a national theatre. Conditions now seemed right to implement the 1949 Act. Meanwhile there was considerable pressure to recognize the Old Vic as the National Theatre. The Conservative election pamphlet on "The Challenge of Leisure," cited earlier, saw the Old Vic as the answer to the problem of financing a National Theatre.

> Before it is built, we must have a living organization of actors and actresses. . . forming the nucleus of the National Theatre Company. We think such an organization is best created, in the British way, round something already in being which has proved its worth. This we find in the Old Vic.[44]

The Old Vic, however, had many critics who question this scheme, proposing instead that the Stratford Company should become the National Theatre for England. The company had built up a most respectable reputation in the classical theatre and as Charles Landstone put it:

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[42] Ibid., February 10, 1960, p. 10.

[43] Ibid., February 12, 1960, p. 16.

[44] Richard Findlater, "National Theatre Year," The Spectator, 204 (March 18, 1960), 385-386.

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". . . its omission from the National Theatre scheme became an anachronism."[45] In the summer of 1960 this omission was remedied. On June 29, 1960, The Times (London) reported:

> The Governors of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon have accepted an invitation to appoint representatives to the Joint Council of the National Theatre and Old Vic, which will in the future be known as the Joint Council of the National Theatre.[46]

Appointment of Stratford representatives, in the eyes of many critics, was an extremely wise decision. As Richard Findlater indicated:

> If you follow the empiricists' argument that a National Theatre Company should first be created 'round something already in being which has proved its worth,' then surely the rightful claimant should not be the Old Vic, but the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon? Since the war it has built up an international reputation which has dimmed the Old Vic's name; most of our leading actors, directors and designers have worked there, more frequently and fruitfully on the whole than at the Vic; it is the best-equipped theatre in the country, serviced as it is by a permanent backstage organization with no counterpart in London; . . .[47]

A new Executive Committee was formed with Sir Kenneth Clark as independent chairman. The sole objective of this new committee was to ". . . press for an immediate Government decision which would enable the National Theatre to be completed and opened in April 1964--the 400th anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare."[48] It is interesting to note that the first committee of this nature set up by Granville Berker and his

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[45]Landstone, p. 16.

[46]The Times (London), June 29, 1960, p. 4.

[47]Findlater, p. 386.

[48]Arts Council of Great Britain, The Fifteenth Annual Report, 1959-1960, (London: The Baynard Press, 1960), 19.

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During the summer and fall of 1960 the various committees, M.P.s and interested parties continued to press the Chancellor of the Exchequer for a decision on the building of the National Theatre on the South Bank of the Thames. Six such discussions are recorded in Parliamentary Debates between June and December of 1960. In the latter part of the year the requests to the Chancellor changed from building the theatre on the south bank to establishing a national repertory company. In November, Dr. Stross of the Arts and Amenities Committee met with Sir E. Boyle, Financial Secretary.

> Dr. Stross asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will now take steps to assis in the formation of a National Theatre Company which would perform mainly in provincial theatres.
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> . . . . . .
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> Sir E. Boyle: I will bear the hon. Member's suggestion in mind. I think that the proposal that a National Theatre Company should be formed to play mainly in the provinces is a new one from the point of view of Questions in this House. We will certainly consider it but I cannot add to my original answer.[49]

Continuing to exert pressure on the Chancellor, Dr. Stross in December, 1960, with support from Mr. Jeger, reminded the Chancellor, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd of the significance of the date, April, 1964 and the hope that the National Theatre could be opened in that month. Mr. Lloyd assured the gentlemen that he was very much aware of the significance of the date but made no promises.[50]

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[49]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 630 (1959-1960), 531.

[50]Ibid., 631, 1043.

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Supporters of the National Theatre were confident that some definite action would be taken early in 1961. Although the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not made any statement on a decision to begin building, the supporters felt certain a decision would soon be forthcoming ". . . because the work would fit in opportunely with the ambitious plan that the L.C.C. have laid before the Royal Fine Art Commission for the development of the South Bank site."[51]

Further moves were made by the Arts and Amenities Committees in February, 1961 to urge the government to live up to its promise of 1949.

> Mr. George Strauss, Sir Hamilton Kerr and Dr. Barnett Stross called on Sir Edward Boyle, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and expounded proposals for the foundation of a national theatre company. They argued that if money was an obstacle to a national theatre on the South Bank the priority should be a national company of players, based on the Old Vic and visiting the provinces.
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> The two Committees have not given up hope of a National Theatre, which they regard as the second phase. Mean while they are convinced that a national company should be sustained at an annual cost to the Exchequer of between 300,000 and 350,000 pounds and suggest that the Government should increase their support for the Old Vic Company to this amount through the Arts Council.[52]

The Committees decided, then, to accept second best by forming a national company of players and perhaps building the theatre itself at a later date. This decision might, however, jeopardize the holding of the site on the South Bank since the London County Council could not be expected to reserve the location for many more years. Their own plans to redevelop the entire South Bank area by 1964 would be seriously

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[51] The Times (London), January 27, 1961, p. 6.

[52] Ibid., February 28, 1961, p. 12.

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The two-phase development of the National Theatre gained popularity with the government in the early sixties. On March 3, 1961 The Times reported:

> Proposals for a national theatre are to come before the Government for decision very soon. The question is under study by Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and among the representatives he has before him are the views of the Arts Council.
>
> Within the Government opinion seems to be turning towards the proposal for the formation of a national company of players as the first phase, leaving the building of a national theatre on the South Bank to be the second phase.[53]

The announcement brought about a series of criticisms from the public, especially from people representing the theatrical profession. One such critic was Felix Aylmer, President of the British Actors' Equity Association, who expressed his views in The Times:

> Sir.--All who have struggled over the years for the National Theatre will view with the gravest disquiet the reported parliamentary acceptance of the idea of a National Theatre Company without a National Theatre.
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> . . . . . .
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> Any attempt to deal with . . . necessities on a temporary and makeshift basis must multiply expenses while diminishing efficiency.
>
> If furthermore, the company is to be treated as a traveling circus, it will in practice be impossible to recruit actors of the required calibre and standing. So far from justifying the title of 'National', the theatre will be seen merely as a poor relation of Stratford and the Old Vic waiting for some generous brewer to pay its bills, Great Britain unfortunately being bankrupt. Moreover, one potential benefactor cannot be kept waiting indefinitely. The L.C.C. have kept the site vacant on the South Bank for ten years and are showing signs of understandable impatience. Preparations for the 1964 Festival--Shakespeare's quarter centenary--are under way. This is no time for half-measures, particularly where there is grave danger that the half-measure would discredit the world.[54]

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[53] Ibid., March 3, 1961, p. 12.

[54] Ibid., March 13, 1961, p. 21.

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There were also, at about the same time, numerous articles in favor of creating a national company and condemming the idea of building a National Theatre building. As the correspondent for The Economist wrote: "Is there really a need to create a pompous national mausoleum for the bright young critics to peck at every week-end? With the Old Vic there is an invaluable and honourable, compromise."[55] Probably the greatest critic of the establishment of the National Theatre was the noted playwright, John Osborne who wrote:

> The big danger in the 1960's is the formation of a new theatre establishment. That, I feel, is the objection to the National Theatre, where all the safest talents will be creating some awful kind of museum. It seems to me like the building of a new Royal Academy. Simply on the basis of one's experience of English life, one knows that it would be the smaller, safer people would be in charge. That's the way it always works, unfortunately. Perhaps I am a pessimist, but I think I'm being realistic about it, and I should hate to see some of the good talents wasted in creating a waxwork museum. It would give some actors betters parts and guaranteed employment, but that seems to me such a minimal return for erecting yet another institution. I agree that hy-pathetically the National Theatre might be stimulating to me and other dramatists if a really free and new stage was built there: except that one doesn't know what the context of power would be, and whether one would want to work in it.[56]

The debates continued on the merits of establishing a National Theatre in London versus the creation of a national company of players, thereby enriching the repertory theatre in the provinces. In December, 1960, the Executive Committee of the Joint Council of the National

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[55]"Theatre for the Nation," The Economist, 198 (February 11, 1961), 550.

[56]John Osborne, "That Awful Museum," Twentieth Century, 169 (February, 1961), 212.

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Theatre under the leadership of Sir Kenneth Clark proposed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the National Theatre should be built on the South Bank and opened in 1964, the quartercentenary year of Shakespeare's birth. The proposal stated that the theatre should contain two auditoria:

> . . . one of the proscenium arch type and the other an open-stage arena, each with approximately 1,200 seats--at an estimated cost of 2,300,000 pounds. The resources of the Old Vic and of the Stratford-upon-Avon managements were to be fully integrated, and a company of 150 players formed to provide a year's repertoire in both auditoria at the National Theatre, a six months' season at Stratford and a touring company to serve the needs of the provincial cities. The annual subsidy required for the maintenance of the theatre and the companies was estimated at 450,000 pounds per annum.[57]

The Arts Council supported the proposal of the Joint Council of the National Theatre and notified the Chancellor of its endorsement of the case for the establishment of the National Theatre.

Finally, the long-awaited decision from the Chancellor of the Exchequer was announced in the House of Commons on March 21, 1961. After relating the proposal by the Joint Council of the National Theatre, the Chancellor said:

> The Government believes that there are better ways of using the resources which can be made available to help the living theatre. They are ready to make additional funds available through the Arts Council for assistance to the Old Vic and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, provided that satisfactory arrangements can be made through the Arts Council to govern the expenditure of such funds. Such assistance could take the form both of capital provision for improving existing buildings--particularly the Old Vic building in York Road--and of increased annual subvention to help improve standards and meet touring costs. The Old Vic and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre each has a great dramatic tradition of its own, and the Government would like to see these distinctive traditions preserved.

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[57]Arts Council of Great Britain, The Sixteenth Annual Report, 1960-1961, (London: The Baynard Press, 1961), 15.

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[59] Ibid., p

[61] Great Br
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> The Government are also prepared to increase the support already given through the Arts Council to provincial repertory theatres both by way of grant to repertory companies and by contributions towards the cost of renovating existing theatres and building new ones.[58]

The government's decision not to build a National Theatre came as a great disappointment to all those who had worked diligently over the years for the cause. Now the great fear was that the South Bank site would be lost forever. In answer to protests by Mrs. Irene White that the site must be preserved, the Chancellor answered:

> . . . There is a limited amount of public money available, and I have to consider the best way to deploy it. I am in agreement with the hon. Lady about the importance of keeping the site on the South Bank for what I think are called cultural purposes.[59]

Aside from the advocates of a National Theatre, the group most seriously affected by the Chancellor's decision was the London County Council. The leader of the Council, Sir Isaac Hayward, expressed great disappointment and told The Times:

> This is not only a matter of the Government's responsibility to the arts. . . . The Government is responsible to see that the site on the South Bank which the L.C.C. has reserved for nearly ten years is not sterilized indefinitely and lost to other cultural uses. The council will have to review the position in the light of the talks suggested by the Chancellor.[60]

In the House of Commons on March 30, 1961, the Financial Secretary was reminded of the ". . . general dismay over the whole country about this niggling and petty way of dealing with such a big question,"[61] and

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[58]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 637 (March 21, 1961), 210.

[59]Ibid., p. 213. [60]The Times (London), March 22, 1961, p. 12.

[61]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 637 (1960-1961), 1507.

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[62] Ibid.

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asked if he would reverse his decision. The Secretary replied:

> . . . The Government have given a great deal of thought to this and I should be hopelessly misleading the House if I gave any impression that the Government were likely to go back on the main lines of their decision. . . . I think that most people who have read my right hon. and learned Friend's statement and his answers to questions feel that the theatre can take a great deal of comfort from it.[62]

Not all, however, did take great comfort in the Chancellor's statement. One in particular was Sir Donald Wolfit who wrote:

> Sir.--Truly any citizen interested in art and culture of this country may say with King Lear, 'My wits begin to turn.' Hard on the heels of the Chancellor's ruthless refusal to implement the promise made by all parties in the House of Commons to build the National Theatre on the South Bank site comes a statement from the L.C.C. proposing to spend no less than three million pounds on additions to the Festival Hall and car parks and gardens with sculpture.
>
> The situation becomes rapidly more farcical than ever, if it was not so tragic. Where is the 70,000 pounds left by the late Carl Meyer for the building of a National Theatre? Surely the trustees could insist that it be used at once to excavate the site already promised by the L.C.C. and the foundations laid.
>
> I do humbly suggest that a protest against this monstrous decision is tabled at once.[63]

The London County Council continued to go ahead with plans to develop the South Bank which were to include a new front for Festival Hall, a smaller concert Hall seating 1,100 and a recital room for 400, a series of art and exhibition galleries as well as car parks, and the gardens with sculpture, at which Sir Donald Wolfit scoffed. At a

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[62] Ibid.

[63] The Times (London), March 25, 1961, p. 9.

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meeting of the London County Council on March 23, 1961, Sir Percy Rugg, leader of the opposition on the L.C.C., suggested that since the government would not build the theatre, perhaps the L.C.C. should consider the possibility of building a National Theatre on the South Bank:

> . . . A national theatre will benefit London far more than any other part of the country. Bearing in mind the great wealth of London and the south-east we could comfortably take this project in our stride. A rate of only one penny in the Greater London area produces over 750,000 pounds. The local authorities in this area alone can, therefore, by banding together, pay the cost of building a national theatre by using a penny rate for three years.
>
> That would mean the theatre could start without debt. Running costs should be shared between the local authorities, the Government through the Arts Council and the many business organizations and television companies who already patronize the arts.[64]

Sir Isaac Hayward welcomed the suggestion saying that ". . . the council could not be expected to see the site, which had been held available since the Queen Mother laid a foundation-stone in 1951, 'indefinitely sterilized'."[65]

Hopes for the National Theatre were seemingly at a new low until the London County Council intervened with a possible solution. It was estimated that the theatre would cost approximately 2,500,000 pounds; if the government were to release its 1,000,000 pounds that would mean that the county would have to provide the balance of 1,500,000 pounds. The proposal won the support of all concerned, excepting the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Kennth Rae, secretary of the Joint Council of the National Theatre stated: "I would regard this as an exceedingly

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[64] Ibid., March 24, 1961, p. 4.

[65] Ibid., March 29, 1961, p. 7.

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66 Ibid.,

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handsome offer on the part of the L.C.C. I would have thought it would be difficult for the Government to turn this down without very serious consideration."[66] Mr. Robert Mellish, chairman of the London Labour Party was pleased with the county's proposal: "The South Bank scheme has already cost 5,000,000 pounds and it would indeed be a tragedy if further development was held up by Government delay in passing on the other 1,000,000 pounds."[67] Sir Isaac Hayward was equally optimistic:

> I do not expect the Chancellor to give a quick decision because obviously at the moment he is very much absorbed with his Budget, but I would hope that when the Budget is over he will be able to give attention to it. . .
> It is unlikely that anything would be needed from the Exchequer this year. . . If approval is given some time must pass for working drawings to be prepared and tenders invited and decided on.[68]

All that was needed for the building of the National Theatre was the government's agreement to play its part and provide the 1,000,000 pounds. On March 30, 1961 the Financial Secretary, Sir Edward Boyle, was asked by Mr. Kenneth Robinson in the House of Commons to make the commitment:

> Mr. K. Robinson: If, as seems probable, in default of any action by the Government the London County Council proceeds to build a National Theatre, will the Financial Secretary pledge the Government to provide the L.C.C. with the 1,000,000 pounds which was promised by the House in 1949 for this specific purpose?
> Sir E. Boyle: I think that I should be extremely unwise to give a pledge of that kind in answer to the hon. Gentleman, whose supplementary question goes quite a long way beyond the Question on the Order Paper.[69]

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[66] Ibid., April 5, 1961, p. 6.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 637 (1960-1961), 1507-1508.

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In the spring of 1961 there was growing concern over the London County Council's offer to assume the major portion of the National Theatre expense. Although nearly everyone supported the theory many objected to the reality of providing the actual funds. Essentially, the argument was why should the people of London support a "National" theatre. In April, 1961 Hugh Jenkins explained the situation in a letter to The Times:

> The picture of local authority funds as a fixed pool from which all moneys are taken is a false one. It is not a question of robbing people of homes to pay for the arts. . . . The money will be raised especially for the theatre by a 1d. rate spread over three years. . . .
>
> As to the propriety of the L.C.C. acting in the matter, the capital county is not Little Muddlecombe. This great authority does not say, "the Royal Festival Hall is really a national building, therefore, we will have nothing to do with it". It does not say, "the Sadler's Wells Opera is a national company, therefore, we will not help them". The L.C.C. under its present political control has recognized that in our country national institutions are centred on the capital and that this gives the people of London a special responsibility towards them. However, in spite of the good work it does as a patron of the arts, the L.C.C. is still not yet spending the product of a 1d. rate. Other authorities are encouraged under the Local Government Act of 1948 to spend up to the product of a 6d. rate, so the L.C.C. still has plenty of financial power in hand.[70]

Very little progress was made on the National Theatre issue with the Chancellor of the Exchequer during the spring of 1961. The Chancellor was occupied with preparation of the annual budget and this took precedence over all other matters. In the House of Commons on April 13, 1961, the Financial Secretary was pressed for a statement. The advocates argued that the government should take advantage of the L.C.C. offer, that

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[70] The Times (London), April 8, 1961, p. 9.

the government had a debt of honor, that the House was committed to release the 1,000,000 pounds.

> Mr. K. Robinson: If a public authority like the London County Council can build a national theatre on grants provided by itself, and when 1,000,000 pounds has been voted by this House for the specific purpose, why is it not automatic for that sum of money to be made available to the L.C.C.?
>
> Sir E. Boyle: I know that the House is aware that the whole problem which the Government had to face was not merely one of capital cost. There is the annual running cost as well, and the question of what should be the priority for giving a sum of money as my right hon. and learned Friend said, annually, amounting to between 300,000 pounds and 450,000 pounds a year. I really cannot add to what I have already said this afternoon. . .[71]

At its annual meeting in London on April 23, 1961, the British Actor's Equity Association passed a resolution which

> . . . regretted the Government's decision and welcomed a recent statement by Sir Isaac Hayward. . . that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer would hand over the 1,000,000 pounds. . . the L.C.C. would find the balance required. The meeting urged the Government to reverse their decision and accept this offer.[72]

In addition to the pressure created in the House of Commons and that from organizations such as the British Actor's Equity Association, articles appeared almost daily in The Times (London) urging the government to work with the London County Council in building the National Theatre on the South Bank. Perhaps the letter to the Editor by Laurence Irving, a long-time ardent supporter of the National Theatre, best exemplified the sentiments of other writers of such letters. Mr. Irving argued in his letter that the English theatre was in some disarray and further

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[71]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 638 (1960-1961), 462.

[72]The Times, (London), April 24, 1961, p. 6.

that the country needed a National Theatre in which the young, inspired, actors, directors and theatre workers in general could work under one roof. He concluded:

> Sir Ralph Richardson wrote recently that a National Theatre is not comparable to a National Gallery in that the exhibits are alive and kicking. Yet it can be compared with a national or municipal orchestra. In both cases, under the hand of an ardent director an association of artists with individual skills can reach a measure of perfection interpreting classic and modern repertory conscious of their corporate being and assured continuity of purpose.
>
> Those who disagree may well ask what I mean by style. Perhaps it is totality of presentation in a well-conducted, well-equipped and disciplined theatre. The Royal Shakespeare Theatre and the Old Vic have whetted our appetites for a National Theatre: neither, owing to its chartered obligations, can qualify as a substitute.
>
> The experiment will be costly and at first trial, may fail. So it is with rockets.[73]

A few days later Mr. Lindsay Anderson viewed his objections to Mr. Irving's statement saying that ". . . what we must have is not one National Theatre but the extension, through adequate subsidy, of the company system to a number of groups, each of which would then be able to develop its own personality, its own style--in its own theatre."[74]

Opinions continued to be divided. Sir Alec Guinnes said that ". . . he pinned his hopes on the National Theatre; while John Osborne thought that the National Theatre would probably be a dreary museum."[75]

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[73] Ibid., April 28, 1961, p. 15.

[74] Ibid., May 2, 1961, p. 13.

[75] "Theatre Warfare," Drama, No. 60 (Spring, 1961), 19.

On June 6, 1961, a deputation from the London County Council met with Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, Chancellor of the Exchequer, asking for government support to build the National Theatre on the South Bank. The Times reported the meeting the following day:

> After an hour's talk an agreed statement was issued by the Treasury, which said that the deputation placed before the Chancellor of the Exchequer 'the L.C.C.'s proposal that a new two-auditorium theatre should be constructed on the South Bank on the basis of a contribution by the Government of the 1,000,000 pounds mentioned in the National Theatre Act of 1949, together with an L.C.C. contribution of the remainder of the capital cost (estimated at 2,300,000 pounds) through the product of a penny rate for two or three years.'
>
> The statement went on to say that 'full discussion took place on the implication of the council's offer, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressed his recognition that it created a new situation to which he was prepared to give full consideration.'[76]

The Chancellor related to the House of Commons on July 4, 1961 the discussion he had held with the London County Council deputation and implied that he was ready to meet the guarantee made by Parliament over ten years ago.

> I must, however, make it clear that I would not in any event be prepared to agree to more than the sum of 1,000,000 pounds already approved by Parliament toward capital costs, nor could I agree to increase the sum by way of annual subvention already contemplated in accordance with my statement of 21st March.[77]

In July, 1961 the National Theatre project received new impetus. The general purpose committee of the London County Council advocated participation in the 2,300,000 pound scheme to build the National Theatre on the south bank of the Thames.

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[76] The Times (London), June 7, 1961, p. 15.

[77] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 643 (1960-1961), 1217.

> They recommend that the council is prepared to participate upon submission by the Joint Council for the National Theatre of a scheme, acceptable to the council and to the Government, for the creation of such a theatre which assumes as a basis:
>
> 1. Participation by the Royal Victoria Hall (Old Vic), the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford, and Sadler's Wells;
> 2. Contributions towards the capital costs of 1,000,000 pounds by the Government, and by the council of the balance of expenditure of the order of 1,300,000 pounds;
> 3. Subvention by the Government of the companys' using the theatre and the continuance of the council's contribution to Sadler's Wells Opera; and
> 4. Adequate representation by council and the Government on any managing body.
>
> . . . The Chancellor of the Exchequer has now suggested that the Government and the council should invite the Joint Council for the National Theatre to submit for their joint consideration a scheme for a national theatre to embrace the Royal Victoria Hall . . . the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, and Sadler's Wells, and have asked that, if such a scheme were to be found generally acceptable, the Government for their part would then be ready to consider again the possibility of their supplementing the council's offer of capital funds by the grant of 1,000,000 pounds as authorized by the National Theatre Act of 1949.
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> Towards the annual running expenses of the companys' permanently using the National Theatre under the draft scheme it could be assumed that the Government would guarantee an annual subvention not exceeding 400,000 pounds a year in total, based on an estimated breakdown of 230,000 pounds for drama and 170,000 pounds for opera and ballet.
>
> This Government subvention would be in respect of all expenditure at the headquarters of the institutions concerned (i.e., including the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford, as well as any National Theatre, but assuming the discontinuance of performances at the existing Old Vic and Sadler's Wells theatres), but not expenditure on provincial touring, which would be provided for seperately.[78]

Any reconciliation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer was welcomed by the advocates of the National Theatre. It was encouraging to know that the 1,000,000 pounds might finally be released and even more

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[78] The Times (London), July 13, 1961, p. 13.

assuring was the government's suggested subvention of 400,000 pounds towards the annual operating expenses. What did come as something of a shock was the inclusion of Sadler's Wells in the draft scheme. This would certainly invite additional problems in building the theatre since the demands of opera would be somewhat different than those of drama. In addition, there would most assuredly be problems of administration in such an elaborate scheme. The discontinuance of performances at the existing Old Vic and Sadler's Wells promised to provoke additional criticism.

Following the announcement of the plan to include the Sadler's Wells in the National Theatre plans, The Times, (London) in a leading article wrote:

> The scheme, as might be expected, would embrace the Old Vic and Royal Shakespeare companies; but the further incision of Sadler's Wells is odd--can it be inspired by the happy thought, happier to the Treasury than the Green Room, that this would answer the chronic financial difficulties of Sadler's Wells?
>
> It also appears that the Government's offer of a subsidy is made on the assumption that performance would be discontinued at the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells theatres. That is to predetermine something that ought to remain open for careful consideration while the general scheme is being worked out. . . . But a real chance to get on with the building is now presented; and for this the London County Council, which has stolen the initiative from the Government and proposed to put up more than half the capital, deserves full credit.[79]

For several years members of the Sadler's Wells Trust had held intermittent discussions with the London County Council on the possibility of rehousing Sadler's Wells on the South Bank or elsewhere. The reasons for this were stated by Mr. James Smith, chairman of Sadler's Wells Trust

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[79]Ibid., July 13, 1961, p. 11.

and of the Sadler's Wells Foundation, at a news conference held on July 19, 1961.

> The reason for this. . . can be stated simply. We have felt that it was not possible for Sadler's Wells to continue its artistic development for more than a short period given the present theatre and site, and that only did London require in addition to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, one modern opera house but also Sadler's Wells required such a house if it was to play its proper part in the artistic life of London.[80]

Once the Sadler's Wells was moved to the new complex on the South Bank, it was proposed that the existing theatre in Rosebery Avenue would be sold and the proceeds would be contributed to the National Theatre's general purpose fund. As might be expected, discontinuance of traditional work at the Sadler's Wells, as well as the Old Vic, brought a reaction from the public. Denis Richards of Morley College wrote:

> It may be necessary, Sir, that something of the present Vic and Wells organizations goes into the National Theatre. I only assert that if price of this is the closure of the Vic and the Wells as public theatres there will be many who will regret the change. In sum, I plead that the Vic and the Wells shall merge into the National Theatre only if their trustees make adequate arrangements to see that the two theatres in Waterloo Road and Rosebery Avenue, with so much dramatic and social history behind them, should retain their own honoured names, and remain devoted, under whatever auspices to the public performance of drama and music high quality at popular prices.[81]

Mr. Denis Richards' protest was supported in general by George Strauss, M.P. who wrote that:

> . . . London, instead of having two excellent repertoire companies, one at the Aldwych Theatre and one in the Waterloo Road, attracting capacity audiences, will have only one. . . . Moreover, one of the

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[80] Ibid., July 20, 1961, p. 8.

[81] Ibid., August 5, 1961, p. 7.

> major benefits of a National Theatre, which advocates have always envisaged--the greater opportunities it will provide for producers, designers and young actors--will be confounded. Indeed the existing opportunities will be curtailed.
>
> There is surely, too, a danger in the proposed compulsory amalgmation. Might it not result in the replacement of two of the most vital elements in the British Theatre with an unwieldly organism which would find it difficult to achieve the loyalties, built up over many decades, that inspire the two existing companies.[82]

In place of this unwieldly organism, Mr. Strauss suggested that the two companies retain their respective identies and traditions, as well as their seperate houses. He went on to say that ". . . unless the change is made, the National Theatre scheme, while benefiting opera, may do more harm than good to British drama."[83]

The British Actors' Equity Association also attacked the Chancellor's multi-theatre scheme. Equity sent a memorandum to the Chancellor in which it declared that

> . . . the aims of the National Theatre as originally stated, cannot be achieved on this basis, and any hope of its giving autonomous artistic direction to the four institutions would be in vain, as each has rival claims.
>
> This scheme would sacrifice existing companies with individual aims to create an unwieldly organization with every, hence no, aim. . . there can be no case whatever for artistic monopoly. . . for these reasons our opposition must be unequivocal.[84]

One intimately concerned with the "total theatre" scheme was Mr. Peter Hall, director of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (called the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre until 1961 when the Queen commanded that

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[82] Ibid., August 17, 1961, p. 9.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., August 23, 1961, p. 11.

its name be changed).[85]

At the annual meeting of the governors of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Mr. Hall, responding to a question about being united in the National Theatre plan said:

> This is a very tricky and dangerous time for us because, to put it bluntly, if a national theatre is founded and heavily subsidized, it will automatically cut at the very roots of our work. It is useless to pretend it will not, because if such a theatre with the aid of a large amount of money could do our kind of work we might find ourselves very much the poor relation.[86]

Mr. Hall's statement was the reverse of that by a spokesman for the Old Vic who said: "The Governors and Directors of the Old Vic welcome the Government's decision to reopen the question of the National Theatre, and will be eager to reach a formula which will satisfactorily embody the Old Vic and the Royal Stratford Theatre jointly in the project."[87]

The London County Council, still hoping to complete plans for the 1964 celebration of Shakespeare's death, had taken the initiative to revitalize interest in the National Theatre project with this, its most recent scheme to amalgamate the Old Vic, the Royal Shakespeare Company and Sadler's Wells into a new National Theatre under one roof. The National Theatre project, throughout its long history, had received the support of nearly every movement interested in the arts: the Arts Council, the Old Vic, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre Company, the Council of Repertory Theatres, the commercial theatre and the British Actors' Equity Association.

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[85]John Goodwin, editor, Royal Shakespeare Theatre Company 1960-1963, (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1964), 7.

[86]The Times (London), November 23, 1961, p. 15.

[87]Ibid., July 13, 1961, p. 8.

The latest scheme, however, was not so popular and sceptics doubted its success.

During the early part of 1962 discussions, negotions and plans took place between the London County Council, the Joint Council of the National Theatre and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In January, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury was asked for a progress report to which he replied that he had ". . . received from the chairman of the Joint Council a report on the present stage reached in the council's discussion on the scheme for a national theatre. A full scheme has not yet been submitted."[88] More than this, the Secretary was not at liberty to reveal. The Chancellor was again pressed for a reaction to the proposal for a National Theatre on the South Bank on April 3, 1962 and to encourage all concerned with the project to proceed as rapidly as possible.[89] There was growing concern over the proposal to abandon the Sadler's Wells theatre in Rosebery Avenue and at the same meeting in April, the Secretary to the Treasury was urged ". . . to endeavour also to secure the preservation of the Sadler's Wells Theatre. . ."[90]

While the planning of the National Theatre was in progress in the spring of 1962, rumors abounded. One such rumor was that the Royal Shakespeare planned to withdraw from the South Bank scheme. The Times wrote:

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[88]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 652, (1961-1962), 398-399.

[89]Ibid., 657, 193.

[90]Ibid.

> Why, in any case, were the Royal Shakespeare and the Old Vic brought in on this scheme at all? The Royal Shakespeare enjoys an unassailable position in relation to the Bard's work put on at his birthplace in a holidy atmosphere: the Old Vic was intended from the first to be a popular urban resort. Neither of these functions need compete with the idea of a National Theatre as conceived by Shaw, Granville Barker and several of our greatest living actors.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And, if, as a horde of ill-wishers expect, the National Theatre turns out to be more of a museum than a power house, two tested alternatives will still be there to maintain prestige. Perhaps the claim to be a National Theatre de facto needs competition from a National Theatre de jure before it can be substantiated.[91]

In the early 1960's the Royal Shakespeare Company had won the acclaim of the nation. Under the abledirection of Peter Hall the theatre took on new directions and many people considered this to be Great Britain's national theatre.

> The changes brought by Mr. Hall were immediate and far-reaching. A number of actors and actresses were engaged under long-term contract to ensure a strong permanent core of the company; a London theatre, the Aldwych, was found so that the company could introduce modern plays and non-Shakespeare classics into their repertoire; Peter Brook and Michael Saint-Denis joined Mr. Hall in the direction of the theatre.
>
> Between January, 1960, and December, 1963, the company grew as a flexible ensemble and appeared in no less than 43 new productions. Many of these were received from time to time, and many toured Great Britain and abroad.[92]

Mr. Hall's objection to becoming part of a new National Theatre is understandable. The Royal Shakespeare had only recently been granted its charter (1961) and had expanded its repertoire as well as its physical facilities.

In May of 1961 the Royal Shakespeare converted rumors to fact and

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[91] The Times (London), March 26, 1962, p. 14.

[92] John Goodwin, p. 6.

withdrew from the National Theatre scheme, leaving the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells on their own in the new venture. Mr. Peter Hall explained the reasons to The Times (London):

> We withdrew from the National Theatre. . . because we considered that an amalgamation of the Old Vic, the Royal Shakespeare, and Sadler's Wells would destroy the three companies' very different traditions and might produce an organization too large to have any artistic personality. Yet my governors and I believe strongly in the idea of a National Theatre.
>
> We wish to preserve our own identity, though we would welcome being part of a National Theatre federation. We wish to develop the policy of the past two years, producing a repertory of Shakespeare in Stratford-on-Avon and of new plays and classics in London.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> If we are to have a National Theatre, as we all hope and believe, then surely it is better that it should not have a complete monopoly. Another subsidized company (perhaps even two) should be doing the same work with equal opportunities but in its own way. This would develop more actors and build up larger audiences. Any activity needs competition to prevent complacency. The French, after 300 years' experience of a National Theatre, have now proved this point with their three companies. Couldn't we learn the lesson at the beginning.[93]

On April 17, 1962, the Joint Council of the National Theatre announced plans for the new National Theatre to be built on the South Bank. The proposal was submitted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer who, in turn, referred it to the Arts Council. Mr. Henry Brooke, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, told the House of Commons that the government would make a decision after receiving the advice of the Arts Council.[94]

The proposal, as recommended by the Joint Council of the National Theatre, called for space on the South Bank between County Hall and the

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[93]The Times (London), April 5, 1962, p. 7.

[94]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 658, (1961-1962), 52.

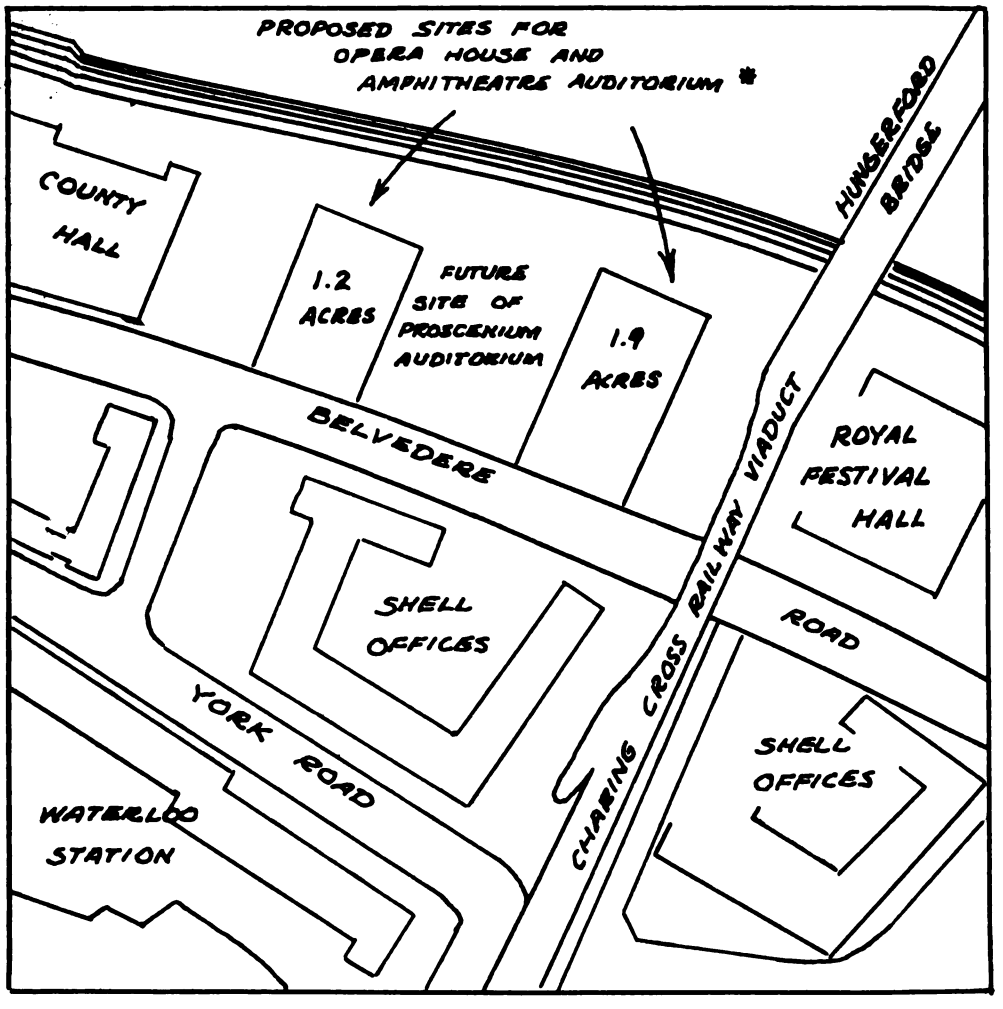

Fig. 2.--Proposed Sites for Opera House and Amphitheatre Auditorium[95]

[95] The Times (London), April 18, 1962, p. 12.

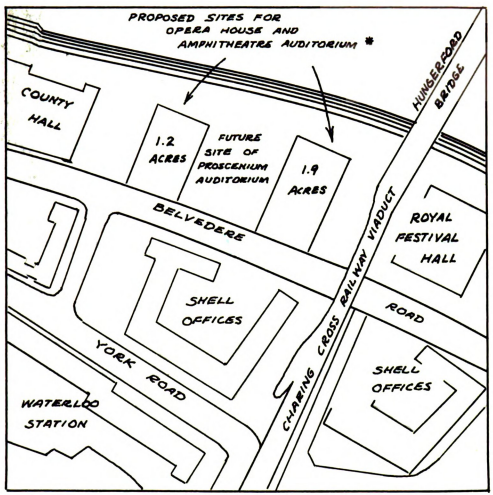

Fig. 2.--Proposed Sites for Opera House and Amphitheatre Auditorium[95]

[95] The Times (London), April 18, 1962, p. 12.

Royal Festival Hall large enough to accomodate an amphitheatre auditorium for drama and an opera house to replace Sadler's Wells with space between for a proscenium auditorium to be built at a later date.[96] (see figure 2)

> Allocation of two theatre sites on the South Bank, instead of one as originally proposed, was approved in principle yesterday by the London County Council. One site of about 1.2 acres is adjacent to County Hall and one of 1.9 acres adjacent to Hungerford railway bridge.[97]

The Joint Council of the National Theatre also proposed that the existing Old Vic in Waterloo Road provide the proscenium theatre until the new one could be constructed. The proposal made provisions for administration of the National Theatre, suggesting that a National Theatre Board be appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to run the National Theatre Company. This board would have the responsibility of appointing an artistic director and a general administrator of the National Theatre Company.[98]

With the withdrawal of the Royal Shakespeare Company ". . . the ceiling figure for annual Government subvention for headquarters expenditure for the National Theatre and the new Sadler's Wells under the scheme, if approved, would be 300,000 pounds."[99] The scheme was more elaborate than ever before and would, therefore, be more expensive than anticipated. The London County Council sought to protect itself from further financial commitment at a meeting held on April 17, 1962.

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[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

> The Committee consider that the council should not be committed to any expenditure beyond allocation of the sites, the capital contribution of about 1,300,000 pounds already approved, and a yearly subvention of 100,000 pounds, which would include the council's contribution to Sadler's Wells opera. For 1961-63 this amounts to 45,000 pounds a year and also for each of the two succeeding years.[100]

It really looked as though, at last, Great Britain would have her National Theatre. All that was now required was the recommendation of the Arts Council and most speculators seemed to think that this was an assured guarantee. The government would release the 1,000,000 pounds and the London County Council would contribute a further 1,300,000 pounds. The Council, in effect, had forced the government's hand by increasing its own offer. Now came the problem of selecting an administrative board and an artistic director. As one critic wrote: "The real danger is that the National Theatre Board (itself appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in consultation with the LCC) will not be able to get a good--and brave--enough man for the job of artistic director."[101]

On July 3, 1962, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Brooke, announced in the House of Commons that the Arts Council had reported favorably on the proposal published by the Joint Council of the National Theatre and had urged its implementation.[102] Mr. Brooke continued:

> The first step must be the appointment of a National Theatre Board which will be responsible for creating and running the National Theatre Company. With the agreement of the London County Council, I have invited Lord Chandos to be the first Chairman of this Board,

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[100] Ibid.

[101] "National Stage," The Economist, 203, (April 28, 1962), 228.

[102] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 662, (1961-1962), 33.

> and I am happy to inform the House that he has accepted the invitation. I also propose to appoint in consultation with the London County Council a South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board, to be responsible--under the Government and the London County Council--for building the National Theatre and also the new Opera House on the South Bank. . . I am glad to say that Lord Cottesloe, as Chairman of the Arts Council, has accepted an invitation to preside over this body, which will include representatives of both the National Theatre Board and Sadler's Wells. I shall announce the full composition of the National Theatre Board and of the South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board as soon as possible.[103]

The following month, on August 2, the membership of the two boards was announced in a Parliamentary written reply. The membership included the following:

> National Theatre Board.--Lord Chandos (chairman), Mr. Hugh Beaumont, Sir Kenneth Clark, Sir Ashley Clarke, Mr. W. J. Keswich, Sir Douglas Logan, Mr. Henry Moore, Mr. Derek Salberg, and Lord Wilmot. The L.C.C. has nominated Mrs. Freda Corbet, M.P., chairman of the General Purposes Committee.
>
> The South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board.--Lord Cottesloe (chairman), Sir Leslie Rowan, Mr. Prince Littler, Mr. Norman Marshall, Sir Isaac Hayward, Sir Percy Rugg, and Sir William Hart. Sadler's Wells have nominated Mr. David McKenna and Mr. Norman Tucker as their representatives and the National Theatre Board will also nominate two representatives.[104]

Both the National Theatre Board and the South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board were appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer after conferring with the London County Council.

The National Theatre Board wasted no time in appointing an artistic director of the new National Theatre. At its meeting in London on August 9, the Board offered the position to Sir Laurence Olivier and he accepted.[105]

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[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid., 114-115.

[105] The Times (London), August 10, 1962, p. 8.

In 1961 Olivier was appointed director of the Chichester Festival Theatre to which he was committed for at least two years. However, it was determined that the two positions would not interfere with each other and his appointment as director of the National Theatre was agreeable to both organizations. In accepting the directorship of the National Theatre, Olivier stated: "I shall strive my utmost to lay the foundation of a National Theatre that will finally justify its long wait for existence and be a source of pride to my profession and to the country as a whole."[106]

The selection of Sir Laurence Olivier as director of the National Theatre won popular and professional acceptance. He was regarded by many as England's greatest actor/director since Irving, having played most of the classical roles such as Hamlet, Othello, Richard II, Oedipus and Henry V, to mention only a few. Sir Laurence had had a distinguished career with the Birmingham Repertory Company in the 1920's and with the Old Vic during and following World War II. His talents, however, were not limited to playing classical roles and, more recently, he has proved himself a good exponent of modern drama in such plays as Osborne's The Entertainer in 1957 and again as Ionesco's hero in Rhinoceros in 1960.

In the Fall of 1962 the British Drama League announced, in its publication Drama, its support of the newly appointed artistic director

> It is very good news that Sir Laurence Olivier, who this summer has been steering the Festival Theatre at Chichester through its first season, has been appointed to direct the National Theatre. His wide experience as a leading actor and also as a director make him the obvious, and indeed perfect, choice.[107]

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[106] Ibid.

[107] "At Last," Drama, 66 (Autumn, 1962), 17.

Progress continued throughout the remainder of 1962 and in September, Lord Chandos and Sir Laurence Olivier were appointed as the National Theatre Board's representatives to the South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board. The latter Board appointed Mr. R. A. Lynex as the secretary and chief executive officer.[108]

The years 1961 and 1962 had witnessed remarkable progress in the establishment of the National Theatre. The necessary administrative boards, artistic director, site, and, perhaps most important, financial support had all been agreed upon by all concerned. However, the National Theatre had neither a physical plant nor architect to design one. During the first few weeks of 1963, the South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board, charged with the responsibility of building the theatre and the opera house on the South Bank, began fulfilling its duties. In January, the Board announced in The Times that it had decided that:

> . . . after consulting the President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, to invite a small number of selected architects to submit schemes for the National Theatre and the Opera House. . . and to appoint a panel of assessors to discuss with the board in the first instances the names of the architects to be so invited, and subsequently to advise in light of the schemes submitted, on the choice of an architect or architects to be appointed by the board for the theatre and the opera house.[109]

In addition, the Board appointed a building committee with Sir Laurence Olivier and Mr. Norman Marshall as joint chairmen. Other members on the building committee included: Mr. Michael Benthall, Mr. Peter Brook, Mr.

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[108]The Times (London), September 27, 1962, p. 16.

[109]Ibid., January 23, 1963, p. 14.

George Devine, Mr. Michael Elliott, Mr. Roger Furse, Mr. Peter Hall, Mr. Sean Kenny, Miss Tanya Moiseiwitsch, and Mr. Michael Saint-Denis.[110] The building committee decided not to offer an architectural competition, as was usually done when selecting a designer of public buildings.[111] Architects who wished to participate were given until June 19, 1963, to submit ". . . evidence of the approach he would make to the problem, of his abilities to design such buildings and of his experience or specialized knowledge."[112]

Everything was progressing well; the theatre had its administrative boards and its artistic director. Mr. Stephen Arlen, administrative director of Sadler's Wells, had been released from his daily duties at Sadler's Wells and appointed administrative director of the National Theatre during its period of planning.[113]

After the production of The Broken Heart at the Chichester Theatre, Kenneth Tynan, dramatic critic for the Observer, wrote a review in which he openly attacked Olivier as artistic director of that theatre. Tynan attacked the production style, Olivier's acting and even the "peninsular Chichester stage." At the end of the review he reminded Olivier of the triumvirate make up of John Burrel, Ralph Richardson, and himself who

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[110] Ibid., February 14, 1963, p. 8.

[111] Ibid., May 15, 1963, p. 14.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid., December 7, 1962, p. 8.

successfully managed the Old Vic during the 1944-1946 seasons and further suggested that such a joint dictatorship, comprising Olivier, Peter Brook and Anthony Quale, be formed to operate the new National Theatre.[114] Miss Virginia Fairweather, press representative at the Chichester Festival Theatre and later at the National Theatre, reported that Sir Laurence reacted to Tynan's review by saying ". . . I would suggest that I employ Mr. Tynan at the National. In the time-honoured phrase 'If you can't beat 'em, join 'em' and at least he would not be able to write notices about the theatre again."[115]

On March 18, 1963, The Times (London) reported the appointment of Mr. Kenneth Tynan as literary manager of the National Theatre. His responsibilities at the National Theatre were defined as follows:

> His duties will include assisting the director in planning the company's repertoire, reading plays, looking for new and unfamiliar plays, advising on the commissioning of new works, and generally supervising the literary side of the theatre's activities.
>
> He will also be responsible for the theatre's publications, printed records, programmes, books and articles on the company's work, and will act as the National Theatre's spokesman where matters of policy are concerned.[116]

In following Tynan's advice, Olivier selected John Dexter and William Gaskill, both of whom had done admirable work with Olivier at the Royal Court, to form the triumvirate of directors at the National Theatre.[117] While still working at Chichester, Olivier and his directors

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[114]Kenneth Tynan, "Open Letter to an Open Stager," Observer, cited by Virginia Fairweather, Cry God For Larry, (London: Calder and Boyors, 1969), p. 67-69.

[115]Fairweather, pp. 69-70.

[116]The Times (London), March 18, 1963, p. 7.

[117]Fairweather, p. 83.

were planning the repertoire for the National Theatre. On August 7, 1963, with a little over two months before the opening production on October 22, a press conference was held and Lord Chandos announced that "until the new building is completed, in an estimated four years, productions will be housed in the Old Vic, where a revolving stage and new sound equipment are being installed at a cost of 40,000 pounds."[118] The repertoire was also announced at this press conference.

> The first season will begin with Sir Laurence's production of Hamlet, and the remaining plays will be Farquahar's The Recruiting Officer, The Master Builder, Othello (which will open on tour), Hobson's Choice, Max Frisch's Andorra (the British stage premiere), and a double-bill of Sophocle's Philoctetes and Beckett's most recent work, Play.[119]

Olivier was to be responsible for the production of Hamlet for which Sean Kenny was to design the scenery and Peter O'Toole to play the name role.[120] Sir Laurence was also scheduled to play the title role in Othello which would be directed by John Dexter while Mr. Gaskill would direct The Recruiting Officer.[121] The National Theatre's first season's repertoire would also include two plays from Chichester: Saint Joan and Uncle Vanya.[122]

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[118]The Times (London), August 7, 1963, p. 4.

[119]Ibid.

[120]Ibid., April 11, 1963, p. 17.

[121]Ibid.

[122]Fairweather, p. 91.

In these early planning stages during the spring and summer of 1963, it was decided that there would be no second company as such. The basic company included about sixty actors. This company would become divisible when tours were undertaken (a five-week provincial tour was scheduled for April, 1964).[123]

> Details of casting offer the intriguing prospect of seeing Sir Michael Redgrave as Hobson and Ibsen's Solness; Maggie Smith as Desdemona; Frank Finlay as Iago; Joan Plowright as Emilia; and the young Northers actor Tom Courtenay as the martyred hero of Andorra. In advance, of course, the major casting events are Peter O'Toole's Hamlet and Sir Laurence's first encounter with the role of Othello.[124]

It was made perfectly clear that the National Theatre would be a new organization and not a revamping of the Old Vic. The Old Vic Trust confirmed that its concluding season would end on June 1, 1963 under the direction of Michael Elliott and that the National Theatre would move into the theatre on August 3.[125]

After nearly one-hundred years of frustrations, hopes and disappointments, the National Theatre became a reality. "September 15, 1963, was a historic day in London. It was then that rehearsals began for the first production of the British National Theatre."[126] Although the actual building was not built, nor even designed, the organization

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[123] The Times (London), August 7, 1963, p. 4.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., March 5, 1963, p. 15.

[126] Alan Pryce-Jones, "The British National Theatre: A Fact After A Century of Frustration, Theatre Arts, 47 (November, 1963), 20.

was formed and had taken up residence at the Old Vic with plans to open with its first production in October. Many problems still faced the advocates of the National Theatre: the architect for the theatre still had to be selected and the question of financing the building had not been completely solved since building costs continued to rise. However, the men in administrative positions promised exceptional leadership and organizational abilities. Their respective attributes were best summed up, perhaps, by Alan Pryce-Jones who wrote:

> Chandos is very much the public man of affairs who also has strong views about the arts and how to run them. He has been a secretary of state, he is a key man in industry, and he belongs to the Lyttelton family which, for generations, has had an exceptional intellectual record. Tynan is the kind of explosive force which used to be christened "young" and "angry". Olivier finds committee work tedious and likes to go on his own way. Yet the three have to work together, especially during the four or five years to come in which a plan for the building will be decided on and the first growing pains of the company soothed while the building itself rises.[127]

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[127] Ibid., p. 21.

CHAPTER IV

PLANS FOR A NATIONAL THEATRE BUILDING

Although the National Theatre Company was formed in 1963 and began productions in October of that year, (see Chapter VI) it was still without the long awaited new facilities planned for the South Bank and to date continues to perform at the refurbished Old Vic theatre in Waterloo Road. As previously mentioned, the National Theatre Board appointed a Building Committee in 1963, which in turn invited a selected group of architects to submit evidence as to ability, experience and an outline of the approach to be used in planning such a project. The South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board was charged with the responsibility of commissioning the architect[1] which by November, 1963 had narrowed the list of applicants to fifteen.[2] These fifteen architects were then interviewed by a committee of about twenty-five people, who on the basis of the interviews, further reduced the list to four people. The interviewing committee included architects, painters and leading figures in the theatrical world.

> The South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board, in consultation with the R.I.B.A., appointed an Advisory Panel composed of Sir Robert Matthews, Sir William Holford, Mr. John Piper, Mr. Norman Marshall, and Mr. Hubert Bennett, to assist in a final selection of the

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[1] The Times (London), November 12, 1963, p. 5.

[2] Ibid.

> Architect for the National Theatre. It is expected that the appointment of the architect will have been made by the end of this calendar year.[3]

On November 22, 1963, Lord Cottesloe, chairman of the South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board announced that Mr. Denys Lasdun had been selected to design the National Theatre and proposed opera house:[4]

> Mr. Lasdun, aged 49, has been responsible for some of the most distinguished English buildings of recent years, including the partially completed headquarters of the Royal College of Physicians in Regent's Part, Fitzwilliam House, Cambridge, and the flats overlooking the Green Park that were awarded the R.I.B.A. London architecture bronze medal last year.
>
> He is the architect of the new University of East Anglia at Norwich and was recently appointed to design the building of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors in Parliament Square.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Asked about his approach to his task, Mr. Lasdun replied succinctly that he began with 'a deep interest in the disciplines of drama, opera and architecture and in what they can mean to each other.[5]

Mr. Lasdun was given a free hand in designing the theatre and opera house on the rather limited space on the South Bank reserved for this project. (see figure 2, p. 77). There was growing concern over the wisdom of trying to build two such complex structures on this site. This, after all, was to be the National Theatre and like the company itself, was being built with public funds. Therefore, as an exemplary theatre for the nation, every precaution had to be taken that it would be built correctly, utilizing every pound of the taxpayers' money to the best advantage. A long-time

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[3]Arts Council of Great Britain, "Ends and Means," The Eighteenth Annual Report, 1962-1963, (London: The Baynard Press), p. 17.

[4]The Times (London), November 23, 1963, p. 6.

[5]Ibid.

advocate of the National Theatre, the British Drama League, expressed the importance of careful planning and preparation in theatre construction when using public tax money:

> In the present climate of public opinion it is unlikely that the stream of subvention will dry up unless it can be shown that the money is being rashly spent. It is, therefore, vitally important that in the present building or reconstruction of theatres with public aid and private donation the new playhouses should be expertly planned for the advantage of the actors as well as the audience. If a new theatre thus founded has at once to be rebuilt because of thoughtless preparation, the donors can reasonably say that the enthusiasts for drama deserve no further favours.[6]

As indicated on the map in figure 2, p. 77, the space allocated to the national theatre and opera house project was comprised of two specific areas--the smaller area (1.2 acres) was designated as the area for the opera house while the larger area near to Hungerford Bridge (1.9 acres) was earmarked for the National Theatre since it would contain two auditoria, and would, therefore, require more space.[7] However, in a statement to The Times, Lord Cottesloe made it clear that the utilization of the available space was very flexible:

> . . . He cautiously referred to the two sites earmarked at present as 'the sites known to be available' and the only limiting factors, apart from Hungerford railway bridge, which bounds the area on one side, and County Hall, which bounds it on the other, seems to be various undisclosed agreements between the L.C.C. and the Shell company and the need to use some of the area for car parking for the Festival Hall. This need could be met by combining it with the car-parking needs of the new building in one large underground park.[8]

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[6]"Patronage and Performance," Drama, No. 71 (Winter, 1963), 17.

[7]The Times (London), November 23, 1963, p. 6.

[8]Ibid.

It was planned to construct both buildings as one operation. Sir Laurence Olivier told The Times that it would be undesirable ". . . for the main auditorium to have more than 1,000 seats and that the smaller, which would be more of an experimental theatre, would probably have about 300."[9] Speaking for Sadler's Wells, Mr. Norman Tucker, a member of the South Bank National Theatre and Opera House Board, said: ". . . the opera house would probably seat 1,600."[10] At the time of Mr. Lasdun's appointment as architect, available funds for the project were made up from the 1,000,000 pounds granted by Parliament, 1,300,000 pounds promised by the London County Council, an unknown sum from the sale of the Sadler's Wells and an undisclosed amount from the trustees of the National Theatre Board. It was almost certain that the available funds would not be sufficient to meet construction costs.

When appointed as architect for the new National Theatre, Mr. Lasdun informed the members of the National Theatre Board that it would be well over a year before he would have any concrete plans on the project. In the spring of 1965, Lord Cottesloe, chairman of the National Theatre and Opera House Board, held a press conference at which he announced "a 9,500,000 pound project to build a National Theatre and a new Opera House on the South Bank of the Thames is to be put before the Government and the Greater London Council. . ."[11] The proposed design would occupy the entire

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., May 27, 1965, p. 6.

area on the South Bank between Hungerford Bridge and County Hall:

> The Opera House, sited downstream, would seat about 1,650 and would house the Sadler's Wells company. It would be divided from the theatre by a "valley", a natural setting for open-air pageantry and "happenings" in general. . .
>
> The main auditorium for the National Theatre has been designed to exploit the qualities that distinguished live theatre from television and cinema. It would be one room, shared equally with the audience, who would be seated on two steeply raised tiers almost enclosing the open stage. It would seat 1,100 and emphasis had been placed on achieving the most intense relationship between audience and actor, and exploiting the three-dimensional quality of the action itself.[12]

In addition to the main auditorium with an open stage, the plans called for a proscenium theatre which would seat 750 people and a small experimental theatre underneath the proscenium theatre with a seating capacity of two-hundred.[13]

In planning this project, Mr. Lasdun was confronted with the problem of the existing Shell Mex building which dominated the skyline along this area of the South Bank. In evaluating the Lasdun design, the architectural correspondent for The Times wrote:

> Two things emerge from Mr. Lasdun's preliminary proposals: what a disaster the Shell building was to the development of the South Bank, and how unexpectedly successful Mr. Lasdun has been in minimizing the disaster by giving the Shell tower a geometrical relationship to the buildings--new and old--along the river front. He was, of course, in no position to do anything about the barrier the rest of the Shell building creates between the South Bank site and what lies beyond.[14]

Although the National Theatre and Opera House Board approved these

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[12] Ibid.

[13] "The National Theatre," Theatre World Annual 1966 (London: Iliffe Books, Ltd., 1965), p. 33.

[14] The Times (London), May 27, 1965, p. 6.

preliminary plans, final acceptance rested with the Government and the Greater London Council. If approved, building operations could not begin until 1967 and it was estimated that at least six years would be required to complete construction.[15]

As might be expected, the cost of the new National Theatre and Opera House came as something of a shock to those agencies concerned, namely the government and the Greater London Council. The proposed figure of 9,500,000 pounds did not include the costs of sub-structure and surrounding area. In explaining the total cost of the project in the House of Commons, the Secretary of State for Education and Science stated:

> The estimated cost of building the proposed Opera House and National Theatre is 9½ million pounds. To this has to be added the cost of the proposed sub-structure and surrounds. This has been roughly estimated at 5 million pounds and would include provision for car parking facilities part of which would not be used exclusively for the Opera House and Theatre. These estimates, which are based on present costs, do not include professional fees.[16]

The architect felt that his inclusion of the surrounding terraces and car parks were essential to the overall development of the area:

> . . . not only was the site highly attractive but it was set like a spider in the web of the most effective public transport system in London. He expected that a river service from Westminister to a pier by the theatre might also operate. For theatre and opera goers arriving by car, under-ground parks, holding 500 vehicles

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[15] Theatre World Annual, p. 33.

[16] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 714, (1964-1965), 100.

> would be provided, and along the river-side there would be a 400 ft. long setting-down lane, the largest in the world.[17]

The proposals were turned over to the Greater London Council and the government for approval. Once again debates ensued between these two agencies as to the responsibility for financing the project. Early in 1966, Miss Jennie Lee, the Undersecretary for the Department of Education and Science stated that there had been no commitment by the Government to build a National Opera House: "When the Labour Government came to power they were firmly committed to meeting the cost of the National Theatre equally with the Greater London Council. . . But there had been no commitment on the building of a National Opera House."[18] However, the Greater London Council said that there had been confidential talks with the government on the possibility of building an opera house in addition to the National Theatre.[19] Before committing more money to the South Bank project, the Greater London Council expressed that it would be necessary to determine the needs of opera and ballet throughout the country and requested that the Arts Council form a committee for such a purpose.[20] Mr. Victor Mishcon, chairman of the general purposes committee of the Greater London Council, expressed doubt for hopes of building an opera house to rehouse Sadler's Wells but went on to say

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[17] The Times (London), May 27, 1965, p. 6.

[18] Ibid., January 18, 1966, p. 4.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., March 9, 1966, p. 9.

that "he hoped the original design for the national theatre would stand alone without an opera house, should this be the final conclusion."[21]

Prospects for building an opera house looked bleak. In March, 1966, it was announced that the cost of the theatre would be approximately 7,500,000 pounds. "The Government will find half, up to a maximum of 3,750,000 pounds, and the G.L.C. have agreed to find an equal amount. The opera house would cost an extra 5,500,000 pounds."[22] Lord Cottesloe, chairman of the South Bank Theatre and Opera House Board, estimated that it would be another year before a final decision would be reached but also stated that "the door is still open for an opera house."[23] Opera devotees took some solace in the fact that the existing Sadler's Wells facilities were inadequate and would eventually have to be replaced. There was, however, the ever present threat that the South Bank site might be lost and if the opera house were not build adjacent to the National Theatre what would this do to the design as proposed by Mr. Lasdun? The Times reported the architect's reaction as follows:

> Mr. Lasdun appears confident that his design will not be spoiled if the portion of it next to County Hall, containing the two theatres, has to stand on its own. He always had it in mind that the opera house might follow the theatre, and his treatment of the site as a piece of urban landscape will allow equilibrium to be maintained since the opera house site is not in any case to be left empty.[24]

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., March 10, 1966, p. 14.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

The British Arts Council, at the request of the Greater London Council, formed a committee to examine the needs for opera and ballet throughout the country. The committee was headed by Lord Goodman and in December, 1966, reported the results of its survey. Lord Goodman, who was also chairman of the Arts Council, sent a report to Miss Lee in which it was recommended that ". . . the first priority for an opera house should be Manchester, on the understanding that this does not prejudice the situation in Scotland where plans are less far advanced."[25] Although the committee's report was not complete at that date, Lord Goodman said that it ". . . would suggest the priority that should be given to the South Bank opera house project."[26] The findings of this committee meant that Sadler's Wells would have to look elsewhere for new facilities since "the acoustics in the present theatre were poor, and the building was far too small."[27]

In spite of Mr. Lasdun's assurance that excluding the opera house from the South Bank complex would not interfere with his design, the Greater London Council expressed "... . the danger that the design, however skillfully adapted to the new circumstances, would be seriously unbalanced by the loss of the opera house."[28] The Council, therefore, proposed that the National Theatre site between County Hall and Hunger-

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[25] Ibid., December 23, 1966, p. 8.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., March 21, 1967, p. 10.

ford Railway bridge be removed to a new site on the South Bank to the downstream side of Waterloo Bridge.[29] Mr. Lasdun expressed delight with the Council's decision since the new site was considerably larger.[30]

New problems arose in the plans to build a National Theatre with the newly elected Conservatives who controlled the Greater London Council in the summer and fall of 1967. Essentially, the Council now argued that half the proposed cost of the National Theatre was too much for the Council to finance.

> They argue that the new site to the east of Waterloo bridge now allotted to the theatre is worth 2,000,000 pounds, and that this sum should be included in their share of the total cost. This is a red herring, since a free site on the South Bank was always part of the bargain: the theatre has only been given this better, downstream site because the council could not get anyone to build the luxury hotel that was formerly planned for there.[31]

Alderman Leslie Freeman, chairman of the general purposes committee for the Greater London Council denied that the newly elected Conservatives were attempting to block the building of the National Theatre but he also felt it was "quite ridiculous" that a National Theatre should be financed by the London taxpayers.[32]

When the architect first submitted his designs for the National Theatre the cost was estimated at 7,500,000 pounds which was to be equally shared between the government and the Greater London Council.

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] "Theatre Subsidies, Acting Out," The Economist, 223, (June 3, 1967), 1024.

[32] The Times (London), May 4, 1967, p. 12.

This meant, in effect, that should the cost be increased the additional money would have to come from the Greater London Council. Although the critic for The Economist criticized the G.L.C. in general, he did concede this point:

> The GLC can argue that the Government's "half-share" is fixed at 3,750,000 pounds; and that if the actual cost goes much above that . . . the GLC will be left to carry its own half of the expected cost plus the unexpected extra cost. Some concession by the Government to insure the council against price escalation might well be justified.[33]

Throughout the summer of 1967 the whole issue of the National Theatre became political ammunition for the rival political parties comprising the Greater London Council. The Labour Party accused the controlling Conservatives of purposefully delaying the project and asserted that, if the Labour Party was still in power, Great Britain would have her National Theatre.[34] In a letter to The Times, Leslie Freeman of the Greater London Council, refuted these allegations, saying:

> The Labour Party had been in control of the L.C.C. and G.L.C. for over 30 years and must bear their share of the responsibility for the delays that have occurred. When the Conservatives took over in April this year 1967 they certainly reviewed this project but no action was taken which in any way delayed work on the National Theatre. On the contrary, the Greater London Council since it became Conservative controlled has expressed its strong determination that the National Theatre should become a reality after many years of vacillation and frustration.[35]

Lord Chandos, chairman of the National Theatre Board, felt confident that the new Conservative G.L.C. could be convinced of the justification

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[33] "Theatre Subsidies," p. 1024.

[34] The Times (London), August 11, 1967, p. 7.

[35] Ibid., August 15, 1967, p. 9.

of the cost of the National Theatre.[36] He did, however, warn that ". . . it could not go through if there were serious cuts and, in fact, if this happened, the whole scheme would fall to the ground."[37]

While the political arguments between Labour and Conservative raged, the Greater London Council and the government worked together in formulating plans for constructing the National Theatre. Miss Jennie Lee informed the House of Commons in July, 1967, that "I have had preliminary discussions with representatives of the Greater London Council. It is our joint wish that a National Theatre should be built as quickly as possible."[38] However, the government was firm in its decision to provide only half the proposed costs. In answering a question over what financial arrangements had been arrived at between the government and the Greater London Council, Miss Lee stated:

> The position of the Government remains unchanged. They are prepared to share the cost of the National Theatre equally with the Greater London Council, subject to a maximum contribution, related to costs at tender stage, of 3 3/4 million pounds. The South Bank Theatre Board received the detailed plans and estimates from the architects earlier this month and these are now being studiedby my Department and the Council.[39]

Although new negotations between the government and the Conservative controlled Greater London Council, which had come to power in April, 1966, further delayed plans for the construction of the new National Theatre,

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[36] Ibid., May 20, 1967, p. 10.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 751, (1966-1967), 187.

[39] Ibid., Vol. 754, 402.

the GLC assured all concerned that it was anxious to see the South Bank project become a reality as the previous GLC members had been. Most people did not doubt the intentions of the GLC but many did question the means of implementation as Irving Wardle pointed out in a statement to The Times.

> They are not merely debating the estimated cost, but seeking to shift the whole basis of the 1966 agreement. Instead of giving a site free, they now want its value to be taken into account in the assessment of their contribution towards the building. The site was bought for 200,000 pounds; now its value is estimated at 2,000,000 pounds. (a commercial valuation). And if one follows this reasoning to a logical conclusion it means that the council could now be demanding the sum of 5,750,000 pounds from the Treasury--or even more. . . If this is the case, then the National Theatre is as far off as ever.[40]

In its attempt to determine specific, detailed costs of the new National Theatre, the G.L.C. asked the architect to prepare a detailed report which was to be ready by November 8, 1967.[41] Mr. Lasdun approved of the G.L.C.'s financial curiosity and assured the council that there would be no escalation.[42] However, Mr. Lasdun refused to compromise on standards:

> It demands certain facilities, certain standards without which it ceases to be a national theatre.
> The architect, insists Lasdun, can only exercise all reasonable economy in working to his brief. That done, the decision to be taken is not "Can we prune the cost a little here or there"? but "Do we want a National Theatre or not"?[43]

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[40] The Times (London), November 11, 1967, p. 19.

[41] Ibid., October 23, 1967, p. 8.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

On November 8, 1967, the architect's report was submitted to the South Bank Theatre Board. The report, which was over one hundred pages long covered every aspect of the designs for the theatre and a detailed explanation of the costs.[44] One surprising aspect of the report was the reduction in the estimated cost from 7,500,000 pounds to 7,400,000 pounds. Miss Jennie Lee announced in the House of Commons that:

> The Architect's estimate is 7.4 million pounds based on prices ruling in November, 1967. Up to a limit of 7½ million pounds related to costs at tender stage, the Government and the Greater London Council have agreed to share the costs equally, the Council making the site available free.[45]

It was hoped by the National Theatre advocates that the government and the G.L.C. would consider favorably the reduction in estimated cost and

> . . . another factor that might weigh with the Council and the Treasury is that no money would be needed during the first eighteen months of the operation. As Sir Laurence Olivier said: "The Prime Minister has promised us a boom in about a year--just the right time to start building."[46]

Details of the proposed 7,400,000 pound National Theatre were made public on November 22, 1967, by Lord Cottesloe, chairman of the South Bank Theatre Board. The external architectural shape of the building was dictated by its internal structure, which called for two theatres.

> The incorporation in the building of two auditoria, one in amphitheatre form and the other with a proscenium stage, follows the earlier design and the early decision by the board that a single

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[44] Ibid., November 11, 1967, p. 19.

[45] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 757, (1967-1968), 345-346.

[46] The Times (London), November 25, 1967, p. 9.

> auditorium, however ingeniously made adaptable to various production techniques, would be an undesirable compromise, besides--since it would have to provide at least 2,000 seats--falling short of the ideal in audibility and visibility.[47]

The larger amphitheatre was designed with an open stage and a fan-shaped auditorium, seating 1,165 people in two stepped tiers.[48] This arrangement of audience and actors was quite similar to that of the Chichester Festival Theatre, which Olivier had helped to plan. This main stage and auditorium

> . . . is centered on the diagonal axis of a square. This concept, recommended by Normal Bel Geddes in 1914 as the most economic use of space for stage and spectators, is fully exploited by projecting on the same axis an exciting triangular terrace over the main entrance, and three scene docks wrapped around the back of the stage. These contain space for three rolling stages each 50 foot square. The acting area is 56 foot wide and 72 foot deep at the centre, with a revolve of 40 foot diameter.[49]

The larger auditorium was designed in such a way that audience members would not confront each other across the projected stage.

Designs for the smaller theatre called for a more conventional actor-audience arrangement:

> The smaller auditorium seats 895 in two tiers, facing a 54 foot wide proscenium (with presumably a mobile false pros within). The stage here is 48 foot deep and 72 foot wide from wall to wall beneath the fly floors. This house is set on a longitudinal axis with two scene docks at side and rear of the stage and an assembly area between them.[50]

This proscenium theatre, in the plans, is on a lower level with ". . . its

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[47] Ibid., November 23, 1967, p. 10.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Michael Warre, "A Note on the Plans for the National Theatre," Theatre Notebook, XXII, No. 3, (Spring, 1968), 117.

[50] Ibid.

own foyers and approaches, since the two theatres are to operate simultaneously."[51]

As previously discussed, the National Theatre's objectives had always been to present a broad spectrum of world drama ranging from serious to comic, from ancient to modern. In order to accomplish such an aim, it was felt that in addition to the conventional proscenium theatre and the larger thrust stage, a studio theatre was essential. As Michael Warre wrote: "It could do no less--as the aim is to keep a large National company fully employed in a world repertory of drama, playing to the largest possible audiences."[52] The major attribute of the experimental theatre was felt to be its adaptibility in terms of actor-audience relationship:

> The experimental studio has a basic stage area of 26 foot square, with seating adaptable for performances in the round, open stage, transverse or endstage. There are seven rehearsal rooms within the complex, two 50 foot square with access to scene and property shops, one larger, housed under the main auditorium and four, each about 24 foot square, on an upper story. Workshops on the east and south of the block include metal shop, armoury, paint shops and scene shops in close proximity to the stage docks of both main houses. The largest workshops--for painting and construction, are 50 foot by 125 foot each.
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> Dressing rooms for 135 actors are placed between the three houses, in four stories round an open court, connected by lifts with the wardrobe accommodation above. 38 administration offices are sited on the east and south at stalls foyer level, with a further 38 on the floor above for artistic direction and stage movement staff.

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[51] The Times (London), November 23, 1967, p. 10.

[52] "A Note on the Plans for the National Theatre," p. 117.

> At the north east is the stage door, with green rooms above on foyer level. In this corner of the building there is an area set aside for a library and collection of theatrical documents.[53]

Seemingly, the architect had overlooked nothing in planning the National Theatre complex. However, the plans made no provision for such activities as training actors, technicians, potential directors and designers. Mr. Warre asks: "Can these activities be contained within the present scheme? Possible--though no specific areas have been allotted for this purpose."[54]

In addition to meeting the functional demands of a National Theatre, Mr. Lasdun and Partners were careful to consider the convenience of the public who would be attending the theatre as well as the overall aesthetic appearance of the complex. The exterior of the complex is surrounded with terraces on two major levels.

> The lowest of these terraces is a continuation of the terraces outside the Festival Hall and the Queen Elizabeth Hall, and is connected to them beneath the land arch of Waterloo Bridge. This terrace will therefore be open to the public as a riverside promenade.
>
> The upper terraces can be opened in the same way, or restricted to the use of the theatre audiences as outdoor foyers, equipped with infrared heaters.
>
> The building will be centred from several levels--that of Waterloo Bridge, that of the concert-hall terrance and that of the riverside walk. By car, it will be approached via the east side from Upper Ground, where there is a ramp to the basement carpark.[55]

The design was approved by the South Bank Theatre Board and was ready to advance to the construction stage, subject to the approval of

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[53] Ibid., p. 118.

[54] Ibid.

[55] The Times (London), November 23, 1967, p. 9.

the Greater London Council and the Treasury. It was emphasized that no substantial sum of money would be required for eighteen months and "if all goes as it is hoped, the new national theatre could be ready for use by January, 1973."[56]

For months the Greater London Council had insisted that no action could be taken on the National Theatre until it received the revised plans from the architect. After the plans were made public on November 22, 1967, the G.L.C. no longer had any reasons for further delay:

> On their side the Council have denied charges of philistinism and used the absence of the revised designs to explain their delay. With the delivery of the designs the Council can no longer take shelter behind Mr. Lasdun's office; and one now expects them to justify their declared aim of building the theatre "without further delay."[57]

However, the new plans meant further delay for the Greater London Council since it would now have to reconsider every aspect of the project. Speaking for the Council, its leader, Desmond Plummer, said: ". . . fresh discussions must take place with the Department of Education and Science, the joint sponsors, before a final decision is made."[58]

On December 28, 1967, an exhibition of the model, photographs, and plans was held at the Royal Institute of British Architects. At the exhibition, Sir Laurence Olivier expressed hope that the project for the National Theatre would be approved.[59] However, by January of 1968,

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., November 25, 1967, p. 9.

[58] Ibid., November 30, 1967, p. 11.

[59] Ibid., December 29, 1967, p. 2.

approval of the plans by the Greater London Council was still in doubt. Although the majority of the G.L.C. approved the designs, they sought protection against any escalation in cost and felt that ". . . the Theatre Board's architects, Denys Lasdun and Partners, should be able to 'tighten up' without damaging the design."[60]

On February 1, 1968, it was announced that the National Theatre would be built and the costs would be shared by the Treasury and the Greater London Council. However, there were still conditions attached to this agreement. The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science, Miss Jennie Lee, announced in Parliament the terms of the agreement between the two governmental agencies involved:

> The position of the Government remains unchanged, we are prepared to share the cost of the National Theatre equally with the Greater London Council, subject to a maximum contribution, related to costs at tender stage, of 3 3/4 million pounds. The Government propose to introduce a Bill in due course to remove the limit of 1 million pounds placed on their contribution by the National Theatre Act, 1949.[61]

It appeared that the new Conservative Greater London Council had been convinced of the need for a National Theatre and there was occasion for celebration after nearly one hundred and twenty years of delay. The director of the National Theatre, Sir Laurence Olivier, expressed his pleasure at the decision while, at the same time, saying ". . . I shall not be cracking my personal bottle of champagne until the building starts to rise from the ground."[62] Shortly after the decision to build the

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[60] Ibid., January 27, 1968, p. 8.

[61] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 757, (1967-1968), 1543.

[62] The Times (London), February 2, 1968, p. 1.

National Theatre was announced, Richard Pilbrow was appointed consultant on the project with responsibilities for the stage area, including lights and sound.[63]

In her statement in Parliament, as reported above, Miss Lee made it clear that the government would pay half the cost of construction of the National Theatre at tender stage, which meant that the government would share with the Greater London Council any increase in cost. Two weeks following Miss Lee's statement, the G.L.C. stated to the National Theatre Board that ". . . they could not accept an open-ended arrangement. 3,750,000 pounds was their 'absolute maximum'."[64] The G.L.C. members feared that the estimated figure of 7,400,000 pounds would prove to be more than absolutely necessary at the time of construction and this would ". . . give more room for manoeuvre."[65] Speaking for the G.L.C., Mr. Leonard Freeman said: "We believe it is a practical proposition to complete the theatre within the quoted figure, perhaps with one or two adjustments."[66] A correspondent for The Times wrote:

> One possible solution has been put forward: that the theatre's architect, Dr. Denys Lasdun, should redraft the project on the basis that on current prices it would cost say 6,500,000 pounds, thereby allowing for a 1,000,000 pound increase during construction. But the Government is against this; apart from seriously delaying the project, it would also almost certainly result in a smaller building.[67]

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[63] Ibid., February 3, 1968, p. 8.

[64] Ibid., February 16, 1968, p. 10.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

On February 27, 1968, the Greater London Council approved the plans for the National Theatre submitted by the South Bank Theatre Board. The Council also agreed that its maximum contribution toward the project was fixed at 3,750,000 pounds, "irrespective of its final cost."[68]

The government, determined to see the establishment of the National Theatre on the South Bank, was not discouraged by the G.L.C. decision. Using its own funds of 100,000 pounds, the South Bank Board, at the advise of the government, instructed the architects to prepare working drawings within the total expenditure of 7,600,000 pounds.[69] When asked if these financial limitations would impose any alteration in the design, Miss Lee answered: ". . . certain changes are to be made by the architect to keep within the expenditure limit, but they do not involve a fundamental alteration in his scheme."[70]

The National Theatre project had finally become a reality. Advocates had finally won the total support of the government and together they were determined to overcome any opposition from any and all sources. The problem of rising costs had not been completely solved since the G.L.C. had fixed its contribution and the government had agreed to share any increase in cost. In speaking to this issue in the House of Commons, Miss Jennie Lee said:

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[68] Ibid., February 28, 1968, p. 4.

[69] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 761, (1967-1968), 565-566.

[70] Ibid., p. 566.

> . . . I think that, with 7½ million pounds and an additional 100,000 pounds, if we cannot build a splendid theatre, we all ought to jump in the Thames. I am quite satisfied that we can get ahead. . . we need not quibble about past arguments; the important thing now is that we have a splendid board which wants to go ahead with the building of the theatre. Most of us would like to see the beginning by next year.[71]

In July of 1968, it was announced that building of the National Theatre should begin in the summer of 1969.[72] Perhaps Michael Warre summed it up best when he wrote:

> Guided by the genius of Sir Laurence Olivier, the success of the manifold activities of the organization will depend on the enlightment of those who came to use this marvellous instrument. We hope with all our hearts that the scheme will go forward to its final realization in the very near future.[73]

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[71] Ibid.

[72] The Times (London), July 24, 1968, p. 1.

[73] Warre, p. 118.

CHAPTER V

THE NATIONAL THEATRE IN PRODUCTION: 1963 TO 1968

The administrators, artists and politicians concerned with the establishment of a National Theatre in Great Britain were determined to build an organization even without the promised new physical facilities. Undoubtly, it would have been most desirable to present the National Theatre's inaugural production on the stage of its own new theatre but after a one hundred year delay, the supporters were anxious to establish a National Theatre company and begin producing plays. Plans for building the physical plant, previously discussed, posed a set of problems completely seperate from the challenges presented in the establishment of a company and would, therefore, have to be dealt with independently. In any case, in the minds of the supporters the National Theatre was more than a building--it was a company of actors presenting a repertory in a specifically national style.

During its early years, the newly formed National Theatre faced a series of extremely difficult tasks. Although the organization had won the support of many, it was not without its critics--some who were waiting, perhaps hoping, for its failure. As one critic wrote: "Sir Laurence is well aware that Sneerwell and Backbite did not die with Sheridan and have a permanent lodging in Theatre Street."[1] One of the first tasks the

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[1]"Grand National," Drama, No. 70, (Autumn, 1963), 17.

National Theatre faced was that of building a reputation which would justify its existence as a subsidized theatre. In order to accomplish this aim, it would have to establish standards comparable to other national theatres in Europe; an objective not simply or easily achieved since Great Britain's National Theatre was not committed to any one period, genre, playwright, or even a particular style but ". . . has already committed itself to a far larger ambition: the representation of the best from whatever source, ranging from Ostrovsky to Pinter, Euripides to Pirandello."[2] In addition to creating standards which would measure up to other national theatres, Olivier and his company had to develop a style peculiar to the National Theatre. As Alan Pryce-Jones stated: "It must not be rigid, it must not approach all plays, of whatever kind, in the same spirit. But it has to engrave a particular stamp on its work. . ."[3] In other words, the National Theatre was expected to develop a distinction in production style much the same way that other theatres such as the Old Vic and Stratford had done in years past. Again, this distinction would be far more difficult to accomplish for the National Theatre since its aim was to present "a spectrum of world drama," a phrase coined by the theatre's literary manager, Kenneth Tynan.[4]

With rather squalid working quarters and the refurbished Old Vic, a company of about sixty actors, a managing director, a literary manager

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[2]Pryce-Jones, p. 21.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Fairweather, p. 89.

and a triumvirate of directors, the National Theatre was established. Its first production was presented on October 22, 1963.[5]

As previously mentioned, the National Theatre's first season was opened with a production of Hamlet. For the name role, Peter O'Toole was employed as a guest star. As might be expected, this inaugural production was directed by Sir Laurence Olivier and played nearly five hours. Clive Barnes wrote:

> As befits a national theatre, the piece is played virtually uncut from the First Quarto version, with a few readings taken from the Folio and some rearrangement of scenes adapted from the Second Quarto. It played for slightly less than five hours, and the audience, unused to such fidelity, started to shuffle in their seats like people at a religious ritual.[6]

Alan Brien accused O'Toole of falling in love with the role and censored Olivier for being over-ingenious as a director. He concluded his review, saying: "Altogether it is a production grandiose but oddly muffled, suggesting that the tension in the company between experiment and tradition, between star turns and ensemble playing, has not yet been resolved."[7] In general, the critics were harsh in their evaluation of the Hamlet production. Many expressed the attitude that they had expected more from a National Theatre. The critic for The Times titled his review "Routine Performance of Hamlet" and went on to say:

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[5]For a list of productions, directors, designers and opening dates, see Appendix V.

[6]Clive Barnes, "England's National Theatre," Nation, 197, (December 7, 1963), 399.

[7]Alan Brien, "London Openings," Theatre Arts, XLVIII, No. 1, (January, 1964), 31.

> The irreverent reaction is unfair, but it would have been easier to resist if the opening production had been one of unusual quality. This production is not. It contains good things, but it bears the stamp of having been put on as a means of exhibiting a number of big names in the most famous and popular work in the classical repertory.[8]

Alan Seymour referred to Hamlet as disastrous and questioned bringing in O'Toole to play the name role: "Why didn't they get Rock Hudson?"[9]

With this rather inauspicious beginning, Olivier wisely drew from the Chichester repertory its most successful productions, Saint Joan and Uncle Vanya, to succeed Hamlet in the National Theatre's repertory. As Simon Trussler said: "the pedigree of these productions was unimpeachable, . . ."[10] Shaw's Saint Joan had opened the second season at the Chichester Festival Theatre in June, 1963 with Joan Plowright in the title role. The production had been most successful at Chichester[11] and enjoyed continued critical acclaim in London at the Old Vic.[12] Equally successful was Olivier's production of Uncle Vanya when it was presented at Chichester in 1962.[13] Although the cast was greatly altered in the National Theatre's London production the show was a favorite with the critics. The Times critic wrote: "At Chichester this was a great production. It has improved."[14]

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[8]The Times (London), October 23, 1963, p. 14.

[9]Alan Seymour, "The National Theatre," London Magazine, IV, No. 1, (April, 1964), 80.

[10]Simon Trussler, "England: The National Theatre," Tulane Drama Review, X, No. 1, (Fall, 1965), 149.

[11]The Times (London), June 25, 1963, p. 17.

[12]Ibid., October 31, 1963, p. 17.

[13]Ibid., July 17, 1962, p. 13.

[14]Ibid., November 20, 1963, p. 5.

The National Theatre's first season promised variety with its repertory of ten plays. Following the successful productions transferred from the Chichester Festival Theatre came two authentic National Theatre productions--The Recruiting Officer and Hobson's Choice. Both productions ". . . set an astonishingly high standard artistically and technically from the outset."[15] Although most critics favored William Gaskill's production of The Recruiting Officer, Alan Seymour condemned it. Essentially Seymour took issue with the Brechtian style which Gaskill imposed on the production: "It is neither an amiable production in the conservative style nor a convincing exercise in the Brechtian manner."[16] Conversely, it was this same aspect which other critics praised: ". . . William Gaskill's direction exemplifies the art of relating a classic to the modern world without distorting the original--the art which give the National Theatre its cause for existence."[17] Trussler rated the production as the most successful classical revival to date.[18]

Of John Dexter's production, Hobson's Choice, Trussler wrote:

> This is the kind of play the National Theatre should be staging. Its chances of a West End revival would be slim, and yet it represents a milestone in the development of a national drama--the shaping of regional attitudes into a dramatic form that is neither a caricature nor condescendingly folksy.[19]

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[15]R. B. Marriott, "History in the Making," The Stage Year Book 1964, Anthony Merryn, ed., (London: Carson and Comerford, Ltd., 1964), p. 17.

[16]Seymour, p. 79.

[17]The Times (London), December 11, 1963, p. 17.

[18]Trussler, p. 155.

[19]Ibid., p. 151.

Although the critic for The Times was greatly disappointed in Michael Redgrave's performance in the role of Henry, he shared with the majority of critics an enthusiasm for the entire production.[20]

After having presented five classics, the National Theatre turned to more modern, experimental kinds of plays. In January, 1964, Max Frisch's Andorra was produced, followed in April by Beckett's Play and Sophocles' Philoctetes on a double bill. None of these productions were critically successful and were soon dropped from the repertory.[21] Much of the fault with the production of Andorra was attributed to the script and ". . . Tom Courtenay's grating, small-scale performance (which relies too much on hunched shoulders, and a habit of spitting out detached words)."[22] The double bill with Play and Philoctetes suffered the same fate as Andorra and for many of the same reasons--the scripts, especially.[23]

To date, probably no other National Theatre production has been as popular as John Dexter's production of Othello with Sir Laurence Olivier in the title role. Although Olivier has repeatedly denied being the star in his own company, unquestionably the success of Othello can be attributed directly to the talents of this single actor. In spite of the general acclaim of the production, The Times accused Olivier of building up his part at the expense of Iago:

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[20]The Times (London), January 8, 1964, p. 13.

[21]Harold Clurman, "Great Britain's National," The Nation, 199, (July 13, 1964), 18.

[22]The Times (London), January 29, 1964, p. 13.

[23]Ibid., April 8, 1964, p. 10.

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> The lack of a fully realized Iago seriously impoverishes the production--even in the Othello scenes, where Mr. Finlay's reading makes most sense. Othello needs an adversary, not an accomplice. As it is, Olivier's Othello stands as a heroic solo performance which is more remarkable for its technical mastery than for its power to move.[24]

In his review of the Othello production, Clurman admitted that "the climax and sensation of the National Theatre's season is Othello."[25] This same writer, however, supported the critic from The Times saying:

> The production is not especially euphonious. The reasonable realism of the approach makes most of the lines clear but rarely gratifying the ear. This may also be due to Frank Finlay's utter unsuitability for the role of Iago. He was chosen on the ground that Othello would never be taken in by Iago if he were a "spectacular" character, one whose 'honesty" was not of a blunt unvarnished nature. This is mere rationalization, a trick to heighten the effect of an effulgent Othello by a dun Iago. It has little to do with Shakespeare, whose realism is never commonplace but always heroic.[26]

These adverse criticisms of the production, however, were few when compared with the abundance of favorable reviews.[27] Perhaps more representative of the general critical response to Othello was that written by Alan Seymour:

> The sheer emotional generosity of this performance should win the National Theatre company a thousand hurrahs. Our intelligence is fully brought into play by clear-cut exposition of the play's layout and detail; the director and star then unashamedly enlist our emotions by shedding, it seems, all the inhibition which has ever frozen our modern theatre into an aspic of chilly 'good tast'.[28]

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[24] Ibid., April 22, 1964, p. 10.

[25] Clurman, p. 24.

[26] Ibid.

[27] For a collection of critical reviews of the Othello production see Othello: The National Theatre Production, edited by Kenneth Tynan, (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1966), pp. 101-110.

[28] Alan Seymour, "Theatre: Othello," The London Magazine, IV, No. 5, (August, 1964), 81.

When the National Theatre made its first international tour to Moscow and West Berlin in September, 1965, Othello appeared in the repertoire. After the production in Moscow, "Sir Laurence Olivier and his National Troupe received a ten-minute standing ovation. . ."[29] which further exemplified the success of this production.

During its first season, the National Theatre experienced its share of production failures. But nearly always, the company seemed to manage a remarkable recovery. After the ill-fated Hamlet production, the company regained critical favor with Saint Joan and after the experimental double bill was only mildly received by the critics, the company earned critical acclaim with its production of Othello.

The National Theatre concluded its first season at the Old Vic with a production of Ibsen's The Master Builder. Directed by Peter Wood, the production opened on June 9, 1964 with Michael Redgrave playing the role of Halvard Solness and Maggie Smith as Hilde Wangel. Critics generally condemned the production in their reviews; however, The Times praised the sets by Rudolf Heinrich, the acting of Maggie Smith but criticized Redgrave's Solness.[30] Clurman also expressed displeasure with Redgrave saying that he ". . . may be a little soft for the ruthless, egocentric Solness. . ."[31] Clurman summed up his critical reaction saying:

> The result is a production--all of it well cast--very much to the point. What is missing is mood; the spiritual atmosphere which must

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[29]The New York Times, September 8, 1965, p. 4.

[30]The Times (London), June 10, 1964, p. 17.

[31]Clurman, p. 18.

> inform a play's structure. This fault, . . . is perhaps symptomatic of something in the artistic make-up of the National Theatre company.[32]

Alan Seymour praised the production of The Master Builder: the direction, the acting and the settings. He wrote: "I cannot for the life of me see why the performance has been critically so ill-treated."[33] The play continued in the repertory the following season but with some cast changes. Joan Plowright took over the role of Hilde Wangel while Olivier replaced Redgrave as Solness.[34]

The National Theatre company, then, critically survived the first season. As to be expected, mistakes were made in play selection as well as casting but these were problems the directors were unable to anticipate and could only hope would not reoccur in succeeding seasons.

The 1964-1965 season at the Old Vic was opened on October 13, 1964 with a production of Marston's The Dutch Courtesan. Again the National Theatre drew from the Chichester Festival Theatre[35] for the opening production of the second season. When this play opened at Chichester the previous July, the critics attirbuted its failure to the playwright[36] and

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[32] Ibid., p. 19.

[33] Seymour, "Theatre: Othello," p. 84.

[34] Frances Stephens, editor, "The National Theatre," Theatre World Annual 1966, (London, Iliffe Books, Ltd., 1965), p. 33.

[35] The Chichester Festival Theatre served as a kind of summer work to the National Theatre's regular season.

[36] The Times (London), July 15, 1964, p. 5.

[37] Ibid., October 28, 1964, p. 5.

when it was received at the Old Vic it was called "An Inhibited Booby."[37] In addition to the problems with the script, The Times critic felt that much of the faults with the production were the result of ineptitude on the part of the directors, William Gaskill and Piers Haggard who failed to make a definitive decision on interpretation of the script.[38]

Many people questioned the second show, Hay Fever, on the grounds that it was more suitable to the commercial theatre than a subsidized National Theatre. For this production, Dame Edith Evans was brought in to play Judith Bliss and Noel Coward was assigned the directorial tasks. After its premiere at the Opera House in Manchester, Hay Fever enjoyed continued success at the Old Vic where: ". . . this production succeeds Hobson's Choice as the second popular favourite to be produced to the status of a British classic."[39]

Following Hay Fever came Peter Shaffer's Royal Hunt of the Sun, which had had its world premiere at the Chichester Festival Theatre on July 7, 1964, under the skillful direction of John Dexter. The production was transferred to London on December 8, 1964, and although it continued to be a favorite with the critics, the production was more suited to the thrust stage at Chichester than the proscenium arch at the Old Vic.[40] In addition to the virtues of the script, most critics

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[37]Ibid., October 14, 1964, p. 8.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid., October 28, 1964, p. 5.

[40]Ibid., December 9, 1964, p. 9.

praised the talents of Colin Blakeley as Pizarro and Robert Stephens as Atahuallpa:

> A second visit to The Royal Hunt of the Sun, which I first noticed when it opened at Chichester in 1964, enabled me to realize once more what a remarkable actor Blakeley is.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Robert Stephens as the Inca Atahuallpa gives a performance as completely convincing as Blakeley's, but in a part far removed from the range of a western actor's experience. The arrogant, savage majesty of this creature is conveyed in a haunting, incantatory voice and the movements of a ceremonial dancer. The relationship between these two, each at last defeated in the attempt to find his essential personality, loving one another across the gulf which becomes Atahuallpa's death, is tremendously moving; and it is set against a spectacular production which, though it is less striking here than in the larger spaces of Chichester, remains one of the most sumptuous of our time.[41]

There was, however, at least one critic who was unimpressed with the production. Simon Trussler wrote: ". . . the strength of the play was not in its epic scale: and on this occasion John Dexter's facility for spectacle did the play a disservice in obscuring what was essentially a portrayal in depth of a relationship between two people: to this portrayal all the gloss was irrelevant."[42] In spite of this adverse criticism, this production proved to be a highlight for the National Theatre during its second season. The play remained in the repertory during succeeding seasons and continued to garner favorable reviews. In 1966, the critic for The Times wrote: "With its impressive movement and brilliant color, the production, by John Dexter and Desmond O'Donovan, fully measures up to this difficult demand."[43]

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[41] E. Martin Brown, "Theatre Abroad: London Theatre," Drama Survey, V, No. 1. (Spring, 1966), 88.

[42] Trussler, "England: The National Theatre," p. 152.

[43] The Times (London), December 14, 1966, p. 6.

Olivier directed the fourth production in the 1964-1965 season, which was Arthur Miller's The Crucible. The director was praised for his honesty in ". . . recognizing the play for what it is, a great melodrama, calling for massive emotional outbursts and--in all but the two central figures--black and white characterizations."[44] Critically, this production was only mildly successful and perhaps much of the success was due to a critical comparison between Miller's play and John Whitting's The Devils, which is concerned with a similar topic: ". . . the advantages are all on Mr. Miller's side."[45]

For the production of Much Ado About Nothing, Franco Zeffirelli was imported to direct and design the settings. Certainly this production was not the most successful in the repertory but it may have been the most controversial. Zeffirelli transposed the play into modern Sicily which prompted one critic to write: "Zeffirelli's Sicily has enormous charm."[46] Then after praising the settings and the spectacle of the production, the same writer asked: "But where, meanwhile, is the play?"[47] Trussler referred to the production as: ". . . a misconceived Much Ado, directed by Franco Zeffirelli and with, of all things, textual emendations by Robert Graves; . . ."[48]

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[44] Ibid., January 20, 1965, p. 13.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., February 17, 1965, p. 16.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Trussler, "England: The National Theatre," p. 154.

Mr. Graves, a poet, had been invited to revise the text, not to ". . . modernize the text but . . . confine himself to words in use during or shortly after Shakespeare's lifetime."[49]

Mother Courage and Her Children, directed by William Gaskill and designed by Jocelyn Herbert, concluded the new productions for the National Theatre's second season. This was the first Brecht play the company had produced. For the role of the mother, Miss Madge Ryann, an Australian actress, was hired; she became a permanent member of the National Theatre company.[50]

Gaskill, in staging the play, attempted, for the most part, to provide his audiences with an authentic Brechtian production.

> The London notices were predictable; English middle-class middlebrow critics reaching for the inevitable terms: 'heavy, Teutonic, humourless, naive. . .' This is what infuriates; it is a great opportunity missed; with a few grains of imagination and some truly Brechtian cunning Mr. Gaskill could have hammered out for us a production fit for the sceptical, inquiring Sixties, a new, vigorous look at the old master which would have forced these critics into a fresher response. Gaskill's published utterances are modest and his sincerity unquestionable and unquestioned. His intention to reproduce for his own audience what he believed to be a great production suggests unusual humility and dedication to the author. It is a pity he was not less reverent.[51]

In his critique of the production, Martin Esslin wrote:

> . . . William Gaskill's production of Mother Courage . . . achieved an effect tantamount to miniaturization of the play and its characters. These wild and rumbustious figures, who should exude vitality,

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[49]The Times (London), November 29, 1964, p. 15.

[50]Ibid., January 14, 1965, p. 5.

[51]Alan Seymour, "Theatre: Down with Dogma," The London Magazine, V, No. 4, (July, 1965), 66.

> Rabelaisian appetite, lechery, and meanness, appeared cooled down into whispering dwarfs and bloodless spectres--an effect which became all the more eerie as the outward aspects of the production (design and lighting) were meticulously and almost photographically copied from the Berlin production, so that one seemed to be watching a play performed by zombies, re-enacting scenes from their lives after having been turned into lifeless puppets.[52]

The critics generally felt that Gaskill had been more successful at imposing a Brechtian style on his earlier production of Farquhar's The Recruiting Officer than his staging of Brecht's play, using the Brechtian techniques.

In spite of much adverse criticism of the productions staged by the National Theatre during its second season, it was considered a successful year for the company. In addition to the new plays presented in 1964-1965, "several successes from the previous season continued in the repertory, among them Othello, The Recruiting Officer and Hobson's Choice, . . ."[53]

The National Theatre company had an extremely busy schedule during the summer of 1965 as it prepared for its first international tour to Moscow and West Berlin scheduled for September. The repertory included Othello, Hobson's Choice and a new play in the repertoire, Congreve's Love for Love, which had its National Theatre premiere in Moscow.[54]

In London, the National Theatre opened its 1965-1966 season with a production of John Arden's Armstrong's Last Goodnight. First presented

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[52]Martin Esslin, "Brecht and the English Theatre," Tulane Drama Review, II, No. 2, (Winter, 1966), 66.

[53]Theatre World Annual 1966, p. 33.

[54]The Times (London), June 8, 1965, p. 13.

in Glasgow in 1964, this play was then produced at the Chichester Festival Theatre under the direction of John Dexter and William Gaskill with Albert Finney playing John Armstrong, and Robert Stephens as Sir David Lindsay.[55] Of the Chichester production, one critic wrote:

> The cast, admittedly, are faced with an exceptionally difficult text, and it is not surprising that they succeed less well than their Scottish predecessors, in distinguishing between the dialects of court and countryside. Where they do succeed is in conveying the richness of the writing itself.[56]

When the play was presented at the Old Vic on October 12, 1965, some extensive alterations were made. The proscenium production was staged by Albert Finney, who switched the order of the first two scenes for which he was criticized: ". . .it simply made the play less immediately comprehensible. Mr. Arden, it seems, knew better."[57] In her review of this production, Penelope Gilliat, critic for the Observer of London, awarded acting honors to Robert Stephens,". . .regarded in England as the acting successor to Olivier."[58]

As previously stated, Love for Love, directed by Peter Wood on loan from the Royal Shakespeare Company, had its National Theatre premiere in Moscow. On October 20, 1965, the Congreve classic joined the Old Vic repertory where it enjoyed continued success. Mr. Wood was praised for ". . . removing Restoration comedy from the hothouse and reconnecting it

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[55] Ibid., July 7, 1965, p. 14.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., October 13, 1965, p. 13.

[58] Gilliat, p. 96.

with the society of its time."[59] E. Martin Brown added his praises of the production, saying:

> The style of the play is seen by Peter Wood to derive not from an artificial code of mannerisms but from the life of its time, and the vitality of its characters to be expended as much upon making money as upon making love. So the 'Restoration' manners become the natural expression of this vitality, and the peerless lines are the witty commentary of real people on their own way of life. The cast once more play with zest, enjoying the creation of an ensemble into which Sir Laurence Olivier's charming Tattle fits naturally; his scenes with Lynn Redgrave's Prue are infectiously funny and a perfect contrast to those which she plays with Colin Blakeley's Ben.[60]

For the third production of the third season, the National Theatre again drew from the Chichester repertoire for a revival of Arthur Pinero's Trelawny of the "Wells". The open stage at Chichester has often times been the object of critical attack but the critic of The Times admitted that for Desmond O'Donovan's production of Trelawyn of the "Wells" the open stage was suitable: "It was a bold stroke to mount a play as firmly bounded by the proscenium as this on Chichester's open stage; and for once the experiment has succeeded."[61] The same critic titled his review "Pinero Revival A Brillian Stroke" and added:

> As befits a play about the theatre community this is an ensemble production with fine small performances by Wynne Clark as the manager's wife, Edward Petherbridge as the reluctant Demon of Discontent, and Graham Crowden as the low comedian. Louis Purnell is quietly ladylike as the New Woman of drama; and Robert Stephens, as Wrench, gives a characteristically expert study in mild schizophrenia as a naturalist trapped among the barnstormers.[62]

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[59] The Times (London), October 21, 1965, p. 16.

[60] Brown, "Theatre Abroad: London Theatre," p. 88.

[61] The Times (London), July 14, 1965, p. 15.

[62] Ibid.

The Pinero revival was equally as successful on the Old Vic stage when it first appeared on November 17, 1965. Most critics felt the changes in the production were all for the better. Brown wrote: "The company casts a roseate glow around the old theatre. Rythmically, musically and in its exact control of mood, the production has that high style which we are coming to expect from the National."[63] The play was kept in the repertory the following season with minor cast changes.[64]

Often considered a master director of farce, Jacques Charon from the Comedie-Francaise was brought to the National Theatre to direct Feydeau's A Flea in Her Ear, which was translated by John Mortimer. After five weeks of intensive rehearsals[65] the play opened in February to rave notices. As might be expected, the play's success depended upon the exact timing, which critics felt was expertly handled by Mr. Charon:

> . . . he has evoked a performance of inexhaustible vitality and impeccable style. Andre Levasseur's designs are wittily extravagant in the now fashionable vein of nouveau art, and he uses the trick of the revolving beds to great effect. The timing of business has to be seen to be believed. The play is extremely bold, totally free from innuendo.[66]

Although the above critic praised Albert Finney, doubling in the roles of the suspected husband and the hotel porter, not all critics shared his views: ". . . what the production most lacks is a comic star. . . . and

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[63]Brown, p. 88.

[64]The Times (London), June 14, 1966, p. 7.

[65]Wardle, "London's Subsidized Companies," p. 114.

[66]Brown, p. 89.

Although Albert Finney, . . . gets splendidly inside the style, he does not take command of the stage. His is one good comic performance among others."[67] In the summer of 1966, the National Theatre acquired the Queen's Theatre in the West End. (this acquisition is further discussed in Chapter VI) A Flea in Her Ear opened the summer season at the Queen's Theatre and Albert Finney was replaced in the lead role by Robert Lang. Critics generally agreed that Lang surpassed Finney: "If any single performance is responsible for keeping the production seething like a pressure cooker it is his."[68]

Next in the 1965-1966 season came a double bill comprising Strindberg's Miss Julie and a new play, Black Comedy, by Peter Shaffer. The latter had been written by Shaffer the previous summer for the Chichester season where it premiered with Miss Julie on July 27, 1965. Both plays were favorites at Chichester with Maggie Smith as Julie and Albert Finney as Jean.[69] The same two actors along with Derek Jacobi continued to delight audiences and critics when the plays were presented at the Old Vic in March, 1966:

> Both productions have been strengthened--and both in the direction of unremitting intensity. In Miss Julie the collision between the mistress and the valet is now swifter and more brutal; . . .
> . . . . . .
> In Black Comedy there remains rich entertainment in the spectacles of Derek Jacobi stumbling about in clandestine furniture removal, Graham Crowden exercising his powers of leadership in pitch darkness, and Louise Purnell as an idiot deb going up the stairs on all fours.[70]

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[67] The Times (London), February 9, 1966, p. 15.

[68] Ibid., August 5, 1966, p. 15.

[69] Ibid., July 28, 1965, p. 14.

[70] Ibid., March 9, 1966, p. 7.

The critical success of the first six shows of the third season was sharply contrasted with the critical failure of the last two: O'Casey's Juno and the Paycock and John Osborne's A Bond Honoured, freely adapted from La Fianza Satisfecha by Lope de Vega. Directed by Olivier, the former play seemed to indicate that the National Theatre Company could not project the O'Casey, Irish flavor. Although Colin Blakely was admired as the Captain, the rest of the cast's performances fell far short of Mr. Blakely: "The trouble is that he lacks opponents of equal strength, and is obliged to throw his weight about in a vacuum."[71]

Critically, Osborne's adaption of the Lope de Vega play faired little better. A Bond Honoured appeared on a double bill with the successful Black Comedy, opening on June 6, 1966. Basically, the critics attacked Osborne for failing to maintain any reverence to the original script:

> Perhaps the original is a masterpiece--what is certain is that it squared almost too neatly with modern ideas of revolt against an absurd universe, and gave Mr. Osborne an open invitation to let fly in his natural monodramatic vein.
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> There are two things to be said here. First, the spectacle of gratuitous insult, sexual humiliation and physical cruelities needs a good deal more wary handling and intellectual justification than it did a few years ago (one would guess that even the English appetite for sadism in on the wane). And secondly, Mr. Osborne seems to have gone to work more in a spirit of self-indulgence than of re-interpretation.[72]

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[71] Ibid., April 27, 1966, p. 7.

[72] Ibid., June 7, 1966, p. 15.

Immediately following the critical attacks on his adaption, John Osborne sent a telegram to The Times in which he admonished the critics for their accusations of him as a playwright.[73] Succeeding Mr. Osborne's statement came a whole series of public statements on the role of the critic. Some of the writers such as John Arden supported Osborne while others favored the decision of the critics.[74] In a leading article, the drama critic for The Times pointed out that many current playwrights were formerly drama critics (including John Osborne) and then asked: "Do they become dolts as soon as they exchange one activity for the other?"[75]

In his review of A Bond Honoured, John Elsom approached the play as an original and criticized Osborne, not for his irreverance to Lope de Vega, but on the matter of Osborne's own writing:

> . . . the play has been encrusted with a thick patina of rhetoric, verbal and visual, which heightens rather than conceals the inner weakness. John Osborne has been praised often enough for the 'robustness' of his language: the bold metaphors, the daring interestingly confused half-sentences. He is one of the few dramatists today who can write richly, but naturally: imaginatively, but without self-consciousness. But in A Bond Honoured, he writes like a man trapped by his public image. There are some good lines: but the language too often sounds pretentious and vaguely Shakespearian. . . . The overall effect is one of verbal strain, not because too many thoughts are crowded into too few words, but because the words are high-sounding when the thoughts and feelings behind them are thin.[76]

Thus, the National Theatre's third season ended on a rather sour note but, fortunately, it had received enough critical acclaim with

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid., June 11, 1966, p. 11.

[75] Ibid., July 4, 1966, p. 14.

[76] John Elsom, "A Bond with Nahum Tate," The London Magazine, VI, No. 8, (November, 1966), 75.

previous productions that it could afford at least one major failure.

The 1966-1967 season witnessed only four new openings at the National Theatre in Waterloo Road. John Dexter, who had had the unfortunate experience of directing the Osborne play, faired little better with Ostrovsky's The Storm, which was first presented by the National Theatre on October 18, 1966. George Bernard's warning to Granville-Barker that "the old drama may serve you, or the new; but the old-fashioned drama's the very devil."[77] must have haunted the production staff of The Storm. Although Josef Svaboda's sets were highly praised, the critics seemed to feel that the National Theatre, with this production, was living up to the Osborne prediction of being a "ghastly museum."

With the second production of the fourth season the National Theatre recovered from its series of critical failures by following a pattern that had become almost predictable: staging a play by a well known author in which Olivier was personally involved either as actor or director. The play was Strindberg's The Dance of Death and Sir Laurence played the Captain. It is difficult to determine how much credit should be attributed to the director, Glen Byam Shaw, but the success of the play has been attributed to the interpretation given by Olivier in the lead role. In an interview, Olivier stated:

> Oh, it's very funny. I think Strindberg meant it to be funny and I think perhaps the mistake has been made. . . People have been wishful

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[77]Granville-Barker, p. vii.

> to avoid laughs in what they thought were the wrong place, they considered it was a tragedy, therefore it should have no laughs, which, of course is, I think, a mistake.[78]

This approach was extremely rewarding, critically. As one critic put it: "The production is most likely to go an record for Laurence Olivier's performance as the Captain. This is a masterpiece."[79] Richard Gilman said simply that Laurence Olivier was ". . . magnificant in the central role."[80]

Originally the third show for the 1966-1967 season was to have been As You Like It, directed by John Dexter. It was, however, decided that the now renowned Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead would be presented in this slot instead. A debate ensued and John Dexter resigned as associate director of the National Theatre. (this administrative dispute is further discussed in Chapter VI). Tom Stoppard's play was first seen the previous year at the Edinburgh Festival: "There was little in that production to suggest the expressive resources which are now revealed by the National Theatre."[81] Under the direction of Derek Goldby, Stoppard's first stage play was a hugh success at the National Theatre:

> In its origin this is a highly literary play with frank debts to Pirandello and Beckett; but in Derek Goldby's production, these

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[78]"A Conversation with Sir Laurence Olivier," An Interview of Sir Laurence Olivier by Elliot Norton on National Educational Television, July 12, 1967.

[79]The Times (London), February 22, 1967, p. 8.

[80]Gilman, p. 85.

[81]The Times (London), April 12, 1967, p. 8.

> sources prove a route towards technical brilliance and powerful feeling.
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> . . . . . .
>
> Marc Wilkinson's defunctive music contributes superbly to the atmosphere; and Desmond Heeley's sets--a sepulchral palace and a ghost ship under a slack rotting said--exactly catch the specification for the action "within and around the action of Hamlet."[82]

For the final show of the 1966-1967 season, the National Theatre again turned to Chekhov. The successful production of Uncle Vanya from the opening season obviously invited critical comparisons between that production and the production of Three Sisters also directed by Olivier. Comparisons were favorable although Uncle Vanya had had a cast of stars and Three Sisters was cast from the resident company. Josef Svoboda again collaborated with the National Theatre for the design of sets and Beatrice Dawson provided costumes. In a program note Olivier stated: "In Chekhov we are all stars,"[83] and Olivier was not "overingenious" in this production:

> Olivier's approach to Chekhob is one of self-abnegation. There is no attempt to pull any surprises. . . only the conviction that no other dramatist had a better understanding of the human heart, and all a production can do is to follow his meaning with absolute fidelity and sympathy. It is an approach that denies a director any personal signature, reduces critics to writing advertising copy.[84]

As You Like It recaptured its place in the National Theatre repertoire in the 1967-1968 season. Clifford Williams directed, and judging from the critical response, the administrators at the National Theatre

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., July 5, 1967, p. 6.

[84] Ibid.

must have felt the departure of John Dexter more than ever. In his production, Williams cast all males; although not original, the casting produced comic results but all for the wrong reasons. The Times critic wrote of the production:

> It offers no grand design; and seems mainly concerned with discovering (no doubt to the wrath of the company's ladies) what happens when the women's parts are played by men.
> With the exception of Ronald Pickup's Rosalind the result is entirely comic: and the comic variety seems very much a temperamental reflex of the different actors.[85]

Writing in The London Magazine, Frank Marcus praised the Williams' production:

> This may have been the starting point for Clifford Williams, but he has gone on to create something far more exciting and revolutionary than Kott's Bitter Arcadia.
> . . . . . .
> . . . this production of As You Like It must be regarded as a landmark.[86]

Marcus was one of the few critics who expressed the idea that Williams' production was a great accomplishment. Most seemed to share Brown's feeling that:

> The National Theatre seems impelled to do things with Shakespeare, where the RSC just do him, trying to penetrate into the real meaning of the text. Zefferelli's jazzed-up Much Ado is still running, and now we have As You Like It with an all-male cast.[87]

For the next two productions at the National Theatre, Sir Tyrone Guthrie returned to the Old Vic to direct Tartuffe, which opened in

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[85] Ibid., October 4, 1967, p. 8.

[86] Frank Marcus, "Theatre: New Approaches," The London Magazine, VII, No. 9. (December, 1967), 78.

[87] Brown, "Theatre Abroad: English Theatre," p. 314.

November, 1967 and Volpone, which was presented in January, 1968. Guthrie employed his long-time colleague, Tanya Moiseiwitsch, to design the latter. Guthrie had often said that a National Theatre to be really "national" had to display the best talents the country had to offer so it was not surprising that he casted Sir John Gielgud as Orgon in Tartuffe. Both Guthrie productions were generally praised by the critics, although one questioned the director's motives in casting Gielgud in the role of Orgon instead of the title role:

> As a specialist in hypocritical roles (Angelo, Joseph Surface) it is rather a surprise to find John Gielgud playing not the name part in Tartuffe, but Orgon, the misguided family man who takes the pious cuckoo into his nest.[88]

The same critic questioned Gielgud's ". . . uncertainity with the lines, . . . and his habit of breaking vigorous gestures before completing them."[89] So it would seem, then, that employing England's top actors does not insure against the National Theatre receiving unfavorable reviews.

For his production of Volpone, Guthrie was praised for exploitation of the bird and animal images but Frank Marcus felt that the imagery was carried too far:

> Guthrie has attempted to relate these creatures to reality by using a highly vocal and cynical chorus of ordinary citizens as on-lookers and commentators in the mountebank's scene and at the trial. But this device doesn't really work. . . . the stress on dehumanization and bestial behaviour, so effective in the beginning, brings diminishing returns. The great trial scene becomes tiresome and irrelevant,

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[88] The Times (London), November 22, 1967, p. 7.

[89] Ibid.

> because nobody cares about the fate of the characters. They're not human beings; they might just as well have been put in the care of the RSPCA.[90]

In summing up Guthrie's contribution to the National Theatre with these two productions, Marcus wrote: "As expected, he brings two bold interpretative concepts to his productions of Volpone and Tartuffe."[91]

The trend in reviving classics was continued in the 1967-1968 season with a production of Seneca's Oedipus, directed by Peter Brook. And like the preceding classical revivals that season, Oedipus was far from being a favorite with the critics. Again, Sir John Gielgud's talents were employed and again, contrary to Guthrie's statement, actors of the National Theatre company were more highly praised than was the star talent:

> In terms of sheer rhetoric there are two thrilling performances by Colin Blakely (delivering Creon's speech on the raising of Laius's ghost), and Irene Worth, passing through horrors to speak Jocasta's last lines. . . Sir John Gielgud, dispensing honeyed cadences amid the carnage and registering Oedipus's blood--freezing discoveries, with a testy frown, seems only marginally in contrast with the show.[92]

The consensus of critics seemed, however, to indicate that the disappointment over the show was the result of the script more than the production.

A similar accusation was aimed at the following production, Brecht's Edward II. Directed by Frank Dunlop, this production opened at the Old Vic on April 30, 1968. The following day, Irving Wardle wrote:

> . . . preseumably it was in the interest of social realism that the adapters extended Marlowe's short time-span to the length of 19 years.

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[90]Frank Marcus, "Theatre: Villains as Heroes," The London Magazine, VIII, No. 1, (April, 1968), 59-60.

[91]Ibid., p. 59.

[92]The Times (London), March 20, 1968, p. 8.

> A picture of suffering England, however, is precisely what does not come over. . . .
> Invocations to Brecht's "dialectical" method are not enough to clarify the confusions of this piece. Its purpose is cloudy.[93]

After this attack on Brecht's script, Wardle praises individual performances, notably Geraldine McEwan's Queen Anne and Robert Lang's Mortimer.[94]

The 1967-1968 season at the Old Vic was concluded with a triple bill, comprising The Covent Garden Tragedy by Henry Fielding, A Most Unwarrantable Intrusion by John Morton and a new play In His Own Write by Adrienne Kennedy, John Lennon and Victor Spinetti. The three plays were directed by unknown directors, all members of the National Theatre's acting company. The experiment proved a valuable exercise for junior directors but did little to amuse the audiences. The Times critic summed up the evening's bill saying:

> Wisely, in my opinion, the National Theatre call this a "Triple Bill", not a "Triple Comedy Bill". Full length comedies are one thing; but to assemble a programme of brevities and invite the public into fun corner is to freeze laughter at the source.[95]

Essentially, the critical failure of this bill was the result of a combination of inferior scripts and inept directors. Robert Lang, director of the Fielding farce, was rated as "uninventive,"[96] while In His Own Way was rated as ". . . a soporific flow of mindless punning that is closer

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[93]Irving Wardle, "Brecht raid on British classic," The Times (London), May 1, 1968, p. 8.

[94]Ibid.

[95]The Times (London), June 19, 1968, p. 11.

[96]Ibid.

to Professor Stanley Unwin that to Joyce,"[97] and Tony Walton settings for Robert Stephen's production of A Most Unwarrantable Intrusion ". . . is not the least triumph of the production."[98]

Thus, the National Theatre ended its first five years of production. It is impossible to draw any definitive conclusion on the over-all success of these thirty-six productions but the critical reviews seemed to indicate that, in spite of notable failures, the National Theatre of Great Britain had earned its title. The repertoire covered the range of drama from Seneca to Beckett; there were new plays as well as classics and while some were highly praised and other duly criticized, few were rated as total failures. The National Theatre was considerably handicapped during its first five years through inadequate facilities--primarily, the lack of essential space in which to train actors, directors and technicians. It might well be expected that when the company begins work in the new facilities planned on the south bank of the Thames, greater opportunities for experimentation will lead to even better productions for public consumption.

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[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although many reasons can be attributed to the delay in establishing a national theatre in Great Britain, perhaps the most notable reason has been the lack of public support. The people of England have always taken great pride in their dramatic heritage and their self-sufficiency to produce this great drama. A predominate public attitude has been that the United Kingdom has always excelled in dramatic activities, working on the basis of private enterprise, without the intervention of the central government. An additional point of view has been that if such a central theatre were to be built in London, the nation's capital, the provincial centers would not realize any direct benefits and the National Theatre would become just another London theatre where today there already exist about forty-five theatres. Many also feared that such a grandiose scheme would result in some kind of dreary museum, benefitting only a select segment of the population.

A second major delay in establishing a National Theatre has been the lack of funds. The periodic attempts made to build a national theatre during the past century have almost always been beset with financial difficulties. Many noble attempts were made by various committees and devoted individuals to raise the necessary funds. The government was approached which finally resulted in the passage of the National Theatre Act in 1949, allotting 1,000,000 pounds for the project. However, this

figure proved insufficient and a compromise was worked out between the government and the Greater London Council to meet the financial demands for the national project.

When the National Theatre Bill was debated in Parliament in 1949, advocates convinced the opposition of the need for a National Theatre by arguing that a National Theatre would provide ". . . not only first-rate national theatre in London, but a centre, in every sense of the word, for the development of dramatic art."[1] A further objective was ". . . to set the highest standard of performance of the drama. . ."[2] Since the supporters felt that there was no theatre in London equipped to adequately stage plays representing all periods of drama, from the classical to the modern, a National Theatre should assume this responsibility and perhaps, more importantly, ". . . more theatrical workers--players, producers, authors and stage staff--will find lasting and remunerative employment."[3] In answer to the charges that the National Theatre would benefit London but not the provinces, the advocates answered: "It is also intended to stimulate the art of theatre through other possible and suitable means, to organize national theatre tours throughout the country and overseas."[4]

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[1]Whitworth, p. 246.

[2]Ibid., p. 251.

[3]Ibid., p. 261.

[4]Ibid., p. 246.

This was to be a theatre for the nation and should, therefore, be made available to people in Great Britain irrespective of their social, financial, religous, or political status. In debating the Bill in the House of Commons, the Financial Secretary stated:

> It is obviously desirable that the prices of the seats should be reasonable. I am sure all of us hope that everyone, regardless of the state of his pocket, will be able to enjoy the plays that will be put on in this theatre. I would like to see many seats sold at sixpence.[5]

It was, however, the desire of many M.P.s that the National Theatre would show a profit and be operated much in the same way as nationalized industries:

> I believe that in this National Theatre there could be a wide divergence of prices. . . On the other hand, I advocate high prices, where the best that English literature and English acting can give is expected, to our visitors from overseas, with great gain to us in every respect.[6]

These early objectives, as formulated by the members of Parliament, in debating the National Theatre Bill, were reiterated and, in some cases, enlarged by members of the administrative and artistic staff after the creation of the National Theatre company in 1963. As previously mentioned, Kenneth Tynan, the literary manager, coined the phrase "a spectrum of world drama," which he has used to define the dramatic repertory for the National Theatre. He further explained the phrase by saying: "We rejected any notion of making a showcase for British plays. What we want is the

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[5] Ibid., p. 247.

[6] Ibid., p. 266.

very best plays of the world, British or no."[7] Sir Laurence Olivier, supported the statement of Tynan's and added a further objective ". . . to develop in time a company which will be the finest in the world."[8]

These, then, were some of the major objectives to be accomplished by a National Theatre organization as seen by its advocates. One might well ask to what extent has the National Theatre, during its first five years of operation, implemented these stated objectives? Also, what major problems--artistic, administrative and financial--have been encountered during the National Theatre's period of production from 1963 through the 1967-1968 seasons?

Although the National Theatre received much of its early impetus from the Shakespeare Memorial Committee, only four of the thirty-six plays produced by the National Theatre during its first five seasons have been Shakespearean.[9] This seeming neglect of the national bard provoked many who would like to see more productions of Shakespeare on the National stage.[10] However, many critics, such as Simon Trussler, defended the decision to stage fewer Shakespearean plays than might be expected:

> If we apply too strictly the criterion that a National Theatre should not duplicate work being well done elsewhere, we deny

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[7]"The British National Theatre, a Fact after a Century of Frustration," p. 20.

[8]The Times (London), August 7, 1963, p. 4.

[9]See Apendix V.

[10]The Times (London), November 16, 1963, p. 9.

> Shakespeare the door of the Old Vic. The Royal Shakespeare Company for many years was our national theatre in all but name, and certainly its productions at Stratford-on-Avon will and should remain our foremost homage to the Bard. The National Theatre has been wise to limit itself thus far to three Shakespeare revivals. . .[11]

It is difficult, if indeed not impossible, to make a value judgement on the plays comprising the National Theatre's repertoire during its first seasons of production. Mr. Tynan made the statement that the company would produce the "best plays available irrespective of their orgins. However, the literary manager gave no criteria as a basis for selecting the best plays. As indicated in Appendix V, of the thirty-six plays produced, twenty-one were written by British playwrights. (this figure includes a play by G. B. Shaw and one by Sean O'Casey.) Although not necessarily a "showcase" for British drama, this distribution would seem to indicate a definite bias for English drama. These twenty-one plays represent nearly all dramatic periods from the works of Shakespeare in the Elizabethan period to a contemporary play by John Lennon. Playwrights between these two extreme periods are represented by such notables as: Jonson, Marston, Farquhar, Congreve, Pinero, Shaw, Fielding, Morton, Coward, Brighouse, O'Casey, Osborne, Shafer, Arden and Stoppard.

In addition to the twenty-one British plays, the National Theatre has produced fifteen plays by authors outside the British Isles. This non-British repertoire included plays by Sophocles, Seneca, Moliere, Ibsen, Chekhov, Strindberg, Ostrovksy, Feydeau, Brecht, Miller, Beckett,

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[11]Simon Trussler, "England: The National Theatre," Tulane Drama Review, X, No. 1, (Fall, 1965), 154.

and Frisch. One might reasonably ask: Where are the plays by Euripides, Aristophanes, Goldoni, Lope de Vega, Racine or the more contemporary plays by Pirandello, Durrenmatt, Ionesco, Albee and others? It would seem, then, that the National Theatre has not fulfilled its objective of offering a "repertory of world drama" but a repertory of British drama with some foreign plays thrown in. In his attempt to appraise the National Theatre's work during its early years of production, Irving Wardle wrote: "The theatre is there to reveal value as well as to endorse it: it would clearly not be a good idea to limit the programme to academically approved masterpieces."[12] After criticizing the selection of a "superfluous" Volpone, a pantomimic Tartuffe, the Brecht Edward II, the Brook Oedipus and the "feeble three-comedy bill," Mr. Wardle wrote: "No doubt there are solid managerial reasons for all these shows." He then added: "However, such reasons may not do much to satisfy the serious theatre going public."[13] Sir Laurence justified the repertoire saying:

> . . . as the spectrum of world drama is more concerned with the past than it is with the present, it does involve one with a great many classical revivals. It's expected, of course, as the National Theatre of Great Britain, to do a certain percentage of British works, and a slightly smaller percentage of foreign works, and I suppose twenty per cent at the most of modern works.[14]

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[12] Irving Wardle, "Is the National Theatre doing its Job?" The Times (London), September 28, 1968, p. 19.

[13] Ibid.

[14] "A Conversation with Sir Laurence Olivier," An Interview of Sir Laurence Olivier by Elliot Norton on National Educational Television, July 12, 1967.

At an interview conducted with Kenneth Tynan in 1965, the literary manager for the National Theatre acknowledged his company's failure at providing a broad repertoire, but expressed hope for the future:

> One thing we have to realize is that the European theatres seem so lively because they have such an incredibly rich and varied repertoire; they don't use only their own plays and a couple of general classics, they call upon the whole body of European theatrical literature. Do you realize the West End has NEVER seen a professional English production of a play by Goethe? That there are dozens of plays by great playwrights of the past--Lope de Vega, Calderone, who remain names in textbooks in this country but only in this country because our managements have been so timid and so parochial in the past?
>
> That as I see it is our function at the National Theatre for the next decade or so. Fill up the gaps in the repertoire. Gradually bring to our audiences all the plays which are part of the living theatre elsewhere.[15]

The National Theatre has been criticized for not doing more new plays or plays of an experimental nature. By the end of the 1968 season the company had produced four new plays--The Royal Hunt of the Sun and Black Comedy by Peter Shafer, Armstrong's Last Goodnight by John Arden and A Bond Honoured by John Osborne, based on La Fianza Satisfecha by Lope de Vega. About the only truly experimental work presented was Beckett's Play. Although about twenty new scripts were submitted weekly to the National Theatre, Tynan stated that ". . . so far we've found very little we'd go overboard about."[16] He continued the explanation, saying that new playwrights are more interested in being produced by commercial organizations

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[15]Alan Seymour, "The National Theatre, An Interview with Kenneth Tynan," London Magazine, V, No. 5, (August, 1965), 50.

[16]Ibid., p. 51.

since they might offer an extended run whereas at the National Theatre they would only get one performance each week.[17]

In 1964, the British Drama League, a long time supporter of the National Theatre, expressed its displeasure over the company's current repertoire, saying:

> The National Theatre Company has wasted time and effort on too many ventures. Was Philoctetes a cultural gain? Do we need a revival of The Crucible? The British Drama League has supported the claims of National and Municipal Theatres throughout its life. But it also speaks for the public, whose members are doing their duty as tax payers. Have they no rights as playgoers?[18]

A writer for The Times also questioned the repertoire at the end of the first five years:

> Looking back over the past five years, it is hard to see how the theatre can ever have been described as a library of the classics. The peaks of world drama are almost all missing; half a double-bill has been devoted to the Greeks; there has been no French tragedy and no classical German drama whatever; very little Elizabethan or Jacobean material, and nothing from the Spanish Golden Age. Instead of the basic work we get Marlowe adapted Brecht, Lope de Vega adapted by John Osborne, Seneca adapted by Peter Brook.[19]

A second major objective of the newly established National Theatre was to reach as many people as possible through provision of low-priced admissions and a touring program of the provinces as well as international tours. A fair assessment of this objective cannot be adequately made until the company begins operations in the new facilities on the South Bank.

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[17] Ibid., p. 52.

[18] "Asking for More," Drama, No. 75, (Winter, 1964), 17.

[19] "Is the National Theatre Doing Its Job?", p. 19.

There are constant complaints regarding the inadequate facilities at the Old Vic. The Theatre has a seating capacity of 879[20] and when seven different productions are staged in a booking period of eight weeks, people are often denied seeing a particular show. The productions at the National Theatre have been extremely popular with attendance averaging approximately ninety per cent.[21] The Old Vic, however, is an old theatre and the physical comforts afforded the audience leave much to be desired, as one critical audience member wrote: "Anyone wishing to spend twenty-seven shillings, six pence so as to wake up next morning with neuralgia and a sore throat should sit at the left hand end of the front row: ask for B 16 or 17."[22] However, the problem of adequate seating was partially solved early in 1966 when the National Theatre procured the Queen's Theatre in the West End, thereby enabling more people to see the productions.[23]

The British National Theatre has faced the ever present problem of getting the working classes to attend the theatre. At the production of Andorra in January, 1964, an audience questionnaire indicated that only 0.3 per cent of the audience could be described as manual workers; the same survey showed that eighty-nine per cent came from the London

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[20]The Times (London), January 28, 1965, p. 13.

[21]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 757, (1967-1968), 426.

[22]The Times, (London), December 9, 1964, p. 13.

[23]Ibid., February 16, 1966, p. 17.

Metropolitan area.[24] In explaining the results of the questionnaire to The Royal Society of Arts, Kenneth Tynan stated:

> The Andorra figures show that thirty-five per cent of the audience is either teaching or being taught. A further twenty-four per cent consists of clerical or other white-collar workers. Point three per cent (0.3%) are manual workers. The last figure is the most distressing, demonstrating as it does that live theatre is socially beyond the desires and financially beyond the means of working-class audiences. Something must be done to remedy this, the obvious course being to reduce the prices of admission, which would involve either an increase of subsidy or a lowering of artistic standards. The former would clearly be preferable. Encouragingly, fifty-five per cent of the audience is thirty-five years old or younger, which implies that we are not tailoring our program to meet the demands of gerontophile nostalgia. Many of our spectators are addicts, obsessed with theatre to the point (in some cases) of mania. Thirty-seven per cent of them go to the theatre more than thirty times a year; and fifteen per cent more than fifty times. One realizes that the theatre is kept alive by a hard core of absolute fanatics. Nine per cent of the audience, paying more than seventy-five visits a year, buy far more tickets than the thirty per cent who come fifteen times or less.[25]

Obviously, the problem is not unique with the National Theatre and about all that any organization can do is make the productions available--this the National Theatre had done within the limits of its subsidy and physical facilities.

When the National Theatre company was first formed it drew heavily from the company of the Chichester Festival Theatre for both actors and plays. Since its inception in 1963, the company has returned to the

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[24]The New York Times, March 30, 1964, p. 1.

[25]Kenneth Tynan, "A Symposium: The New Repertory--A Socioartistic Experience," cited in Barry Hyams, ed., Theatre, The Annual of the Repertory of Lincoln Center, Vol, II (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), 86.

Chichester theatre for its summer season. As previously mentioned, many of the shows were initially transferred from the Chichester repertoire and since the first season other shows have had their National Theatre premiere at the Chichester Festival Theatre. In addition to its summer program, the company regularly tours the provincial centers throughout the country. Again, some of the productions have had their National Theatre premiere at these theatres outside the London area. For example, Othello was first staged at the Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham as was Juno and the Paycock; Hay Fever was first presented by the National Theatre company at the Opera House in Manchester. Touring of the provincial theatres is made possible by dividing the company into two parts. For example, when the repertory is comprised of eight plays, six of these plays might be on the road with only two left for London productions.[26]

Probably the National Theatre has received more criticism for its touring program that any other aspect of its operations. The major criticism seems to be that not enough touring is done, denying large areas of the country the benefit of National Theatre productions.[27] However, steps have been taken to correct the situation:

> The crisis came in the autumn tour of 1965, which Mr. Tynan describes as "our Bay of Pigs; we relied on the spontaneous response of the local populace and it was a mistake". From Manchester to

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[26]"A Conversation with Sir Laurence Olivier."

[27]The Times (London), March 17, 1967, p. 15.

> Bournemouth the public was indifferent to everything except star shows; and when the National Theatre's posters went up in Cardiff someone was heard asking: "Ours or theirs?"[28]

Since the detection of a general apathy during the first years of production, the National Theatre has undertaken a vigorous promotion campaign and ". . . outside London there has been vigorous tours promotion involving demonstrations to schools and youth clubs, appearances on local television, and advance sorties by 'commmando groups' from the company."[29] It is still too soon to determine the full effect of the promotion scheme and its effect on the touring policies.

An area in which the National Theatre has excelled during the first five years has been its international touring. Its first tour to Moscow in 1965 was considered a huge success as was the Berlin visit. The National Theatre was the first foreign company to appear at the Kremljovsky theatre in the Kremlin.[30] The company presented three plays in Moscow--Othello, Hobson's Choice and a new play in the company's repertory, Love for Love. "More than 20,000 people saw the sixteen performances given by the British National Theatre company at the Kremlin Theatre."[31] The Moscow-Berlin tour came much earlier than expected. When the company was first formed, it had hoped to make its first foreign tour sometime in 1969.

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[28] Irving Wardle, "National Theatre avoids the pitfall of privilege," The Times (London), March 11, 1967, p. 11.

[29] Ibid.

[30] The Times (London), June 8, 1965, p. 13.

[31] Ibid., September 23, 1965, p. 8.

Following the Moscow engagement, the National Theatre enjoyed tremendous success at the Berlin Festival with its production of Love for Love and Othello. The latter was ". . . generally considered a high point of the Berlin Festival. . ."[32] The demand for tickets to the performances might be an indication of the Berliners' enthusiasm for the National Theatre from Great Britain, performing at the Freie Volksbuhne:

> Theatre fans had begun to queue up for tickets five days before tickets were sold. Some of them were cheated out of their chance of getting one by an apparently organized gang. Its members managed to get to the ticket office before those who had waited so long, not without the use of force which led to police intervention. Unconfirmed reports said that up to 1,000 marks (about 90 pounds) was paid for a ticket on the black market.[33]

In January, 1966, it was announced that the National Theatre would participate in the World Festival, a part of Expo 67, in Montreal, Canada to be held the following October.[34] As with its previous international tours, the company garnered great critical acclaim in Canada with its productions of Dance of Death, A Flea in Her Ear and Love for Love.[35] In addition to the international tours already conducted, the National Theatre directors have discussed the possibility of other tours. In 1966, the director of the Burgtheater of Vienna asked the National Theatre to stage Othello there[36] and as far back as 1963 there were discussions

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[32] Ibid., September 27, 1965, p. 14.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., January 31, 1966, p. 14.

[35] "Best of Breed," Time, Vol. 90, (November 3, 1967), 64.

[36] The Times (London), October 21, 1966, p. 18.

between the National Theatre and Lincoln Center regarding the possibility of the National Theatre performing in New York.[37]

In its efforts to reach as many people as possible, both at home and abroad, the National Theatre has turned to the mass media. It has, to date, produced Othello on film, which has benefitted world wide audiences. In June of 1968, Strindberg's Dance of Death was filmed by B.H.E. (British Home Entertainment) for Paramount, the same organization that filmed the National Theatre's production of Othello.[38] There have also been extensive talks on the possibility of television production of National Theatre shows:

> The B.B.C. and the National Broadcasting Company in the United States have been considering a joint approval to the new National Theatre company with a view to filming its productions on tape. The B.B.C. said negotiations were still in the early stages.
>
> It is understood that the proposed arrangements would give the N.B.C. television rights in the western hemisphere to any of the company's plays taped by the B.B.C.[39]

Kenneth Tynan, in an effort to retain actors without tremendous salary increases, has advocated some type of arrangement between ". . . the BBC and CBS which would give actors the chance of being seen throughout Britain and coast-to-coast in the United States for high salaries."[40] So far no such arrangements have materialized but some such means of extending National Theatre productions beyond the limits of the live

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[37] Ibid., November 15, 1963, p. 17.

[38] Ibid., February 14, 1968, p. 13.

[39] Ibid., May 23, 1964, p. 12.

[40] Irving Wardle, "London's Subsidized Companies," Tulane Drama Review, XI, No. 2, (Winter, 1966), 119.

stage appears inevitable.

Undoubtly, the successful management of the National Theatre's acting company can be attributed directly to the leadership provided by Sir Laurence Olivier. Olivier has repeatedly said that he deplored any kind of star system within the National Theatre organization and that the major objective was to build ". . . a company whose excellence would gradually increase and increase, until the company itself would be the star."[41] To date this aim has been fulfilled only in part. When the company was first formed, it numbered thirty-five actors.[42] At the end of the fourth season sixteen members of the original company were still working at the National Theatre.[43] When asked it he was looking for a special kind of actor, Olivier answered:

> Very good ones, very good ones. Versatile ones; people who had their heart in the right place; unlazy ones, deeply enthusiastic, courageous, gifted with all sort of attributes. I must say that the nature of the work. . . does demand physical--not perfection, but physical prowess. It does demand great strength, much more than people think. It demands much more physical tone. When you get an actor who is gifted with immense strength, his co-ordination is so much better than a weedy type of actor.[44]

As stated previously, Olivier had been only partially successful at building a company of star actors. Throughout its short history of production, there has been fairly extensive turnover in the acting

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[41]"A Conversation with Sir Laurence Olivier."

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Hal Burton, editor, Great Acting (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967) p. 31.

company. Some of the actors have left the National Theatre, usually to work in the commercial theatre where they could earn more money:

> The withdrawal. . . of big names from the Old Vic and the Aldwych has torpedoed the earlier confident announcements that here at last was what English actors had been waiting for: financial security, a non-competitive atmosphere, and the right conditions for work. The right conditions have not stopped a good many of them from preferring to go back into the commercial jungle.[45]

In addition to the lure provided by the commercial theatre, National Theatre actors have often turned to the films for additional income. Kenneth Tynan explained the problem as follows:

> Our good actors are constantly being tempted away not only to make British films but to Hollywood, or to co-productions in Italy or France or Spain. We can't offer them anything like the money they can earn from films. So we have to be able to offer them flexible contracts. But we also have to be able to offer them something else. It's more than a matter of prestige. It's loyalty and even duty. The British actor has not had to make such decisions before. It's always been a matter of opportunity rather than duty.[46]

Keeping the company together has been primarily the responsibility of the artistic director. The actors receive an annual salary. In addition, they are given a bonus for every production in which they appear. Under this salary scheme, there is inspired interest on the part of the actors even when appearing in small roles.[47] In other words, it has not been a fantastic salary offer that has held the company but more a sense of pride, loyalty and duty. To this end, Sir Laurence Olivier has been most effective:

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[45]"London's Subsidized Companies," p. 117.

[46]"The National Theatre, An Interview With Kenneth Tynan," p. 53.

[47]"A Conversation with Sir Laurence Olivier."

> . . . in this area Larry is superb. His own sense of vision and purpose fills the actors with admiration. He is wonderful to work with, and for. And when it comes to the point this dedication makes itself felt. He is extraordinarily persuasive.[48]

A particular case is that of Albert Finney, one of the National Theatre's leading actors. Finney, who had been away for a year, returned to the company and when asked what roles he would like, he answered: "I'll play as cast."[49]

One of the major accusations leveled at the National Theatre's casting policies is that nearly all its casting is done from members of the company and as a result the company is not using the best talents available. Tynan has expressed concern over this problem:

> Tyrone Guthrie was lecturing me the other week. He sais, "You've got a lovely company, dear, for a civic theatre in Germany somewhere; but if you call yourself a National Theatre you must engage, for no matter how short periods, the greatest national star actors. Where's your Wolfitt, and your Richardson, and your Gielgud?" He's got a case. If we are supposed to be the National Theatre, we ought to be showing not just the best company in England but the best actors in England.[50]

Irving Wardle added support to Guthrie's statement by suggesting that as an actor, Olivier dominates the stage and has often miscast actors so as to avoid any competition. Wardle further added:

> All this adds strength to Guthrie's argument. If the National is sometimes eclipsed by its own star and incapable of maintaining a truly permanent ensemble (with the expiry of the first set of three-year contracts, the theatre is now expecting the biggest annual

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[48]"The National Theatre," An Interview with Kenneth Tynan," p. 53.

[49]Ibid., p. 54.

[50]"London's Subsidized Companies," p. 117.

> turnover since its foundation), there is all the more reason to engage, if only for short periods, the country's leading actors.[51]

However unfortunate, actors in Great Britain, just as actors anywhere, will most often work where they can realize the greatest remuneration and until the National Theatre can afford to offer salaries competitive with the commercial theatre and the film industry, it will continue to face this problem. The situation might become even more acute should Olivier be replaced by someone with less persuasive abilities. Speaking to this issue, a journalist for The Times wrote:

> On the present showing it seems that the renunciation of star-casting is not reaping much of a reward in ensemble work. And when stars have joined as guest performers (Gielgud, Irene Worth) they have been under-employed. . . . More urgent than the employment of theatrical knights and dames is the need to find a place for younger stars--like Nicol Williamson and Ian McKellen--who for the time being are still committed to a theatre in which they rarely get the work they deserve.[52]

At the time when plans for the establishment of the National Theatre were getting underway in the early sixties, many critics of the project felt that the Royal Shakespeare Company, performing at Stratford-upon-Avon and at the Aldwych, should become the National Theatre. To date, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre receive the greatest portion of the Arts Council subsidy for drama. However, each refers to the other as a friendly competitor. The advocates of the National Theatre hoped that the work of the two companies would complement

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[51]"National Theatre Avoids the Pitfall of Privilege," p. 11.

[52]The Times (London), December 28, 1968, p. 16.

each other and so far this seems the case. With the repertoire of the National Theatre, no specific style has emerged and this, according to Kenneth Tynan, is as it should be. The Royal Shakespeare Company, however, has diligently worked at developing a style of production. The director of the latter company, Peter Hall, has said that the Royal Shakespeare Company is not

> . . . in competition with the National. On the contrary, we each help to define the other. Their intention is to deal with the world repertoire; ours is to do modern or classical plays that reflect on Shakespeare today. Their aim is to be comprehensive and catholic; and the fact that they are there removes as far as we're concerned any responsibility which we might feel that perhaps we ought to "do" an Ibsen or a Chekhov. So we can be much more specialized--because they're not being.[53]

Productions by both companies show, however, that neither of the two companies is quite as limited as Mr. Hall suggests. The Royal Shakespeare Company has performed such period plays as Marlowe's The Jew of Malta while the National Theatre has produced contemporary plays such as Becketts Play and Frisch's Andorra. Tynan has explained the National Theatre's lack of style saying:

> Good repertory theatres fall into two main categories. One is the kind that is founded by a great director or playwright with a novel and often revolutionary approach to dramatic art. He creates a style for his own special purpose. Examples of this process would include Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre, Bertolt Brecht's Berliner Ensemble, and Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop. The other category consists of theatres with a broader, less personal raison d'etre, whose function, more basic though not more valuable, is simply to present to the public the widest possible selection of good plays

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[53]"London's Subsidized Theatres," pp. 111-112.

> from all periods and places. In this group you can place the Schiller Theatre in West Berlin, the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, and the National Theatre in the Waterloo Road. Their aim is to present each play in the style appropriate to it--and that is an ambition by no means as modest as it sounds.[54]

In spite of the seeming compatibility of the two major British companies, they do have their differences, especially in the area of finance:

> Outside observers are prone to translate the "friendly rivalry" of the R.S.C. and the National into more cut-throad terms, especially since neither side dare criticize the other too openly for fear of calling the whole principle of subsidized theatre into question. Also, since last year the gap between the two theatres has been narrowing; and it is quite easy to interpret such things as their separate ventures into films and television, . . . and the much publicized leak of their financial divergences, as if these represented the confrontation of two super-powers eyeball to eyeball in the elephant grass.[55]

Since its foundation in 1963, the National Theatre's governmental subsidies have far exceeded those of the Royal Shakespeare Company's grants. In addition, the National Theatre has received supplemental grants from the Greater London Council. For example, in 1965 the R.S.C. received approximately 88,000 pounds from the government while the National Theatre was granted 142,000 pounds by the Treasury and an additional 68,000 pounds from the Greater London Council.[56] As a result of the lack of adequate subsidy, the R.S.C. has been forced to reduce its activities--the acting company has been reduced by fifty people, the training program and experimental productions have nearly stopped and most of the Shakespearean productions have been revivals.[57]

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[54]"A Symposium: The New Repertory--A Socioartistic Experience," pp. 84-85.

[55]"National Theatre Avoids the Pitfall of Priviledge," p. 11.

[56]"London's Subsidized Companies," p. 110.

[57]Ibid.

According to Peter Hall, future hopes for his company depend not on the government but the city of London, which has promised assistance in the next few years.[58]

Although the National Theatre has received more financial support than the R.S.C., it is not without its money problems. Fortunately, its survival has not been endangered, nor has its production program suffered.

The administrators of the National Theatre have felt that in order to do the kinds of things that a national theatre should be doing, increased annual subsidy is essential. The plea for more money began with the first season and has continued annually. For the 1963-1964 season the National Theatre received a grant from the government of 130,000 pounds--more than any other subsidized theatre in Great Britain.[59] This government subsidy has been supplemented each year by a grant from the Greater London Council. Every year the National Theatre Board has petitioned both sponsors for more money and each year the grants have been increased. In spite of subsidies, the National Theatre has failed to show a profit; on the contrary, it continues to lose money annually. In 1966 the National Theatre Board's annual report showed an excess of expenditure over income in the amount of 342,322 pounds.[60] "Grants of 51,431 pounds from the G.L.C. and 187,866 pounds from the Arts Council failed to offset this completely, leaving a deficit of 103,025 pounds."[61] The previous

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[58] Ibid.

[59] "Asking for More," p. 17.

[60] The Times (London), October 11, 1966, p. 14.

[61] Ibid.

year's deficit had been 138,969 pounds, which at the end of the 1965-1966 season left the National Theatre with a total deficit of 241,994 pounds.[62] Speaking for the National Theatre Board, Lord Chandos attributed the accumulated deficit to the fact that the National Theatre started with no initial capital funds.[63]

In 1967, Miss Jennie Lee announced in the House of Commons plans to liquidate the accumulated deficit:

> Grants made by the Arts Council to the National Theatre Company in the four years of its existence up to and including 1966-67 amounted to 766,000 pounds. The grant for the current financial years is 240,000 pounds, to which should be added 80,000 pounds towards the progressive liquidation of accumulated overdraft and a further provision of 20,000 pounds, which may not be called upon in full, in respect of guarantee of touring costs. The size of future grants is for the Council to determine.[64]

In a plea for more public funds, Kenneth Tynan explained the ever-present demands for the National Theatre's subsidy, as well as the need to adequately support the Royal Shakespeare Company:

> There are many other serious legitimate theatres in Britain which are supported to a certain extent by public funds. . . . The National Theatre gets more money than any of the others; but I should like to emphasize that none of them gets enough. . . .
>
> To keep our standards as high as our output, we shall need more money soon. The same applies to our friendly rivals, the Royal Shakespeare Company. I would like them to be able to compete with us on equal terms; because artistic competition usually makes for better art, whereas commercial competition seldom makes anything but money.[65]

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 756, (1967-1968), 211-212.

[65] The Times (London), March 19, 1964, p. 15.

One possible solution to the National Theatre's great financial need would be to follow the course of the Royal Shakespeare Company, reducing the size of the company and limiting the number of plays in repertory. This would, however, defeat the purpose of a National Theatre. By its very nature and purpose, the National Theatre must continue its touring program and maintain its ambitious repertory system. It would, therefore, seem that the National Theatre's persistent demand for more money is well founded.

Artistic administration at the National Theatre operated relatively smoothly during the first seasons. Olivier, as previously discussed, brought in John Dexter and William Gaskill, who had earned their reputations at the Royal Court. Dexter, Gaskill and Kenneth Tynan represent the present generation of theatrical artists. "Sir Laurence though clearly vigorous, is of another generation and possible of another school of thought."[66] Both associate directors, Dexter and Gaskill, had worked with Olivier at the Chichester Festival Theatre. The former press representative for the National Theatre has noted that Olivier, when first working with his associate directors, was easily influenced by their interpretations of scripts and administrative policies.[67]

Most of the inconsistencies of style in the National Theatre productions can be attributed to the numerous stage directors. Although Olivier, Dexter and Gaskill constituted the Company directors, additional

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[66]"The National Theatre: An Interview with Kenneth Tynan," p. 53.

[67]Fairweather, pp. 85-86.

directors were brought in from outside the Company. At the end of the 1967-1968 season Olivier had been directly responsible for five productions, Dexter had directed six shows and Gaskill was responsible for only three. The remainder of the productions were headed up by such people as George Devine, who had administered the Royal Court Theatre for many years, Noel Coward, directing his own play, Peter Wood from the Royal Shakespeare Company, Jacques Charon from the Comedie Francaise and Franco Zeffirelli to mention only a few. Tynan has admitted that the introduction of new directors has been a source of argument:

> One thing we have argued about is the introduction of new blood directorially. To me it is no reflection on our own very fine directors to want to bring in people from outside and in fact if the general 'enriching' process is to work fully we need new ideas, new approaches, from foreign visitors. Zeffirelli is a case. When we first thought of doing Much Ado our own directors assumed it would be one of them, they are British after all, and it's Shakespeare the national Bard and all that. But precisely because of all this it seemed to me important that we get someone else, a fresh approach from outside. . . . I knew not everyone would want him to do it, I knew the result would stir up controversy. Why not? If we were always predictable and safe they'd start calling us a museum. I believe we should have as a regular practice two foreign directors a year, to drop in, and shake us all up a bit with their fresh approach.[68]

After two seasons together, the triumvirate directors ". . . were getting restless and seeking either more authority or other outlets."[69] The growing animosity between the three finally became overt during the 1965 summer season at Chichester. At the end of the season William

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[68]"The National Theatre: An Interview with Kenneth Tynan," pp. 52-53.

[69]Fairweather, p. 112.

Gaskill resigned from the National Theatre to take over the direction of the Royal Court.[70] In the spring of 1967, John Dexter also resigned, leaving the administration of artistic policy in the hands of Olivier and Tynan. Dexter's resignation came about over a dispute regarding ". . . the casting and opening date of his production of As You Like It which was displaced from the repertory by Tom Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead."[71] According to Tynan, "if you have a Dexter he's wholly irreplaceable. There has been friction, but nobody had any idea it was going to end like this. He will be missed."[72] In August, 1967 it was announced that "Mr. Robert Stephens and Mr. Frank Dunlop have been appointed associate directors of the National Theatre. Mr. Stephens. . . joined the National Theatre five years ago as an actor. He has also taken over the productions of several National Theatre presentations."[73]

In addition to the turnover in the acting company and the resignation of the associate directors, there has been a change in general managers of the National Theatre. Although there is no evidence of disagreement, the general manager from the outset, George Rowbottom, withdrew from the National Theatre in the summer of 1967 and went to the Nottingham

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[70] Ibid.

[71] The Times (London), March 23, 1967, p. 10.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., August 23, 1967, p. 5.

Playhouse as administrator. Mr. Rowbottom was replaced by Anthony Easterbrook in March, 1968.[74]

Until April, 1967, relations between the National Theatre administrators and the National Theatre Board had been remarkedly congenial. During the winter and spring of 1967 Olivier and Tynan had been in consultation with Rolf Hochhuth over the possibility of producing Hochhuth's new play, The Soldiers. Briefly, the play deals with World War II and the tragedy of Poland and the bombing of cities such as Rotterdam, Coventry and Dresden. In his play, Hochhuth questions Churchill's decision to bomb. "Why did he hold back the second front for so long? Why the belief that the answer lay in bombing?"[75] On April 24, 1967, the National Theatre Board met and rejected the play on the grounds ". . . that some characters, especially Sir Winston Churchill and Lord Cherwell, were grossly maligned."[76] The playwright had agreed to alter the play but the Board still refused its production by the National Theatre. Olivier expressed great displeasure over the Board's verdict and Tynan said:

> . . . he thought the board had shown a tragic failure of vision and a remarkable lack of confidence in the judgment of an artistic director who had succeeded in establishing the National Theatre as one of the major companies of the world.
> The board's decision. . . brought into question the whole matter of separation of powers within a subsidized theatre. It was his

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[74] Ibid., March 21, 1968, p. 9.

[75] Ibid., July 15, 1967, p. 7.

[76] Ibid., April 25, 1967, p. 1.

> view that, although the board should lay down the broad lines of policy, the choice of actors and plays had to remain the prerogative of the artistic director.[77]

The National Theatre Board, however, felt differently. The chairman of the Board, Lord Chandos, said:

> A play which imputes the murder of General Sikorsky to Sir Winston Churchill at the instigation of Lord Cherwell is not suitable for National Theatre. General Sikorsky, Polish Prime Minister died in an air crash in 1943.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> All matters of artistic importance naturally are matters for the director. Wide national policy is a matter for the board.[78]

The vote of "no confidence" in the National Theatre's artistic director by the National Theatre Board precipitated a series of letters to the editors of the London newspapers. While some supported Oliver and Tynan, others questioned the extene of their authority. There was talk that Olivier might resign over this controversy, however, Tynan dispelled this rumor, saying "There is no possibility of this, he is far too deeply committed to the theatre. But if he did resign, I would resign too."[79]

In a letter to The Times Lord Chandos questioned ". . . why this absolute and complete power in a small but important part of national life should be vested in one man."[80] The chairman continued: "It is our duty to protect minorities even from themselves. It is not part of our

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[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., April 26, 1967, p. 1.

[80] Ibid., May 2, 1967, p. 11.

duty to give any one man power to impose his will, whatever the consequences."[81] Two days later, Tynan wrote a reply to the Chandos letter:

> What is needed, if any state-subsidized theatre is to operate without friction, is a clear separation of powers--between the public element in the enterprise, which should keep an eye on expenditure and the broad outlines of stated policy. . . and the artistic directorate, in whose realm all specific decisions on repertoire and casting should lie.[82]

It was announced on April 27, 1967, that Olivier and Tynan would produce The Soldiers independent of the National Theatre.[83] They even received the sanction of the Lord Chamberlain with the stipulation that they procure permission from surviving relatives of prominent British figures portrayed in Hochhuth's play.[84] This plan, however, never materialized and the whole issue was dropped but not forgotten. The controversy was continued in the House of Commons where the final decision was: "The way in which decisions are taken by artistic concerns receiving public subsidy is a matter for the organizations themselves, each working within its own constitution."[85]

This issue, then, was never completely solved and therefore remains a potential danger to future relationships between the National Theatre's artistic directors and members of the National Theatre Board, who are appointed by the Department of Education and Science. Although

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., May 4, 1967, p. 11.

[83] Ibid., April 27, 1967, p. 2.

[84] Ibid., September 11, 1967, p. 2.

[85] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 746, (1966-1967), 21.

Sir Laurence accepted the Board's decision, he advised that ". . . for the sake of future directors and even of future boards all parties concerned should be prepared not to let 'the problem that has not yet been solved' be the last recorded expression on the subject,"[86] and Tynan added ". . . that as a result of the dispute over the play his future relationship with the board would be uneasy."[87]

Since its inception in 1963, Great Britain's National Theatre has had its share of artistic, administrative and political problems. In spite of these problems, it has continued to flourish. Like most newly formed organizations, the National Theatre during its first five years of operation has experienced a period of adjustment. Undoubtly, many of the earlier objectives and policies of the theatre will change as it gains new and more experiences. Although there is nothing to indicate that drastic changes will be forthcoming, it is safe to assume that when the company moves to its new facilities on the South Bank, certain changes will occur. Much of the present policy can be attributed to the leadership provided by Sir Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Tynan. One can only speculate on what alterations would occur in the present policy of the National Theatre should either or both of these administrators be replaced, since much of theatre policy is directly related to the individual personalities who direct it. It does seem, however, that the National Theatre has survived

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[86] The Times (London), May 8, 1967, p. 9.

[87] Ibid., April 26, 1967, p. 1.

its most crucial period--the first five years. Joseph Papp, director of the New York Shakespeare Festival, gives a company five years to preserve its vitality and Peter Brook allows the same length of time for any single production. Perhaps, the same term applies to the National Theatre. If that is the case, the National Theatre has passed the test.

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APPENDIX

17

APPENDIX I

Mr. Effingham Wilson's

PROPOSITION FOR A NATIONAL THEATRE

Made in 1848[1]

1. That the Committee formed for the purpose of preserving to the nation the house in which our 'poet of all time' had birth, having satisfactorily effected that object, should now dissolve.

2. That, it being generally acknowledged that the human mind receives most quickly and retains most durably, impressions made by dramatic representations, the importance and expediency are suggested of purchasing by national subscription, on the part of and for the people, some theatre wherein the works of Shakespeare, the 'world's greatest mortal teacher', may be constantly performed.

3. That the said theatre should be opened at such reasonable charges as shall be within the reach of all.

4. That the most able manager and best working company should be engaged and constantly retained; and that only one five-act drama should be performed in the course of one evening.

5. That the Government for the time being, or any other body of men agreed upon, should hold the said theatre in trust for the nation, appointing a committee for the management of the same.

6. That the said National Theatre should be made to act as a great and true dramatic school, at which alike the poet and the performer, the creator and the embodier (in the highest walks of the dramatic and histrionic arts), should receive their diplomas, living genius and talent being so fostered and sustained.

My idea arose thus: The then 'Shakespeare Committee', having completed the good work of purchasing for the nation Shakespeare's House, my hopes was that they might be induced not to stop there, but to continue their endeavours to secure to us 'A house for Shakespeare' as the best and truest, as the only adequate and appropriate monument. As Byron has it--

A shrine for Shakespeare worthy him.

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[1]Whitworth, pp. 28-29.

The times were then, however, so thoroughly 'out of joint' that the plan was, necessarily, temporarily abandoned.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
Effingham William Wilson

II, Royal Exchange
19th January 1864.

APPENDIX II

Sir Henry Irving Speaks[2]

The question of the establishment of a National Theatre is surrounded by so many difficulties, and has so many side issues, that the time at present at my disposal does not allow me to go properly into it. The two questions which must from the beginning be held in view are: Is a National Theatre desirable? Is its establishment upon a permanent basis a possibility?

With regard to its desirability, I have little, if any, doubt. In this country, artistic perfection of a high ideal is not always the road to wordly prosperity; and so long as open competition exists there will always be found persons whose aim is monetary success rather than the achievement of good work. In order that the stage may be of educational value, it is necessary that those who follow its art should have an ideal standard somewhat above the average of contemporary taste. This standard should be ever in advance, so that as the taste and education of the public progress, the means for their further advancement should be ready. To effect this some security is necessary. If the purifying and ennobling influence of the art is to be exercised in such a manner as to have a lasting power, it is necessary that the individual be replaced by something in the shape of a corporation, or by the working of some scheme by its nature fixed and permanent.

It would, I think, be at present unadvisable to touch upon the subject of State subsidy with reference to the British stage. The institutions of this country are so absolutely free that it would be dangerous--if not destructive--to a certain form of liberty to meddle with them. Quid pro quo is a maxim which holds good of State aids, and a time might come when an unscrupulous use might be made of the power of subsidy. Besides, in this country, the State would never grant monetary aid to individual enterprise under any guarantees whatsoever. As the State could not possibly of itself undertake the establishment and management, the adoption of some corporate form would be necessary with reference to the stage before the subsidy could be raised with any possibility of success.

A 'National Theatre' implies an institution which, in its nature is not either limited or fleeting. Such a scheme must be thorough, must rest upon a very secure basis, and must conform to the requirements of art, policy, and commerce. It must be something which, in the ordinary course of things, will, without losing any of its purpose or any of its individuality, follow with equal footsteps the changes of the age. In order to

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[2]Whitworth, pp. 31-33.

do this, it must be large, elastic, and independent. Let us consider these conditions. Firstly, as to magnitude. As the National Theatre must compete with private enterprise, and be with regard to its means of achieving prosperity weighted with a scrupulosity which might not belong to its rival, it should be so strong as to be able to merge--in its steady average gain--temporary losses, and its body should be sufficiently large to attempt and achieve success in every worthy branch of histrionic art. Secondly, the corporate body should be to a certain extent elastic. The production of talent in a country or an age is not always a fixed quantity; and whilst for the maintenance of a high standard of excellence no one manifestly under the mark of his fellows should be admitted, all those worthy of entrance should be absorbed. Thirdly, the National Theatre should be independent. Once established under proper guarantees, it should be allowed to work out its own ideas in its own way. Art can never suffer by the untrammelled and unshackled freedom of artists--more especially when the idiosyncrasies of individuals, with the consequent possible extravagance, are controlled by the wisdom and calmness of confluent opinion. The difficulties of systematization would be vast, but the advantages would be vast also.

The merits of the concentration of purpose of men following kindred pursuits have been tested already, and the benefits both of individuals and bodies are known. Our art alone has yet no local habitation, no official recognition, no political significance. Should the scheme of a National Theatre be carried out, great results might follow--much good to the great body of aspirants to histrionic fame. Provision might, at a small expense to each individual, be made for the widow and the orphan. Old age would be divested of the terrors of want. A restraining influence would be exercised on unscrupulousness. A systematic school of teaching would arise; and the stage would acquire that influence and position which, whatever they may be in the present, are to be in the future great.

APPENDIX III

The Archer-Barker Plan[3]

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[3]Archer and Barker, Schemes and Estimates for a National Theatre, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

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APPENDIX IV

THE PROPOSED SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL

NATIONAL THEATRE

An Illustrated Handbook 1909[4]

History

In this section of the Handbook, the Committee relates the general history of the movement from 1879 when Matthew Arnold first called for a national Theatre until the fusion of the National Theatre Committee and the Shakespeare Memorial Statue advocates.

Objects

(1) to keep the plays of Shakespeare in its repertory;

(2) to revive whatever else is vital in English classical drama;

(3) to prevent recent plays of great merit from falling into oblivion:

(4) to produce new plays and to further the development of the modern drama;

(5) to produce translations of representative works of foreign drama, ancient and modern;

(6) to stimulate the art of acting through the varied opportunities which it will offer to the members of the company.

Architecture

The Shakespeare National Theatre should be unique, ". . . a building wholly different in character and aspect from any existing theatre."

(1) As a Memorial to Shakespeare, it should ". . . bear unmistakable testimony to the nation's reverence for its greatestpoet. . . ."

(2) As a Repertory Theatre, the building must be functional, attractive and practical. ". . . it should be agreeable as a popular place of resort, irrespective of the particular entertainment on the stage; and to this end a far more spacious building is required than any existing playhouse."

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[4]Whitworth, pp. 82-91

Methods

The theatre is to be a repertory theatre ". . . able to present, and bound to present, at least two different plays of full length at evening performances in each week, and at least three different plays at evening performances and matinees taken together."

The Shakespeare National Theatre should serve as a model for repertory theatres throughout the country and provide an incentive to their establishment.

Government

The governing body for the Theatre are to be appointed by ". . . the Crown, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, by the Universities of the capital cities of the three kingdoms, by the University of Wales, by the Royal Academy, the British Academy, the Workers' Educational Association, the London County Council, the Corporation of London, and the Municipalities of five great cities of England, two of Scotland, and two of Ireland." In addition there are to be certain ex-officio Governors.

The governing body shall appoint a standing committee which has the responsibility of selecting the managing staff for the theatre. This staff shall ". . . consist of a Director, a Treasurer, and a Literary Manager."

The General Appeal

The theatre is to be located in London, the nation's capital. The theatre would provide a training ground for a new generation of actors. Through its touring plan, the theatre would enable ". . . the classes which visit London infrequently, or not at all, to see whatever is best in Shakespearian acting and modern drama."

"For the purposes of appeal the following four funds have been instituted:

Fund A.	Site	Sum required about 100,000 pounds
Fund B.	Building and Equipment	Sum required about 150,000 pounds
Fund C.	Endowment	Sum required about 250,000 pounds
Fund D.	To be allocated to Funds A,B, or C at the discretion of the Committee	From any balance obtainable"

APPENDIX V

The National Theatre Productions: 1963-1968

1963-1964 Season

PLAY	PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	SCENERY AND COSTUMES*	FIRST PERFORMANCE**
HAMLET William Shakespeare	Laurence Olivier	Sean Kenny (s) Desmond Heeley (c)	October 22, 1963
SAINT JOAN George Bernard Shaw	John Dexter	Michael Annals	October 30, 1963 (C.F.T. June 24, 1963)
UNCLE VANYA Anton Chekhov translated by Constance Garnett	Laurence Olivier	Sean Kenny (s) Beatrice Dawson (c)	November 19, 1963 (C.F.T. July 16, 1962: July 1, 1963)
THE RECRUITING OFFICER George Farquhar	William Gaskill	Rene Allio	December 10, 1963
HOBSON'S CHOICE Harold Brighouse	John Dexter	Motley	January 7, 1964
ANDORRA translated by Michael Bullock	Lindsay Anderson	John Bury	January 28, 1964

1963-1964 Season (Cont'd.)

1963-1964 Season (Cont'd.)

PLAY	PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	SCENERY AND COSTUMES*	FIRST PERFORMANCE**
PLAY Samuel Beckett and PHILOCTETES Sophocles adapted by Keith Johnstone	George Devine William Gaskill	Jocelyn Herbert Sam Kirkpatrick	April 7, 1964
OTHELLO William Shakespeare	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	April 21, 1964 (A.T. April 6, 1965)
THE MASTER BUILDER Henrik Ibsen adapted by Emlyn Williams	Peter Wood	Rudolf Heinrich	June 9, 1964

**C.F.T. Chichester Festival Theatre
A.T. Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

*s- scenery
c- costumes

1964-1965 Season

PLAY	PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	SCENERY AND COSTUMES*	FIRST PERFORMANCE**
THE DUTCH COURTESAN John Marston	William Gaskill Piers Haggard	Annena Stubbs	October 13, 1964 (C.F.T. July 14, 1964)
HAY FEVER Noel Coward	Noel Coward	Motley	October 27, 1964 (O.H. October 19, 1964)

1964-1965 Season

PLAY	PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	SCENERY AND COSTUMES*	FIRST PERFORMANCE**
THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN Peter Shaffer	John Dexter Desmond O'Donovan	Michael Annals	December 8, 1964 (C.F.T. July 7, 1964)
THE CRUCIBLE Arthur Miller	Laurence Olivier	Michael Annals	January 19, 1965
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING William Shakespeare	Franco Zeffirelli	Franco Zeffirelli (s) Peter J. Hall (c)	February 16, 1965
MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN Bertolt Brecht translated by Eric Bentley Lyrics translated by W. H. Auden Music by Paul Dessau	William Gaskill	Jocelyn Herbert	May 12, 1965

**C.F.T. Chichester Festival Theatre
O.H. Opera House, Manchester

*s- scenery
c- costumes

1965-1966 Season

PLAY	PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	SCENERY AND COSTUMES*	FIRST PERFORMANCE**
ARMSTRONG'S LAST GOODNIGHT John Arden	Devised by John Dexter and William Gaskill Proscenium Production by Albert Finney	Rene Allio	October 12, 1965 (C.F.T. July 6, 1965)
LOVE FOR LOVE William Congreve	Peter Wood	Lila de Nobili	October 20, 1965 (K.T. September 9, 1965)
TRELAWNY OF THE "WELLS" Arthur W. Pinero	Desmond O'Donovan	Motley	November 17, 1965 (C.F.T. July 13, 1965)
A FLEA IN HER EAR (La Puce A l 'Oreille translated by John Mortimer)	Jacques Charon	Andre Levasseur	February 8, 1966
MISS JULIE August Strindberg translated by Michael Meyer	Michael Elliott	Richard Negri	March 8, 1966 (C.F.T. July 27, 1965)
and BLACK COMEDY	John Dexter	Alan Tagg	
JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK Sean O'Casey	Laurence Olivier	Cermen Dillon	April 26, 1966 (A.T. April 4, 1965)

1965-1966 Season (Cont'd.)

PLAY	PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	SCENERY AND COSTUMES*	FIRST PERFORMANCE**
A BOND HONOURED John Osborne based on La Fianza Satisfecha by Lope de Vega and BLACK COMEDY	John Dexter	Michael Annals	June 6, 1966

**C.F.T. Chichester Festival Theatre
K.T. Kremlin Theatre, Moscow
A.T. Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

*s- scenery
c- costumes

1966-1967 Season

PLAY	PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	SCENERY AND COSTUMES*	FIRST PERFORMANCE
THE STORM Alexander Ostrovsky adapted by Doris Lessing	John Dexter	Josef Svoboda	October 18, 1966
THE DANCE OF DEATH August Strindberg translated by C. D. Locock	Glen Byam Shaw	Motley	February 21, 1967
ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD Tom Stoppard	Derek Goldby	Desmond Heeley	April 11, 1967

1966-1967 Season (Cont'd.)

PLAY	PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	SCENERY AND COSTUMES*	FIRST PERFORMANCE
THREE SISTERS Anton Chekhov translated by Moura Budberg	Laurence Olivier	Josef Svoboda (s) Beatric Dawson (c)	July 4, 1967

*s- scenery
c- costumes

1967-1968 Season

PLAY	PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	SCENERY AND COSTUMES	FIRST PERFORMANCE
AS YOU LIKE IT William Shakespeare	Clifford Williams	Ralph Koltai	October 3, 1967
TARTUFFE Moliere translated by Richard Wilbur	Tyrone Guthrie	Rene Allio	November 21, 1967
VOLPONE Ben Jonson	Tyrone Guthrie	Tanya Moiseiwitsch	January 16, 1968

1967-1968 Season (Cont'd.)

PLAY	PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	SCENERY AND COSTUMES	FIRST PERFORMANCE
OEDIPUS Seneca adapted by Ted Hughes from translation by David Anthony Turner	Peter Brook	Peter Brook	March 19, 1968
EDWARD II Bertolt Brecht translated by William E. Smith and Ralph Manheim	Frank Dunlop	Carl Toms	April 30, 1968
Triple Bill:			
THE COVENT GARDEN TRAGEDY Henry Fielding	Robert Lang	Tony Walton	June 18, 1968
A MOST UNWARRANTABLE INTRUSION John Maddison Morton	Robert Stephens		
IN HIS OWN WRITE Adrienne Kennedy, John Lennon and Victor Spinetti	Victor Spinetti		

APPENDIX VI

Architectual Plans for the National Theatre

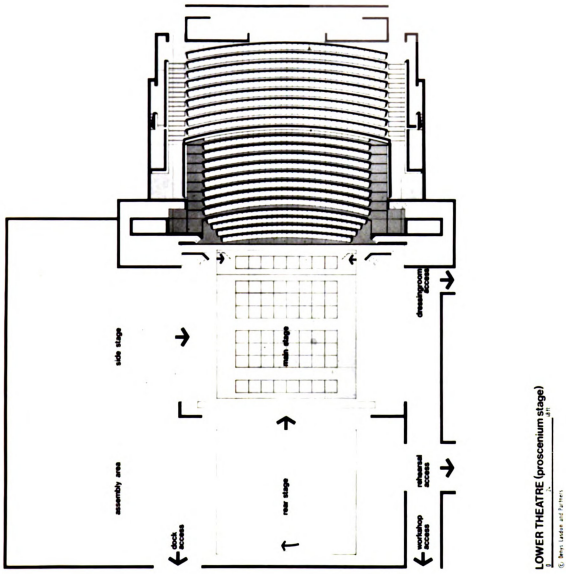


Fig. 3.--Floor Plan of the Lower Theatre (proscenium stage)

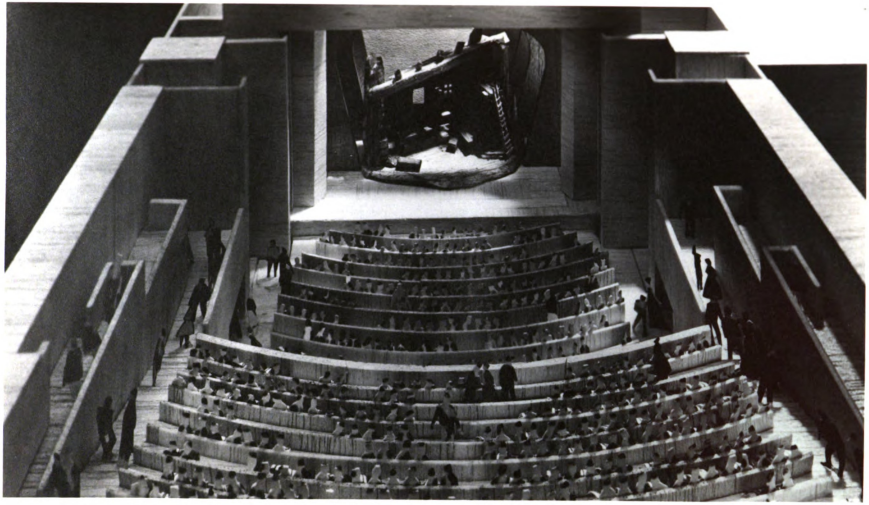


Fig. 4.--Model of the Lower Theatre (proscenium stage)

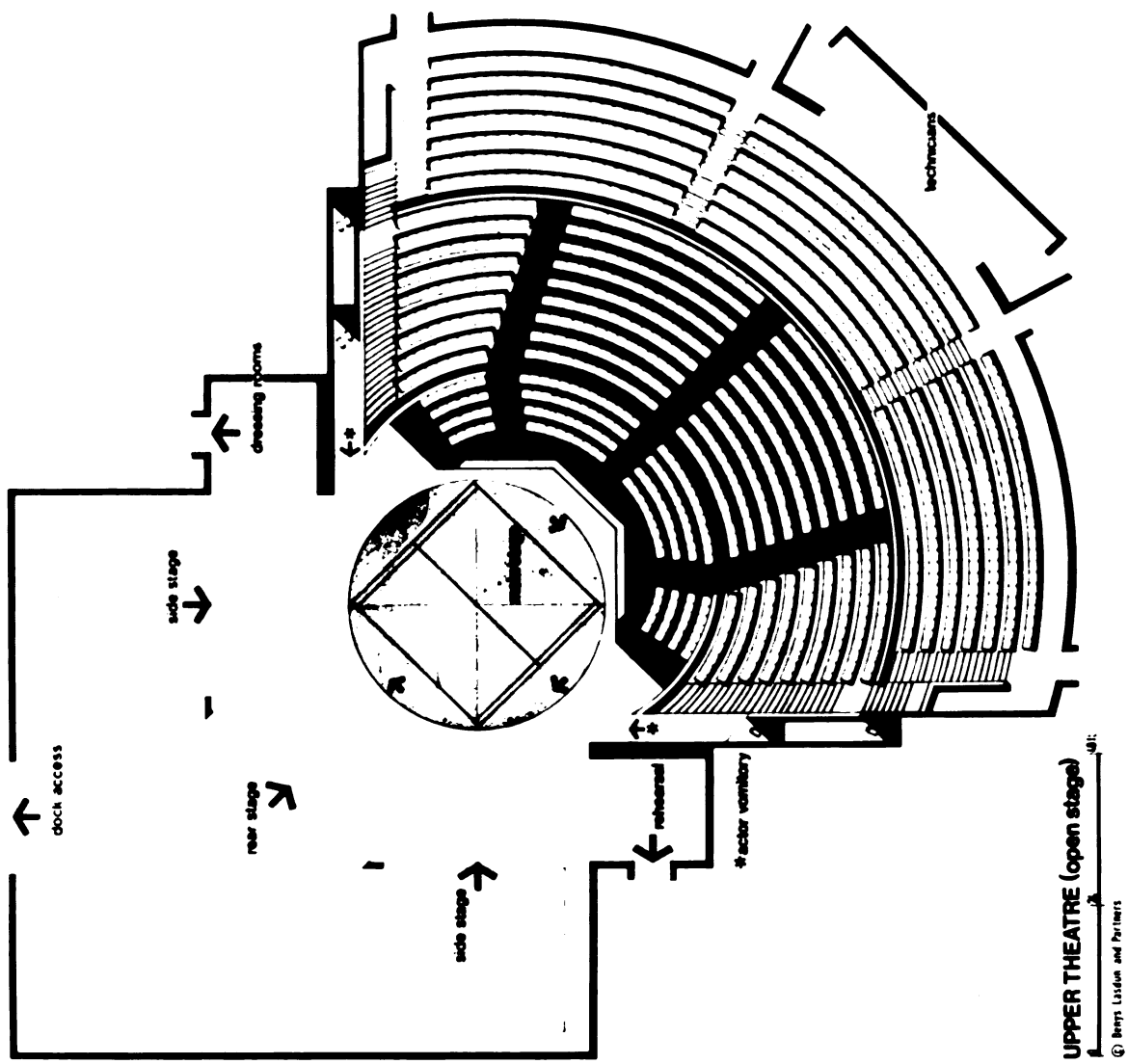
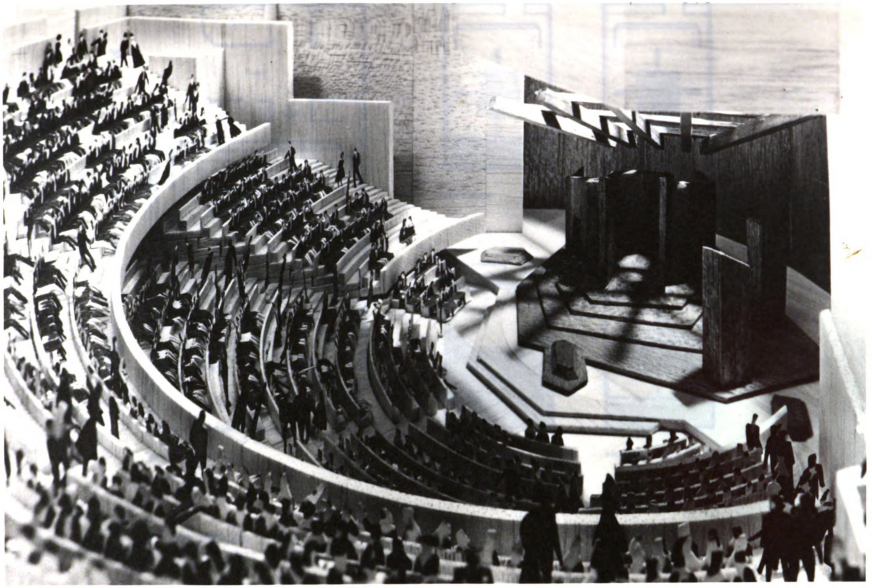


Fig. 5.--Floor Plan of the Upper Theatre (open stage)

Fig. 6.--Model of the Upper Theatre (open stage)



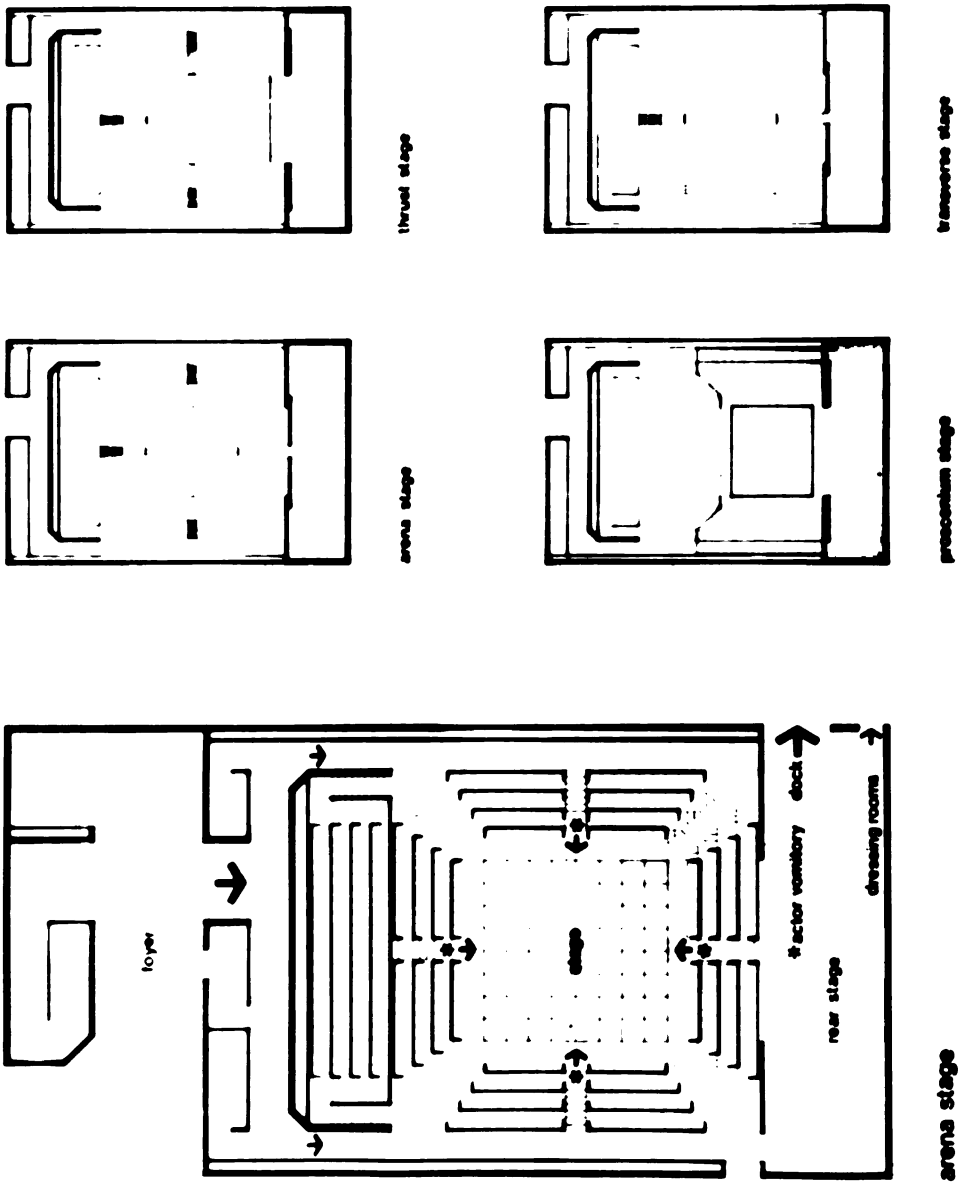


Fig. 7.--Floor Plan of the Studio Theatre