

Bill Howell went on, before his untimely death, to build one more theatre, the school theatre at Christ's Hospital, completed in 1975. This theatre attempted to combine the thrust stage of the Young Vic with an end-stage capability. Although the architecture has more finesse, it is, in my view, a much less successful space than the Young Vic because the thrust format forces the balconies too far apart for it to work well in the end stage form. The sense of focus is lost. Another interesting aspect of the Christ's Hospital scheme was its use, for the first time, of mobile towers which could be used to complete the balconies around the back of the stage. The technology was imperfect, but they paved the way for the various schemes using towers on air bearings which were to come later and to enable a good deal of adaptability.



The Guthrie thrust-stage form was a catalyst for a renewed interest in single-space theatres but it did not flourish as a type. It was too restrictive in the limitations it placed on designers and the inability of three-sided productions to transfer to more conventional 'end-stage' theatres elsewhere. Enthusiasm for single-space theatres was, however, undiminished.



The next highly influential building of this period was the Manchester Royal Exchange. This was the product of a major regional producing company who were also exploring the Guthrie legacy under artistic director Michael Elliott and designer Richard Negri. Within the cavernous space of the Royal Exchange they saw the opportunity to create a free-standing theatre in the round in which the audience would be stacked up on all sides of a central acting area. They built it first out of scaffolding, and then commissioned architects Levitt Bernstein Associates to develop a more elegant, permanent version, which was completed in 1976.



Top: Christ's Hospital School Theatre by Bill Howell. Below: three views of the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester by architects Levitt Bernstein Associates.

It is an extraordinary piece of architecture and a great theatre but because it is in the round it was a heroic one-off design, not a transferable prototype.

Theatre, which was to become the Cottesloe. Iain's background as a theatre manager and man of the theatre, rather than an architect or designer, meant he was deeply imbued with theatre history and he saw the connection between the 18th century

For the development of a more widely applicable open-stage theatre form, we owe much to one man. He is Iain Mackintosh, not able to be at this Conference due to a previous commitment. In the mid-1970s Richard Pilbrow invited Iain to join him at Theatre Projects Consultants to help develop the third space at the National

In 1975 Iain was the highly influential exhibition at the exposed many of the Georgian theatre:

*This chapter, illustrated with more than 120 pictures and graphics, reviews the development of all forms of auditoria over the ages, identifying important features that need to be understood by those involved in the design of performance spaces today*