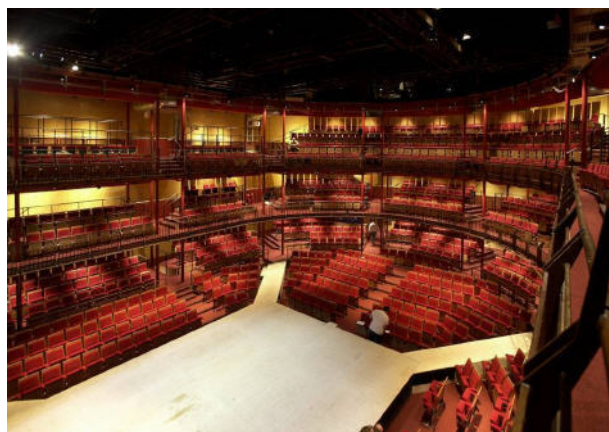


when they are, the gestation periods for most buildings means that the artistic teams have moved on by the time their dreams are realised. We have heard about this in Conference also.

Performances are naturally transient but buildings are long-term investments. When schedules for the following season are not planned until just before printing deadlines, how can designers plan ahead for a building that will last for decades and that needs to inspire and fulfil the dreams and desires of future generations of scenographers? Theatrical ideas are constantly evolving and need time to develop at their own pace. The more intriguing innovations are the result of many years of development. Tanya Moiseiwitsch and Tyrone Guthrie developed their particular fascination with the thrust stage through temporary festival stages in an auditorium made of timber. Each year variations could be tested to see which proportions worked best. Stratford Ontario, the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis and the Crucible in Sheffield produced startling results. Similarly, Michael Elliott and Richard Negri worked through several scaffold versions of theatres-in-the-round before Levitt Bernstein Associates created their permanent Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester. Stephen Joseph worked with layouts of old cinema seats and wooden platforms before several versions of his theatre-in-the-round – or in this case more of a square – were cast in concrete.

The success of each of these approaches was that the ideas were tested, as if in model form, but significantly at full scale. It is good to see that the Royal Shakespeare Company is following the same approach and the hope is that Tom Piper and Flip Tanner of the RSC with their consultants and design team will be able to refine their designs in the temporary courtyard theatre before the new permanent Royal Shakespeare Theatre emerges. Tom is the designer of the prototype theatre space and is currently designing the *Histories Trilogy*, the first in an eight-play cycle from *Richard II* to *Richard III*. Tom is excited about the new theatre's potential as an epic scale one-room space seating 1,100 and I hope he is allowed to change his mind a few times more as a result of his experiences working in the prototype.

I might also mention the new Warehouse Theatre in Croydon. This might proceed now that developers Stanhope have won the planning permission for the commercial development that will in part fund the new building. Artistic director, Ted Craig, and



A new space with designer input – the deep thrust stage of the temporary Courtyard Theatre which seats 1,000, as conceived by the Royal Shakespeare Company
 Architect: Ian Ritchie
 Consultants: Charcoalblue
 Photo: courtesy the Royal Shakespeare Company

designer, Michael Pavelka, have given a strong lead on the nature of the new performance space. Neil Morton and I at Theatreplan aim to realise their ambitions to the full.

We know that not every theory presented will turn into an inspired landmark theatre and it would be surprising if many didn't end up with some deficiencies. The Crucible, which I love, has many, though certainly fewer than the comparable Chichester Festival Theatre, with its hexagonal geometry and shallow seating rake. But these are both spaces that are much admired and enjoyed by directors and designers and are used to good theatrical effect too. I haven't even mentioned the National Theatre Building Committee and the Olivier Theatre, nor John Bury and the Barbican, both of which also have many advocates.

Like audiences, designers grow fond of particular theatres or performance spaces, sometimes because of their permanence, sometimes because of their legacy of bygone times, and sometimes because it's a surprise just to walk in and discover them changed. Often it is the scenographer's response to the architecture of the theatre that makes these spaces vital and inspiring. It is this clash of architecture and scenography – of permanence and transience – that encourages good theatre. I am uncertain of the theoretical benefits of architects and scenographer understanding each other better. Only a few scenographers will have something significant to contribute to a building project, but I wouldn't want to exclude anyone

Three very differing views on the relationship between scenography and theatre architecture are given by scenographer Jaroslav Malina, consultant Jean-Guy Lecat and two architects turned theatre consultants, John Coyne and Peter Ruthven Hall. Here Peter summarises his position.