

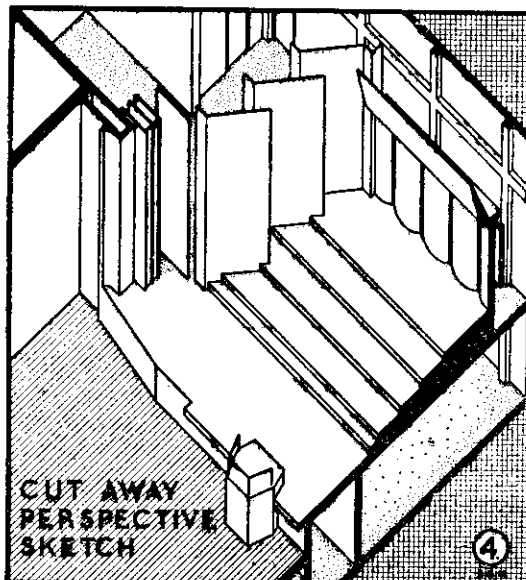
the design. In the past it has not generally been appreciated that as much attention should be paid to the design of the stage and its facilities as is given to the rest of the hall. If you reflect for a moment, it will be realised that the stage itself is the theatre proper, the hall is merely an enclosed space accommodating the audience. These two sections of the theatre are separated by what is called the proscenium wall. Stage conditions which permit an actor to give of his or her best are reflected in the measure of audience appreciation. Together, these create that atmosphere known as good theatre.

There is no reason why a new type of all purpose auditorium should not be evolved in New Zealand to suit our particular requirements. At present there seems to be a rigid adherence to the solid proscenium wall, with a fixed stage opening, dividing actor from audience. This solid proscenium wall can readily be dispensed with as its sole function is to provide a screen to the mechanics of the stage and a picture frame to the stage setting.

A flexible proscenium, both lateral and vertical, could be introduced, still maintaining the conventional loft to fly scenery and the usual side stage off runs for storage and circulation. Such

a setting with a stage floor of normal height would give the maximum flexibility for any type of performance. It would further obviate the inherent drawbacks of the conventional fixed proscenium opening, which at times restrict vision lines and result in cramped stage conditions, creating problems for both artist, conductor and producer.

Recently the new Town Hall at Lower Hutt was opened. At the request of the City Council and the architects, I designed a composite stage setting suitable for the National Orchestra, or for a choir of 90 to 100, with an accompanying orchestra of 25 players. This stage setting can, in conjunction with a stepped outer forestage, also accommodate a college choir of some 500 to 600 pupils, along with a college orchestra of 25 to 30 musicians. The stage setting is designed so as to be readily removable should the stage proper be required for theatrical



productions. To illustrate the design of this stage setting, four numbered drawings are shown on this and the facing page, and a key to these drawings appears below.

The architects for the Town Hall are to be complimented on the width of proscenium opening they have provided. They have achieved a marked degree of flexibility by utilising sliding doors. Had the normal fixed proscenium opening been adopted for this hall, it is most unlikely that the National Orchestra or a large choir would have been able to present a programme from this stage.

I wish to express my thanks to Mr Stanley Oliver and to Mr J. L. Hartstonge, Concert Manager of the N.Z. Broadcasting Service, for their assistance in the planning of the choral and orchestral requirements.

DRAWING 1, on facing page, shows the planning requirements for the National Orchestra, the disposition of the musicians being shown in diagram form. Drawing 2, next to No. 1, shows the same stage setting accommodating a choir of 97 singers, an orchestra of 25 musicians and two soloists. Drawing 3 (at top of this page) is a section through the stage, showing the stepped dais used for both choir and orchestra, the rear and overhead acoustical reflectors and diffusers, and the side splay reflectors to reinforce the music of the choir and orchestra. The overhead lighting is also shown masked from the sight of the audience by the overhead reflectors. Both the overhead acoustical reflectors and the light battens can be adjusted to any angle to suit the acoustical and lighting requirements of varying orchestras and choirs. An indication of the many overhead suspension lines required to fit a stage are also shown. The outer forestage to accommodate the college choirs is indicated by a dotted line. The legend on this drawing gives a description of the various component parts of a stage setting. Drawing 4 (lower, right) shows a cutaway perspective sketch of the assembled stage.

KEY TO ILLUSTRATIONS

and orchestra, the rear and overhead acoustical reflectors and diffusers, and the side splay reflectors to reinforce the music of the choir and orchestra. The overhead lighting is also shown masked from the sight of the audience by the overhead reflectors. Both the overhead acoustical reflectors and the light battens can be adjusted to any angle to suit the acoustical and lighting requirements of varying orchestras and choirs. An indication of the many overhead suspension lines required to fit a stage are also shown. The outer forestage to accommodate the college choirs is indicated by a dotted line. The legend on this drawing gives a description of the various component parts of a stage setting. Drawing 4 (lower, right) shows a cutaway perspective sketch of the assembled stage.

FOR STRAND STAGE LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

★ SUCH
★ AS
★ SUPPLIED
★ FOR
★ THE
★ LOWER
★ HUTT
★ TOWN
★ HALL

CONSULT BRITISH GENERAL ELECTRIC CO., LTD.