

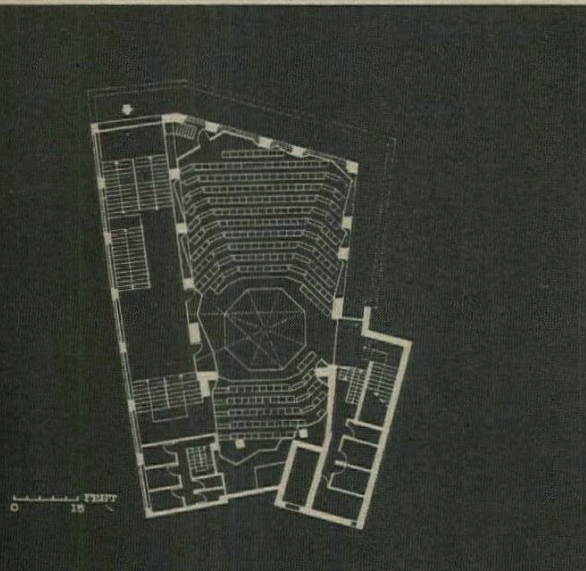
acoustics and lighting more effectively.

Yet, even the bigger theaters have benefited from the trend toward greater openness as demonstrated "off Broadway." The most impressive example of this can be found in the Festival Theater at Stratford, Ontario (below, center). Its capacity is almost 2,200 seats, arranged in a 225-degree arena pattern around a deeply projecting forestage. In this ingenious plan, no seat is farther than 70 feet from the stage,

so that there is a real sense of intimacy between audience and performers despite the great size of the auditorium. The new Repertory Theater for Lincoln Center, which is being designed by Eero Saarinen, will be based upon the principles tested at Stratford.

Much of the pioneering work toward these new developments in theater design was done at colleges and universities, whose facilities, in the past, have tended to be rather primitive. In

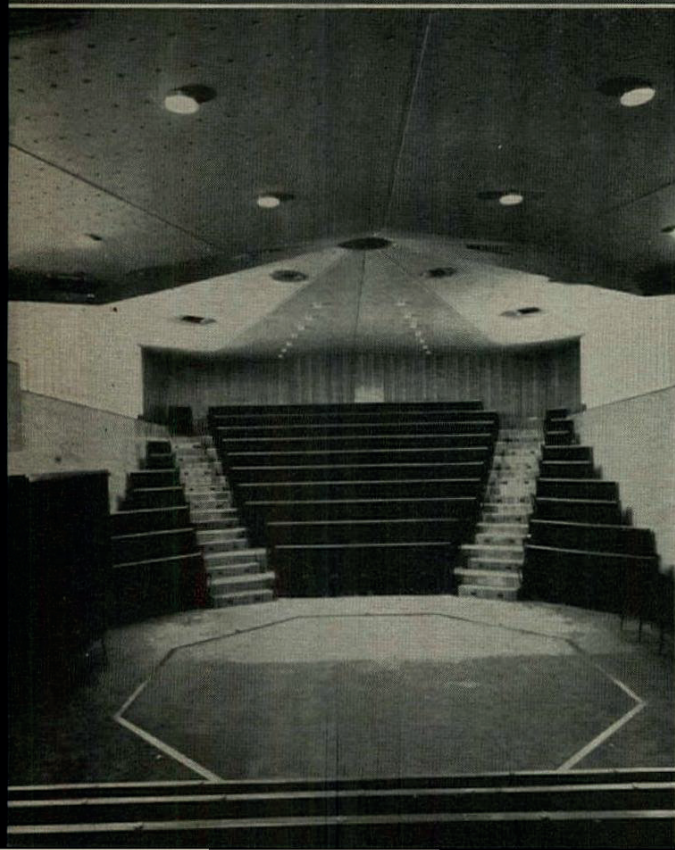
some instances, a gymnasium would be turned into a flexible theater by the use of bleacher seats and modular boxes; in others, a multipurpose auditorium would be given an added dimension as a theater by extending its stage far out into the audience to create a three-sided platform. More recently, it has been possible to build fully equipped experimental theaters on several campuses: Harvard's Loeb Theater (page 104) will be one of the most imagina-



Central stage arrangement in Milan's Teatro Sant' Erasmo (left) seats 250. No seat is farther than 30 feet from the octagonal stage. Both actors and spectators enter from two side entrances, and lighting is contained in balconies above these entrances. The irregular form of the auditorium contributes to the intimate atmosphere of the theater. It was built in 1952-53 (architects: Antonio Carminati and Carlo de Carli).



Festival Theater at Stratford, Ontario (right) was designed primarily for Shakespearean productions. Its deep, projecting stage has a permanent balcony and peripheral steps. Although the seating capacity of the Festival Theater is close to 2,200, no spectator is farther than 70 feet from the stage—a feat achieved by arranging the seats in a 225-degree horseshoe pattern on two levels. The original Festival Theater was housed in a tent, and the radical seating pattern was developed in this informal setting by Director Tyrone Guthrie, Designer Tanya Moisewitch, and Promoter Tom Patterson. By 1955, sufficient funds became available to enclose the playhouse with a permanent structure. "It makes no sense to call this adventurous, self-determined house the best new theater on the American continent," Critic Walter Kerr has written; "it is the only new theater of any consequence on the American continent." (Architects for the final structure: Rounthwaite & Fairfield.)



CLARK