

ACT 1 and ACT 2



A Contemporary Study of London's Most Historic
Theatres

by Jan Levy

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This artwork features all the main theatres in London. The theatres are set out in 5 rows of 10. The original idea was to attempt to walk from the first theatre to the last. However, after walking in a somewhat circuitous fashion from The Palladium to the Noel Coward, (about 8 miles) the artist went home to recover. The following week, the rest of the images were photographed travelling on the train!

Each theatre can be “read” individually on a theatre by theatre basis and colours have been carefully selected to allow the viewer to read the images one by one. Bright, bold and vivid colours have been used to give an unrealistic “theatre” but at the same time careful reference to architectural features is evident.

A balance between retaining the beauty of the architecture and yet introducing graphic animation has been a challenge and the journey has been long but undoubtedly rewarding.

Most people would agree that going to the theatre as a rather special and significant event that can last a lifetime and the artist’s aim is to create a composition to represent all the main theatres in an animated pop art style which allows the viewer to recollect and celebrate in their own experiences and recollection of the theatre.

There are to be 30 pieces in this edition and each piece is hand crafted and carefully constructed.

As with the first piece under the umbrella “Rhetoric and Reality”, the overall aim is to create a fun yet serious artwork where the visual language can be read in individual images, yet the total composition is pieced together to make a comprehensive, and fascinating artwork for the viewer.

Order of Artwork

Row 1

1. The London Palladium



The **London Palladium** is a 2,286 seat West End theatre West End theatre located off Oxford Street. From the roster of stars that have played there and many televised performances, it is arguably the most famous theatre in London, especially for musical variety shows.

Walter Gibbons, an early moving pictures manager, built the Palladium in 1910 to compete with Edward Moss’s London Hippodrome and Oswald Stoll’s London Coliseum. The facade (originally that of Argyll House, which is why the pub opposite is called The Argyll Arms) dates back to the 19th century. Formerly it was a temporary wooden building called *Corinthian Bazaar*, which featured an aviary and aimed to attract customers from the recently closed Pantheon Bazaar (now Marks and Spencer’s on Oxford Street. The theatre was rebuilt a year later by Fredrick Hengler, the son of a tightrope walker, as a circus venue that included an aquatic display in a flooded ring. Next it became the *National Skating Palace* - a skating rink with real ice. However the rink failed and the Palladium was redesigned by Frank Matcham, a famous theatrical architect who also designed the Coliseum, for a site that previously housed Hengler’s Circus. The building now carries Heritage Foundation commemorative plaques

honouring Lew Grade and Frankie Vaughan.

The theatre retains many of its original features and was Grade 11 listed by English Heritage in September 1960. The Palladium had its own telephone system so the occupants of boxes could call one another. It also had a revolving stage.

2. The Dominion



The **Dominion Theatre** is a West End theatre on Tottenham Court Road close to St Giles Circus and Centre Point Tower. The theatre was built on the location of the former Horse Shoe Brewery, which was the site of the 1814 London Beer Flood.

It was built in 1928–29, designed by W and TR Milburn with a steel-framed construction and a concave Portland stone facade. It was built as a theatre for live shows, but after faltering business in the early 1930s, the building was converted to also allow it to show films.

Despite its huge seating capacity (given as 2,858 in 1940), the Dominion did well thanks to its excellent location where Charing Cross Road, Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road all meet. The cinema closed temporarily at the height of the Blitz early in October 1940, but re-opened for good on 12 January 1941. After the war, it continued the link with the New Victoria, almost invariably playing with the Gaumont circuit programme for a pre-release week before it went into the Northwest London area to commence its suburban run.

In December 1956 Rank first considered making regular use of the Dominion for live shows again and had internal estimates of the cost involved for rewiring and refurbishing the stage facilities. The first major use as a live venue came when the *Judy Garland Show* ran from Wednesday 16 October to Saturday 16 November 1957.

It now has a seating capacity of 2,182 in two tiers of galleries, following the closure many decades ago of the former upper circle. The theatre retains its 1920s light fittings and art deco plasterwork.

There has been a lot of renovation of the theatre over the past couple of years. The large dressing room block at the rear of the theatre has its stone work cleaned and new exact replica windows fitted. Inside the building has also seen many changes with the reinstatement of the once derelict area originally occupied by the theatre's restaurant/tea rooms and which was utilised by Rank in its time at the Dominion as office space. This large space above the main foyer is now a state of the art rehearsal studio and events space.

In 2002, the hit stage musical *We will Rock You*, based on the songs of Queen, created by Queen guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor, together with British comedian Ben Elton opened. The show was due to close in October 2006 before embarking on a UK tour, but due to popular demand has been extended indefinitely. The show is currently in its ninth year and as such is the longest running musical ever to play at the Dominion Theatre

3. The Shaftesbury



The **Shaftesbury Theatre** is located on Shaftesbury Avenue, London in the West End.

The theatre was designed for the brothers Walter and Frederick Melville by Bertie Crewe and opened on 26 December 1911 with a production of *The Three Musketeers*, as the *New Prince's Theatre*, becoming the **Prince's Theatre** in 1914. It had a capacity of 2,392.

It had considerable success with an 18 week season of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, presented by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company in 1919. These became a regular attraction at the theatre in the 1920s, interspersed with runs of theatre

productions transferred from other venues.

The theatre was sold to EMI in 1962, and became the Shaftesbury Theatre. Broadway productions that transferred to the theatre for long runs in the 1960s included *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1962), *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (1963) and *Little Me* (1964).

Part of the ceiling fell in on 20 July 1973, forcing the closure of the long-running musical *Hair* after 1,998 performances. The theatre almost fell victim to redevelopment, but a campaign by Equity succeeded in having the theatre placed on the 'Statutory List of Buildings of Special architectural or Historic Interest', and the theatre was Grade 11 listed by English Heritage in March 1974.

4. New London Theatre



The **New London Theatre** is a West End theatre located on the corner of Drury Lane and Parker Street in Covent Garden.

Designed by Paul Tvrkovic and seating 960 on 2 levels, the theatre's auditorium first opened with a television recording of Marlene Dietrich's one-woman show. The theatre officially opened on 2 January 1973 with a production of *The Unknown Soldier and His Wife* starring Peter Ustinov. It then hosted *Grease*, starring Richard Gere as Danny. Beginning in 1977, the theatre was used as a television studio for several years and then returned to use as a theatre. The theatre's biggest hit was the Andrew Lloyd Webber and Trevor Nunn musical *Cats*, choreographed by Gillian Lynne which premièred in the theatre on 11 May 1981. Closing in 2002, this production became the longest running musical in West End history.

The theatre building also contains an underground car park, a cabaret venue, a basement nightclub, shops and a residential tower.

5. Phoenix Theatre



The Phoenix Theatre is located on Charing Cross Road (at the corner with Flitcroft Street). The entrance is in Phoenix Street. It is owned by the Ambassador Theatre Group. It has a capacity of 1012 on three levels.

Designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, Bertie Crewe and Cecil Masey, it is Grade II listed, with a restrained neoclassical exterior, but an interior designed in an Italianate style by director and designer Theodore Komisarjevsky. It opened on 24 September 1930 premièring *Private Lives* by Noel Coward, who also appeared in the play with a young Laurence Olivier. Coward returned to the theatre with *Tonight at 8:30* in 1936 and *Quadrille* in 1952. On 16 December 1969, the long association with Coward was celebrated with a midnight matinee in honour of his 70th birthday, and the foyer bar was renamed the *Noel Coward Bar*.

The current production is *Blood Brothers*, a 1982 Willy Russell musical. This moved from The Albery Theatre in 1991, and is the longest running show at the theatre.

6. The Palace Theatre



The **Palace Theatre** is an imposing red-brick building that dominates the west side of Cambridge Circus, and is located near the intersection of Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road. The Palace Theatre's current capacity is 1,400.

Commissioned by impresario Richard D'Oyly Carte in the late 1880s, it was designed by Thomas Edward Colcutt. Carte intended it to be the home of English grand opera, much as his Savoy Theatre had been built as a home for English light opera, beginning with the Gilbert and Sullivan series. The foundation stone, laid by his wife Helen in 1888, can still be seen on the façade of the theatre, almost at ground level to the right of the entrance. The theatre's design was considered to be novel. The upper levels are supported by heavy steel cantilevers built into the back walls, removing the need for supporting pillars that impede the view of the stage. The tiers, corridors, staircases, landings are all constructed of concrete to reduce the risk and damage that might be done by fire

The theatre opened as the "**Royal English Opera House**" in January 1891 with Arthur Sullivan's *Ivanhoe*. No expense was spared to make the production a success, including a double cast and "every imaginable effect of scenic splendour. It ran for 160 performances, but when *Ivanhoe* finally closed in July, Carte had no new work to replace it, and the opera house had to close.

The theatre re-opened in November 1891, with André Messager's *La Basoche* (with David Bispham in his first London stage performance) at first alternating in repertory with *Ivanhoe*, and then *La Basoche* alone, closing in January 1892. Carte had no other works ready, and so he leased the theatre to Sarah Bernhardt for a season and sold the opera house within a year at a loss. It was then converted by Walter Emden into a grand music hall and renamed the **Palace Theatre of Varieties**, managed by Charles Morton, known as the 'Father of Music Halls', who made it into a successful enterprise. Denied permission by the London County Council to construct the promenade, which was such a popular feature of adult entertainment at the Empire and Alhambra theatres, the Palace compensated by featuring apparently nude women in tableau vivants, though the concerned LCC hastened to reassure patrons that the girls who featured in these displays were actually wearing flesh toned body stockings and were not naked.

7. Prince Edward Theatre



The **Prince Edward Theatre** is situated on Old Compton Street, just north of Leicester Square, in the City of Westminster.

The theatre was designed in 1930 by Edward A. Stone, with an interior designed by Marc-Henri Levy and Gaston Laverdet. Named after Prince Edward (then the Prince of Wales, briefly Edward VIII and later Duke of Windsor), it opened on April 3, 1930 with a performance of the musical *Rio Rita*. It has a capacity of 1618 and a Grade 11 listed building.

In 1974, the theatre was acquired by impresario Bernard Delfont. Four years later, in 1978, it was converted back to a theatre, by RHWL Architects and given its original name, reopening with the world première of the musical *Evita* on 21 June 1978. Further renovations were undertaken by RHWL in 1992–93, increasing the size of the stage, reopening 3 March 1993 with a revival of *Crazy for You*. The ABBA musical, *Mamma Mia!* Premiered here on 6 April 1999, transferring to the Prince of Wales Theatre, after a five year run.

8. Queens



The **Queen's Theatre** is located in Shaftesbury Avenue in the City of Westminster. It opened on 8 October 1907 as a twin to the neighbouring Gielgud Theatre which opened ten months earlier. Both theatres were designed by W.G.R. Sprague. It has seating of 1099 on three levels. The theatre was Grade II listed by English Heritage in June 1972

In September 1940, a German bomb landed directly on the theatre, destroying the facade and lobby areas. The production at the time was Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* starring Celia Johnson, Owen Nares and Margaret Rutherford. The theatre remained closed until a £250,000 restoration was completed by Westwood Sons & Partners almost 20 years later. The auditorium retained its Edwardian decor while the lobbies and exterior were rebuilt

in a modern style. The reconstructed theatre opened 8 July 1959 with John Gielgud's solo performance in *Shakespeare speeches and sonnets, Ages of Man*.

Since April 2004, the theatre has played host to Cameron Mackintosh's production of *Les Misérables* which transferred after 18 years at the nearby Palace Theatre. The musical celebrated its 20th anniversary at the venue on 8 October 2005 and overtook *Cats* as the longest running musical of all time a year later on 8 October 2006.

An extensive refurbishment was undertaken in the latter half of 2009 which improved public areas and increased capacity with new seating and boxes reinstated at dress circle level.

9. Gielgud Theatre



The Gielgud Theatre is located on Shaftesbury Avenue in the City of Westminster, London, at the corner of Rupert Street. The house currently has 889 seats on three levels.

The theatre opened on December 27, 1906 as the Hicks Theatre in honour of actor, manager and playwright Seymour Hicks, for whom it was built. Designed by W.G.R. Sprague in Louis XVI style, the theatre originally had 970 seats, but over the years boxes and other seats have been removed. The theatre is a pair with the Queen's Theatre, which opened in 1907 on the adjacent street corner. The theatre was renamed in honour of British actor John Gielgud. In 2003

The Globe was the home of a resident theatre cat named Beerbohm. The tabby's portrait still hangs in the corridor near the stalls. Beerbohm appeared on stage at least once in every production, forcing the actors to improvise. He always chose to occupy certain actors' dressing rooms while they were at the theatre, including Peter Bowles, Michael Gambon and Penelope Keith. Beerbohm was mentioned several times on *Desert Island Discs*, and he was the only cat to have received a front page

obituary in the theatrical publication, *The Stage*. He died in March 1995 at the age of 20.

Refurbished in 1987, with extensive work on the gold leaf in the auditorium, the theatre is particularly notable for its beautiful circular Regency staircase, oval gallery and tower.

10. The Apollo Theatre



The Apollo Theatre is a Grade II listed West End theatre, on Shaftesbury Avenue. Designed by architect Lewin Sharp for owner Henry Lowenfield, and the fourth legitimate theatre to be constructed on the street, its doors opened on 21 February 1901 with the American musical comedy *The Belle of Bohemia*.

The Apollo was renovated by Schaufelberg in 1932, and a private foyer and anteroom was installed to the Royal Box. The sculpted work on the stone fascia is by T. Simpson, the building is of plain brick to the neighbouring streets. The theatre has a first floor central loggia. Inside there is a three galleried auditorium with elaborate plasterwork. The theatre seats 796 and the balcony on the 3rd tier is considered the steepest in London.

The Stoll Moss Group purchased the Apollo Theatre in 1975 and sold it to Andrew Lloyd-Webber's Really Useful Group and Bridgepoint Capital in 2000. Nica Burns and Max Weitzenhoffer purchased the theatre and several others in 2005, creating Nimax Theatres, which still owns the theatre.

Row 2

11. Lyric Theatre



The Lyric Theatre is a West End theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue in the City of Westminster.

Designed by architect C. J. Phipps, it was built by producer Henry Leslie with profits from the Alfred Cellier and B. C. Stephenson hit, *Dorothy*, which he transferred from the Prince of Wales Theatre to open his new venue on 17 December 1888. It was the second theatre to be constructed on this stretch of Shaftesbury Avenue and is now the oldest on the street. The foyer and bars were refurbished in 1932-33, and the facade was restored in 1994. At present it seats 967 on four levels, although it originally was designed with a seating capacity of 1,306. The theatre still uses an electric pump to operate its iron curtain.

Early in the theatre's history, it staged mostly comic operas, and later it has been a home to light comedies, musicals and straight dramas.

The theatre retains many of its original features (including being built behind an original 1767 house front, at the rear to Great Windmill Street, the former house and museum of Sir William Hunter) and the theatre was Grade II listed by English Heritage in September 1960.

12. Piccadilly Theatre



The Piccadilly Theatre is a West End theatre located at 16 Denman Street, behind Piccadilly Circus and adjacent to the Regent Palace Hotel, in the City of Westminster,

Built by Bertie Crewe and Edward A. Stone for Edward Laurillard, its simple facade conceals a grandiose Art Deco interior designed by Marc-Henri Levy and Gaston Laverdet, with a 1232-seat auditorium decorated in shades of pink. Gold and green are the dominant colours in the bars and foyer, which include the original light fittings. Upon its opening on April 27, 1928, the

theatre's souvenir brochure claimed, "If all the bricks used in the building were laid in a straight line, they would stretch from London to Paris." The opening production, Jerome Kern's musical *Blue Eyes*, starred Evelyn Laye, one of the most acclaimed actresses of the period.

The Piccadilly is one of twenty-four venues owned by the Ambassador Theatre Group.

13. Criterion Theatre



The Criterion Theatre is a West End theatre situated on Piccadilly Circus in the City of Westminster, and is a Grade II* listed building. It has an official capacity of 588.

In 1870, the caterers Spiers and Pond began development of the site of the White Bear, a seventeenth-century posting inn. The inn was located on sloping ground stretching between Jermyn Street and Piccadilly Circus, known as Regent Circus. A competition was held for the design of a concert hall complex, with Thomas Verity winning out of 15 entries. He was commissioned to design a large restaurant, dining rooms, ballroom, and galleried concert hall in the basement. The frontage, which was the façade of the restaurant, showed a French Renaissance influence using Portland stone.

After the building work began, it was decided to change the concert hall into a theatre. The composers' names, which line the tiled staircases, were retained and can still be seen. The redesign placed the large Criterion Restaurant and dining rooms above the theatre, with a ballroom on the top floor.

When Spiers and Pond applied for a licence to operate, the authorities were unhappy because the theatre was underground and lit by gas, creating the risk of toxic fumes. The Metropolitan Board of Works had to vote twice before the necessary licence was issued, and fresh air had to be pumped into the auditorium to prevent the audience from being asphyxiated. It was not until October 1881, at the Savoy, that the first theatre was lit electrically.

In March 1883 the theatre closed for alterations demanded by the Metropolitan Board of Works. The pumping of fresh air into the ten year-old auditorium, some thirty feet below street level, was deemed unsatisfactory. Thomas Verity supervised the alterations (Verity by now had also designed the Comedy Theatre in 1881 and The Empire Theatre in 1882). The new direct access ventilation shaft meant cutting off a considerable portion of the adjoining Criterion Restaurant. New corridors were built, with several new exits. The auditorium was reconstructed and the stage re-equipped. The old dressing rooms were demolished and new ones built. Most importantly, electricity was installed. *Dramatic Notes* (1884) states "The Criterion Theatre, transformed from a stuffy band-box to a convenient, handsome, and well ventilated house, reopened on April 16". Further alterations and redecorations took place in 1902-03, when the theatre was closed for seven months.

During World War II, the Criterion was requisitioned by the BBC - as an underground theatre it made an ideal studio safe from the London blitz - and light entertainment programmes were both recorded and broadcast live.

In the 1970s the Criterion site was proposed for redevelopment, which caused protest as people feared the theatre would be lost. In February 1975 the GLC Planning Committee approved the development on the condition that the theatre continued in full, continuous and uninterrupted use while the redevelopments took place. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s the row increased and the Equity Save London's Theatre Committee organised high profile demonstrations (campaigners included John Gielgud, Edward Woodward, Diana Rigg, Robert Morley and Prunella Scales) as they feared that the theatre would still be lost.

In the 1980s, the theatre building was purchased by Robert Bourne, a property tycoon and patron of the arts, and his wife, theatre impresario Sally Greene. The couple set up the Criterion Theatre Trust, a registered charity created to protect the Criterion's future. From April 1989 to October 1992 the theatre was closed whilst it underwent major renovations both in the back and front of the house. During that time, the block that exists today was built around it. After the refurbishment, the Criterion retains a well-preserved Victorian auditorium.

The Criterion's current production is *The 39 Steps*, adapted for the stage by Patrick Barlow from John Buchan's novel, filmed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1935.

14. Prince of Wales



The **Prince of Wales Theatre** is a West End theatre on Coventry Street, near Leicester Square in the City of Westminster. It was established in 1884 and rebuilt in 1937, and extensively refurbished in 2004 by Sir Cameron Mackintosh, its current owner.

The first theatre on the site opened in January 1884 when C.J. Phipps built the **Prince's Theatre** for actor-manager Edgar Bruce. It was a traditional three-tier theatre, seating just over 1,000 people. The theatre was renamed the "Prince of Wales Theatre" in 1886 after the future Edward VII. Located between Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square, the theatre was favourably situated to attract theatregoers.

After 50 years, the theatre's 800 seats were deemed insufficient for productions of the day, and it was demolished. On 17 June 1937, Gracie Fields sang to the workmen as she laid the foundation stone of the new Art Deco-decorated theatre, designed by Robert Cromie, and the theatre opened on 27 October that year. The new theatre's seating capacity was about 1,100, and it had a larger stage and improved facilities for both the artists and the public, including a large, stylish

stalls bar (the bar itself was 14 metres long), complete with dance floor. The theatre was Grade II listed by English Heritage in April 1999.

Refurbishment was carried out in 2004 to increase the seating capacity slightly to 1,160 seats and to modernise the theatre's facilities. New bars were added, the auditorium completely rebuilt, the backstage areas refurbished and the theatre's famous tower and exterior completely gutted and refurbished with new LED lighting and a crisp modern finish.

The theatre re-opened with its present show, ABBA's musical *Mamma Mia!* on 16 April 2004. On 18 August 2007, *Mamma Mia!* became the longest running show ever at the Prince of Wales, overtaking the previous record held by *Aspects of Love* with 1,326 performances at the venue and counting. The production marked another landmark on Thursday 23 August 2007, celebrating its 3,500th performance since its 1999 world premiere at the Prince Edward Theatre in Old Compton Street, London.

15. Comedy Theatre



The **Comedy Theatre**, is a West End theatre, and opened on Panton Street in the City of Westminster, on 15 October 1881, as the *Royal Comedy Theatre*. It was designed by Thomas Verity and built in just six months in painted (stucco) stone and brick. By 1884 it was known as just the *Comedy Theatre*. In the mid-1950s the theatre went under major reconstruction and re-opened in December 1955, the auditorium remains essentially that of 1881, with three tiers of horseshoe shaped balconies. It

The theatre is a part of the Ambassador Theatre Group.

The theatre was Grade II listed by English Heritage in June 1972.

16. Jermyn Theatre



Jermyn Street Theatre is a performance venue situated on Jermyn Street, London. It has a capacity of 70.

Formerly a restaurant, under the leadership of Howard Jameson, it was transformed into a 70-seat studio theatre right in the heart of London's West End. It opened in August 1994.

In their mission statement, the theatre states that their aim is "to provide talented new actors, directors and writers with the opportunity to be recognised and given a platform in the best West End Studio Theatre."

Its patron is Princess Michael of Kent.

The Theatre is located at 16b Jermyn Street, close to the Criterion Theatre. Its closest tube station is Piccadilly Circus.

17. Her Majesty's Theatre



Her Majesty's Theatre is a West End theatre, in Haymarket, City of Westminster, London. The present building was designed by Charles J. Phipps and was constructed in 1897 for actor-manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree, who established the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art at the theatre. In the early decades of the 20th century

The name of the theatre changes with the sex of the monarch. It first became the **King's Theatre** in 1714 on the accession of George I. Most recently, the theatre was known as **His Majesty's Theatre** from 1901 to 1952, and it became Her Majesty's on the accession of Elizabeth II. The theatre's capacity is 1,216 seats, and the building was Grade II* listed by English Heritage in January 1970. Really Useful Group Theatres owned the

theatre building from 2000 until 2010 when it was sold to the **Grade-Linnit consortium; the land beneath it is on a long-term lease from the Crown Estate.**

The venue was also the setting for the popular ITV1 variety series *Live From Her Majesty's*, which ran on television from 1982 to 1985. It was on this programme that Tommy Cooper collapsed and died on stage in 1984.

18. Theatre Royal Haymarket



Theatre Royal Haymarket or **Haymarket Theatre** or the **Little Theatre** is a West End theatre in The Haymarket in the City of Westminster which dates back to 1720, making it the third-oldest London playhouse still in use. Samuel Foote acquired the lease in 1747, and in 1766 he gained a royal patent to play legitimate drama (meaning spoken drama, as opposed to opera, concerts or plays with music) in the summer months. The original building was a little further north in the same street. It has been at its current location since 1821, when it was redesigned by John Nash. It is a Grade I listed building, with a seating capacity of 888. The freehold of the theatre is owned by the Crown Estate.

In 1994 the theatre closed for a £1.3 million refurbishment, re-opening later that year with *An Evening with Peter Ustinov*. The current theatre has a seating capacity of 888 on 4 levels.

19. Trafalgar Studios



Trafalgar Studios, formerly **The Whitehall Theatre** until 2004, is near Trafalgar Square, in the City of Westminster, London.

Also known as **Trafalgar Studios at the Whitehall Theatre** in honour of its former incarnation, the building consists of two intimate theatres designed by architects Tim Foster and John Muir. Studio 1, the larger of the two spaces with 380 seats, opened on June 3, 2004 with the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *Othello*. Studio 2, with 100 seats, opened in October 2005

In 1969 a nude revue called *Pyjama Tops* took over the venue and remained for five years, after which the building was shuttered. After considerable refurbishment that retained most of its Art Deco features, it reopened on March 5, 1986 with a successful revival of J. B. Priestley's *When We Are Married*.

Between 1997 and 1999, the theatre was converted into a television and radio studio used primarily to broadcast Jack Docherty's popular talk show and BBC Radio 4's *Live from London*. It returned to theatrical use, with such productions as *Three Sisters*, *Puppetry of the Penis*, *"Art"*, *Rat Pack Confidential*, and *Sing-a-Long-a-ABBA*, before its owner, the Ambassador Theatre Group, announced the building would be reconfigured and reopen with a new name.

The theatre was Grade II listed by English Heritage in December 1996. The Theatre is set out in two studios,

Studio 1 380 seats
Studio 2 100 seats

20. The Playhouse



The Playhouse Theatre is a West End theatre in the City of Westminster, located in Northumberland Avenue, near Trafalgar Square. The Theatre was built by F. H. Fowler and Hill with a seating capacity of 1,200. It was rebuilt in 1907 and still retains its original substage machinery. Its current seating capacity is 786.

Built by Sefton Henry Parry as the **Royal Avenue Theatre**, it opened on 11 March 1882 with 679 seats.

The theatre was rebuilt in 1905 to the designs of Blow and Billerey. During the work, part of the roof of the adjacent Charing Cross railway station collapsed. The roof and girders fell across the train lines but part of the

station western wall also fell and crashed through the roof and wall of the theatre. This resulted in the deaths of three people in the station, and three workmen on the theatre site and injuries to many more. The theatre was repaired and re-opened as **The Playhouse** on 28 January 1907 with a one-act play called *The Drums of Oudh* and a play called *Toddles*, by Tristan Bernard and Andre Godferneaux. The new theatre had a smaller seating capacity of 679.

In 1996 the theatre was closed for complete refurbishment under the direction of English Heritage; reopening in 1997 with Mr. Sulaiman Cole's production and the West End première of Anton Chekhov's *The Wood Demon*. However, the auditorium is luxuriously decorated, with grandiose murals, caryatids, golden pillars, carved balustrades, and shining gold decoration.

The theatre has a seating capacity for 786 on 3 level and is Grade 11 listed.

21. Adelphi



The **Adelphi Theatre** is a 1500-seat West End theatre, located on the Strand in the City of Westminster. The present building is the fourth on the site. The theatre has specialised in comedy and musical theatre, and today it is a receiving house for a variety of productions, including many musicals. The theatre was Grade II listed for historical preservation on 1 December 1987.

On 18 October 1819, the theatre reopened under its present name, which was adopted from the Adelphi Buildings opposite.

The old theatre was demolished, and on 26 December 1858, *The New Adelphi* was opened and was considered an improvement on the cramped circumstances of the original, which had been described as a "hasty conversion from a tavern hall, permanently kept in its provisional state". The new theatre could seat 1,500 people, with standing room for another 500. The interior was lighted by a *Stroud's Patent Sun Lamp*, a brilliant array of gas mantles passed through a chandelier of cut-glass.

On 11 September 1901, the third theatre was opened as the Century Theatre, although the name reverted in 1904. This theatre was built by Frank Kirk to the design of Ernest Runtz. George Edwardes, the dean of London musical theatre, took over management of the theatre in 1908.

The present Adelphi opened on 3 December 1930, redesigned in the Art Deco style by Ernest Schaufelberg. It was named the 'Royal Adelphi Theatre'. In 1993, Andrew Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Group purchased the theatre and completely refurbished it prior to the opening of his adaptation of *Sunset Boulevard*. The 1998 video of Lloyd Webber's musical *Cats* was filmed at the theatre.

22. Vaudeville



The **Vaudeville Theatre** is a West End theatre on The Strand in the City of Westminster. As the name suggests, the theatre held mostly vaudeville shows and musical revues in its early days. It opened in 1870 and was rebuilt twice, although each new building retained elements of the previous structure. The current building opened in 1926, and the capacity is now 690 seats. Rare thunder drum and lightning sheets, together with other early stage mechanisms survive in the theatre.

The theatre was designed by prolific architect C. J. Phipps, decorated in a Romanesque style by George Gordon, and opened on April 16, 1870. A notable innovation was the concealed footlights, which would shut off if the glass in front of them was broken. The owner, William Wybrow Robertson, had run a failing billiard hall on the site but saw more opportunity in theatre. He leased the new theatre to three actors, Thomas Thorne, David James, and H. J. Montague. The original theatre stood behind two houses on the Strand, and the entrance was through a labyrinth of small corridors. It had a seating capacity of 1,046, rising in a horseshoe, over a pit and three galleries. The cramped site meant that facilities front and backstage was limited.

The theatre closed on 7 November 1925, when the interior was completely reconstructed to designs by Robert Atkins. The auditorium was changed from a horseshoe shape to the current rectangle shape, and the seating capacity reduced to just over 700. A new dressing room block with an ornate boardroom extended the site to Maiden Lane. The theatre reopened on 23 February 1926, with a popular revue by Archie de Bear called R.S.V.P., notable because its final rehearsal was broadcast by the BBC.

23. Savoy



The Savoy Theatre is a West End theatre located in the Strand in the City of Westminster, London, England. The theatre opened on 10 October 1881 and was built by Richard D'Oyly Carte on the site of the old Savoy Palace as a showcase for the popular series of comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, which became known as the Savoy Operas as a result.

The theatre was the first theatre, and the first public building in the world, to be lit entirely by electricity. In 1889, Richard D'Oyly Carte built the Savoy Hotel next to the theatre. For many years, the Savoy was the home of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, and it was run by the Carte family for over a century. Richard's son Rupert D'Oyly Carte rebuilt and modernised the theatre in 1929, and it was rebuilt again in 1993 following a fire. It is a Grade II listed building.

Design of the theatre was given to C. J. Phipps. The builders were Patman and Fotheringham. Plans were drawn up and executed with speed and efficiency. Nonetheless, the advertised opening date had to be put back several times while the innovative electrical work was completed. The Savoy finally opened on 10

October 1881. Carte had at one time intended to call it the Beaufort Theatre, but he announced in a letter to The Daily Telegraph in 1881, "On the Savoy Manor there was formerly a theatre. I have used the ancient name as an appropriate title for the present one.

Sir Joseph Swan, inventor of the incandescent light bulb, supplied about 1,200 Swan incandescent lamps, and the lights were powered by a 120 horsepower generator on open land near the theatre. Carte explained why he had introduced electric light: "The greatest drawbacks to the enjoyment of the theatrical performances are, undoubtedly, the foul air and heat which pervade all theatres.

George Edwardes (later famous as manager of the Gaiety Theatre), introduced several innovations including numbered seating, free programme booklets, proper whisky in the bars, the "queue" system for the pit and gallery (an American idea) and a policy of no tipping for cloakroom or other services. Daily expenses at the theatre were about half the possible takings from ticket sales.

In 1903, the theatre closed and was reopened under the management of John Leigh and Edward Laurillard from February 1904 (beginning with a musical, *The Love Birds*) to December 1906.

On 3 June 1929, Carte closed the Savoy Theatre, and the interior was completely rebuilt to designs by Frank A. Tugwell with elaborate décor by Basil Ionides. The ceiling was painted to resemble an April sky; the walls, translucent gold on silver; the rows of stalls were all richly upholstered in different colours, and the curtain repeated the tones of the seating. Ionides said that he took the colour scheme from a bed of zinnias in Hyde Park. The entire floor space had been replanned: the old cloakrooms and bar at the back of the theatre were relocated to the side, and instead of 18 boxes there was now only one. The new auditorium had two tiers leaving three levels: stalls, dress, and upper circle. The capacity of the old house, originally 1,292, had been reduced to 986 by 1912, and the new theatre restored the capacity almost completely, with 1,200 seats. The new stage was 29 feet, 4 inches wide, by 29 feet, 6 inches deep.

The theatre reopened on 21 October 1929 with a new production of *The Gondoliers* designed by Charles Ricketts

While the theatre was being renovated in February 1990, a fire gutted the building, except for the stage and backstage areas. Tugwell's and Ionides's designs had been preserved, however, allowing the accurate restoration of the theatre under the direction of the architect Sir William Whitfield, Sir Hugh Wontner and the theatre's manager, Kevin Chapple. It reopened on 19 July 1993. The present theatre has a capacity of 1,158. During the renovation, an extra storey was added above the theatre that includes a health club for the hotel and a swimming pool above the stage. The reopened theatre was the venue for the World Chess Championship in 1993, won by Garry Kasparov.

24. Lyceum



The **Lyceum Theatre** is a 2,000-seat West End theatre located in the City of Westminster, on Wellington Street, just off the Strand. There has been a theatre with this name in the locality since 1765, and the present site opened on 14 July 1834 to a design by Samuel Beazley. The building was unique in that it had a balcony overhanging the circle. It was built by the partnership of Peto & Grissell.

The present building retains Beazley's façade and grand portico, but the theatre behind is substantially different from the 1904 design of Bertie Crewe, restored to theatrical use in 1996 by Holohan Architects, after a long period of use as a Mecca Ballroom.

The Old Lyceum Theatre was first built in 1765 on an adjacent site. In 1834, the present house opened slightly to the west, with a frontage on Wellington Street, under the name "**Theatre Royal Lyceum and English Opera House**". The theatre was again designed by Beazley.

After being bought by Thomas Barrasford, in 1904 the theatre was rebuilt and richly ornamented in rococo style by Bertie Crewe, retaining only the façade and portico of the original building. The theatre presented music hall and variety, in an attempt to compete with the Palace Theatre and the new Stoll built London Coliseum, but this was not a success, and the theatre soon returned to presenting drama. In 1919, additional minor alterations to the theatre were made by Edward Jones.

In 1939, the London City Council bought the building, with plans to demolish it to make room for road improvement. The road improvement plans collapsed, and after the war, in 1951, it was converted to a huge ballroom and reopened by Matthews and Sons, as the Lyceum Ballroom. A proposed redevelopment of Covent

Garden by the GLC in 1968 saw the theatre under threat, together with the nearby Vaudeville, Garrick, Adelphi and Duchess theatres. In 1973, the theatre gained protection and was Grade II* listed as Interior despite adaptation and alteration for present ballroom use retains [a] substantial part of Crewe's work

The theatre went dark in 1986, after the National Theatre's promenade performances (in 1985) of Bill Bryden's adaptation of the Mysteries trilogy. Brent Walker leased the theatre during this time but later gave up his lease, and in 1996 it was restored and reconverted into a theatre for large-scale musicals or opera (with a suitably large orchestra pit) by Holohan Architects.

25. Duchess



The **Duchess Theatre** is a West End theatre in the City of Westminster, London, located in Catherine Street, near Aldwych.

The theatre opened on 25 November 1929 and is one of the smallest 'proscenium arched' West End theatres. It has 479 seats on two levels.

The Duchess theatre was designed by Ewen Barr, and constructed by F. G. Minter Ltd, for Arthur Gibbons. The theatre is built with the stalls below street level, to overcome the scale of the site, and the rights of neighbours to Ancient lights. The theatre opened on 25 November 1929 with a play called Tunnel Trench by Hubert Griffith. The interior decoration scheme was

introduced in 1934 under the supervision of Mary Wyndham Lewis, wife of J. B. Priestley.

26. Novello



The Novello Theatre is a West End theatre on Aldwych, in the City of Westminster.

The theatre was built as one of a pair with the Aldwych Theatre on either side of the Waldorf Hotel, both being designed by W. G. R. Sprague. The theatre opened as the Waldorf Theatre on 22 May 1905, and was renamed the Strand Theatre, in 1909. It was again renamed as the Whitney Theatre, in 1911 before again becoming the Strand Theatre, in 1913. In 2005, the theatre was renamed by its owners (Delfont Mackintosh Theatres) the Novello Theatre in honour of Ivor Novello, who lived in a flat above the theatre from 1913 to 1951.

It transferred to the Garrick Theatre in 1982.

The theatre was extensively refurbished in 1930 and again in the early 1970s. It was Grade II listed by English Heritage on 20 July

1971. In 2005, its 100th anniversary year, the theatre was extensively refurbished. The current seating capacity is 1,105.

The theatre reopened on 8 December 2005 with the Royal Shakespeare Company's annual London season, playing to 4-week runs of *Twelfth Night*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*, concluding in March 2006.

27. Aldwych



The Aldwych Theatre is a West End theatre, located on Aldwych in the City of Westminster. The theatre was listed Grade II on 20 July 1971. Its seating capacity is 1,200.

Origins

The theatre was built as a pair with the Waldorf Theatre (now called the Novello Theatre), both being designed by W.G.R. Sprague. Funded by Seymour Hicks, in association with the American impresario Charles Frohman, and built by Walter Wallis of Balham. The ornate decorations were in the Georgian style. The theatre was constructed on the newly built Aldwych.

The Aldwych theatre opened on 23 December 1905 with a production of *Blue Bell*, a new version of Hicks' popular pantomime *Bluebell in Fairyland*.

On 15 December 1960, after intense speculation, it was announced that the Royal Shakespeare Company of Stratford-upon-Avon was to base its London productions in the Aldwych Theatre for the next three years. In fact they stayed for over 20 years, finally moving to the Barbican Arts Centre in 1982. Among many notable productions were *The Wars of the Roses*, *The Greeks*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*, as well as numerous Shakespeare productions.

During absences of the RSC, the theatre hosted the annual World Theatre Seasons, foreign plays in their original productions, invited to London by the theatre impresario Peter Daubeny, annually from 1964 to 1973 and finally in 1975. For his involvement with these Aldwych seasons, run without Arts Council or other official support, Daubeny won the Evening Standard special award in 1972.

In 1990-91, Joan Collins starred in *Private Lives* at the Aldwych. Other notable recent productions are listed below. The theatre is referred to in Julio Cortázar's short story *Instructions for John Howell* (*Instrucciones para John Howell*) in the anthology *All Fires the Fire* (*Todos los fuegos el fuego*).

Twenty-first century

Since 2000, the theatre has hosted a mixture of plays, comedies and musical theatre productions. Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Whistle Down the Wind* played until 2001, and *Fame* enjoyed an extended run from 2002 to 2006. Since then, the venue has hosted *Dancing in the Streets*, which subsequently moved to the Playhouse Theatre, and since September 2006 has been the home to the British musical version of *Dirty Dancing*.

Hauntings At Aldwych Theatre

The Aldwych Theatre is amongst the many theatres that are reported to be haunted.

28. Theatre Royal, Drury Lane



The **Theatre Royal, Drury Lane** is a West End theatre in Covent Garden, in the City of Westminster. The building standing today is the most recent in a line of four theatres at the same location dating back to 1663, making it the oldest London theatre. For its first two centuries, Drury Lane could "reasonably have claimed to be London's leading theatre", and thus one of the most important in the English-speaking world. For most of that time, it was one of a small handful of patent theatres, granted monopoly rights to the production of "legitimate" (meaning spoken plays, rather than opera, dance, concerts, or plays with music)¹ drama in London.

The first theatre on the location was built at the behest of Thomas Killigrew in the early years of the English Restoration. Actors appearing at this "Theatre Royal in Bridges Street" included Nell Gwyn and Charles Hart. It was destroyed by fire in 1672. Killigrew built a larger theatre in the same spot, designed by Sir Christopher Wren; renamed the "Theatre Royal in Drury Lane," it opened in 1674. This building lasted nearly 120 years, under leadership including Colley Cibber, David Garrick, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. The great Ulster Shakespearian actor Charles Macklin performed in this building. In 1791, under Sheridan's management, the building was demolished to make way for a larger theatre which opened in 1794. This enormous new Drury Lane survived just 15 years, burning down in 1809. The building that stands today opened in 1812. Today, the theatre is owned by composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and generally stages popular musical theatre. It is a Grade I listed building.

The present Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, designed by Benjamin Dean Wyatt on behalf of the committee led by Whitbread, opened on 10 October 1812. The new theatre made some concessions toward intimacy, seating 3,060 people, about 550 fewer than the earlier building (though this size is still considered an extremely large theatre). In 1820 the portico that still stands at the theatre's front entrance on Catherine Street was added, and in 1822, five years after gas lighting was installed, the interior underwent a significant remodelling. The colonnade running down the Russell Street side of the building was added in 1831.

The present building was Grade I listed by English Heritage in February 1958.

Drury Lane Theatre Royal Ghosts

Drury Lane has been called one of the world's most haunted theatres.¹ The appearance of almost any one of the handful of ghosts that are said to frequent the theatre signals good luck for an actor or production. The most famous ghost is the "Man in Grey", who appears dressed as a nobleman of the late 18th century: powdered hair beneath a tricorne hat, a dress jacket and cloak or cape, riding boots and a sword. Legend says that the Man in Grey is the ghost of a knife-stabbed man whose skeletal remains were found within a walled-up side passage in 1848.

29. Fortune



The **Fortune Theatre** is a 432 seat West End theatre in Russell Street, near Covent Garden, in the City of Westminster, built in 1922-4 by Ernest Schaufelberg for impresario Laurence Cowen. The façade is principally bush hammered concrete, with brick piers supporting the roof. The theatre is entered through bronze double doors, internally; there is a foyer of grey and red marble, with a beaten copper ticket booth. The theatre is situated next to Crown Court Church and opposite the Theatre Royal. It was the first theatre to be built in London after the end of World War I.

The theatre opened, as the **Fortune Thriller Theatre** on August 8, 1924, with *Sinners* by Lawrence Cowen. An author and playwright, Cowen commissioned the theatre in an Italianate style, that stands on the site of the old Albion Tavern, a public house that was frequented by Georgian and Victorian actors, the auditorium is believed to be the second smallest West End theatre. It was refurbished in 1960.

The theatre's famous figurine, Terpsichore (perched high above the entrance) was sculpted by M H Crichton of the Bromsgrove Guild, a noted company of artisans from Worcestershire.

The theatre was Grade II listed by English Heritage in May 1994. Since the demolition of the original Wembley Stadium, the theatre is now the oldest remaining public building designed wholly using concrete as a textured and exposed façade.

30. **Royal Opera House**



The **Royal Opera House** is an opera house and major performing arts venue in Covent Garden, central London. The large building is often referred to as simply "**Covent Garden**", after a previous use of the site of the opera house's original construction in 1732. It is the home of The Royal Opera, The Royal Ballet and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House. Originally called the Theatre Royal, it served primarily as a playhouse for the first hundred years of its history. In 1734, the first ballet was presented. A year later Handel's first season of operas began. Many of his operas and oratorios were specifically written for Covent Garden and had their premieres there.

The current building is the third theatre on the site following disastrous fires in 1808 and 1857. The façade, foyer and auditorium date from 1858, but almost every other element of the present complex dates from an extensive reconstruction in the 1990s. The

Royal Opera House seats 2,268 people and consists of four tiers of boxes and balconies and the amphitheatre gallery. The proscenium is 12.20 m wide and 14.80 m high. The main auditorium is a Grade 1 listed building, designed by Edward Middleton Barry, started in 1857 and the new building, which still remains as the nucleus of the present theatre, was built by Lucas Brothers and opened on 15 May 1858 with a performance of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*.

Several renovations had taken place to parts of the house in the 1960s, including improvements to the amphitheatre and an extension in the rear, but the theatre clearly needed a major overhaul. In 1975 the Labour government gave land adjacent to the Royal Opera House for a long-overdue modernisation, refurbishment and extension. By 1995, sufficient funds had been raised to enable the company to embark upon a major reconstruction of the building by Carillion, which took place between 1996 and 2000, under the chairmanship of Sir Angus Stirling. This involved the demolition of almost the whole site including several adjacent buildings to

make room for a major increase in the size of the complex. The auditorium itself remained, but well over half of the complex is new.

The design team was led by Jeremy Dixon and Edward Jones of Dixon Jones BDP as architects. The acoustic designers were Rob Harris and Jeremy Newton of Arup Acoustics. The building engineer was Arup.

The new building has the same traditional horseshoe-shaped auditorium as before, but with greatly improved technical, rehearsal, office and educational facilities, a new studio theatre called the Linbury Theatre, and much more public space. The inclusion of the adjacent old Floral Hall, long a part of the old Covent Garden Market but in general disrepair for many years, into the actual opera house created a new and extensive public gathering place.

31. Cambridge Theatre



The **Cambridge Theatre** is a West End theatre, on a corner site in Earlam Street facing Seven Dials, in the London Borough of Camden, built in 1929-30. It was designed by Wimperis, Simpson and Guthrie; interior partly by Serge Chermayeff, with interior bronze friezes by sculptor Anthony Gibbons Grinling¹. The theatre is built in steel and concrete and is notable for its elegant and clean lines of design. The theatre was refurbished in 1950—the original gold and silver décor was painted over in red, and candelabras and chandeliers were added. In 1987, in order to restore the original décor, the theatre was once again refurbished, this time by Carl Toms. The theatre has a circular entrance foyer, with Grinling's bronze frieze depicting nude figures in exercise poses, the theme continues into the main foyer, with dancing nudes, marble pilaster up lighters and concealed lighting.

The theatre, Grade II listed in January, 1999 is a rare, complete and early example of a London theatre adopting the moderne, expressionist style pioneered in Germany during the 1920s. It marked a conscious reaction to the design excesses of the music hall and contemporary cinemas. Theatres looked for a new style appropriate to the greater sophistication of their entertainment and found it in the Germanic moderne forms of simple shapes enlivened by concealed lighting, shiny

steelwork and touches of bright colour; this was not taken up by cinema designers until 1935.

32. New Ambassador



The **Ambassadors Theatre** (formerly the **New Ambassadors Theatre**), is a West End theatre located in West Street, near Cambridge Circus on the Charing Cross Road in the City of Westminster. It is one of the smallest of the West End theatres, seating a maximum of 195 people in the Dress Circle and 251 in the Stalls.

The theatre was, along with the adjacent St Martin's conceived by their architect, W.G.R. Sprague, as companions, born at the same time in 1913, but World War I interrupted the construction of the latter for three years. The Ambassadors was built with the intention of being an intimate, smaller theatre and is situated opposite the renowned restaurant The Ivy, favourite haunt of the theatrical elite.

The theatre was Grade II listed by English Heritage in March 1973.

On Wednesday 4th April 2007, it was announced that ATG had sold the venue to Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen, who named the venue The Ambassadors as it once was, and began an extensive programme of refurbishments.

33. St Martins



St Martin's Theatre is located in West Street, near Charing Cross Road, in the London Borough of Camden. It was designed as one of a pair of theatres with the Ambassadors Theatre by W.G.R. Sprague, in memoriam for the 9th Baron Willoughby de Broke.

Nurtured at an early age through amateur theatricals at Compton Verney, the family seat in Warwickshire, and later developed during the time he spent in London, both as an MP for Rugby, and as a member of the House of Lords. It was his intention to devote a chapter of his autobiography "The Passing Years" to drama, but he died before its completion. His interest was translated into action when in association with B.A. (Bertie) Meyer, who commissioned theatre architect

W.G.R. Sprague to design the St Martin's. Originally intended to be one of a pair with the adjacent Ambassadors which opened in 1913, the St Martin's debut was delayed by the outbreak of World War I: the first performance of Houpla took place on 23 November

Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap" transferred in March 1974 - it is still there, now holding a World Record. The theatre was Grade II listed by English Heritage in March 1973.

34. Wyndham's Theatre



Wyndham's Theatre one of two opened by the actor/manager Charles Wyndham (cp Criterion Theatre). Located on Charing Cross Road, in the City of Westminster, it was designed by W.G.R. Sprague about 1898, the architect of six other London theatres between then and 1916. It was designed to seat 759 patrons on three levels although later refurbishment changed it into four. The theatre was Grade II* listed by English Heritage in September 1960.

Wyndham had always dreamed of building a theatre of his own and through the admiration of a patron and the financial confidence of friends, he was able to realise his dream when Wyndham's Theatre opened on 16 November 1899, in the presence of the Prince Of Wales. The first play performed there was a revival of T. W. Robertson's David Garrick.

The blockbuster of the decade – Godspell - opened at Wyndham's in January 1972 and lasted to October 1974. The original cast included David Essex, Marti Webb and Jeremy Irons.

In May 2005, the theatre was taken over by Cameron Mackintosh's Delfont-Mackintosh Ltd. which began operations of the venue in September 2005. The theatre closed temporarily for final refurbishment works before reopening in September 2008.

35. Arts



The Arts Theatre is a theatre in Great Newport Street, in Westminster, Central London. It now operates as the West End's smallest commercial receiving house.

The Arts Theatre seats 350 in a two-tier basement auditorium. It opened on 20 April 1927 as a member's only club for the performance of unlicensed plays, thus avoiding theatre censorship by the Lord Chamberlain's office. It was one of a small number of committed, independent theatre companies, including the

Hampstead Everyman, the Gate Theatre Studio and the Q Theatre, which took risks by producing a diverse range of new and experimental plays, or plays that were thought to be commercially non-viable on the West-End stage. The theatrical producer Norman Marshall referred to these as 'The Other Theatre' in his 1947 book of the same name.

From 1967 to 1999, the Arts also became a home for The Unicorn children's theatre under the direction of its founder Caryl Jenner who took over the lease. Meanwhile adult performances continued in the evening, including Tom Stoppard's satirical double-bill, *Dirty Linen* and *Newfoundland* which, opening in June 1976, ran for four years at the Arts.

The theatre's lease was taken over by a consortium of UK and US producers in 2000, for a five-year period, and relaunched as a West End Theatre with the anniversary production of Julian Mitchell's play *Another Country*, directed by Stephen Henry. Notable productions during this time included *The Vagina Monologues* and *Closer to Heaven* the Jonathan Harvey/*Pet Shop Boys* Musical.

In 2011, the theatre was taken over by JJ Goodman, lead by Artistic Director Mig Kimpton. The Arts now operates as the West End's smallest commercial receiving house.

36. Garrick



The **Garrick Theatre** is a West End theatre, located on Charing Cross Road, in the City of Westminster. It opened on 24 April 1889 with *The Profligate*, a play by Arthur Wing Pinero. In its early years, it appears to have specialised in the performance of melodrama, and today the theatre is a receiving house for a variety of productions. The theatre is named for David Garrick, considered the most influential Shakespearean actor.

The Garrick Theatre was financed in 1889 by the playwright W. S. Gilbert, the author of over 75 plays, including the Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas. It was designed by Walter Emden, with C. J. Phipps brought in as a consultant to help with the planning on the difficult site, which included an underground river. Originally the theatre had 800 seats on 4 levels, but the gallery (top) level has since been closed and

the seating capacity reduced to 656.

A proposed redevelopment of Covent Garden by the GLC in 1968 saw the theatre under threat, together with the nearby Vaudeville, Adelphi, Lyceum and Duchess theatres. An active campaign by Equity, the Musicians' Union,

and theatre owners under the auspices of the Save London Theatres Campaign led to the abandonment of the scheme.

The gold leaf auditorium was restored in 1986 by the stage designer Carl Toms, and in 1997 the front façade was renovated.

In 1986, the Garrick was acquired by the Stoll Moss Group, and, in 2000, it became a Really Useful Theatre when Andrew Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Group and Bridgepoint Capital purchased Stoll Moss Theatres Ltd. In October 2005, Nica Burns and Max Weitzenhoffer purchased the Garrick Theatre, and it became one of five playhouses operating under their company name of Nimax Theatres Ltd, alongside the Lyric Theatre, Apollo Theatre, Vaudeville Theatre and Duchess Theatre. The interior retains many of its original features, and was Grade II listed by English Heritage in September 1960.

37. Coliseum Theatre



The London Coliseum (also known as the Coliseum Theatre) is an opera house and major performing venue on St. Martin's Lane, central London. It is one of London's largest and best equipped theatres and opened in 1904, designed by theatrical architect Frank Matcham (designer of the London Palladium), for impresario Oswald Stoll. Their ambition was to build the largest and finest 'People's palace of entertainment' of its age.

The theatre changed its name from the London Coliseum to the Coliseum Theatre between 1931 and 1968 when 651 performances of the musical comedy *White Horse Inn* started on 8 April 1931). It reverted to the original name when the Sadler's Wells Opera Company (having moved from Sadler's Wells Theatre) moved to the Coliseum in 1968. The Company changed its name to the English National Opera in 1974 and bought the freehold of the building for £12.8m.

From 16 June 1963 it became the second of London's three Cinerama Theatres, first showing the 3-strip version for the first 5 months, and then 70mm single strip film was shown until 22 May 1968 when it screened its final movie.

It underwent extensive renovations between 2000 and 2004 and has the widest proscenium arch in London as well as being one of the earliest to have electric lighting. It was built with a revolving stage although this was rarely used. The theatre retains many of its original features and was Grade II* listed by English Heritage in September 1960.^[2] The design team for the refurbishment was RHWL (architects), Arup Acoustics(acousticians) and Arup (building engineers).

The theatre hosted both the 2004 and 2006 Royal Variety Performances, in the presence of HRH the Prince of Wales.

38. Duke of York



The **Duke of York's Theatre** is a West End Theatre in St Martin's Lane, in the City of Westminster. It was built for Frank Wyatt and his wife, Violet Melnotte, who retained ownership of the theatre, until her death in 1935. It opened on 10 September 1892 as the **Trafalgar Square Theatre**, with *Wedding Eve*. The theatre, designed by architect Walter Emden became known as the **Trafalgar Theatre** in 1894 and the following year became the Duke of York's to honour the future King George V.

In the late 1970s the freehold of the theatre was purchased by Capital Radio and it closed in 1979 for refurbishment. It reopened in February 1980 and the first production under the patronage of Capital Radio was *Rose*, starring Glenda Jackson. The Ambassador Theatre Group bought the theatre in 1992 and this coincided with London's hottest show, The Royal Court's production of Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden*. A host of successes followed including

Richard O'Brien's *The Rocky Horror Show* (celebrating its 21st Birthday) and the hugely successful Royal Court Classics Season in 1995.

Today, the theatre is the London headquarters of the Ambassador Theatre Group, forming part of their portfolio of eight venues. It is also the producing offices of Sonia Friedman Productions, whose revival of *In Celebration* starring Hollywood leading man Orlando Bloom played until 15 September 2007. An updated version of Jonathan Larson's *Rent - The Musical*, titled '*Rent Remixed*', opened on 2 October 2007. Although initially booking until 5 April 2008, the production closed on 2 February 2008. The theatre was Grade II listed by English Heritage in September 1960.

39. Noel Coward



The **Noël Coward Theatre**, formerly known as the **Albery Theatre**, is a West End theatre on St. Martin's Lane in the City of Westminster. It opened on 12 March 1903 as the **New Theatre**, and was built by Sir Charles Wyndham behind Wyndham's Theatre which was completed in 1899. The building was designed by architect W.G.R. Sprague with an exterior in the Classical style and an interior in the Rococo style.

In 1973 it was renamed the **Albery Theatre** in tribute to the late Sir Bronson Albery who had presided as its manager for many years. Since September 2005, the theatre has been owned by Delfont-Mackintosh Ltd. It underwent major refurbishment in 2006, and was renamed the **Noël Coward Theatre** when it reopened for the London premiere of *Avenue Q* on 1 June 2006.

Noël Coward, one of Britain's greatest playwrights and actors, appeared in his own play, *I'll Leave It To You*, at the then New Theatre in 1920, the first West End production of one of his plays.

The theatre seats 872 patrons on four levels. The building is now a Grade II Listed structure.

40. Royal Court



The **Royal Court Theatre** is a non-commercial theatre on Sloane Square, in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It is noted for its contributions to modern theatre. In 1956 it was acquired by and is home to a resident company, the English Stage Company.

The first theatre on Lower George Street, off Sloane Square, was the converted Nonconformist **Ranelagh Chapel**, opened as a theatre in 1870 under the name **The New Chelsea Theatre**. Marie Litton became its manager in 1871, hiring Walter Emden to remodel the interior, and it was renamed the **Court Theatre**.

Further alterations were made in 1882 by Alexander Peebles, after which its capacity was 728 (including stalls and boxes, dress circle and balcony, amphitheatre, and gallery). After that, Arthur Cecil (who had joined the theatre's company in 1881) was co-manager of the theatre with John Clayton. The theatre closed on 22 July 1887 and was demolished.

The present building was built on the east side of Sloane Square, replacing the earlier building, and opened on 24 September 1888 as the

New Court Theatre. It was designed by Walter Emden and Bertie Crewe, constructed of fine red brick, moulded brick, and a stone facade in free Italianate style. It had a capacity of 841 in stalls, dress circle, amphitheatre, and gallery.

The interior was reconstructed by Robert Cromie, and the theatre re-opened in 1952, and the number of seats inside was decreased to less than 500 seats.

Though the main auditorium and the façade were attractive, the remainder of the building provided poor facilities for both audience and performers, and the stalls and understage often flooded throughout the 20th century. By the early 1990s, the theatre had deteriorated dangerously and was threatened with closure in 1995. The Royal Court received a grant of £16.2 million from the National Lottery and the Arts Council for redevelopment, and beginning in 1996, under the artistic directorship of Stephen Daldry, it was completely rebuilt, except for the façade and the intimate auditorium. The architects for this were Haworth Tompkins. The theatre reopened in February 2000, with the 380-seat Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, and the 85-seat studio theatre, now the Jerwood Theatre Upstairs. The theatre was Grade II listed in June 1972.

41. **Apollo Victoria**



The **Apollo Victoria Theatre** is a West End theatre, located on Wilton Road near Victoria station in the City of Westminster. Opened as a cinema and variety theatre, the Apollo Victoria became a venue for musical theatre, beginning with *The Sound of Music* in 1981, and including the long-running *Starlight Express*, from 1984 to 2002. The theatre is now the home of the musical *Wicked*.

The theatre was built by architects Ernest Wamsley Lewis and William Edward Trent in 1929 for Provincial Cinematograph Theatres, a part of the Gaumont British chain. The theatre was built with two identical façades on Wilton and Vauxhall Bridge Roads. Construction is principally of concrete, with strong horizontal banding along the exterior sides of the auditorium. By contrast the entrances feature a cantilevered canopy, and are framed by vertical channelling, with two black marble columns rising to the roof line. The entrance is simple, making use of chrome trimmings; this leads to a nautical themed interior in the original Art Deco style that makes extensive use of concealed lighting, decorated with scallop shells and columns that burst into sculptured fountains at the ceiling.

The theatre had 74 feet (22.6 m) by 24 feet (7.3 m) stage and was equipped with 10 dressing rooms and two suites for principals. The theatre was Grade II* listed on 28 June 1972.

Cinema and variety

The theatre opened as the New Victoria Cinema on 15 October 1930 with a film starring George Arlis in *Old English*, based on a stage play by John Galsworthy.¹ It was equipped with a Compton 3 manual 15 rank theatre organ, played on the opening night by Reginald Foort, and the theatre also staged variety shows.

The theatre is one of the largest in the West End, with a capacity is 2,305 including standing spaces. The theatre is owned by the Ambassador Theatre Group.

On October 10th 2010 the theatre celebrated its 80th birthday with a Gala Performance, featuring stars of productions past and present, including a reunion of *Starlight Express* performers.

42. Victoria Palace



Victoria Palace Theatre is a West End theatre in Victoria Street, in the City of Westminster, opposite Victoria Station.

The theatre began life as a small concert room above the stables of the Royal Standard Hotel, a small hotel and tavern built in 1832 at what was then 522 Stockbridge Terrace, on the site of the present theatre – not, as sometimes stated, on land where the train station now stands. The proprietor, John Moy, enlarged the building, and by 1850 it became known as **Moy's Music Hall**. Alfred Brown took it over in 1863, refurbished it, and renamed it the **Royal Standard Music Hall**.

The hotel was demolished in 1886, by which time the main line terminus, Victoria Station and its new Grosvenor Hotel, had transformed the area into a major transport hub. The railways were at this time building grand hotel structures at their termini, and Victoria was one of the first. Added to this were the integration of the electric underground system and the building of Victoria Street. The owner of the music hall, Thomas Dickey, had it rebuilt along more ambitious lines in 1886 by Richard Wake, retaining the name Royal Standard Music Hall.

The Royal Standard, was demolished in 1910, and in its place was built, at a cost of £12,000, the current theatre, The Victoria Palace. It was designed by prolific theatre architect Frank Matcham, and opened November 6, 1911.

The theatre has been owned by Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen since 1991. At the opening in 1911, a gilded statue of ballerina Anna Pavlova had been installed above the cupola of the theatre. This was taken down for its safety during World War II, and was lost. In 2006, a replica of the original statue was restored in its place.

43. Old Vic



The Old Vic is a theatre located just south-east of Waterloo Station in London on the corner of The Cut and Waterloo Road. Established in 1818 as the Royal Coburg Theatre, it was taken over by Emma Cons in 1880 when it was known formally as the Royal Victoria Hall. In 1898, a niece of Cons, Lilian Baylis assumed management and began a series of Shakespeare productions in 1914. The building was damaged in 1940 during air raids and it became a Grade II* listed building in 1951 after it reopened.

It was also the name of a repertory company that was based at the theatre. The company formed the core of the National Theatre of Great Britain on its formation in 1963, under Laurence Olivier. The National Theatre remained at the Old Vic until new premises were constructed on the South Bank, opening in 1976. It underwent complete refurbishment in 1985 and in 2003, American actor Kevin Spacey was appointed as new artistic director of the Old Vic Theatre Company which received considerable media attention.

The Old Vic was damaged badly during the Blitz, and the war-depleted company spent all its time touring, based in Burnley, Lancashire at the Victoria Theatre during the years 1940 to 1943. In 1944, the company was re-established in London with Ralph Richardson and Laurence Olivier as its stars, performing mainly at the New Theatre (now the Noël Coward Theatre) until the Old Vic was ready to re-open in 1950. In 1946, an offshoot of the company was established in Bristol as the Bristol Old Vic.

After the departure of the NT, the Old Vic continued as a home for classic and new drama, and was significantly restored under the ownership of Toronto department-store entrepreneur 'Honest Ed' Mirvish in 1985. In 1998, the building was bought by a new charitable trust, The Old Vic Theatre Trust 2000. In 2000, the production company Criterion Productions was renamed Old Vic Productions plc, though relatively few of its productions are at the Old Vic theatre.

44. Young Vic



The Young Vic is a theatre on The Cut, located near the South Bank, in the London Borough of Lambeth. It specialises in giving opportunities to young actors and directors. The theatre is publicly subsidised and has a high artistic reputation. Playwright David Lan has been the theatre's artistic director since 2000. Its philosophy is to "produce great plays for great audiences, now and in the future".

Frank Dunlop completed creation of the theatre venue in 1970, a breeze-block building in The Cut constructed out of a former butchers' shop and an adjacent bomb-site. It was intended to last for five years, but has become permanent. The auditorium, with a thrust stage, has a capacity of around 500 but this can vary depending on the configuration of the stage for each production.

In addition to the Young Vic's main house, there are now two smaller theatre spaces. The Maria, named after theatre designer Maria Bjornson, is the larger of the two with a capacity of 150. The Clare, named after the former artistic director of the Sheffield Crucible, Clare Venables, seats 70. Like the main house, both smaller theatres have flexible seating configurations which can be arranged to suit the production design. In all of the Young Vic's theatres, seating is unreserved with the actors performing in close proximity to the audience.

A memorial in the theatre's auditorium commemorates the 54 people killed in 1941 while sheltering in the cellars of the former building on the site, during The Blitz.

In 2003, the Young Vic launched a campaign to raise £12.5 million for a major reconstruction of its building and closed in 2004 for work to start.

Designed by architects Haworth Tompkins - also known for their refurbishment of the Royal Court Theatre, Regent's Park Open-Air Theatre, and two temporary venues for the Almeida - and with Jane Wernick Associates as the structural engineers, and consulting engineers Max Fordham LLP designing the building services, the refurbishment was completed in October 2006.

The main auditorium has been left intact, but refurbished and technically enhanced. The butchers' shop has also been retained as the main entrance to the building and also the box office.

The remainder of the 1970s structure has been rebuilt to provide new foyers, dressing rooms, two studio theatres, and workshop spaces. An award of £5 million was received from the Arts Council of England.

The Young Vic re-opened on 11 October 2006, with a production of the community opera Tobias and the Angel; with music by Jonathan Dove and a libretto by David Lane,

On 16 May 2007, the refurbished Young Vic won the RIBA London Building of the Year Award. Following this award, the Young Vic was also short-listed for the RIBA Stirling Prize on 27 July 2007.

45. National



The Royal National Theatre (generally known as the **National Theatre** and commonly as **The National**) in London is one of the United Kingdom's two most prominent publicly funded theatre companies, alongside the Royal Shakespeare Company. Internationally, it is styled the National Theatre of Great Britain.

From its foundation in 1963 until 1976, the company was based at the Old Vic theatre in Waterloo. The current building was designed by architects Sir Denys Lasdun and Peter Softley and contains three stages, which opened individually between 1976 and 1977. It is located next to the Thames in the South Bank area of central London.

Since 1988, the theatre has been permitted to call itself the **Royal National Theatre**, but the full title is rarely used. The theatre presents a varied programme, including Shakespeare and other international classic drama; and new plays by contemporary playwrights. Each auditorium in the theatre can run up to three shows in repertoire, thus further widening the number of plays which can be put on during any one season.

In the 2009-2010 season, the theatre began National Theatre Live (NTLive!), a program of simulcasts of live productions to movie theatre venues in other cities, first in the United Kingdom and then internationally. The first season, it broadcast productions of three plays. In the 2010-2011 season, it is adding broadcast productions by other companies, in partnership with Complicite and Donmar Warehouse.

The NT has an annual turnover of approximately £54 million (in 2008–09). Earned income made up approximately 54% of this total (34% from ticket sales and 20% as revenue from the restaurants, bookshops, etc.). Support from the Arts Council and a number of smaller government grants provided 35% of this income, and the remaining 11% came from a mixture of private support from companies, individuals, trusts and foundations.

46. Globe



The **Globe Theatre** was a theatre in London associated with William Shakespeare. It was built in 1599 by Shakespeare's playing company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and was destroyed by fire on 29 June 1613.¹ A second Globe Theatre was built on the same site by June 1614 and closed in 1642.

A modern reconstruction of the Globe, named "Shakespeare's Globe", opened in 1997 approximately 230 metres (750 ft) from the site of the original theatre.

Examination of old property records has identified the plot of land occupied by the Globe as extending from the west side of modern-day Southwark Bridge Road eastwards as far as

Porter Street and from Park Street southwards as far as the back of Gatehouse Square. The precise location of the building however, remained unknown until a small part of the foundations, including one original pier base, was discovered in 1989 beneath the car park at the rear of Anchor Terrace on Park Street.¹ The shape of the foundations is now replicated on the surface. As the majority of the foundations lies beneath 67—70 Anchor Terrace, a listed building, no further excavations have been permitted.

History

The Globe was owned by actors who were also shareholders in Lord Chamberlain's Men. Two of the six Globe shareholders, Richard Burbage and his brother Cuthbert Burbage, owned double shares of the whole, or 25% each; the other four men, Shakespeare, John Heminges, Augustine Phillips, and Thomas Pope, owned a single share, or 12.5%. (Originally William Kempe was intended to be the seventh partner, but he sold out his share to the four minority sharers, leaving them with more than the originally planned 10%). These initial proportions changed over time as new sharers were added. Shakespeare's share diminished from 1/8 to 1/14, or roughly 7%, over the course of his career.

The Globe was built in 1599 using timber from an earlier theatre, The Theatre, which had been built by Richard Burbage's father, James Burbage, in Shoreditch in 1576. The Burbages originally had a 21-year lease of the site on which The Theatre was built but owned the building outright. However, the landlord, Giles Allen, claimed that the building had become his with the expiry of the lease. On 28 December 1598, while Allen was celebrating Christmas at his country home, carpenter Peter Street, supported by the players and their friends, dismantled The Theatre beam by beam and transported it to Street's waterfront warehouse near Bridewell. With the onset of more favourable weather in the following spring, the material was ferried over the Thames to reconstruct it as The Globe on some marshy gardens to the south of Maiden Lane, Southwark. The new theatre was larger than the

building it replaced, with the older timbers being reused as part of the new structure; the Globe was not merely the old Theatre newly set up at Bankside.

On 29 June 1613 the Globe Theatre went up in flames during a performance of *Henry the Eighth*. A theatrical cannon, set off during the performance, misfired, igniting the wooden beams and thatching. According to one of the few surviving documents of the event, no one was hurt except a man whose burning breeches were put out with a bottle of ale. It was rebuilt in the following year.

Like all the other theatres in London, the Globe was closed down by the Puritans in 1642. It was pulled down in 1644, or slightly later—the commonly cited document dating the act to 15 April 1644 has been identified as a probable forgery—to make room for tenements.

Layout

The Globe's actual dimensions are unknown, but its shape and size can be approximated from scholarly inquiry over the last two centuries. The evidence suggests that it was a three-storey, open-air amphitheatre approximately 100 feet (30 m) in diameter that could house up to 3,000 spectators. The Globe is shown as round on Wenceslas Hollar's sketch of the building, later incorporated into his engraved "Long View" of London in 1647. However, in 1988-89, the uncovering of a small part of the Globe's foundation suggested that it was a polygon of 20 sides.

At the base of the stage, there was an area called the pit, (or, harking back to the old inn-yards, yard) where, for a penny, people (the "groundlings") would stand on the rush-strewn earthen floor to watch the performance. During the excavation of the Globe in 1989 a layer of nutshells was found, pressed into the dirt flooring so as to form a new surface layer. Around the yard were three levels of stadium-style seats, which were more expensive than standing room.

A rectangular stage platform, also known as an 'apron stage', thrust out into the middle of the open-air yard. The stage measured approximately 43 feet (13.1 m) in width, 27 feet (8.2 m) in depth and was raised about 5 feet (1.5 m) off the ground. On this stage, there was a trap door for use by performers to enter from the "cellarage" area beneath the stage.

Large columns on either side of the stage supported a roof over the rear portion of the stage. The ceiling under this roof was called the "heavens," and was painted with clouds and the sky a trap door in the heavens enabled performers to descend using some form of rope and harness. The back wall of the stage had two or three doors on the main level, with a curtained inner stage in the centre, perhaps (although not all scholars agree about the existence of this supposed "inner below"),¹ and a balcony above it. The doors entered into the "tiring house" (backstage area) where the actors dressed and awaited their entrances. The floors above could have been used to store costumes and props and as management offices. The balcony housed the musicians and could also be used for scenes requiring an upper space, such as the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. Rush matting covered the stage, although this may only have been used if the setting of the play demanded it.

Motto

The name of the Globe supposedly alludes to the Latin tag *totus mundus agit histrionem*—all the world plays the actor—in turn derived from *quod fere totus mundus exerceat histrionem*—because almost the whole world are players—from Petronius, which had wide circulation in England in the Burbages' time. *Totus mundus agit histrionem* was, according to this explanation, therefore adopted as the theatre's motto. It seems likely, however, that the link between the saying and the Globe was made only later, originating with the industrious early Shakespeare biographer William Oldys, who claimed as his source a private manuscript to which he once had access. This was repeated in good faith by his literary executor George Stevens, but the tale is now thought "suspicious".

47. Barbican



Barbican Centre is considered the largest performing arts centre in Europe. Located in the north of the City of London, England, in the heart of the Barbican Estate, the Centre hosts classical and contemporary music concerts, theatre performances, film screenings and art exhibitions. It also houses a library, three restaurants, and a conservatory. The London Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Symphony Orchestra are based in the Barbican Centre's concert hall.

The Barbican Centre is owned, funded, and managed by the City of London Corporation, the third-largest arts funder in the United Kingdom. It was built as the city's gift to the nation at a cost of £161 million (equivalent to £400 million in 2007), and opened by Queen Elizabeth II on March 3, 1982.

The Centre had a long development period, only opening long after the surrounding Barbican Estate housing complex had been built. It is situated in an area which was badly bombed during World War II.

The Centre, designed by Chamberlin, Powell and Bon in the Brutalist style, has a complex multi-level layout with numerous entrances. Lines painted on the ground help would-be audience members avoid getting lost on the walkways of the Barbican Housing Estate on the way to the Centre. The Centre's design – a concrete ziggurat – has always been controversial and divides opinion. It was voted "London's ugliest building" in a Grey London poll in September 2003¹.

In September 2001, arts minister Tessa Blackstone announced in that the Barbican complex was to be a Grade II listed building. It has been designated a site of special architectural interest for its scale, its cohesion and the ambition of the project. The same architectural practice also designed the Barbican Housing Estate and the nearby Golden Lane Estate. Project architect John Honer later worked on the British Library at St Pancras – a red brick ziggurat.

In the mid-1990s a cosmetic improvement scheme by Theo Crosby, of the Pentagram design studio, added statues and decorative features reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts movement. In 2005-6, the Centre underwent a more significant refurbishment, designed by architects Allford Hall Monaghan Morris, which improved circulation and introduced bold signage in a style in keeping with the Centre's original 1970s Brutalist architecture. That improvement scheme added an internal bridge linking the Silk Street foyer area with the lakeside foyer area. The Centre's Silk Street entrance, previously dominated by an access for vehicles, was modified to give better pedestrian access. The scheme included removing most of the mid-1990s embellishments.

Outside, the main focal point of the Centre is the lake and its neighbouring terrace. The theatre's fly tower has been surrounded by glass and made into a spectacular high-level conservatory. The Barbican Hall's acoustic has also been controversial: some praised it as attractively warm, but others found it too dry for large-scale orchestral performance.

In 1994, Chicago acoustician Larry Kirkegaard oversaw a £500,000 acoustic re-engineering of the hall "producing a perceptible improvement in echo control and sound absorption", music critic Norman Lebrecht wrote in October 2000 – and returned in 2001 to rip out the stage canopy and drop adjustable acoustic reflectors, designed by Caruso St John, from the ceiling, as part of a £7.5 mn refurbishment of the hall. Art music magazine *Gramophone* still complained about "the relative dryness of the Barbican acoustic" in August 2007.

The theatre was built as the London home of the Royal Shakespeare Company, which was involved in the design, but the RSC left in 2002 after a series of alleged poor seasons and because the then artistic director, Adrian Noble, wanted to develop the company's touring performances. The theatre's response was to extend its existing six-month season of international productions, Barbican International Theatre Event, to the whole year.

The Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the City of London's Barbican Library, neither part of the centre, are also on the site. The Museum of London, is nearby at Aldersgate, and is also within the Barbican Estate

48. Sadlers Wells



Sadler's Wells Theatre is a major performing arts venue located in Rosebery Avenue, Clerkenwell in the London Borough of Islington. The present day theatre is the most recent of six theatres that have existed on the same site since 1683. The building which stands today consists of two performance spaces, the 1,500 seat main auditorium and the Lilian Baylis Studio, with extensive rehearsal rooms and technical facilities also housed within the site. Sadler's Wells is recognised as one of the United Kingdom's foremost dance venues and producing houses, with a number of associated artists and companies who produce original works for the theatre. Sadler's Wells is also responsible for the management of the Peacock Theatre in the West End.

Richard Sadler opened a "Musick House" in 1683, the second public theatre opened in London after the Restoration. The name Sadler's Wells originates from his name and the rediscovery of monastic springs^[1] on his property. The well water being thought to have medicinal properties, Sadler was prompted to claim that drinking the water from the wells would be effective against "dropsy, jaundice, scurvy, green sickness and other distempers to which females are liable – ulcers, fits of the mother, virgin's fever and hypochondriacal distemper".

The current theatre opened on 11 October 1998 with a performance by Rambert Dance Company of *Iolanthe* with sets designed by Derek Jarman and Laurence Bennett. The £54 million project was one of the first projects to receive funding from the National Lottery– which contributed £42 million. The new design gave a stage which was wider and deeper and able to accommodate much larger companies and productions than the one it replaced. A new layout to the auditorium accommodated more seats. An extension at the side of the building provided a new ticket office and foyers rising to the full height of the theatre, provided easier audience access to all levels and included bars, cafes and exhibition spaces. As well as the 1,500 seat main auditorium, Sadler's Wells also has a base at the Peacock Theatre near Aldwych. The rebuilt theatre retains the Grade II listing applied to the former theatre in 1950.^[4] It also retains access to the remains of the historic wells that still lie beneath the theatre. The architect was RHWL, the acoustic consultant was Arup Acoustics.

49. Hammersmith Apollo



Hammersmith Apollo (styled **HMV Hammersmith Apollo** since 2009 in a name deal with the owners MAMA Group) is a major entertainment venue located in Hammersmith, London. Designed by Robert Cromie in Art Deco style, it opened in 1932 as the **Gaumont Palace** cinema, being re-named the **Hammersmith Odeon** in 1962. In 2007, the building was purchased by the MAMA Group, who were taken over by the HMV Group in 2010.

The venue was opened in 1932 as the **Gaumont Palace** cinema, Hammersmith and seated over 3,500 people. It was designed by Robert Cromie in the Art Deco style.

In 1962, the building was re-named the **Hammersmith Odeon**, a name many people still use for the venue along with the phonetic abbreviation "**Hammy-O**". The venue was later refurbished and re-named the **Labatt's Apollo** following a sponsorship deal. Musical Theatre Star Michael Ball was the last person to play Hammersmith when it was named 'Odeon' and the first person to play following its renaming as the 'Apollo', both during his 1993 sell out tour.

In the early 1990s, it was again re-named the **Hammersmith Apollo**. It became a Grade II listed building in 1990 and was upgraded to Grade II* status in 2005.

In 2002, the venue was again re-named, this time to the **Carling Apollo** after another brewery struck a deal with the owners, US-based Clear Channel Entertainment (spun off as Live Nation (Venues) UK Ltd in 2005).

In 2006, the venue reverted to its former name, the Hammersmith Apollo. Around this time the stalls seats were made removable and now some concerts have full seating whilst others have standing only in the stalls. In the latter format the Apollo can accommodate around 5,000 people.

In 2007, the original 1932 Compton pipe organ, still present from the building's days as a cinema, was restored. The building then changed hands and was bought by the MAMA Group.

50. Bloomsbury



The **Bloomsbury Theatre** is a theatre on Gordon Street, Bloomsbury, in the London Borough of Camden, owned by University College London.

The Theatre has a seating capacity of 535 and offers a professional programme of innovative music, drama, comedy and dance all year round.

Funded by a UGC grant and a considerable private donation, the theatre was opened in 1968 as the **Collegiate Theatre**, and was renamed the **Bloomsbury Theatre** in 1982. Between 2001 and 2008, the theatre was known as **The UCL Bloomsbury**, to emphasise links with UCL, who use it for student productions 12 weeks a year. The Bloomsbury Theatre recently returned to the logo

designed by cartoonist Gerald Scarfe which it had used for nearly twenty years until 2001.

The theatre building also provides access to the UCL Union Fitness Centre and Clubs and Societies Centre on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors. The basement also holds one of the three University Shops. A UCL Union-run cafe is on the Ground Floor. Access to the Main UCL Wilkins Building (Octagon Building) and the UCL Refectory is possible through the theatre building.