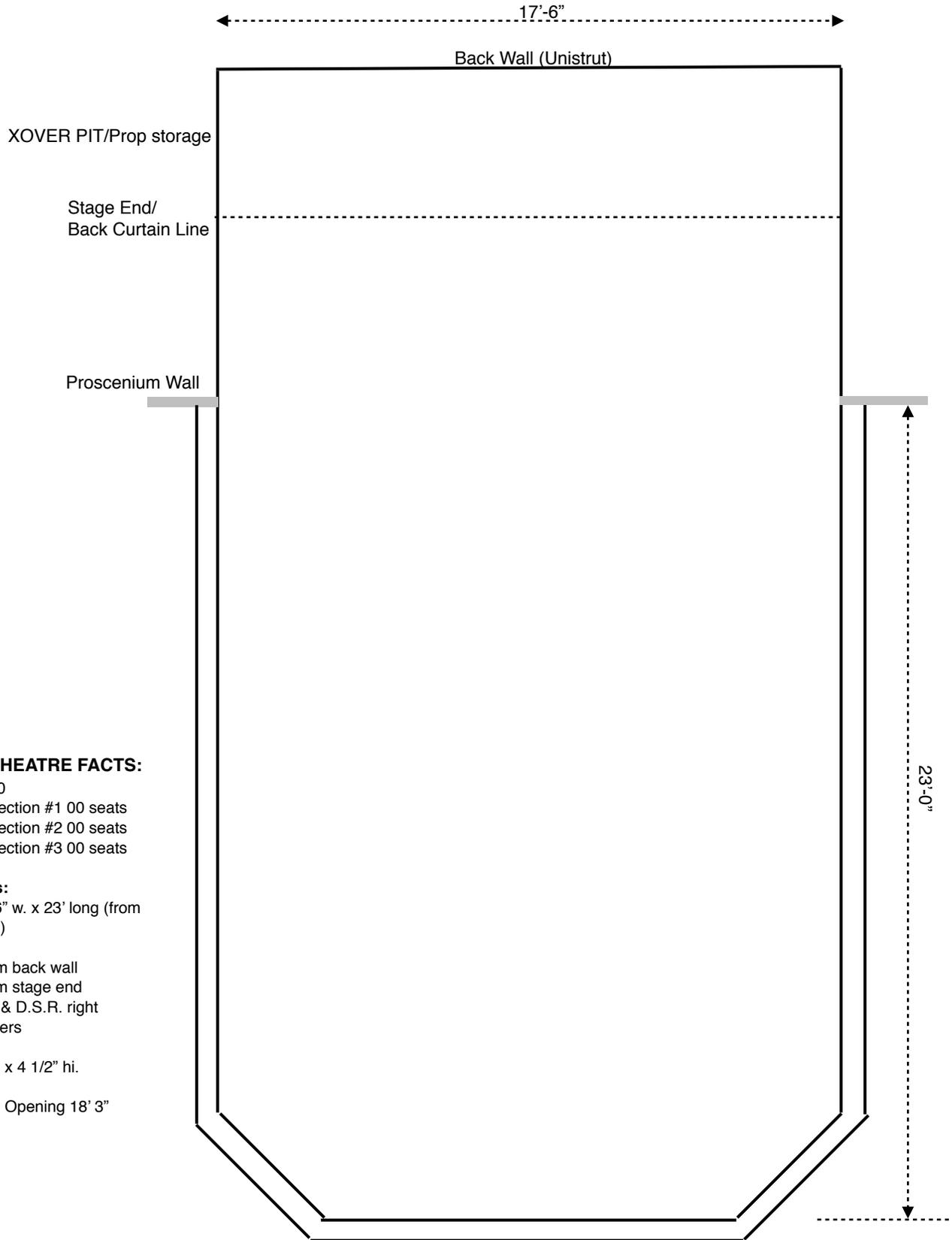


Building a set Model for a three-sided Thrust stage
 (Following Asawa SOTA'S STUDIO THEATRE configuration)



STUDIO THEATRE FACTS:

Seating: 100
 Audience Section #1 00 seats
 Audience Section #2 00 seats
 Audience Section #3 00 seats

Dimintions:

Stage: 17'-6" w. x 23' long (from
 Proscenium)
 x 9" hi.
 32' long from back wall
 28' long from stage end
 4' w. D.S.L. & D.S.R. right
 angled corners

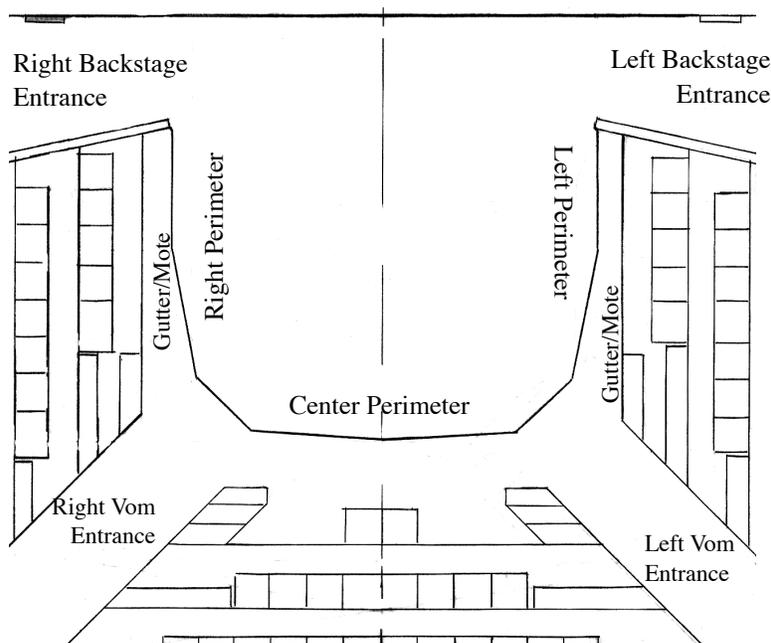
Step: 10" w. x 4 1/2" hi.

Proscenium Opening 18' 3"

Asawa SOTA STUDIO THEATRE Thrust Stage Floor Plan
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Building a set Model for a three-sided Thrust stage
 (Following Asawa SOTA'S STUDIO THEATRE configuration)

GLOSSARY OF STAGE TERMS UNIQUE TO THE THRUST



Cut two 3/16" black on black foam board bases to sizes as shown in floor plan, using 1/2" scale (1/2" = 1'-0")

STAGE: 17'-6" wide (board in inches: 8 3/4") x 32'-0" (board in inches: 16")

Cut a 4'-0" right angel diagonal off the two down stage corners (2" off board).

STEPS: 19'-2" wide (board in inches: 9 & 9/16") x 32'-10" (board in inches: 16 & 3/8")

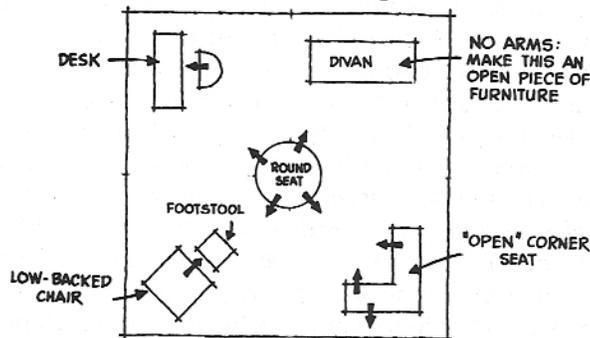
Match the right angel diagonal cut of the two down stage corners for a 10" wide step.

(board in inches: 7/16" wide)

Glue together using clear glue stick.

SCENERY DESIGN FOR THE THRUST STAGE

The thrust stage demands creative set and prop design, such as set pieces called *tumpties*, these are box-like pieces that serve double duty as both props and storage. On the thrust stage the scale is smaller, units must be more detailed and most items must be stage worth and visible from all sides. The designer must have no more thoughts of the "box set" with three walls and with doors and windows. You must rethink audience sight lines and pay continues close attention to them. The designer must think of the parameter and the diagonal. There is not a "front" of the stage.



A ground plan can readily be designed that will fan out from the center (see the drawing above). The use of a center object approachable from all sides will avoid the deadlines of a cleared space and will provide the obstacle course so necessary in a

Building a set Model for a three-sided Thrust stage (Following Asawa SOTA'S STUDIO THEATRE configuration)

dynamic ground plan. Note that the drawing has four major stage areas. By using the areas in combinations with only occasional use of one area, a dynamic interlocking of the stage will result, and all three audiences will see the play equally well.¹

A ground plan could rake the objects onstage along diagonal lines (again think diagonally), helping the majority of the house to see most of the action. You can also see that compositionally, using a triangle made by three figures is very effective on the thrust stage, not only for the person at the apex of the triangle.

Placing covered scenery on this stage would certainly obscure audience vision, but when skeletal frames are introduced you have both good vision and the suggestion of Baroque scenery. Looking through such frames is no problem at all for audiences, for we actually see much in real life through interrupted views. You must learn to exploit this stage in every possible way, for the communal theatre has great potential for our times because it is quite different from motion pictures or television.

Details or scenic elements, such as railings, columns, half walls and wainscoting, cutaway walls, fragmentary walls, door frames, etc., benches, window seats, props and set dressing, sofas, settees, love seats and couches with low or with out backs and are viable on all there sided.

POWER POINT:

The GROUND PLAN is the key to a successful production on a thrust stage. It must be thoroughly thought out and examined for sight line obstacles.

POWER POINT:

Consider items that extend up from the floor and/or down from the ceiling (hanging from the grid), such as ceiling beams and rib structures, plate rails, moldings, perimeter edges above that designated and defined the area below.²

POWER POINT:

Consider the use of levels that might define and delineate the various acting areas on stage.³

POWER POINT:

DON'T FORGET THE FLOOR ITSELF. Various sizes and shapes of rugs, various types and styles of wood flooring, tile, grass, weeds, and even dirt.⁴

The various types of “**SELECTIVE**” **SETTINGS** illustrated below work well on the thrust stage and should be considered by the director and designer when preparing their production: (1) the Selective Setting, (2) the Cut-Down Setting, (3) the Fragmentary Setting, (4) the Profile Setting, and (5) the Minimum Setting.

What is a Selective Set? In the Selective Set certain elements of a setting are carefully ‘selected,’ while others are not chosen.

Selective items, set pieces, or units that define or delineate entrances — door frames, arches, columns, pillars, planters, gates, etc. — are especially desirable at the “vom” entrances. What type of space are we entering, or is it an entrance to another part of the “non-visible” setting?

Remember:

Four entrances to the space

Think on the diagonal! (interior doors, exterior doors)

Consider the parameter!

Think low (Exteriors: garden gates, low stone walls. Interiors: cut-away walls, wainscoting walls, couches with no backs) and above (hanging lights [chandeliers, etc], plate rails)

Example of wainscoting walls [wageschot, Dutch]

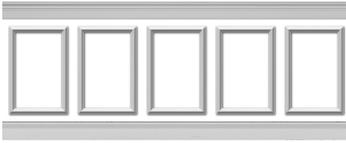
¹ Play Directing, Analysis, Communication, and Style by Francis Hodge, Second edition, Prentice Hall, 1982

² Illustrations of these various elements appear in the next two sections of this supplement.

³ For examples see the photographs in the section: EXAMPLES AND TYPES OF DESIGNS FOR THE THRUST STAGE.

⁴ For examples see the photographs in the section: EXAMPLES AND TYPES OF DESIGNS FOR THE THRUST STAGE.

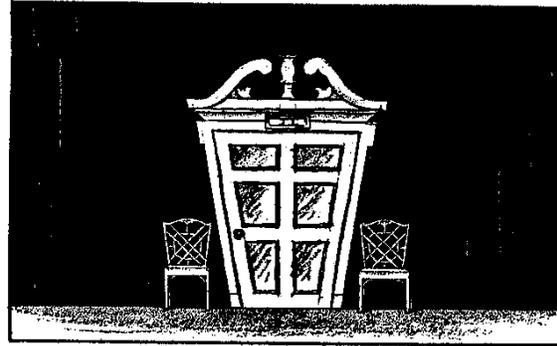
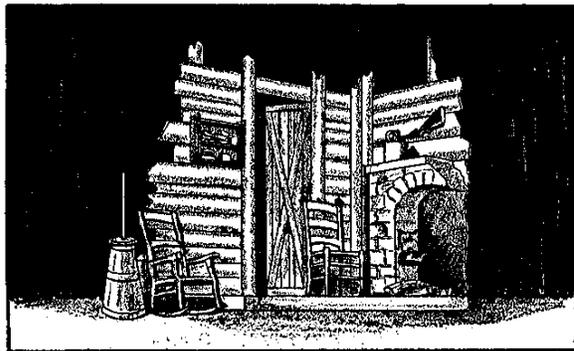
Building a set Model for a three-sided Thrust stage
 (Following Asawa SOTA'S STUDIO THEATRE configuration)



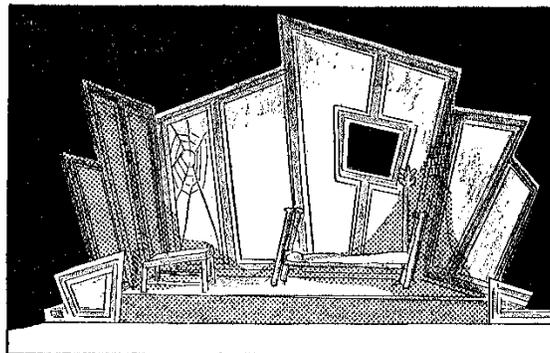
Example of a plate rail



Left, a **SELECTIVE Setting** for the play *Uncle Harry*, particular attention must be paid to the treatment of the units right and left edges and top of the unit. Right, a **CUT-DOWN Setting** for the laboratory set in Maxwell Anderson's *The Star Wagon*. The walls are cut down in direct relation to the architecture of the room.



Left, a form of Selective Setting, the **FRAGMENTARY Setting** for a cabin in the play *Dark of the Moon*. Right, a **PROFILE Setting** for a hallway scene in the musical *Anything Goes*.



A **Minimum Setting** on a wagon. An expressionistic interpretation for the play *The Inspector General*.⁵

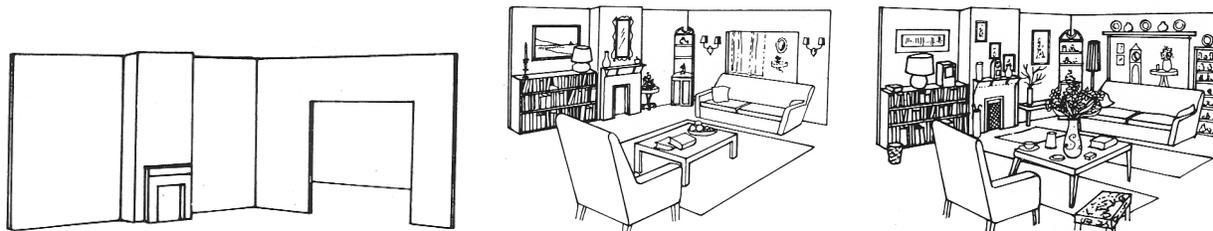
Using selected elements—

⁵ These five illustrations are from: Philippi, Herbert. *Stagecraft and Scene Design*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953. Out of Print.
 Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts Theatre Department — Acting is Action supplement

Building a set Model for a three-sided Thrust stage (Following Asawa SOTA'S STUDIO THEATRE configuration)

By using just a few carefully chosen features it is often possible to build up a convincing locale out of very little. It is fascinating to see how little is needed at times to create a convincing atmosphere. Seeing the door of a house, we assume that the rest of the building exists. A ticket-office represents the entire foyer of a theatre. Show someone holding a fishing rod, backed by a light blue cyc, and we have conveyed the idea that he is fishing. Add the sound of a river, and the audience is convinced. How necessary is it to add the grassy river bank, trees, or water reflections?⁶

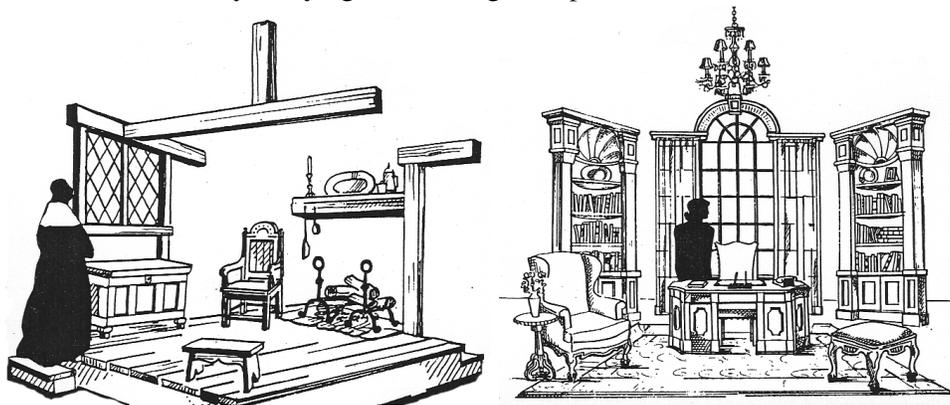
If it is carefully chosen *part* of the location will suggest the entire situation to our audience. But these must be unambiguous, the audience must recognize and interpret the situation instantly. The technique is to imply the whole by showing a complete but localized part.



The three illustrations above show a raked wall unit that would function on a thrust stage. The illustrations also show how well thought out set dressing changes the feeling of a set. Left, the bare skeleton of the set— architecturally appropriate for the play being presented. Center, a personalized decor is developed, suitable for the period, the characters, and the action of the play. Carefully selected properties enhance the scene and give it conviction. Right, excessive set dressing produces an overfussy effect and clogs the composition. The location becomes confused and cluttered, perhaps just the effect needed for the particular play.

EXAMPLES AND TYPES OF DESIGNS FOR THE THRUST STAGE

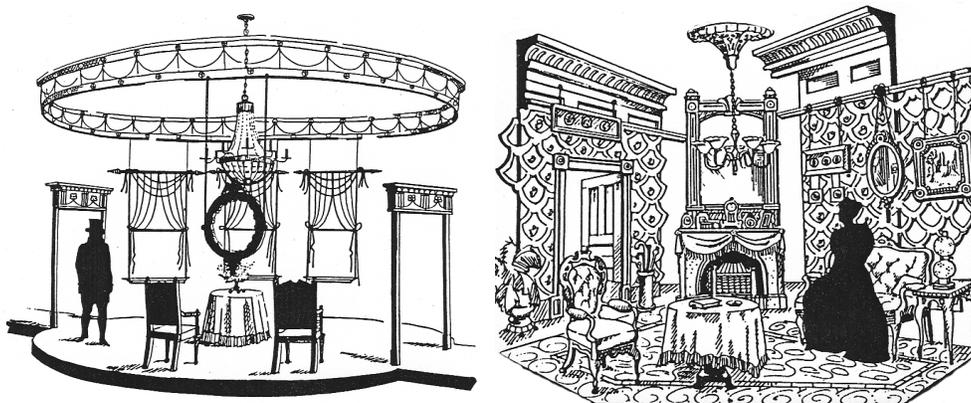
The following section of illustrations and photographs are examples and samples of the many variations of settings for the thrust stage, also scenery styles and scenic elements that lend themselves to set designs of the thrust stage. This section is intended to have the reader discover these elements by studying the drawings and pictures.



Left, a design for a play set in an Early American time period. (notice the unconventional raked angle of the set, the fragmentary and selective set design with ceiling beams that define the space, and the floor treatment.) Right, a design for a play set in an American Georgian design (notice the three separate free standing wall units that have defined capstones to the sides and tops, and the appropriate period chandelier.)

⁶ Both of the last two items can be achieved easily on the thrust stage with gobos.

Building a set Model for a three-sided Thrust stage
(Following Asawa SOTA'S STUDIO THEATRE configuration)



Left, a design for a play set in an Adam/Federal style. (notice the open ceiling unit that mirrors the shape of the stage foot print, the free standing profile doors and window units, and the appropriate period chandelier, all of which give the set an open, light, and airy feeling.)
Right, a design for a play set in an Romantic Victorian design (notice, again, the unconventional raked angle of the set, the three separate free standing wall units of various sizes and shapes, that make this setting very busy, and the appropriate period chandelier.)

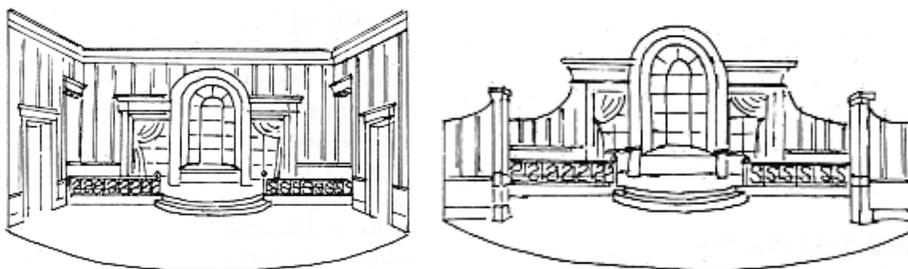
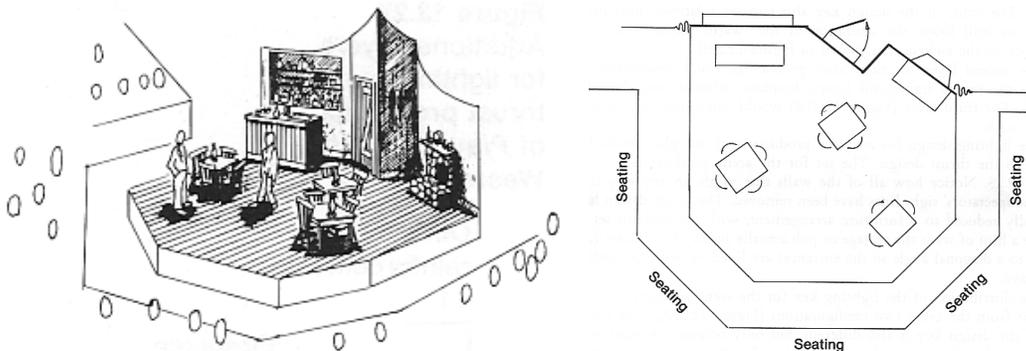
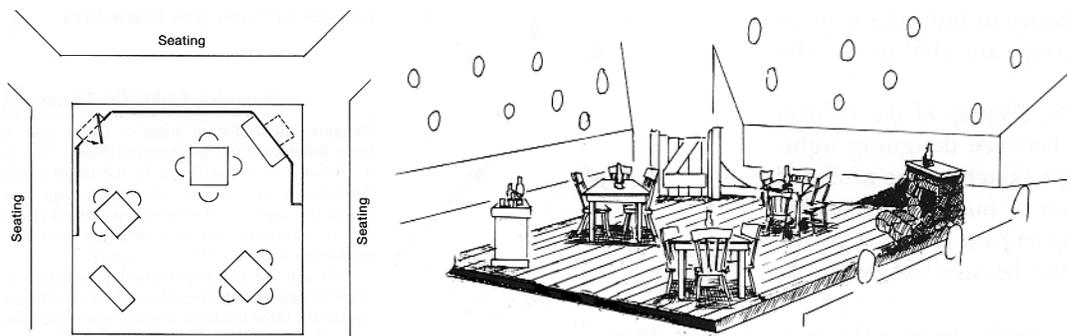


Illustration on the left demonstrates a scenic design using a standard box-set for a proscenium stage, the right illustration gives an idea of a variation on that design using an interesting silhouette of a cut-down setting that would function on a thrust stage.



Left, a set design and right, the ground plan for a production of *Playboy of the Western World* on a thrust stage (notice the capstone treatment to the top of the upstage wall unit).⁸

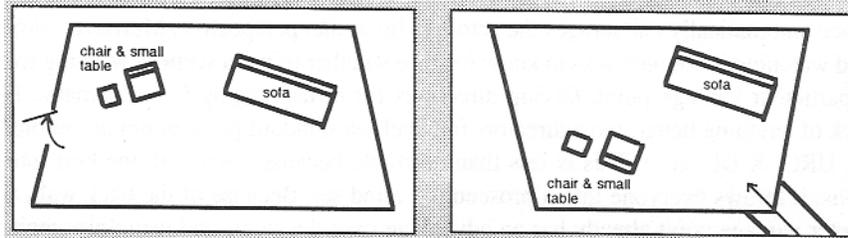


⁷ Gillette, Michael J. *Theatrical Design and Production*. Mayfield Publishing Company. 1987

⁸ Gillette, Michael J. *Theatrical Design and Production*. Mayfield Publishing Company. 1987

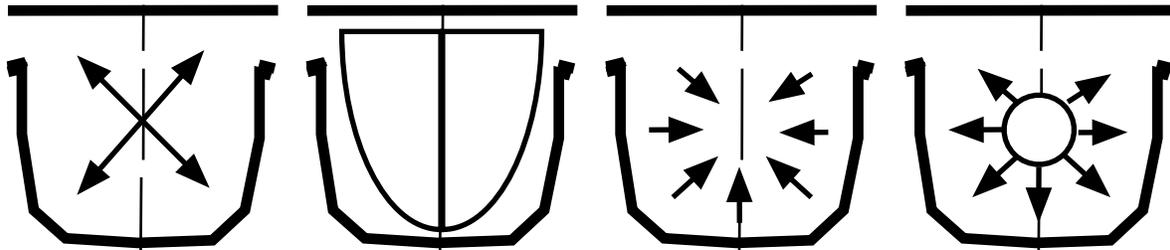
**Building a set Model for a three-sided Thrust stage
(Following Asawa SOTA'S STUDIO THEATRE configuration)**

Left and right, a different variation on a scenic design for *Playboy of the Western World* (ground plan and elevation). On the elevation notice the scenic units of (1) the cut-down door and frame— up center on the drawing— and (2) the fireplace and mantle unit— on the right— which are placed across the “vom” entrances, which makes them visible to all three audience sections and keeps the sight lines acceptable).⁹



Left, Typical Proscenium Furniture Arrangement., Right, Typical Thrust Furniture Arrangement

Final Power Points:



REMEMBER TO
THINK ON THE
DIAGONAL

REMEMBER
USE THE
PERIMETER

RADIATE IN FROM THE
PERIMETER TO THE
CENTER

RADIATE OUT FROM
THE CENTER TO THE
PERIMETER

Many more photographs and illustrations to spark your imagination can be found in *ACTING, DIRECTING & DESIGNING (Lighting & Scenery)* for *THE THRUST STAGE* (a supplement to *ACTING IS ACTION* by Phillip Rayher (also on line)

⁹ Gillette, Michael J. *Theatrical Design and Production*. Mayfield Publishing Company. 1987

Building a set Model for a three-sided Thrust stage
(Following Asawa SOTA'S STUDIO THEATRE configuration)