

“THE PLAYHOUSE IS AN
ENCHANTED ISLAND, WHERE
NOTHING APPEARS IN REALITY
WHAT IT IS NOR WHAT IT
SHOULD BE”.

TOM BROWN, *AMUSEMENTS SERIOUS AND COMICAL
CALCULATED FOR THE MERIDIAN OF LONDON* (1700)

THE ENGLISH MONARCHY AND THE ENGLISH THEATRE FELL TOGETHER. AND WHEN THEY ROSE AGAIN THEY ROSE TOGETHER. ON AUGUST 21, 1660, THE DEAD KING'S SON AND HEIR, CHARLES II, LESS THAN THREE MONTHS AFTER HIS OWN RESTORATION TO THE THRONE, OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED THE RESTORATION OF ENGLISH DRAMA, GRANTING WARRANTS TO TWO COURTIERS "TO ERECT TWO COMPANIES OF PLAYERS CONSISTING RESPECTIVELY OF SUCH PERSONS, AS THEY SHALL CHUSE AND APPOINT, AND TO PURCHASE BUILDE AND ERECT OR HIRE AT THEIRE CHARGE, AS THEY SHALL THINK FITT, TWO HOUSES OR THEATERS [...] FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF TRAGYDIES, COMEDYES, PLAYES, OPERAS, & ALL OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS OF THAT NATURE IN CONVENIENT PLACES."

(BRITISH LIBRARY ADD. MS 19256, FOL. 47)

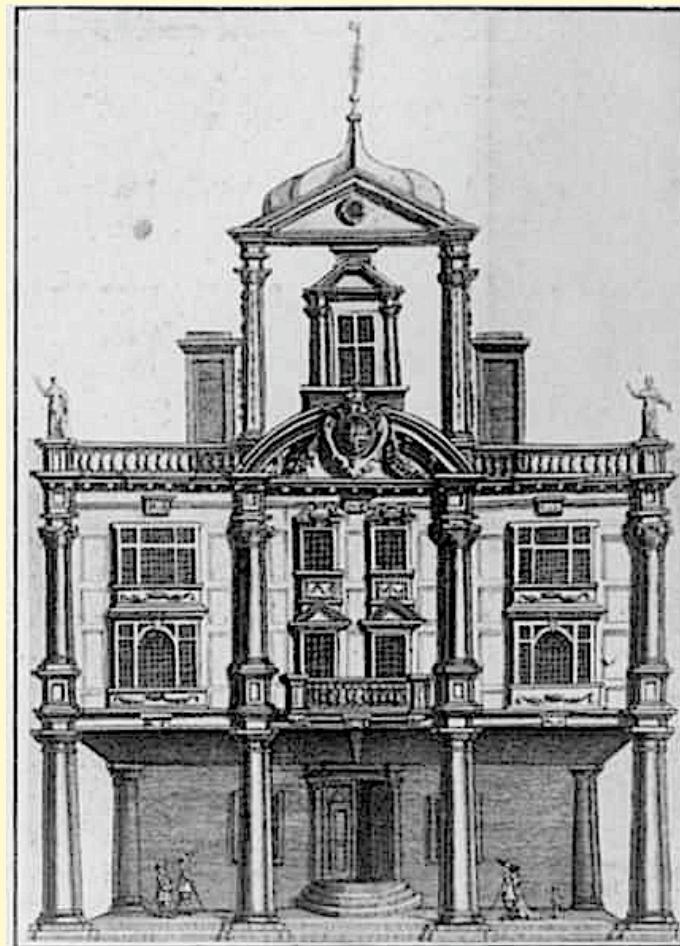
SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT

(1606 – 1668)

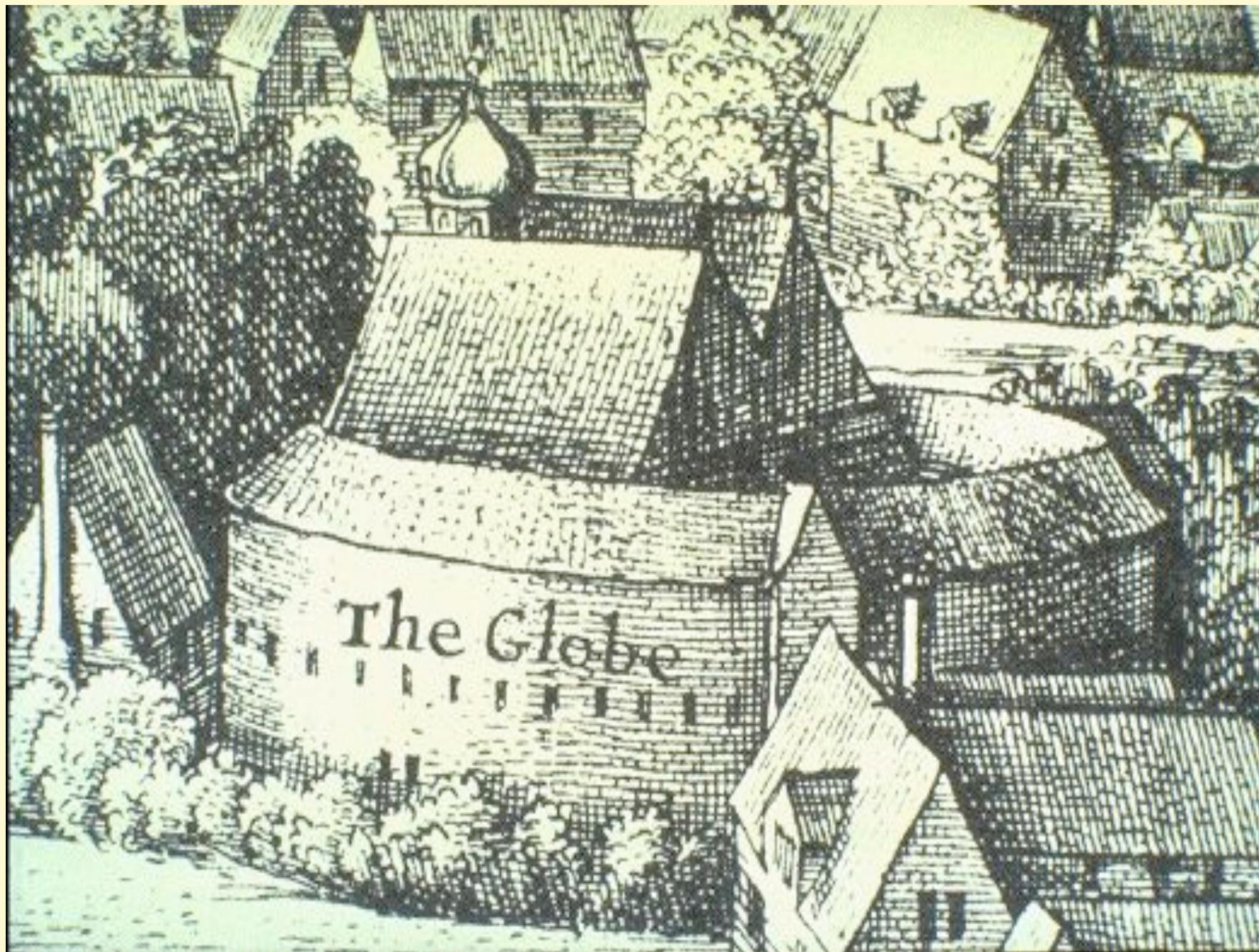


DORSET GARDEN, THE DUKE'S COMPANY PLAYHOUSE,
BUILT IN 1671 BY THE TROUPE CREATED BY SIR WILLIAM
DAVENANT.

THE ENGRAVING SHOWS THE SOUTH FAÇADE OF THE
THEATRE, AS IT WAS PICTURED IN THE LIBRETTO OF *THE
EMPRESS OF MOROCCO* (1673)

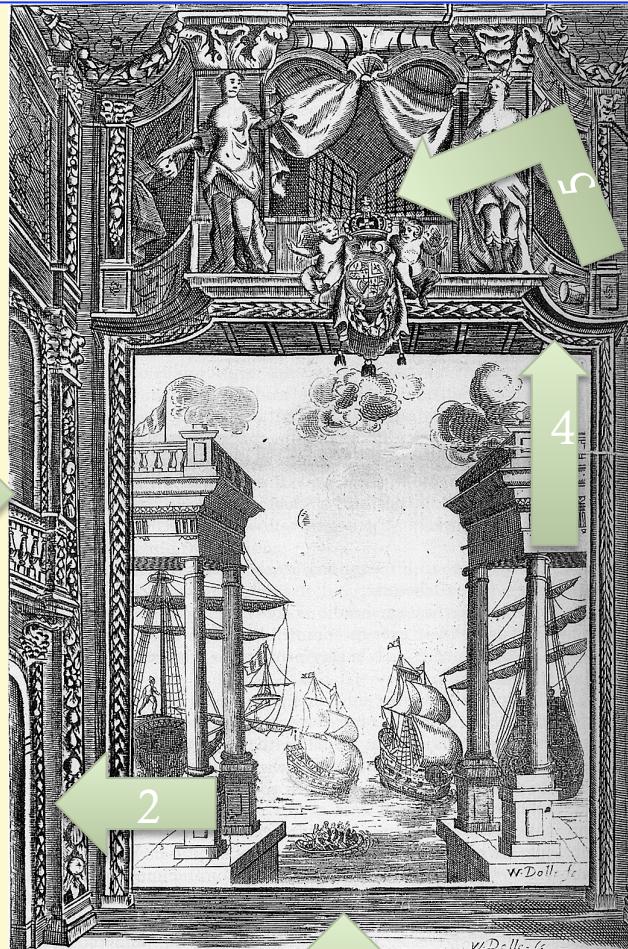






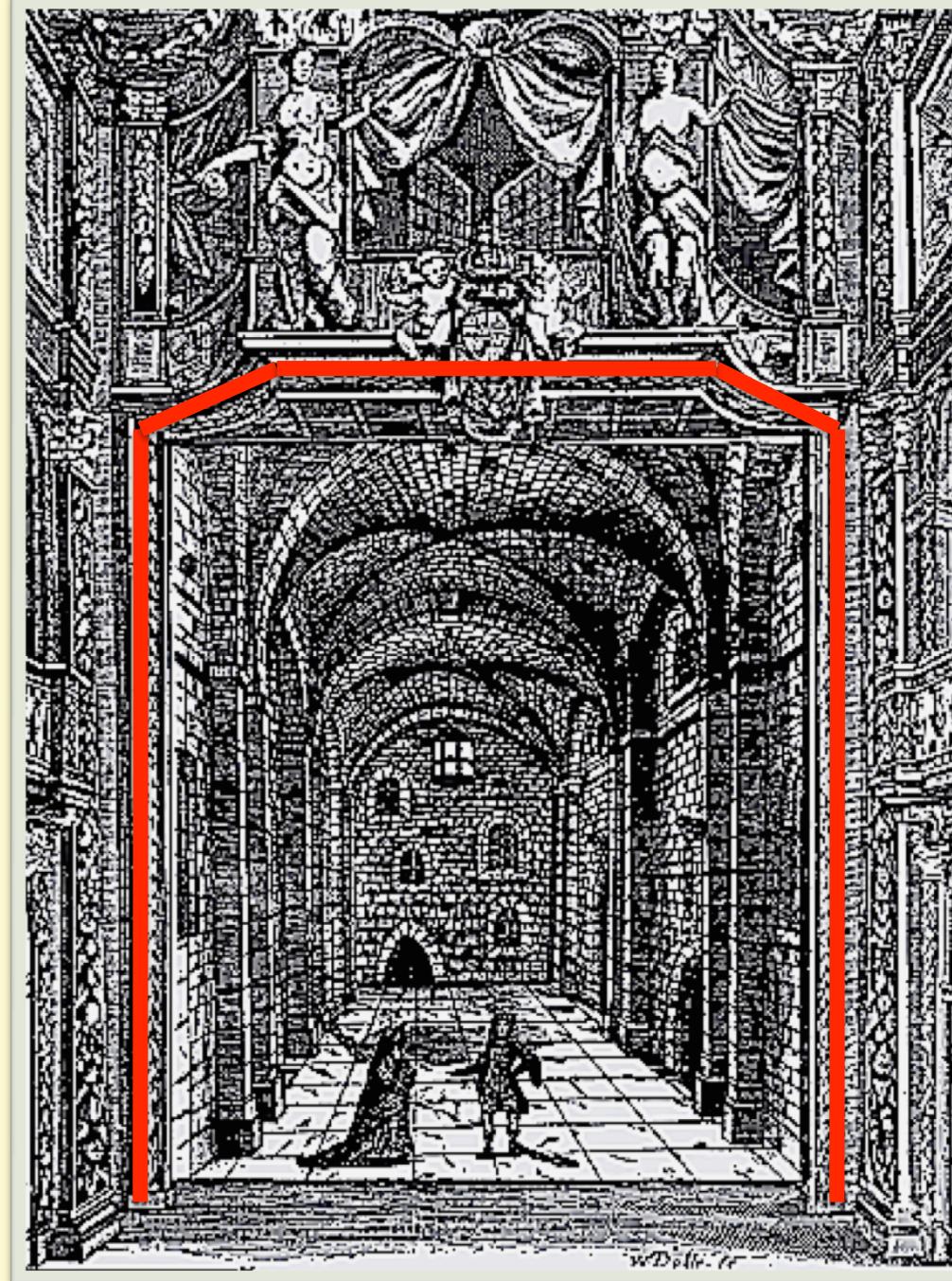
A FEW PLATES FROM ELKANAH SETTLE'S *EMPRESS OF MOROCCO* (1673) ARE THE ONLY CONTEMPORARY REPRESENTATIONS OF THE INSIDE OF DORSET GARDEN THEATRE.

THIS IS ONE OF THE SCENES FOR SETTLE'S *THE EMPRESS OF MOROCCO*, WHICH INCLUDED NUMEROUS SPECTACULAR STAGE EFFECTS.



WE CAN DISCERN HERE PART OF THE FORESTAGE (1) WITH DOORS (2) AND BALCONIES (3) ON BOTH SIDES, THE PROSCENIUM ARCH (4) WITH THE MUSIC BOX (5) ABOVE IT.

*SETTLE, THE
EMPERESS OF
MOROCCO
(1673)*



2. THE CUBE

This cube process entailing the complete bringing into concrete existence of a small, well-defined fragment, cut out of the universe of the work has three striking traits from the point of view of the theatre. In the first place, its realism. Everything within the limits of the cube must be incarnated or represented concretely - it may be more or less stylized, but it must be made apparent to the senses. [...] This cube has a sharply defined form and precise limits; limits that are invariable until a change of place and of setting presents us with another cube, cut out elsewhere in the universe with which we are concerned.

In the second place, its orientation or aspect. The little cube is open on the spectator's side. It faces him. It exerts a force over him, a dynamic force in a horizontal plane pointing like an arrow into the hall. [...] And finally, its third trait: its predetermined, confining architecture. This little piece of universe is internally organized, and the physical aspects of this organization are imposed from start to finish on everything that happens within the box.

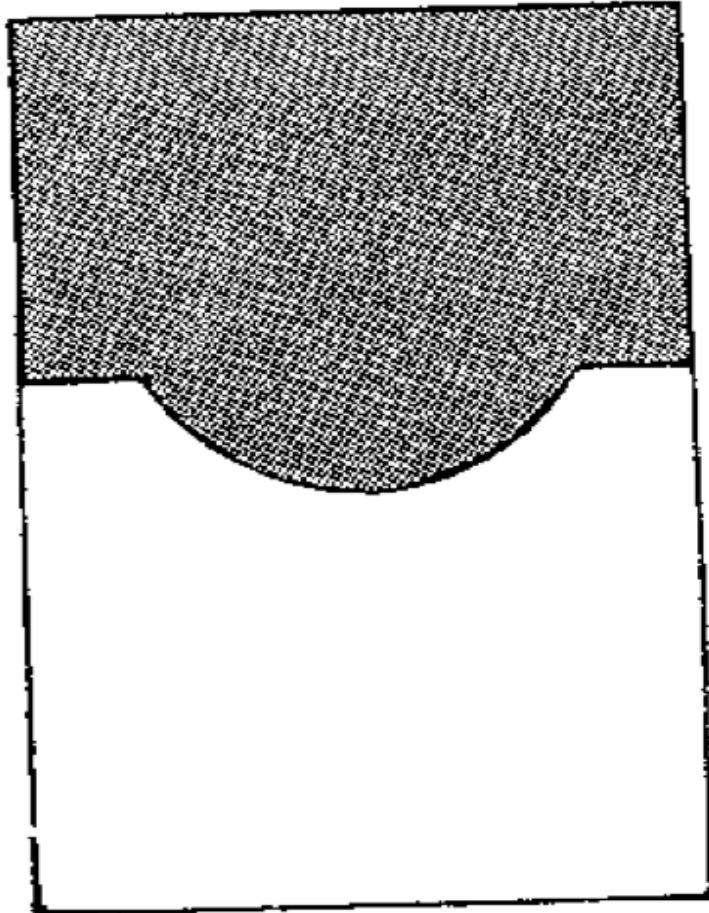


Fig. 2