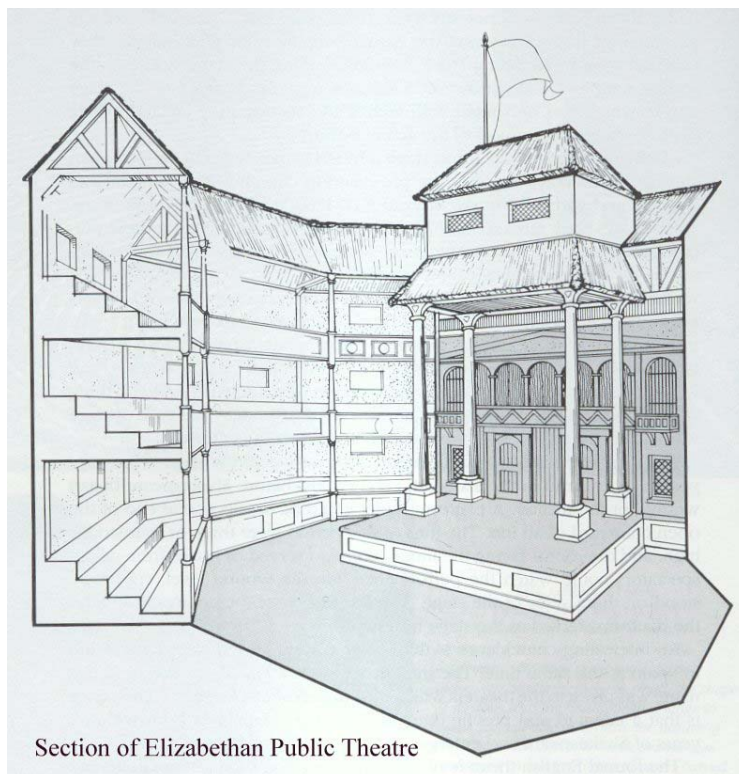


General features of public playhouses:

- Varied in size – largest seated 2-3,000.
- Varying shapes: round, rectangular, octagonal
- Had a "pit" or "yard" – where the "groundlings" were – un-roofed space, surrounding the stage on three sides, enclosed by three tiers of roofed galleries. The yard cost less (general admission), the Gallery cost more. There were probably some private galleries.

The name yard came from the fact that, before the building of proper theatres, the performances were held by travelling companies of actors in the Yards of the inns.

- The stage was raised, 4-6 feet, extending to the center of the yard.
- A "Tiring house" at the rear of the raised platform – where the actors would wait and change.
- The stage was roofed – called "the heavens"—supported by columns. Flying was common, with cranes and ropes.
- Traps in the floor, for fire, smoke, other effects (also called "the hell").
- Two doors in the tiring house—represented widely different locations (France or England, for instance).
- A hut above the Tiring House, for equipment and machinery.
- Flag on top of hut – to signal performance day.
- Musicians' gallery, below hut, third level.
- Perhaps: Two playing levels, upper and lower; maybe a third. Audience may have sat on 2nd level..
- Perhaps: a discovery space (probably between the two doors, portable or permanent, 1 or 3 curtains thrusting out.



Section of Elizabethan Public Theatre