

# Entertainment

*U of A English prof consultant for reincarnation of London theatre*

## The Globe theatre is being recreated

by Matt Hays

In 1599, the first Globe Theatre was opened on the banks of the London Thames. On June 29, 1613, during a performance of *All is True* (apparently an early version of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*), a spark hit the thatch of the roof. A fire began, and the theatre burned to the ground. A new Globe was built within a year. The new roof was tiled, not thatched. The second Globe was torn down in 1644. "Tenements" were built on the site.

For centuries the Globe was largely forgotten. Today, historians admit that we probably know more of ancient Greek and Roman design than of Elizabethan Theatre design. In recent times, there has been renewed interest in the Globe. This, of course, was the theatre where premiere performances of many of Shakespeare's plays occurred.

The battle for a 'third Globe' has been a long and hard one. Interestingly enough, many of the people who have proposed the resurrection have been from the States (including Herbert Hoover and American Ambassador Joseph Kennedy).

Sam Wanamaker, a Chicago-born actor who emigrated to London in 1951, really set the wheels in motion. His personal battle for a Globe has lasted for seventeen years, and finally, last June, after countless squabbles and legal battles, the site for the new theatre was confirmed. Of note is Wanamaker's insistence for authenticity of design, and his attempts to place the theatre on or as close to its original site as possible.

John Orrell is the official architectural consultant for the project. He is an expert on the Elizabethan and Jacobean Theatre and has been involved with symposiums on the reconstruction of the Globe. He is also a professor of English at the University of Alberta.

**Gateway:** How was it that you got involved with Sam Wanamaker and the New Globe Project?

*"What I'm engaged in now is sort of a battle royale with Richard Hosley about the design of the roof of the thing."*

**Orrell:** I have to tell you that there are two Globe projects. There's one in Detroit. Detroit is a horrible city, and they're trying to renew it. As part of this urban renewal they wanted to build a Globe Theatre in a park. In 1979 they held a major conference there to discuss design. I was invited to go to that at the last moment because I'd just published an article on the size and shape of the Globe. I went and made my contribution. As a result of that, Sam Wanamaker asked me to advise the architect Theo Crosbie about the design of the Globe in London, which Sam had been backing since 1968. Sam has that North American vitality that makes him want to do that thing which the English simply haven't been bothered to do for hundreds of years.

**Gateway:** What was the process involved in researching the Globe?

**Orrell:** If you can imagine, about ten or twelve years ago, the state of Globe Studies was this: there had been one book published in 1942 by John Cranford Adams, which had settled people's ideas about the design of the Globe.

We really don't have much in the way of original documentation. We really are at a loss, having to deal with various bits and scraps of evidence.

Adams' book had been very definitive, it had even had plans in it purporting to show the Globe as it really was. That had such a great influence on people. It has influenced reconstructions of the theatre quite heavily. It shaped, for example, the model of the Globe in the English Department here.

It wasn't long before people began to pick it apart. Two of these people were Walter

Hodges, who isn't a scholar really, but an artist, who was very interested in this subject and wrote a splendid book, *The Globe Restored*, illustrated with his delightful drawings. He really had a go at Adams and recast our idea of the Globe.

Hodges arrived at a building which was much more round, not so octagonal. The building was much more authentic in Hodges' book.

Another scholar from the University of Arizona, Richard Hosley, began producing a series of articles which radically questioned many of the assumptions in Adams' book—particularly the idea that there was a hidden stage in Elizabethan Theatres. There seems to be no validity to this idea and yet it's built into people's ideas of the way Elizabethan theatres were. Hosley, on the whole, adopted Hodges' point of view. Still, all of this was pretty amorphous.

What I did when I confronted this problem to look at the evidence and come up with some hard information about the size of the theatre. I produced a theory of its design rationale linking it to medieval methods of setting out a building. I was able to argue about the orientation of the theatre to sunlight.

I came across at a time when both the Detroit and Suffolk Globe Projects were beginning to firm up quite rapidly. I offered my theory about size to the Detroit people and then was able to offer it to the architect in London, and Sam Wanamaker. They developed its design rationale. What I'm engaged in now is sort of a battle royale with Richard Hosley about the design of the roof of the thing. We had a meeting in London this year in which the battle went against him and so we're going to have a roof on top of the building.

**Gateway:** What's the approximate cost of this project?

**Orrell:** They're talking about twelve million pounds. That's about twenty-five million dollars Canadian.

**Gateway:** I presume Thatcher's government isn't handing any money over for that...

**Orrell:** No. We hadn't bothered asking. The idea is to raise the money in private ways if possible. Most of it will be coming from the United States.

**Gateway:** When will the new Globe be completed?

**Orrell:** We've had a bad hold-up in the last couple of years. We not hope that we'll be able to start building in July of next year. It should take about five years to build, because we're going to build it properly with oak. We'll have to use fir if we can't get enough oak.

After the theatre's completion it will be an active theatre and a museum. We're having to work out a way in which the building can be used by an acting company and be open to the public. We're wondering if the public could come in and wander around and watch rehearsals, although we're quite leary of that.

We have a committee of people working out how to deal with the large number of tourists that we'll have. The danger is we may end up like the London Dungeon — just a sort of Fantasyland — well, we don't want that at all. We want to be very authentic if we can.

**Gateway:** Do you feel this project is practical today for contemporary theatre audiences?

**Orrell:** Oh yes. The analogy I like to draw is that in current music there's been a movement over the past few years to rediscover original instruments, to have the music of Vivaldi or Bach played on the instruments of their time. It seems to me that Shakespeare

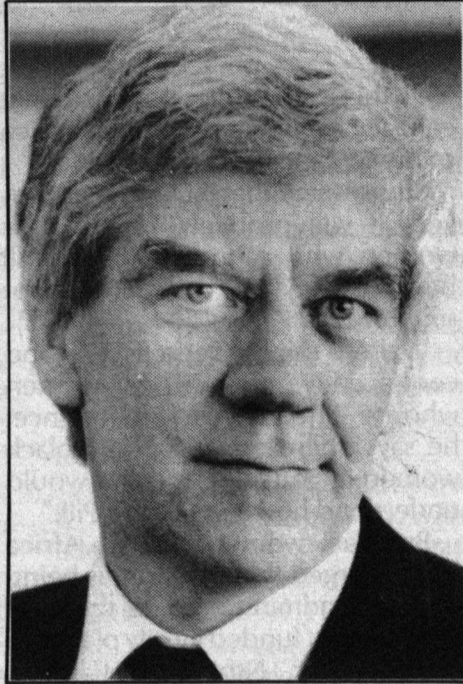


photo Rob Schmidt

John Orrell, official architectural consultant for New Globe Project

was writing for a specific instrument in the Elizabethan Theatre.

One of the things that I can hardly wait to experience is the feeling of walking onto that very large stage and to discover what the acoustics really are like. I don't think anyone knows for sure what the acoustics of that

building will be like.

**Gateway:** Will you be willing to stand in the pit for a two-hour performance?

**Orrell:** Well, people are willing to stand in the Albert Hall for concerts. I don't see why they shouldn't do it in the Globe.

**Gateway:** In original stagings of Shakespearean productions, characters who've died are dragged off stage, and young boys play female roles. Will any of this occur in the new Globe?

**Orrell:** We do want authenticity in construction and design of the Globe. Once you have the instrument, what you do with it is another matter. I don't see why we shouldn't have rock concerts in the Globe. Why not? I hope it's going to be an acoustically interesting place. When the actual Shakespeare productions are put on, I would suspect that some of them will aim at just as authentic a reproduction of the theatre conditions as could be managed. I think this will be very few but I think we'd have all male casts on a couple productions here and there, just to see what it's like. If you were going to do that, the other thing you'd have to do is not let the rest of the cast see a copy of the play. Just hand out the individual roles to actors and let them integrate those as they did originally. I think what you'd come up with is just a curiosity.

**Gateway:** You must be very excited about this project.

**Orrell:** I think it's the most important thing in Shakespeare studies that's happening today.

## Jack Flash jumps

**Jumpin' Jack Flash**  
Twentieth-Century Fox

review by Melinda Vester

*Jumpin' Jack Flash* is a high energy comedy that borders on thrilling.

Whoopi Goldberg plays an eccentric computer operator that gets caught up in an international spy ring. While Terry Doolittle (Whoopi Goldberg) is sending bank transactions over the computer, her transmissions are interrupted by a plea for help. The plea comes from a British agent, Jumpin' Jack Flash, who is unable to leave an Eastern Bloc country. Being the kind-hearted person that Terry is, she tries to help Jack make contact with his organization. This is where the action really begins! In an effort to help Jack, Terry runs into brick walls, cold shoulders, and, of course, the KGB.

Supporting characters are Cynthia (Carol Kane) and Marty (Stephen Collins), Terry's co-workers at the bank. Cynthia is a rather spinny woman who dates "Richard with an Italian last name", "Nick with a Greek last name" or virtually any other man that is available. Marty is the new man in the office who turns out to be Terry's confidante. Although Marty seems to be just an onlooker to Terry's adventure, he is not what he appears to be. In fact, very few of the characters are what they appear to be and this is what makes Terry's adventure perilous.

As Terry is on the run throughout most of the movie, the humour is fast-paced and physical (ie. she is dragged in a phone booth by a tow truck). Every predicament Terry finds herself in calls for a creative solution and Terry has them.

Humour rules Terry's life, even her apartment. Eclectic is the word that best describes it. She has every novelty item imaginable; movie posters, a cut-out of Paul Newman (life size, of course), and a three-foot toothbrush. Each reflects the uniqueness of Terry's personality. Even Terry's last name, Doolittle, reflects something about her. "Doolittle" is what Terry's social life is... that is, before Jumpin' Jack Flash comes along.

A movie of this type takes energy and talent, and Whoopi Goldberg has the vitality



Whoopi Goldberg fast and funny in *Jumpin' Jack Flash*

to carry this role. *Jumpin' Jack Flash* is Whoopi's second starring role in film and her first comedy role. She could prove to be a very familiar face in the future.

*Jumpin' Jack Flash* is a directing debut for Penny Marshall of *Laverne and Shirley*. This is her first feature film. If this film is any indication of Penny Marshall's talent as a director, I am looking forward to her future works. She did a great job.

If there is anything to be disappointed with in this film, it is the lack of music. By what the advertisements indicate, one would believe that the soundtrack would be excellent: big names like "The Rolling Stones" and "Tina Turner". In actuality, there are very few songs at all. It is just inadequate.

If I had to summarize this movie with one word it would be titillating. It's fast and it's funny. *Jumpin' Jack Flash* makes your heart leap at times and you laugh the rest of the time. As Terry would say "and that's the truth."