

# *A Design for an Outdoor Theatre*

*By Harold A. Caparn*

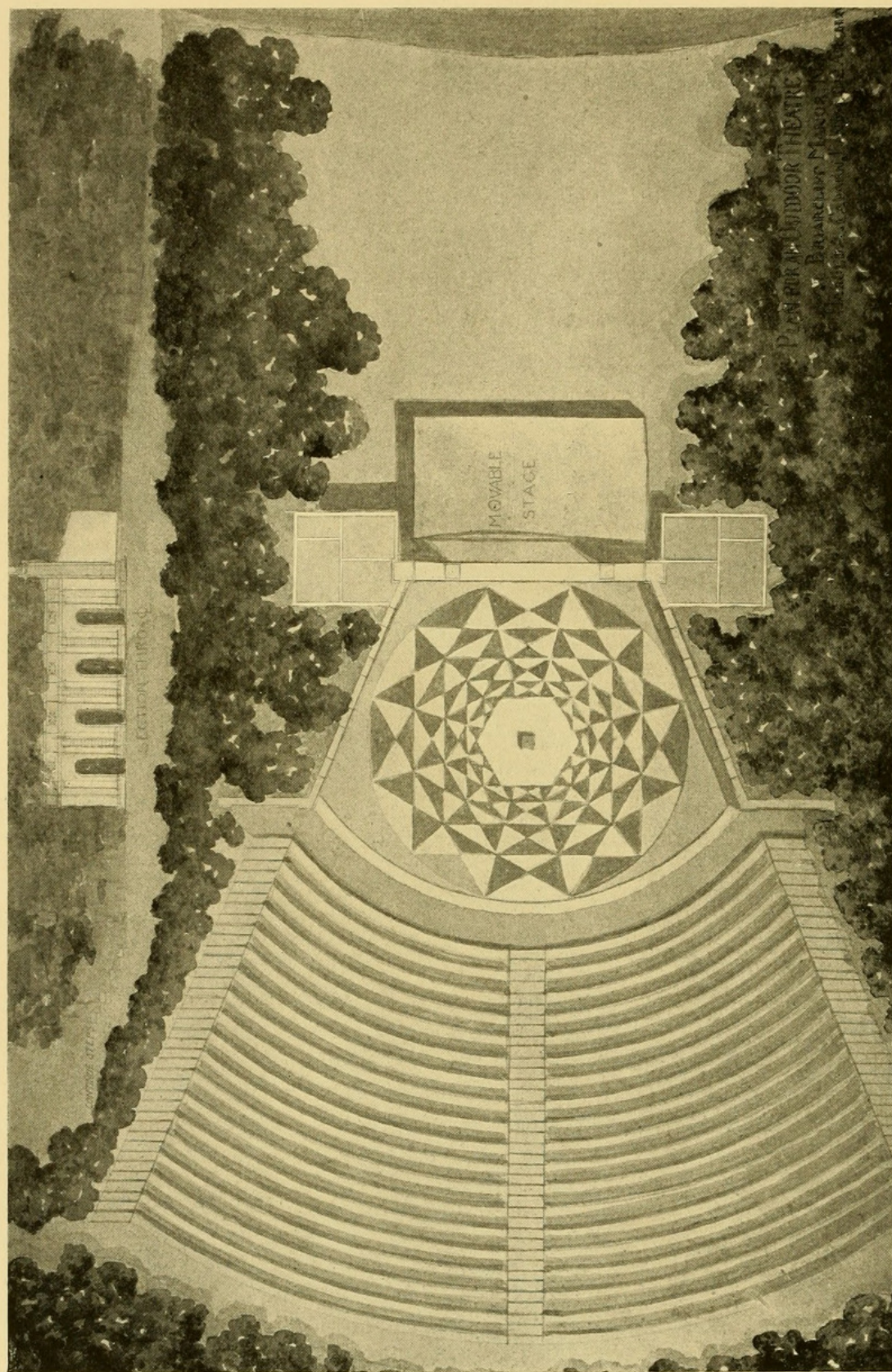


HIS design for an outdoor theatre was made for a syndicate in Westchester County, and laid on the shelf like so many other projects having no obvious relation to the war. It is presented here in the hope that it may be of interest, even in these perilous times as a thing worthy of realization, if not now, in a more propitious season.

As far as the writer knows, this scheme differs from any yet constructed in providing a theatre usable not only for any play that can properly be given out of doors, but for complete presentation of the classical Greek drama. These imperishable monuments of dramatic art are becoming increasingly more popular, yet when they are given, not merely the scenery, but the stage and orchestra have to be constructed. As the Greek drama was an evolution from the choric dances of primitive times, the Chorus was always retained and went through rhythmic movements round an altar on a circular space in front of the stage and five or six feet below it, intoning at intervals their comments to explain the action on the stage and fill in the pauses. This circular space was the orchestra.

In the scheme here illustrated, a grass stage of an extreme width of sixty feet is enclosed by walls or wings with side entrances and curtains at the back which could be kept as a background, covered by a backdrop, or drawn so that the landscape beyond would take the place of a backdrop. It would be





PLAN OF OUTDOOR THEATRE WITH SECTION THROUGH CENTER,  
SHOWING STAGE USED AS ORCHESTRA AND  
MOVABLE STAGE FOR GREEK PLAYS



easy to put a temporary background across any part of the stage so as to make it as deep or shallow as might be desired.

When a Greek play is to be staged, a mat of the desired pattern and forty-five feet in diameter is laid over the grass stage which becomes the orchestra. The tall columns and open wood pediment with the curtains are movable, and for the presentation of a Greek play would give place to a movable stage with the necessary scenery. All this apparatus could be constructed so as to be easy to move or install and could be kept in a convenient place of storage when not in use, under the seats or elsewhere. Six dressing rooms are provided. The seats are intended to be built into the side of a hill, and as shown on the plan, would accommodate an audience of twelve hundred. They are intended to be built of concrete, but could be of wood, or camp chairs on grass terraces. But the cost of concrete would not be very much greater than that of wood, and in view of its permanence and needing no upkeep or repairs, would be, in the long run, more economical, while its massive and handsome appearance, in harmony with a stage enclosed like this, would make a unified structure adequate not only for the presentation of modern plays, but also of the Greek drama in a setting sufficiently like that of twenty-three hundred years ago. Though somewhat ambitious in appearance, this theatre is simple in design, and would not be costly to construct in concrete, even at current prices.





CHINESE PRIMROSE  
*PRIMULA SINENSIS*  
STOCKY, LARGE-FLOWERED TYPE



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