

Globe Theatre

The **Globe Theatre** was a theatre in London associated with William Shakespeare. It was built in 1599 by Shakespeare's playing company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, on land owned by Thomas Brend and inherited by his son, Nicholas Brend and grandson Sir Matthew Brend, and was destroyed by fire on 29 June 1613.

A second *Globe Theatre* was built on the same site by June 1614 and closed by an Ordinance issued on 6 September 1642.

A modern reconstruction of the *Globe*, named "Shakespeare's *Globe*", opened in 1997 approximately 750 feet (230 m) from the site of the original theatre.^[6] From 1909, the current Gielgud Theatre was called "Globe Theatre", until it was renamed (in honour of John Gielgud) in 1994.

The *Globe* was owned by actors who were also shareholders in the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Two of the six *Globe* shareholders, Richard Burbage and his brother Cuthbert Burbage, owned double shares of the whole, or 25% each; the other four men, Shakespeare, John Heminges, Augustine Phillips, and Thomas Pope, owned a single share, or 12.5%.

The reason for the name of the theater

The name of the *Globe* supposedly alludes to the Latin tag *totus mundus agit histrionem*, in turn derived from *quod fere totus mundus exerceat histrionem* "because all the world is a playground"—from Petronius.

The Layout

The *Globe*'s actual dimensions are unknown, but its shape and size can be approximated from scholarly inquiry over the last two centuries. The evidence suggests that it was a three-storey, open-air amphitheatre approximately 100 feet (30 m) in diameter that could house up to 3,000 spectators. The *Globe* is shown as round on Wenceslas Hollar's sketch of the building, later incorporated into his etched *Long View of London from Bankside* in 1647. However, in 1988-89, the uncovering of a small part of the *Globe*'s foundation suggested that it was a polygon of 20 sides.

At the base of the stage, there was an area called the pit, [32] (or, harking back to the old inn-yards, yard)[33] where, for a penny, people (the "groundlings") would stand on the rush-strewn earthen floor to watch the performance. During

the excavation of the Globe in 1989 a layer of nutshells was found, pressed into the dirt flooring so as to form a new surface layer.

The back wall of the stage had two or three doors on the main level, with a curtained inner stage in the centre (although not all scholars agree about the existence of this supposed "inner below"), and a balcony above it. The doors entered into the "tiring house" (backstage area) where the actors dressed and awaited their entrances. The floors above may have been used as storage for costumes and props and management offices. The balcony housed the musicians and could also be used for scenes requiring an upper space, such as the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. Rush matting covered the stage, although this may only have been used if the setting of the play demanded it.

Large columns on either side of the stage supported a roof over the rear portion of the stage. The ceiling under this roof was called the "heavens," and was painted with clouds and the sky. A trap door in the heavens enabled performers to descend using some form of rope and harness. The stage was set in the south-east corner of the building, so as to be in shade during afternoon performances in Summer.