he denounced the commercial American theatre and proposed its decentralization in his influential book The Impossible Theatre. Later, as co-artistic director (with Jules Irving) of the Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre, he stuck his finger in the eye of New York’s banker class with a production of Danton’s Death, tailor-made to outrage his patrons. Drummed out of town, he founded innovative training programs at CalArts and Oberlin and nurtured the careers of Allan Kaprow, Nam June Paik, and María Irene Fornés, to name just three. When European poststructuralism arrived in North America during The first important American playwright of serious, non-musical drama was Eugene O’Neill, who wrote deep and sensitive analyses of human relationships. O’Neill remains the country’s most important dramatist, and his plays are performed frequently. Other notable modern American playwrights include Thornton Wilder, Lillian Hellman, Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee. These names are only a few from the long list of contributors to the contemporary stage. Two important developments in recent years are the “theatre of absurd” and the “black theatre”. There are also some experiments with music and American theater existed
prior to the Revolution, beginning in Southern cities and spreading northward to Philadelphia and New York. Most East Coast cities and several Western cities had theaters by the early nineteenth century and by 1825 New York had become the American theatrical center. Ink drawing of the stage design by Wilfreid Werz for Barrie Stavis's, The Man Who never Died, 1970. As a new nation, American theater had not yet developed its own identity and was heavily influenced by Europe, especially English theater. Nineteenth century audiences enjoyed theatrical spectacles inclu Presentation on theme: “American Theater: Early Twentieth Century. (The American family and its dynamics, a theme becoming popular during this time, would continue to retain a large role in American drama for the rest of the 20th Century.) Famous example of American Expressionism –Focuses on the emotional journey of the main character, Mr. Zero, after he is replaced at his job by an adding machine. Some expressionist experiments employed conventions such as collage-like scenic effects and jarring musical and sound techniques to probe social issues. African American characters became more visible in plays of this time, although African American playwrights remained on the fringes of the theater until the 1950’s. Musicals were rethought and revamped in this era.