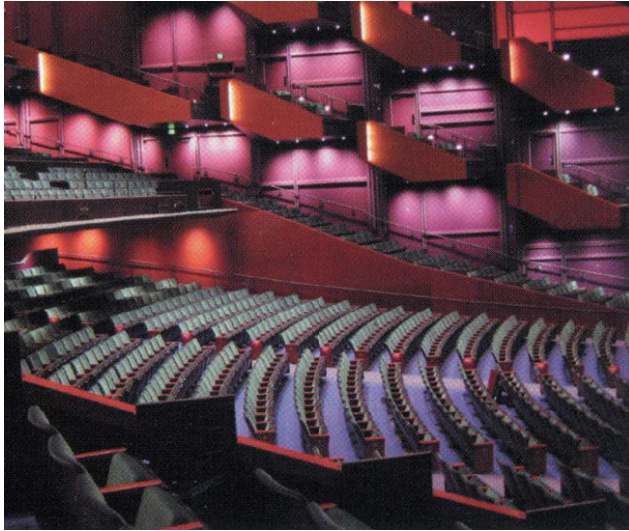




Opera Houses



Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Seattle, Washington

While the Seattle Opera House had served as the home for the Seattle Opera, Pacific Northwest Ballet and a number of Seattle Center presentations for 74 years, there were serious concerns that the building did not meet today's stringent earthquake requirements, and the renovations done in the 1960s were in serious need of refurbishment.

A major criterion for the renovation of the Opera House, now renamed the Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, was to preserve the hall's well-respected acoustics for opera and ballet productions. Known as a "singer's hall," the new McCaw Hall would need to have the vocal richness and clarity of the original hall, while creating a more acoustically intimate connection between performers and audience.

We assisted the design team (LMN Architects) in producing a design that would emphasize the hall's acoustical assets while remedying its acoustical deficiencies. We narrowed the hall's width and positioned the side boxes in optimal locations to both preserve and enhance the hall's acoustical intimacy. Moving the side walls, however, had a secondary effect of a reduction in overall volume, which if not alleviated, might have created harshness and diminished some of the hall's warm sound. To compensate, acoustical volumes were added on the side upper walls, behind grilles transparent to sound.

A new sound reinforcement system was designed in collaboration with Seattle Center's technical department to meet the needs of the community festivals, theatre, poetry and other events that attract nearly 600,000 visitors to the Center annually.

A 288-seat hall, specifically designed for pre-performance lectures, has been added to the complex, as well as generous new patron amenities, including banquet rooms, lounges and restrooms. The acoustic design of this space, as well as mechanical system noise control was performed by our Seattle associate firm, Michael Yantis and Associates.

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall is now a superb new home for the Seattle Opera and Pacific Northwest Ballet.

Project Information

Opera and Ballet House

Scope of Work

Architectural Acoustics
Mechanical System Noise Control
Sound and Vibration Isolation
Sound Reinforcement System

Budget

\$127,000,000

Completion Date

2003

Design Team

Architect: LMN Architects
Theater Consultant: Schuler & Shook, Inc.
Associate Acoustician: Michael Yantis and Associates

Consultant Team

Mark Holden, Principal Designer
Russell Cooper, Project Manager
David W. Robb, Electro-Acoustic Designer
Sam Brandt, Project Manager, Electro-Acoustics

Client

Seattle Opera and Pacific Northwest Ballet

"The new Marion McCaw Hall is acoustically excellent. During the intermission Seattle Opera subscribers buzzed with amazement over the improvement. At the curtain calls, the principal architect Mark Reddington and the consultants from JaffeHolden would surely have been cheered had they appeared."

Anthony Tommasini, Music Critic, The New York Times

"Best of all, are the acoustics, which on the evidence of Saturday's opening performance are little short of magnificent."

Joshua Kosman, Music Critic, San Francisco Chronicle

JaffeHolden.com

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