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Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts opens at Mount Royal University

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by Elsa Lam



Inside the Bella Concert Hall. Photo by Ema Peter.

The opening of the Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts at Mount Royal University marks the emergence of a music facility that is a first in Calgary in terms of size and amenities and is also unique to university music education in Canada.



View of the Taylor Centre at Mount Royal University. Photo by Ema Peter.

The design team was led by Pfeiffer Partners, Inc. in association with locally-based Sahuri + Partners Architecture, Inc. Acoustical design was provided by The Talaske Group. The Taylor Centre has been designed to LEED Gold specifications. Auerbach Pollock Friedlander, Performing Arts/Media Facilities Planning and Design, provided theatre consulting services.

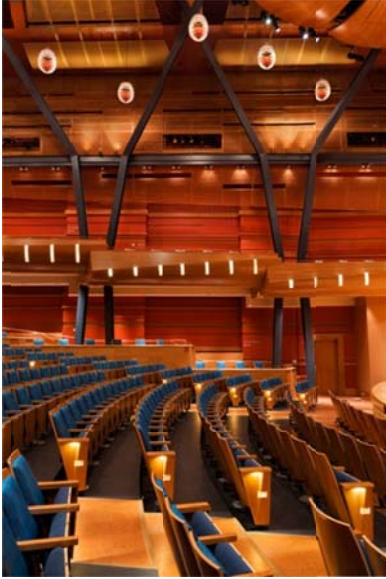


Photo by Ema Peter.

At the centre of the new building is the 773-seat Bella Concert Hall. The design of the concert hall is a modern deconstruction of a rural barn reflecting Alberta's prairie heritage and landscape; the ceiling design is inspired by a prairie rose. The Bella Concert Hall will be used for a variety of music styles from traditional orchestras, choirs, piano soloists to jazz and popular music—both acoustic and amplified. To achieve the needed acoustic flexibility, more than 9,800 square feet of deployable banners and panels were integrated into the hall's walls and ceiling.



A multi-purpose hall uses a similar wood cladding to the main concert hall. Photo by Ema Peter.

In addition to the main concert venue, The Taylor Center also includes ensemble studios for rehearsal and performance, multi-use event spaces, flexible teaching and rehearsal studios, percussion studios, student lounges and a purpose-built Early Childhood instructional suite.



The Centre includes many practice and rehearsal spaces for professional and community program. Photo by Ema Peter.

The new facility uses advanced technology in electrical, heating, and cooling systems which help with the acoustic isolation of the individual rooms and studios offering users the ability to learn, practice, and rehearse undisturbed.



Exterior of the Taylor Centre at night. Photo by Ema Peter.

Located on the school's Lincoln Park Campus, the Taylor Centre is part of a six phase expansion program that started in 2001 to meet the needs of increasing student enrollment. Mount Royal University currently has a student population of more than 14,000 full and part time credit students.



Lobby view. Photo by Ema Peter.

The project began with a well-conceived business plan with the goal of drawing even more community members to the University through expanded outreach programs with new partnerships and strategies for revenue generation to allow for the Conservatory's financial independence. The Mount Royal Conservatory's outreach programming currently serves more than 30,000 students annually ranging from toddlers enrolled in "Music with Your Baby" to Suzuki piano courses for young children on to solo instruction for students of all ages. The capital campaign relied on the resources of the Canadian government as well as private donors, the largest being the Taylor Family, who responded generously to the institution's visionary business plan.