



Detail of elevation

DESIGN OF THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA HALL

Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.

Location: Philadelphia, PA

Client: Philadelphia Orchestra Association

Area: 246,000 sf

Completion: 1996 (design)

In July of 1987, VSBA was selected to design a new building for the world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra. The new 246,000 sf hall, located at the corner of Broad and Spruce Streets in Philadelphia's Center City, was to give the Orchestra an acoustically appropriate space in which to perform and record without external scheduling pressure, and in which other concerts may be presented.

The building's exterior takes visual cues from the adjacent University of the Arts Main Building. Large

windows on Broad Street open onto the elegant Grand Lounge, allowing the excitement and gala atmosphere of an orchestra evening to be glimpsed from the street. Patrons enter the building from two sides -- directly from Broad Street and from the Delancey Street automobile drop-off. The ground floor lobby accommodates service functions, and a ceremonial stair leads to the Grand Lounge.

In the performance chamber, balconies surround the orchestra platform on all sides, allowing the hall to seat between 2,700 and 2,800 patrons. There are three rear balconies, four side box levels, and three tiers behind the platform. A 600-seat recital hall was also designed.

Acoustic consultants Artec Inc. designed a number of devices to attune the hall to optimal listening conditions for different kinds of performances, including adjustable sound chambers, acoustic canopy, and sound absorptive materials. The building was to be acoustically separated from street and subway noise by a complex system of vibration isolation pads and joints.

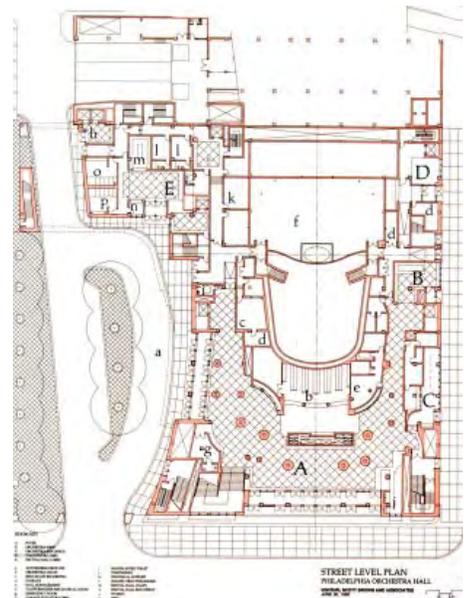
VSBA's design for the Philadelphia Orchestra Hall was not built. The project's parameters were modified and another firm's design was selected.

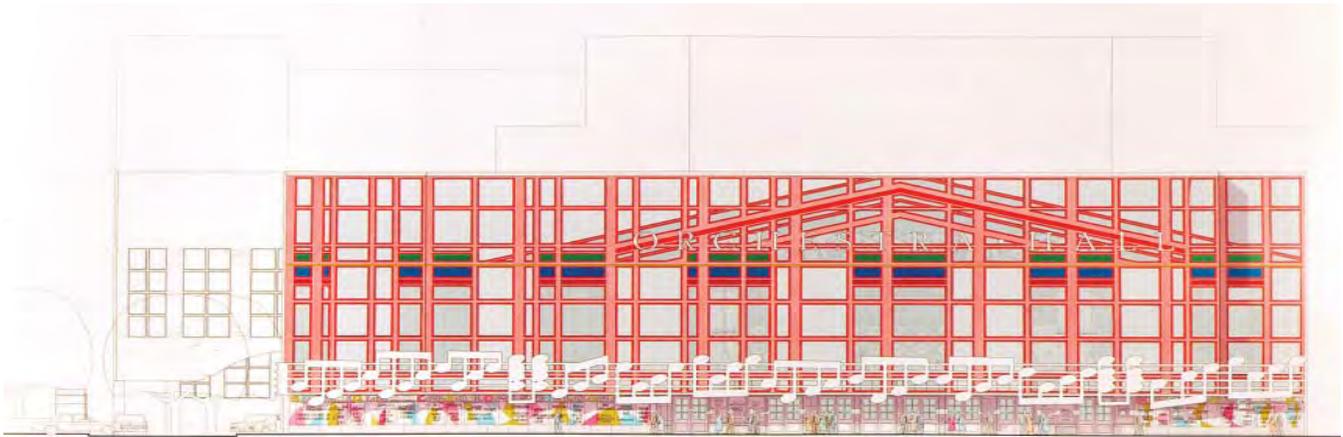


Broad Street elevation at night

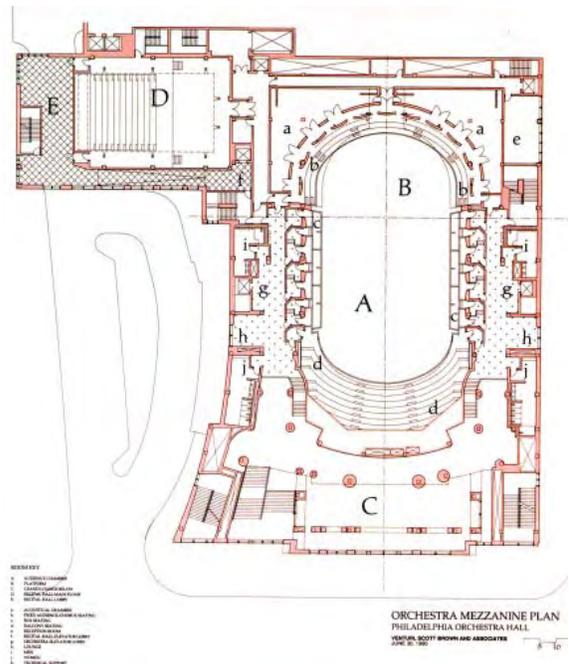
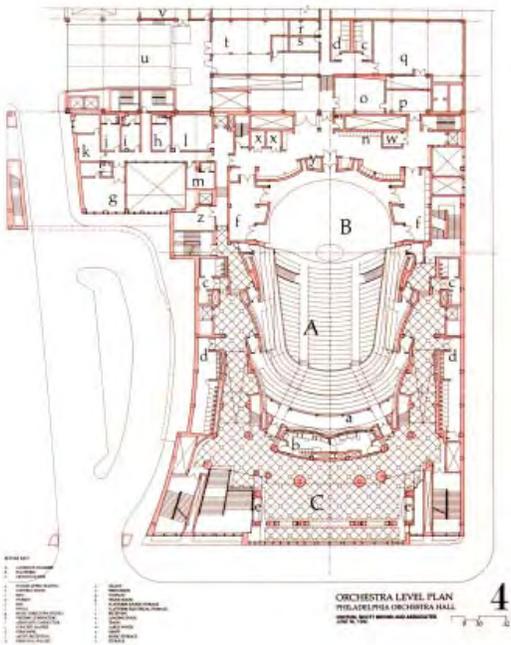


Philadelphia's Avenue of the Arts and the Orchestra Hall's street level plan





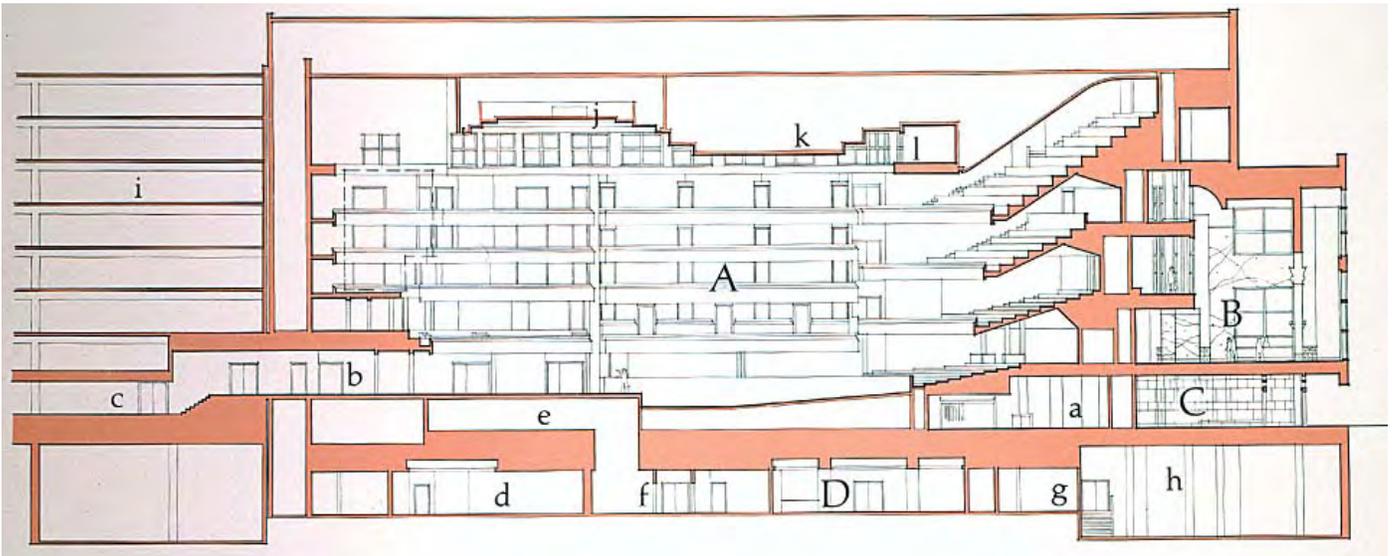
Day and night elevations



Orchestra and mezzanine level plans



Main hall interior



Section