

Oregon Symphony Hall

ARCH 4/585 and 4/586

Winter/Spring 2019

Instructor Scott Clarke, AIA



Elbphilharmonie, Hezog & de Meuron, 2017



Concertgebouw, Adolf van Gendt, 1888



Disney Concert Hall, Frank Gehry, 2003



Philharmonie de Paris, Jean Nouvel, 2015



Musikverein, Theopold Hansen, 1870

The symphony serves an unusual position in our culture. It celebrates communication without words or images and by completely analog means. Narrative, political or otherwise, is either absent, or is referenced only as a means of understanding the genesis of the work being performed. Musicians prepare and then the audience gathers. Together they perform and listen, both indispensable. This ritualized experience brings 2500 people together for a specific shared objective; share the full spectrum of human experience and our unique ability to express our view of the world through focus, dedication, ingenuity and imagination. It provides those engaged with the assurance that, outside the concert hall, we can do better.

Oregon Symphony Hall

This winter/spring terminal studio will involve design of a replacement for the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland. The Oregon Symphony is a highly regarded orchestra, consistent with the high level of quality common in the city's cultural life. However, it must make do with performing in a converted movie theater. The new concert hall will be explicitly designed as a performance space for un-amplified music. While primarily for the Oregon Symphony, it will also host visiting orchestras, chamber groups, and recitals. The facility will include performance spaces of three sizes along with collateral uses. The site will be generous enough to enable, at the discretion of each student, additional program elements.

Primary studio objectives include:

- Creating spaces that enhance the experience of audience members, musicians, and the public
- Develop an understanding of the acoustical, structural, mechanical, and other technical issues inherent in this project type. Integrate these issues within the project
- Understand urban implications of the program. Develop projects that enhance their context

A one-credit fall seminar will prepare students for the studio by introducing concepts that are somewhat particular to concert halls and their uses. Topics and activities may include:

- Introduction to acoustics in performance spaces
- Precedent studies of historic and contemporary concert halls
- Introduction to the business of classical music in the United States
- The history of concert halls
- Brief introduction to the history of music, instruments, and ensembles
- Concert halls as components of vital urban spaces
- Concert halls from the perspectives of musicians, administrators, and conductors
- Excursions to local venues, including performances
- Introduction to structural and mechanical systems of concert halls

The seminar and studio may include lectures, guest speakers, student presentations, student projects, reading and discussion, and visits to venues and performances. Field trips to Seattle and Portland, as well as local venues, will foster an understanding of the cultural, aesthetic, urban, and technical issues pertaining to the design of concert halls.