The symphony serves an unusual role in our culture. It celebrates communication without words or images and by completely analog means. Like architecture, this experience manifests the profound power of nonverbal communication. 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 celebrate our 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.

This winter/spring terminal studio will involve design of a new concert hall for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. The Vancouver 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 unamplified music. While primarily for the Vancouver Symphony, it will also host visiting orchestras, chamber groups, recitals, and other performances. The facility will include performance spaces of three sizes along with collateral uses, enabling the orchestra to broaden its modes of operation, enhance its salience within the city and thereby become more inclusive, reaching more of Vancouver's population.

Primary studio objectives include:
· Creating spaces that enhance the experience of audience members, musicians, and the public
· Developing an understanding of the acoustical, structural, mechanical, and other technical issues inherent in this project type. Integrate these issues within the project
· Understanding urban implications of the program. Developing projects that enhance their context

Preliminary exercises in the winter quarter will prepare students for their design efforts by introducing concepts that are somewhat particular to concert halls and their uses. Topics 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
· Introduction to structural and mechanical systems of concert halls

Studio activities may include lectures, guest speakers, student presentations, reading and discussion, and visits to venues and performances. Field trips to Seattle and Vancouver (pending lack of travel restrictions) as well as local venues will foster an understanding of the cultural, aesthetic, urban, and technical issues pertaining to the design of concert halls.