

For Immediate Release

LMN Architects Reveals Design for Octave 9, an Experimental Music Experience Space for the Seattle Symphony



SEATTLE, June 28, 2018—LMN Architects is pleased to reveal its design for Octave 9 – a new type of venue for music education and performance that expands possibilities for how we relate to music and seeks to deepen our connections to it. Created as a highly flexible education and performance space, Octave 9 will incorporate cutting edge audio and visual technology to establish an immersive multi-sensory musical experience for Seattle Symphony’s music education and community engagement programs.

“In this time of virtual reality and questions of whether we need physical environments or digital experiences, Octave 9 is both. It is not just a new performance venue for the Symphony, it is also an exploration into the future of musical performance and education. With Octave 9, the Seattle Symphony has made a commitment to collaborating with emerging artists who are expanding the definition of musical performance while also making these new technologies accessible to the greater community.”
Mark Reddington, FAIA, Partner, LMN Architects

Octave 9 expands the idea of the black box performance space and turns it into a venue that can truly adapt to the needs of a specific performance or activity. Octave 9 ensures that each visitor’s musical experience is tuned to perfection, no matter where they are in the room. This acoustical experience is achieved through the use of Meyer Sound’s Constellation® Acoustic System, an innovative audio delivery system that allows full flexibility to transform the acoustical experience with electronic systems. Performances will be further enhanced by the visually immersive capabilities of the venue itself. Video and images, presented via ultra-short throw projections, will enable performers to visually transform the space into virtually any environment, further enhancing the multi-sensory experience.

“The Meyer Constellation sound system removes the need to physically shape the space for controlling acoustics which allowed for the creation of a highly flexible space that can be digitally tuned to a wide

variety of performance conditions. Throughout the project, LMN leveraged parametric modeling to coordinate the variety of consultants and systems that occur within the space in order to deliver a design that goes beyond the typical high-tech black box studio.” Scott Crawford, Principal, LMN Architects

To support the immersive experience, the designers for Octave 9 sought to create a physical environment that can acoustically and visually disappear—an experience that responds to programming, rather than the surroundings. All surfaces and materials were considered for their acoustic properties and made absorptive rather than reflective. The floors are carpeted; casework is made of micro-perforated wood; resting instruments go into built-in storage spaces; a mobile bar for social events can be rolled out or put away. Speakers, microphones, projectors, lighting, and the HVAC system are all integrated into a custom-designed acoustically absorptive ceiling. Composed of an array of sound absorbing cells made of a felt-like material, the ceiling design optimizes the room’s acoustic goals while also strategically hiding technical, electrical, and mechanical systems. Certain cells, selected to optimize the overall effect, contain speakers, microphones, projectors, lighting, or the means to regulate airflow for occupants’ comfort. The result is an intimate 2,500-square-foot venue that is highly flexible and capable of morphing to the needs of the performance or activity, whether for a small school group, or an immersive, experimental artist performance.

Octave 9’s visuals are handled through a series of 13 mobile projection panels that can be customized to wrap the space or positioned along the circular track as desired around the room. The resulting digital acoustic architecture permits Octave 9 to feel as large as a concert hall, or as compact as an intimate salon. The advanced audio/visual technology brings musicians and audiences together in a shared immersive exploration of the art.

The combination of audio with visual and lighting effects turns the venue into a flexible playground serving extensive uses, from a classroom/meeting room to a musical performance space to a visual and auditory immersive and interactive environment. Octave 9 will also serve as an experimental space for artists and composers; a space in which to explore the capabilities of the venue itself as a creative tool for expanding interdisciplinary performance possibilities.

Created to deepen the Seattle Symphony's music education programs, community engagement and access for youth, families, and schools, the venue will add a much needed third performance space to Benaroya, while serving as a platform for artistic and technology partnerships, today and into the future.

The \$6.7 million capital project is funded through a combination of public and private funds, spearheaded by a \$2 million match from local philanthropists James and Sherry Raisbeck. Support for Octave 9 comes from the 4Culture/King County Building for Culture Program, Norcliffe Foundation, Apex Foundation, Paula Boggs and Randee Fox, Children Count Foundation, Joshua Green Foundation, The Tagney Jones Family Fund at the Seattle Foundation, LMN Architects, and Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.

Completion is anticipated to be the first quarter of 2019.

Project Team

Seattle Symphony (owners)
LMN Architects (architecture and interiors)
Meyer Constellation Sound (electro-acoustics)
Belle & Wissell, Co. (immersive technology)
Jaffe Holden (acoustical/audio-visual consultant)
Schuler Shook (theater planning and lighting design)
Magnusson Klemencic Associates (structural engineering)
Holaday-Parks, Inc. (mechanical engineering design-build)
Sequoyah Electric, LLC (electrical engineering design-build)
JTM Construction (general contractor)

About LMN Architects

LMN Architects specializes in the planning and design of significant public and private projects, including education facilities, office buildings, mixed-use developments, cultural venues, convention centers, transit stations, and other urban environments that celebrate and enrich communities. The firm is the recipient of the 2016 American Institute of Architects Architecture Firm Award.

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