

What's next? The journey continues...

The Music Hall is committed to its transformation into a performing arts center for the 21st century. Future projects include:

- The full restoration and enhancement of this historic hall, including backstage systems
- The further development of educational offerings for the benefit of the broadest community

Experience the Magic...

Please come back soon for a performance,
master class, or behind-the-scenes tour.

The Music Hall Lobby Project Team

Architect: John Merkle

Co-founder of TMS Architects 25 years ago, he has a passion for historic preservation – particularly saving and restoring historic structures around New England, most notably Wentworth by the Sea. He is currently president of the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance.

Lobby Designer: Jason McLean

High traffic space designer with artisan skills and deep theater experience, Jason McLean designed and built The Loring Café/Bar, the Loring Pasta Bar, the Kitty Cat Klub and is remodeling the historically significant Art Deco-era 900-seat Varsity Theater, all “mandatory destinations” in Minneapolis. Synthesizing the fantasy-come-to-life settings of theater design with the durability of functional public gathering spaces has been his aesthetic trademark.

Construction Manager: John DeStefano, DeStefano & Associates

Armed with a masters in construction management and an MBA, this licensed professional engineer spent over 20 years in the design and construction of a broad range of facilities including commercial, institutional, and historic restoration projects in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine before starting his own firm DeStefano & Associates ten years ago.

Music Hall Executive Director: Patricia Lynch

A visionary leader in the performing arts since the 1980's, she came to The Music Hall in 2004 with a rich imagination, a track record in successful programming, experience in capital improvements and a readiness to nurture the blossoming of the hall. Under her tenure, the hall has been transformed with signature series, increased attendance and financial support, broader awareness, and striking renovations.

REIMAGINING AN AMERICAN TREASURE:

The Opening of a Remarkable New Community Space, a Beaux Arts Lobby for the 21st Century

Welcome to our new Founders Lobby – the latest restoration and renovation work completed in the 1878 historic hall, named for the Founders of The Music Hall (board members from 1989-1992). We are thrilled patrons can now experience the expanded amenities in this 2,600 square foot space, and enjoy the history and beauty of this Beaux Arts lobby for the 21st century, a “theatrical fantasy come to life.”

Working from our strategic plan, we embarked on renovating our cramped, cold, and inadequate lobby in October of 2006. One of many goals we accomplished was to make the old building as ‘green’ as possible. We installed high-efficiency boilers, energy recovery systems, and state-of-the-art LED lighting within the building’s antique footprint.

Architectural conservators have called the theater’s restoration and renovation, which began in 2003 when the U.S. Senate named The Music Hall an American Treasure, “so dramatic, it takes your breath away.” In a full feature on the theater, its history and role in the community, *THE NEW YORK TIMES* celebrated the “majestic Music Hall...returned to its Victorian era glory.”

TRADITIONAL BUILDING reported the theater’s “jaw dropping architectural improvements” in a cover story. When we received the 2008 Preservation Award from the NH Preservation Alliance for our comprehensive work, we were understandably proud.

With this year’s renovation of the lobby and plans for future work, we hope to secure the legacy of this historic building and its community programs, further stimulate the creative culture and economy of this fast-growing region, and strengthen and advance The Music Hall, an American Treasure for the Arts and a cultural anchor for New England.

Join us for a HISTORICAL TOUR

The Music Hall opens its doors twice monthly for guided tours, taking visitors behind the scenes and through the restorations, renovations and history of the celebrated 1878 theater, designated An American Treasure by the U.S. Senate. Guided by Music Hall Historian Zhana Morris, the tour paints a full picture of the history of the hall, including the tales of sailors who rigged the theater in the late 19th Century, its flashy and famous owners, and stars who have taken stage, from Buffalo Bill to Alan Alda, Wynton Marsalis to Patti LuPone.

The tours run on the first Wednesday of the month at 5pm and on the third Thursday at 12:30pm. Tickets are \$6 (\$5 Member) and can be purchased day of tour, in advance at www.themusichall.org or through the box office at 603-436-2400.

“New Music Hall! Music Hall renovations are star of the show... renovation has transformed a cold and cramped lobby... new 2,600-square-foot-space reflects the Beaux Arts beauty of the award-winning historic theater.”

- UNION LEADER

“...If you're a lover of the finer things in life, The Music Hall is a mandatory destination...one of the premier venues on the New England seaboard.”

- YANKEE MAGAZINE



The Music Hall
An American Treasure for the Arts

A Beaux Arts Lobby for the 21st Century

Architect
John Merkle

Executive Director
Patricia Lynch

Designer
Jason McLean

Construction Manager
John DeStefano

Site Manager
Steve DuBack

Onsite Architectural Manager
Nicole Martineau

Director of Special Projects
Elena Maltese, The Music Hall

Artisans
Jason McLean Designs
Art-Tech Productions Inc.
Casting Creations of MN
Loring Design Build Guild
Tuveson Gilding & Restoration
Arens Stoneworks, Inc.
SharpeWorks Strategic Design
James Rahn Graphic Design

“Music Hall takes community a step ahead. With its new Founders Lobby, the hall is taking one small step forward in a giant leap renovation project that will benefit the Seacoast at large.... Walking into the lobby, you can see the vision, the imagination and the respect for this national treasure.... We applaud The Music Hall for its focus on the past and the future, while keeping its present base in mind...you should be proud to be a part of its history.”
- PORTSMOUTH HERALD (editorial)

Facilities and Restoration Committee
Doug Nelson,
Committee Chair * **

Jeff Clark
Josephine Lamprey *
Patricia Lynch **
Lee Sollenberger
John Merkle * **
Rodney Rowland *
Clyde Logue
Zhana Morris
Elena Maltese * **
Larry Lariviere
Ron Ulrich
Quentin Stockwell *

*Green Task Force Members, also includes Bob Sheppard
** Artisan Review Task Force, also includes Donna Ryan, Joanne Francis, Betsy Cole

Contractors & Vendors
A & E Flooring, Inc.
Altus Engineering, Inc.
ATI, Inc.
Caprioli Painting
Cavaretta Construction Co.
CPH Mechanical, Inc.
DC Home Systems
DeStefano and Associates, Inc.
Discount Steel
D.M. Burns Security, Inc.
Engineered Building Systems, Inc.
EnviroVantage, Inc.
Godin Associates
Hampton Technical Services
Hardware Consultants, Inc.
Hayden Excavating & Welding Services Inc.
James Verra & Associates
JSN Associates
Malthouse Construction Co.
Matrix Concrete
NE Lift Company Inc.
Pacific Columns
Petersen Engineering
Rahn + Company
Rand Stoneworks
Redimx
Reuter Associates
Rexel CLS
Riedel Electronics, LLC
Rockingham Electrical Supply Co. Inc.
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R.W. Gillespie & Associates, Inc.
Scarponi Electric, LLC
Sign*A*Rama
SL Chasse
State Street Discount
Visible Light, Inc.
Welch Architectural Signage

A Beaux Arts Lobby for the 21st Century

You’re walking into a theatrical fantasy come to life. The Music Hall’s new Beaux Arts Lobby opened in September 2008.

The 2,600 sf space:

- reflects the Beaux Arts beauty of the historic theater
- showcases the theater’s history in a bold and theatrical way
- furthers our efforts to be as green as possible in an antique building
- offers striking new 21st century amenities and greater access to our 100,000 patrons each year

Why this elegant, eclectic design?

Our 1878 Victorian landmark theater set a high bar for this most recent renovation. The work of craftsmen from 1878-1901 on the proscenium arch and decorative finishes a floor above – restored under the Save America’s Treasure grant in 2006 – called for an equally beautiful space below. We modeled the work in the lobby following Beaux Arts design elements in the hall including columns, gilding, garlands, and curved walls.

What is Beaux Arts?

Beaux Arts is an architectural style that originated in France in the late 19th century. It is characterized by classical/historic forms, symmetry, rich ornamentation, decorative detail, and a grand scale. It is eclectic. Beaux Arts design (as seen in the details of Paris Metro stations and in the work of Louis Comfort Tiffany in tile and sculpted metal) abounded during the Victorian period, the Hall’s period of architectural significance, specifically 1878 and 1901.

Tell me more about the restrooms

They are also Beaux Arts design, but they reflect more than just the history of the hall. The use of “tumbled down brick” reminds visitors of the natural phenomenon that much of the new lobby is underground. To make room for the new space we excavated 700 cubic yards of rock ledge (enough to fill a colonial home!) The grotto-like feel is appropriate. If you look closely, you’ll see we’ve placed many of the rocks and bricks from the demolition and excavation right back into walls.

Efficiency and comfort in the new space

One of many goals we accomplished in this renovation was to make the old building as ‘green’ as possible. We installed high efficiency boilers, energy recovery systems, and state-of-the-art LED lighting within the building’s antique footprint. The porthole doors you walk through create our first-ever entrance vestibules. At last the temperature in our lobby will stay consistent through all varieties of New England weather!

Reflecting our coastal city

Throughout the new space look for bits of recent history – tiles from the old lobby, workmen’s tools, seashells and other nautical items and images reminding us that Portsmouth is a coastal city. In many elements, the lobby ties to the surrounding architecture and spirit of this city. The trusses between the columns in the gathering area remind many of the Eiffel Tower (built in 1889), indeed; they also reflect the ironwork on Portsmouth’s three bridges to Maine. The porthole doors are beautiful not just in function but in design, as they reflect the city’s naval past and the fact The Music Hall was built by sailors in 1878.

“the majestic Music Hall...much of the Beaux Arts interior design is restored and the structure is returned to its Victorian-era glory... Gods and cherubs have reappeared.” - THE NEW YORK TIMES