

ARCHITECTURE

JOHN SERGIO FISHER AND ASSOCIATES



Triple decker

In August 2011, the San Dieguito High School Academy in Encinitas, California, opened a brand new, US\$8 million Performing Arts Center, which was six years in the making.

The contract for the design of the centre was won by JSFA in 2007, after the firm put forward a proposal that worked in harmony with the original 1930s campus designed by Lilian J. Rice, using the same materials and colour palette.

The 16,000ft² building has three performance venues: a 60-piece music rehearsal hall, a 200-seat black box theatre and an amphitheatre. It is divided into a music wing and a drama wing with a practice courtyard in between. The theatre contains a moveable telescoping seating system with upholstered seats on casters. The system enables end stage, traverse, ¾ round and theatre in-the-round seating configurations, and easily and quickly disappears into a flat floor at minimal labour expense.

The theatre also has large sliding doors, which open out to a natural grass 500-person amphitheatre and its stage. The surrounding



Exterior lighting catwalk with reflectors for the amphitheatre (top left); music rehearsal hall (top right); tension grid and movable telescoping seating in the black box theatre (above)

catwalk in the black box theatre contains adjustable acoustics draperies, which, when gathered, enable a reverberation time of 1.6 seconds for acoustic music performances, and when fully deployed, an RT of 1.0 seconds for drama and sound reinforced musicals.

Functional architecture

Concrete masonry unit construction prevents low frequency wave absorption and simultaneously provides proper sound transmission loss and high mass thermal retention. The curving catenary roofs and curving exterior lighting catwalk for the amphitheatre stage makes the building an icon for the performing arts and a gateway to the campus. The roof curves, convex to the performance venues, disburse the sound waves eliminating the need for internal reflectors.

The administration, faculty and students are said to be delighted with the simple beauty of the complex, its functionality and the acoustics. ■

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