



Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

Kleinhans Music Hall Information - "Answers" to the Search Tour

The outside of the large, main hall is shaped like the body of a violin. It is made of brick from Ohio, carefully chosen for its color. Going up the side of the building over the entranceways are what look like large stepping stones. These are intended to anchor the immense height of the building to the ground. Compared to most of its "neighbors" in the area, Kleinhans Music Hall is larger, made of different materials (brick and stone), and was designed in a smooth, simple architectural style.

The outside of the small hall is the same shape as the large hall and was designed as a smaller reflection of the main hall, continuing the smooth, curved lines of its larger counterpart. It is made of brick, like the main hall, and natural stone from Minnesota. The stone is set into the brick in vertical panels, with patterns of squares and rectangles in each of the stone panels. This is much more ornate brick and stone work than on the main hall side of the building. There is water, a shallow reflecting pool wrapping around the side of the hall.

When entering the lobby, the main hall is on one side and the Mary Seaton room (the smaller hall) is on the other. The lobby is symmetrical, with one set of outside doors on each side and two large staircases heading up to the balcony. The lobby is very simple in design and decor. It was designed to be a gathering place between the two halls.

The main hall has a very high cream-colored ceiling. The walls are tall panels of medium-toned wood. The wood of the walls is actually the world's largest installation of Flexwood, wood veneer cut an 80th of an inch thick. There is not any significant pattern to speak of within these wood panels. As far as the lighting is concerned, we see round spotlights scattered across the ceiling, pointing down, and rows of lights low on the paneled walls. There is more light on the stage area: "cove" lights hidden in the ceiling and back walls of the stage, and spotlights that focus on the stage when the concert is in progress. The stage and the walls surrounding it are made of light colored wood. The back wall of the stage could be described as concentric squares. This room was designed for large concerts and performances. The seats are not movable, so other events that could be held here are those that involve large groups of people watching the action on stage, such as graduations and speakers.

The Mary Seaton Room is smaller than the main hall but has a similar shape. It is generally brighter than the main hall, due to the windows in the back of the room. The walls are covered with striped wood called zebrawood in a pattern of squares and rectangles. The floor is covered with a lighter wood, laid down in strips in a repeated square pattern. There are no curtains on the windows and no decorations in the room other than the chairs and tables. These movable chairs and tables, along with the horizontal floor (as opposed to the angled floor in the main hall) allow for a many different types of events to take place in this room. Although designed for chamber music recitals, the room could also hold banquet meals, dances, parties, meetings, and so forth.

Livingston Hall is the smallest room. It is in the same shape as the other rooms. The walls are similar to the main hall. The furniture is art deco couches, chairs and tables. It also has a grand piano. This room serves many purposes today.

While exploring the halls and the lobby, one does not see very many doors, windows, or other openings to the outside. This is especially true in the main concert hall. The intent of this design was containment of people, sound, and light to create a focused, intense experience for concert-goers.

Looking at the descriptions of the outside and inside of the main hall and the Mary Seaton Room, one notices some important connections. The main hall's exterior and interior are both very simple, with smooth lines and a distinct lack of pattern or decoration. The Mary Seaton room has patterned zebrawood walls on the inside, and patterned stone and brick walls on the outside, both involving squares and rectangles in repeating patterns. In both cases, the exterior of the room is designed as an expression of the interior.

As far as which hall is more decorative overall, this would be the Mary Seaton room. Although it contains nothing more than chairs and tables, the pattern of the walls and floors leads to a more stimulating, decorative environment. This room was thought of as the more "feminine" of the two rooms by its designers in the late 1930's. Its patterned walls were not only intended to express this femininity, but to encourage a festive environment for the many events other than concerts that could take place here.