

# AMBASSADOR AUDITORIUM

THE MAKING OF A CULTURAL LEGACY

*“The critical news this morning is that Los Angeles has a new performing arts resource potentially of major significance: an elegant, 1,250-seat showcase for the nontheatrical muses.”*

— *Los Angeles Times*  
April 9, 1974

SINCE opening its doors on April 7, 1974, with a historic inaugural concert by Carlo Maria Giulini and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Ambassador Auditorium has come to be regarded by audiences and performers alike as one of the finest concert halls in the world.

Throughout its first 20 years, which have brought more than 2,500 concerts to over two-and-a-quarter million people, Ambassador Auditorium has enjoyed an unequaled reputation for artistic excellence, superb acoustics and felicitous design — a cultural legacy of enduring value.

Because of the Auditorium's immense popularity, curiosity about the origins of the structure and the institution that created it has developed: Who built Ambassador Auditorium? How was it conceived and engineered? And why was it built in Pasadena?

On the following pages is the detailed story of Ambassador Auditorium — a pictorial history of its design and construction, its building materials and furnishings, its technical features and environs, plus a retrospective of the great performances and events of its first 20 seasons.



*“The design considers the building not only as a place for listening and hearing, but also a place for worship, a dignified environment for scholarly interchange and symposia, and a lively and luxurious center for cultural and musical events.”*

— Arthur E. Mann, FAIA  
Senior Vice President  
Daniel, Mann, Johnson  
and Mendenhall

THE now-familiar profile of Ambassador Auditorium, with its striking white columns and flared roofline, was evident within 12 months of groundbreaking. By January 1973, the superstructure was established with its dominant exterior features in place.

Work on the main building progressed another 11 months before the west lawn gave way to excavation for the half-acre reflecting pool. The egret fountain, assembled on-site in 1967 by sculptor Sir David Wynne, remained in its original location throughout the 26 months of the Auditorium's construction.

More than 100 skilled workers and craftsmen joined concrete to steel, installed state-of-the-art sound and lighting technologies and patiently adorned the Auditorium's surfaces with precious stone, metal, fine woods and elegant fabrics from around the world.

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# “...WE TURNED TO PASADENA.”

By the early 1940s, the Radio Church of God (renamed the Worldwide Church of God in 1968) was outgrowing its administrative offices and printing facilities in Eugene, Oregon. Discovering that he also needed an educated staff to assist with his growing flock, Church leader Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986) began searching for a suitable place to relocate Church operations and open a small college. At the same time, the Church's weekly radio program, *The World Tomorrow*, was expanding to a national audience and Mr. Armstrong saw the need to be close to the recording facilities of Hollywood, as well as the larger printing establishments of Los Angeles.

Of the decision to move to Pasadena, Mr. Armstrong later wrote: “Needing to be accessible to both Hollywood and Los Angeles, ...we turned to Pasadena.” He had first visited Pasadena in 1941 and was attracted by its cultural and educational atmosphere.

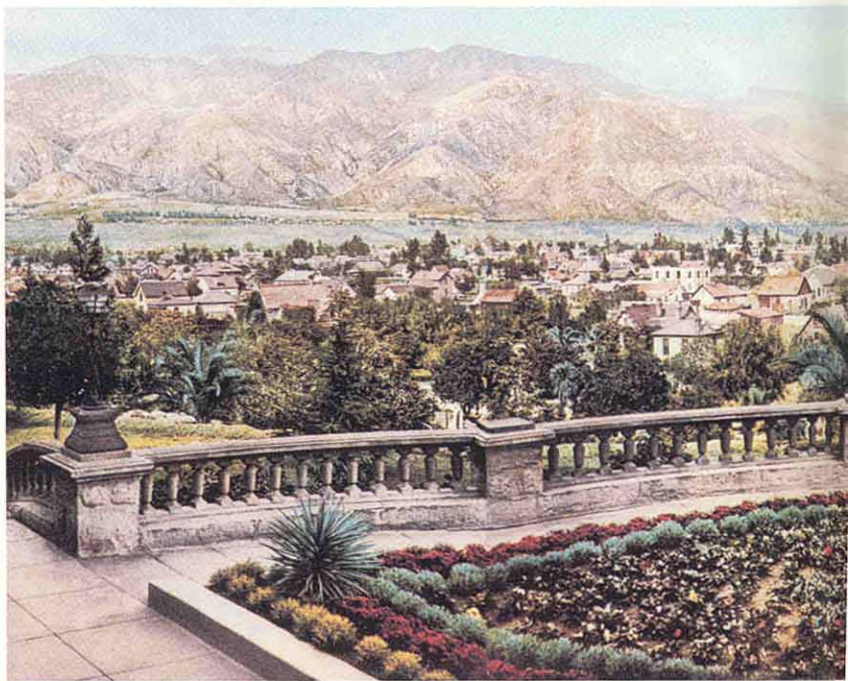
In November 1946, after months of searching, Mr. Armstrong considered a 17-room house at 363 Grove Street, the former Fowler estate just off South Orange Grove Boulevard — Pasadena's “Millionaires' Row.” He immediately recognized the site's potential for classrooms with space for recording studios, offices and printing equipment. The entire Church headquarters and a college could be housed in Pasadena for \$200 less per month than it was costing to rent space in Eugene.

Remarkably, with no down payment, the Church was able to sign a lease-option contract with monthly payments applied to the \$100,000 purchase. After making costly improvements to meet city codes as a classroom facility, Ambassador College opened its doors October 8, 1947, to four students and eight faculty members.

As the Church and its small college grew, other South Orange Grove former millionaire mansions would be acquired at a fraction of their original worth and refurbished by the Church, creating a serene cultural setting for future development, culminating in the completion of Ambassador Auditorium in 1974.

*“Here were beautiful grounds to provide a small, but once cleared of weeds and relandscaped, magnificent campus with beautiful and majestic trees — palms, deodars, magnolias and other fine specimens.”*

— Herbert W. Armstrong  
*Autobiography*  
Vol. 2, page 149





# \$100,000 Deal to Buy Fowler Estate for College Under Option

Negotiations are under way for purchase of the former Kate Fowler estate at 363 Grove Street, just east of South Orange Grove Avenue, for \$100,000, as the location of a college of liberal arts, founded and sponsored by the Radio Church of God, Inc., it was learned today.



The Pasadena Star-News reported Ambassador's pending acquisition of the Fowler estate on July 9, 1947 (top left), noting that it was "considered an ideal setting for the type of institution that is being planned."

The estate, built for businessman and banker Edward F. Claypool in 1895, was sold to Eldridge M. Fowler in 1901, and became Ambassador's first Pasadena building in 1947. It was laden with a rare blanket of snow (far left) when photographed from the lower gardens on January 10, 1949.

An early postcard view of the same building (left) shows its original Moorish contours, which disappeared when it was remodeled in 1922 by renowned architect Myron Hunt.

A hand-tinted panoramic view of Pasadena (below left), photographed in the late 1890s from the east porch of the Claypool estate, surveys the future site of Ambassador College. Decades later, Ambassador Auditorium will rest just left of the center of this view.

Shortly before construction of the Claypool home in 1895, the Pasadena Daily Evening Star observed that "the view is one of the choicest to be found in the city." Neighboring houses were later built on the crest of this hill to take advantage of its superb vista. Terrace Drive, the residential street just below, was so named "because it was cut along the hill slope in terrace fashion," and is now the mall west of Ambassador Auditorium.

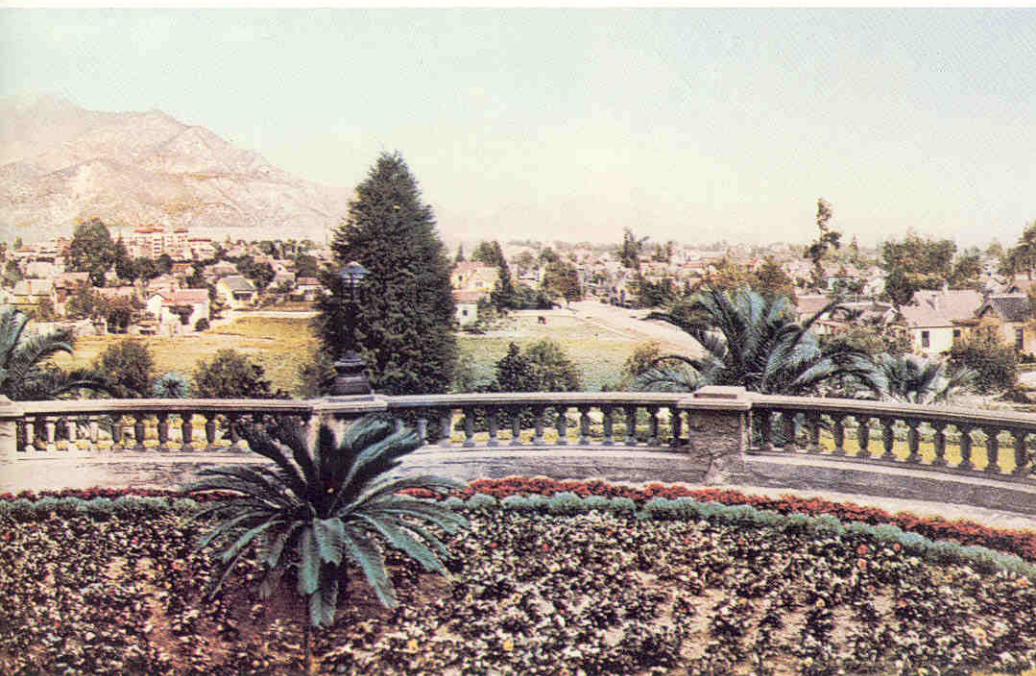


Photo courtesy of the Pasadena Historical Museum



# A MASTER PLAN EMERGES

**A**FTER the purchase of the Fowler estate in 1947, Mayfair, a Tudor-style mansion adjoining the Ambassador campus on the north, was acquired in May 1949. This 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-acre site increased the college grounds to four acres. Early expansion plans were then limited to a few adjacent properties. The present dimensions of the Ambassador site were not conceived until 1956, when the former estate of Hulett Clinton Merritt, previously considered inaccessible, became available at auction.

With the acquisition of the Merritt property, Mr. Armstrong realized that “our entire concept of the future campus was now greatly altered. We knew the campus eventually would have to include the four-block area from Green Street on the north to Del Mar Boulevard on the south — and from ‘Millionaires’ Row’ South Orange Grove Boulevard on the west down to the Union Pacific railroad tracks on the east — a 12-square-block area.”

From 1957 through 1966, all properties within the projected campus boundaries were acquired. These purchases would be the future location of modern buildings constructed to meet the needs of the growing Church and college. Early in 1963, the planning and architectural firm of Daniel, Mann, Johnson and Mendenhall was engaged to begin developing a master plan for skillfully blending new and existing structures.

A particularly urgent need arose late in 1963 when proposed freeway expansion jeopardized the recently acquired lower campus. A recreation complex, designed and completed in one year, was built on the southeast corner of the property in 1964, thus showing the intent to occupy the area with college buildings. The freeway was then routed one block east.

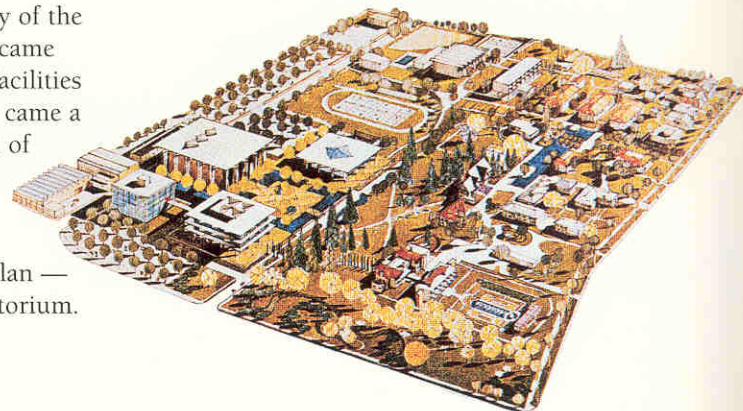
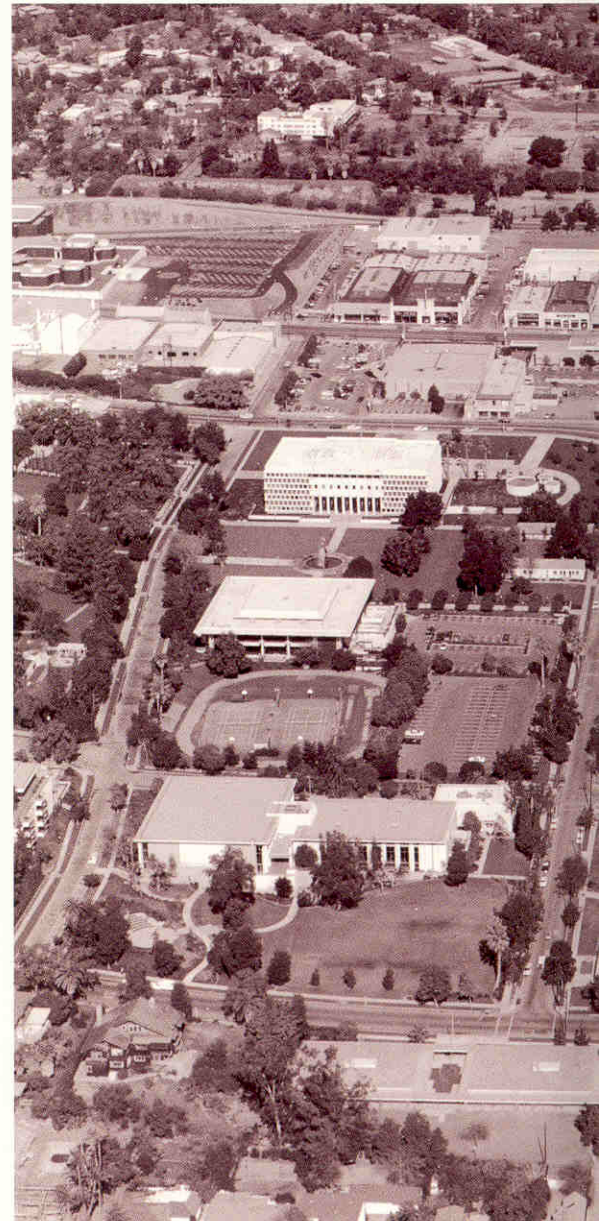
It was hoped that the Auditorium could come next, but as the student body of the college expanded, a dining hall became imperative. Next, new classroom facilities sidetracked the Auditorium. Then came a new men’s dormitory, and the Hall of Administration. At last, on January 6, 1972, financing was secured for the long-awaited finishing structure of the master plan — the magnificent Ambassador Auditorium.



*The 1956 purchase of the Merritt estate, at 99 Terrace Drive (above), greatly altered Ambassador’s original expansion plans.*

*Development on the lower campus east of Terrace Drive is documented in this aerial view (center) looking north. The Recreation Complex, left foreground, was constructed in 1964 on the southeast corner of the campus. The Dining Hall was built just north in 1966 and was followed by the Hall of Administration in 1969. The Auditorium site was occupied by temporary office buildings.*

*The former east boundary of the campus then included the Union Pacific railroad tracks alongside Vernon Avenue (renamed St. John Avenue in 1974). Some Church and college buildings east of the railroad tracks were demolished for freeway construction in 1972. Urban clearing for the proposed Long Beach Freeway can be seen in the far right of the photograph.*



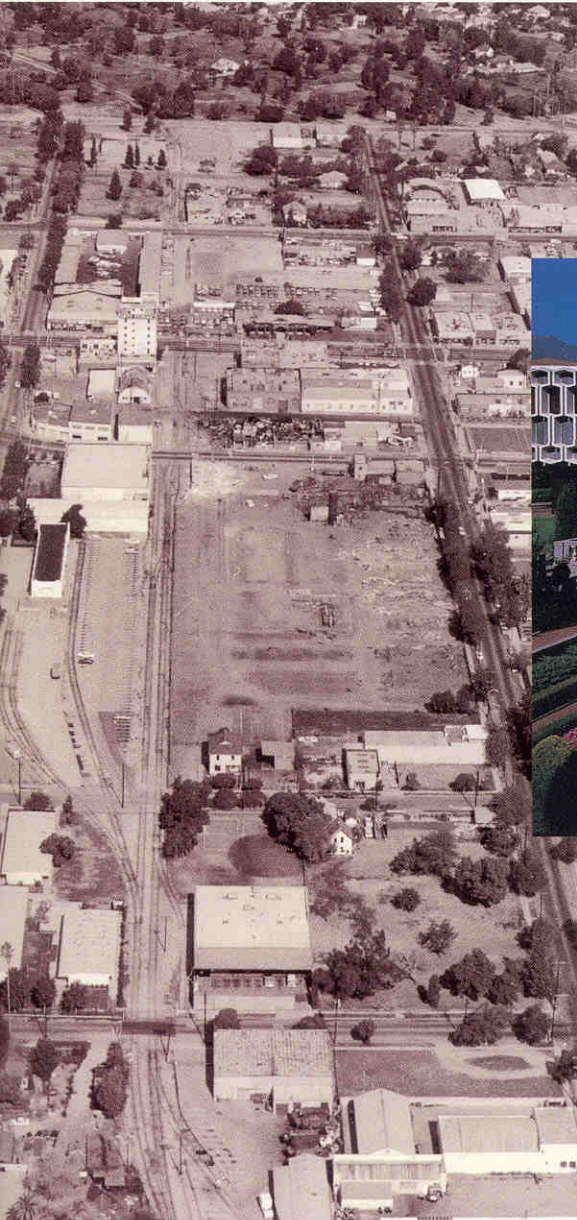


*“Through 1956 and 1957, the Ambassador College campus in Pasadena began expanding with increasing momentum.”*

— Herbert W. Armstrong  
*Autobiography*  
 Vol. 2, page 407



The formal Italian sunken gardens, originally developed in 1907 on the west side of the Merritt estate, extended to Orange Grove Boulevard. By 1966, the college had added a large fountain and installed angled water jets along the



decorative pool (top left). A striking blend of old and new was accomplished in 1968 with the addition of modern buildings occupying the west lawn between the Merritt house and the sunken gardens (above). During this construction phase (left), the west porch of the Merritt house was extended to two stories.

The master plan (far left), initiated in 1963, was intended to “contribute a tremendous uplift to the appearance of this end of Pasadena, in keeping with Pasadena’s national and worldwide reputation as a cultural and education center.”

The four-story Hall of Administration, under construction in 1968 (bottom left), was the last building project before work was begun on Ambassador Auditorium in January 1972.





# THE MAKING OF AMBASSADOR AUDITORIUM

*“Within the three decades of our firm’s international architectural, planning and design experience, there has never been a structure like the Ambassador Auditorium, and we count it as our finest and most outstanding accomplishment.”*

— Arthur E. Mann, FAIA  
Senior Vice President  
Daniel, Mann, Johnson  
and Mendenhall

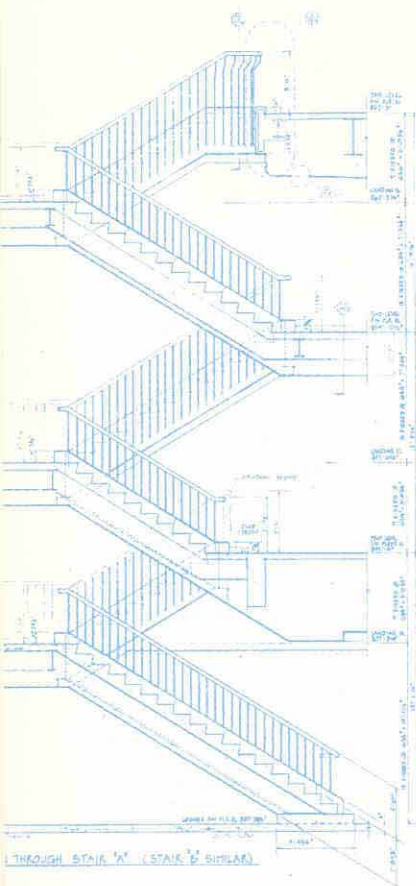
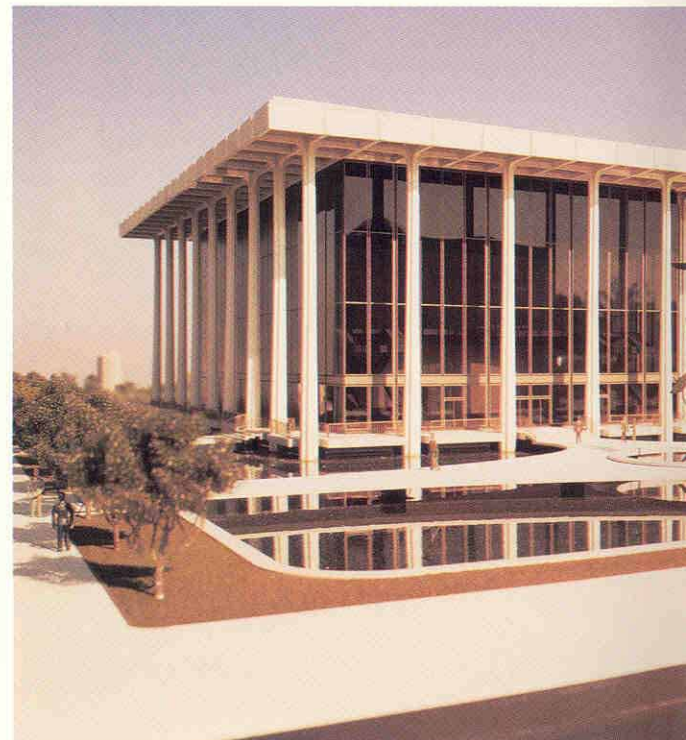
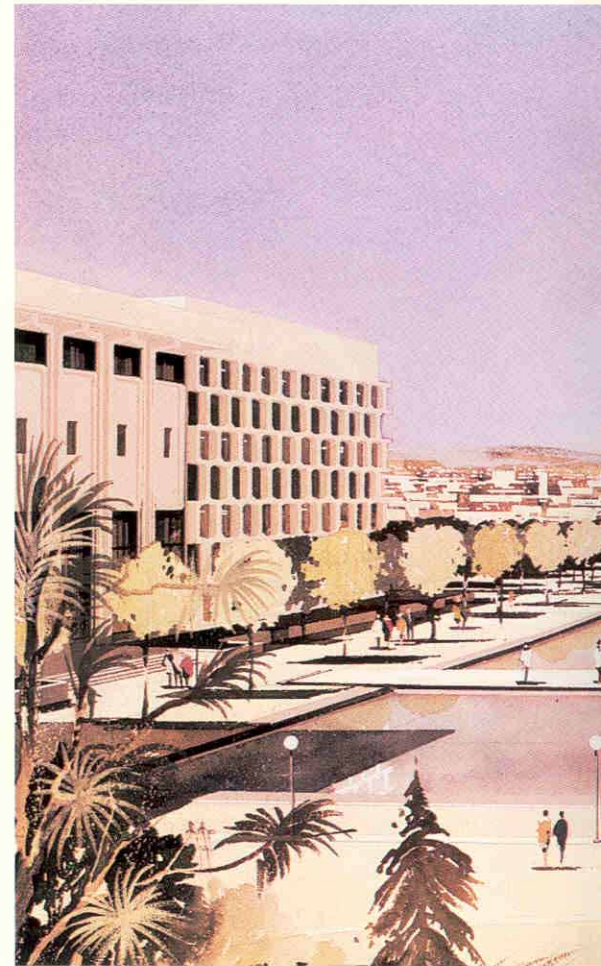
AMBASSADOR Auditorium was intended to be more than a college auditorium or concert hall. As the program for the inaugural concert on April 7, 1974, expressed: “We could not have justified producing a structure of this magnificence for college purposes alone.... This auditorium has been made possible by special gifts from members of the Worldwide Church of God as a monument to the honor and glory of the living God.”

The idea for a building of such quality was conceived in the early 1960s by Herbert W. Armstrong: “a building surrounded by tall pillars and an overhanging roof, the pillars rising out of an approximately half-acre lake.” The Los Angeles-based architectural firm of Daniel, Mann, Johnson and Mendenhall was asked to make a few preliminary sketches of possible exterior designs. Printed copies of the chosen sketch, along with an explanation of the quality and character of the proposed building, were then submitted to the entire Church membership. Some members then voluntarily contributed to a special fund set aside for building purposes.

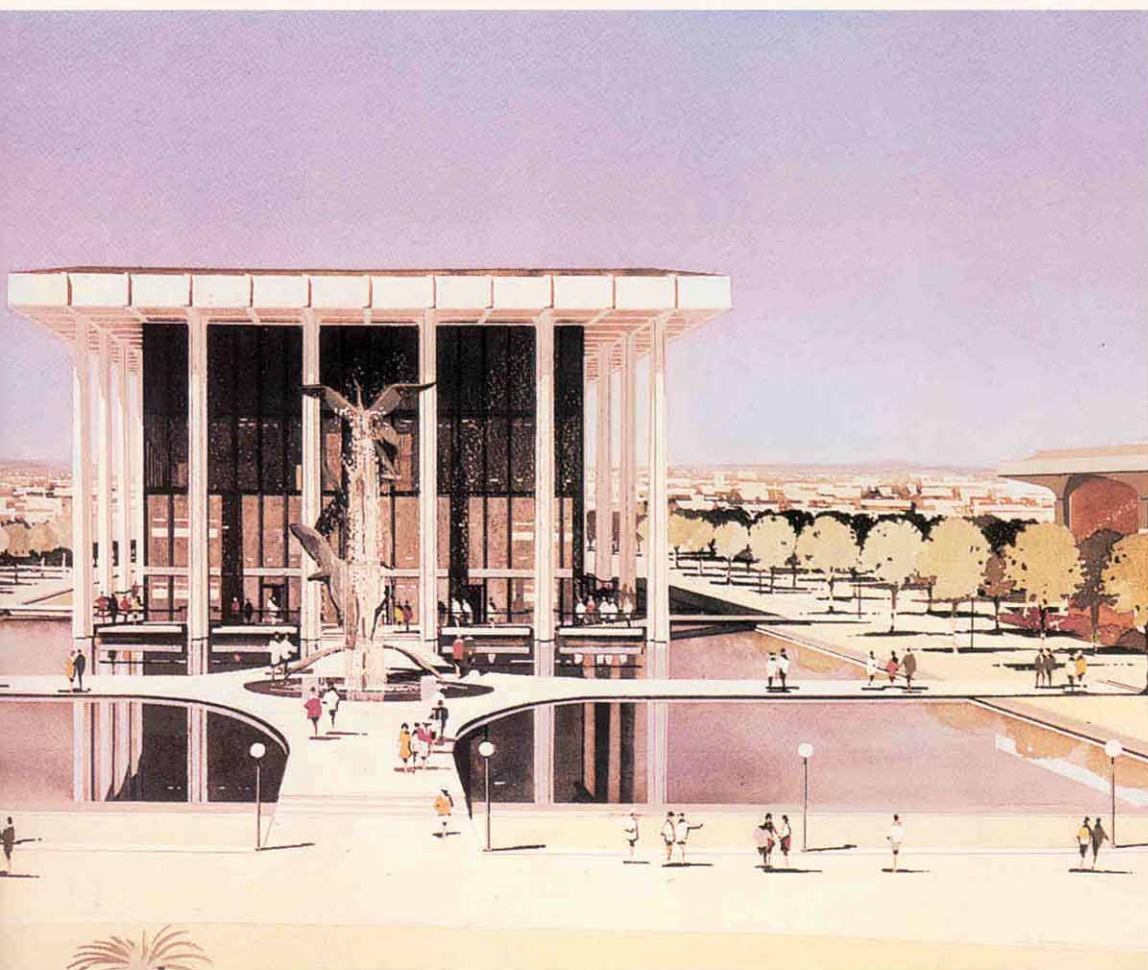
Nearly 10 years after the initial proposal, the Church’s mortgage bankers announced they had secured 89 percent financing by way of long-term loans of 15 or more years. Previous gifts and interim financing supplied the balance of funds needed and ground was broken on January 14, 1972.

Superior performances were requested of the architects, contractors and suppliers. The bidder contracts stipulated a high standard of craftsmanship and consistency of materials. There were to be no shortcuts and no substitutes. The design called for a challenging degree of precision, with fine tolerances imposed on vast, varied amounts of materials from all over the world.

Throughout the 26 months of construction, following more than two years of design and production of the working drawings, the architects, engineers and artisans involved executed a degree of craftsmanship that many believed had disappeared in this century. Ambassador Auditorium is a magnificent accomplishment and stands as a fitting monument to the original purpose of its creation.







Herbert W. Armstrong officially broke ground for Ambassador Auditorium on January 14, 1972 (above).

A brochure describing the proposed auditorium featured this color sketch (left) and a color photograph of the architect's model (bottom left).

Various exterior designs were submitted for consideration, including this early pencil sketch (bottom right).

**Architect:**

Daniel, Mann, Johnson  
and Mendenhall  
Los Angeles, California

**Contractor:**

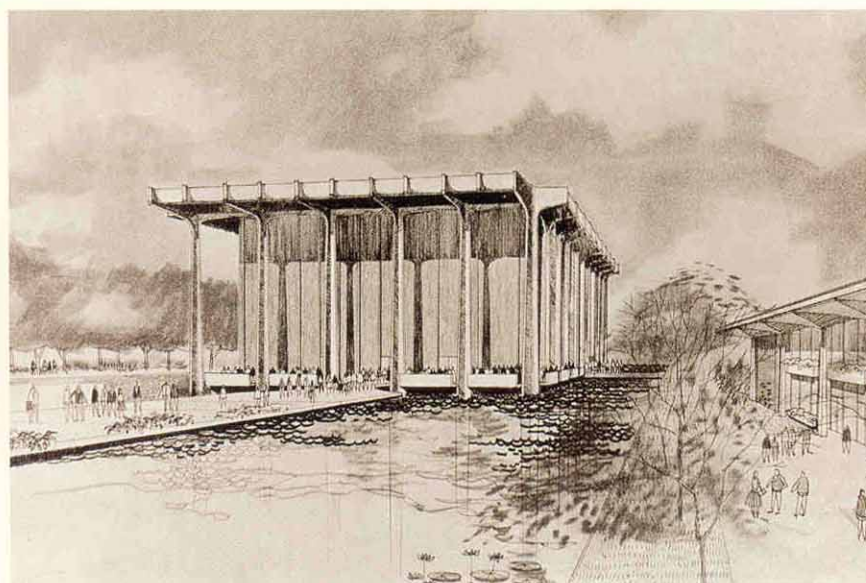
William Simpson  
Construction Company  
Los Angeles, California

**Interior Design:**

Robert E. Smith, A.I.D.  
Ambassador Foundation

**Acoustical Engineers:**

Bolt, Beranek and  
Newman, Inc.  
Canoga Park, California







## CONCRETE AND STEEL

Site preparation for Ambassador Auditorium began with the removal of temporary office buildings (above), followed by (left to right) excavation and shaping of the soil for poured footings and the foundation.

A counterbalanced, hammerhead crane, anchored at the center of the site, hoisted and transported building materials and supplies to every part of the structure.

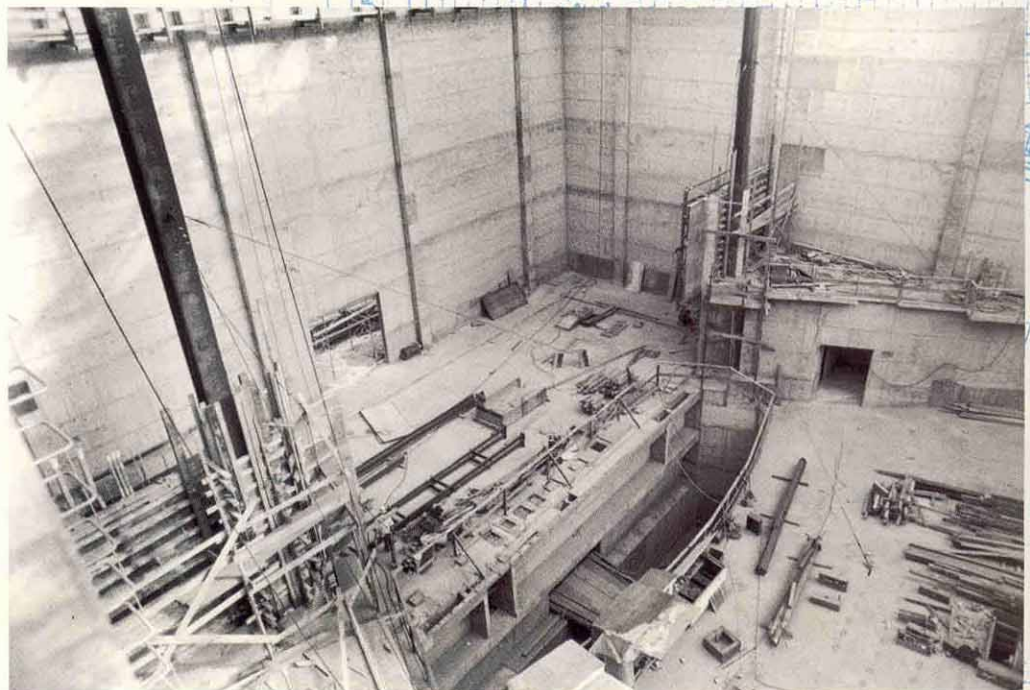
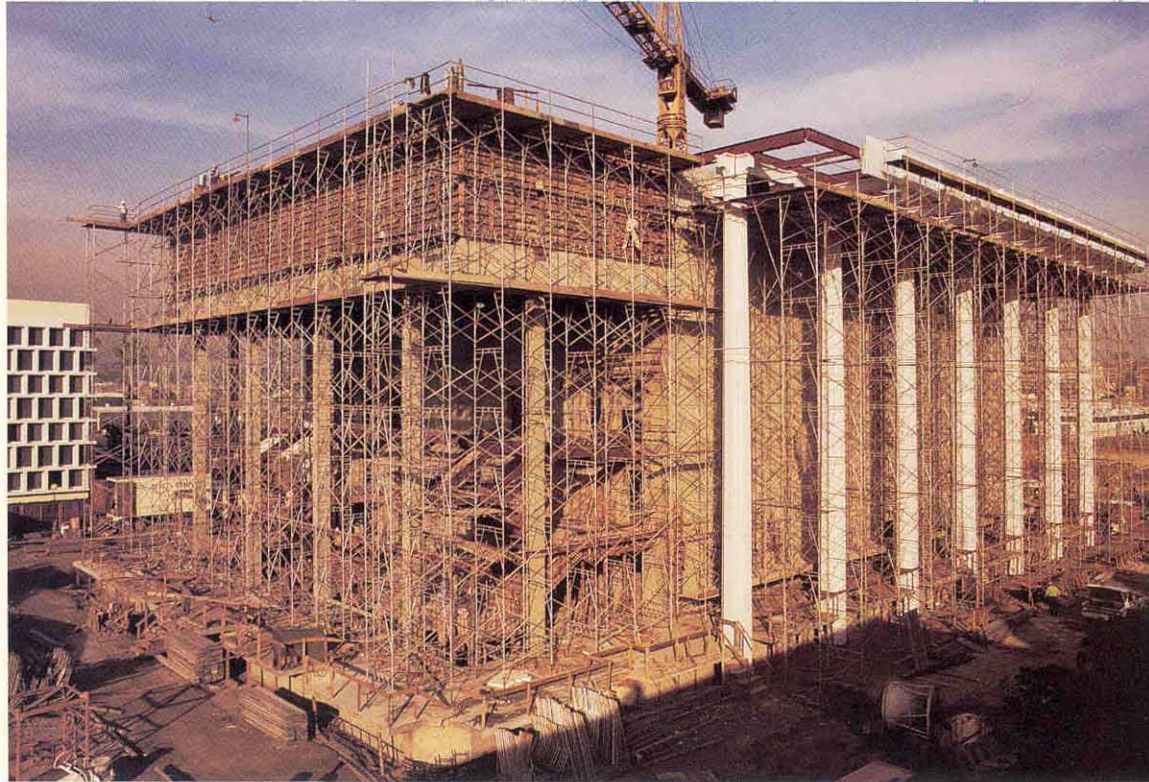
Vertical steel supports, embedded in concrete, defined the height of the superstructure. Poured-in-place lower-level walls, the lobby floor, and a portion of the lobby wall became recognizable.

As the steel framing neared completion, concrete coves marked the future placement of tapered, 72-foot columns.

With the concrete shell of the Auditorium completed (right center), seven of the 26 precast, quartz aggregate columns gleamed in contrast to the south wall. The west end, scaffolding in place, awaited installation of its polished, Brazilian verde granite facade.

Precise concrete contours of the orchestra lift and stage area (right) complemented the slope of newly installed balcony trusses (opposite center).

Close tolerances required individual attention in the placement of each component, including the massive white columns (opposite bottom).







## THE EGRET FOUNTAIN

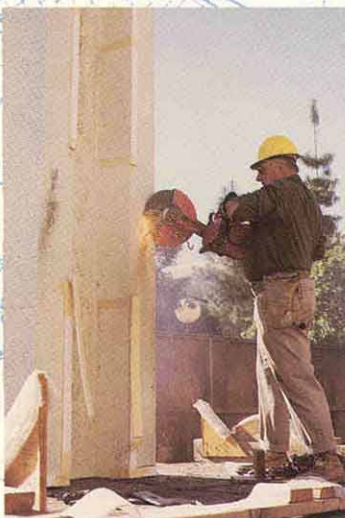
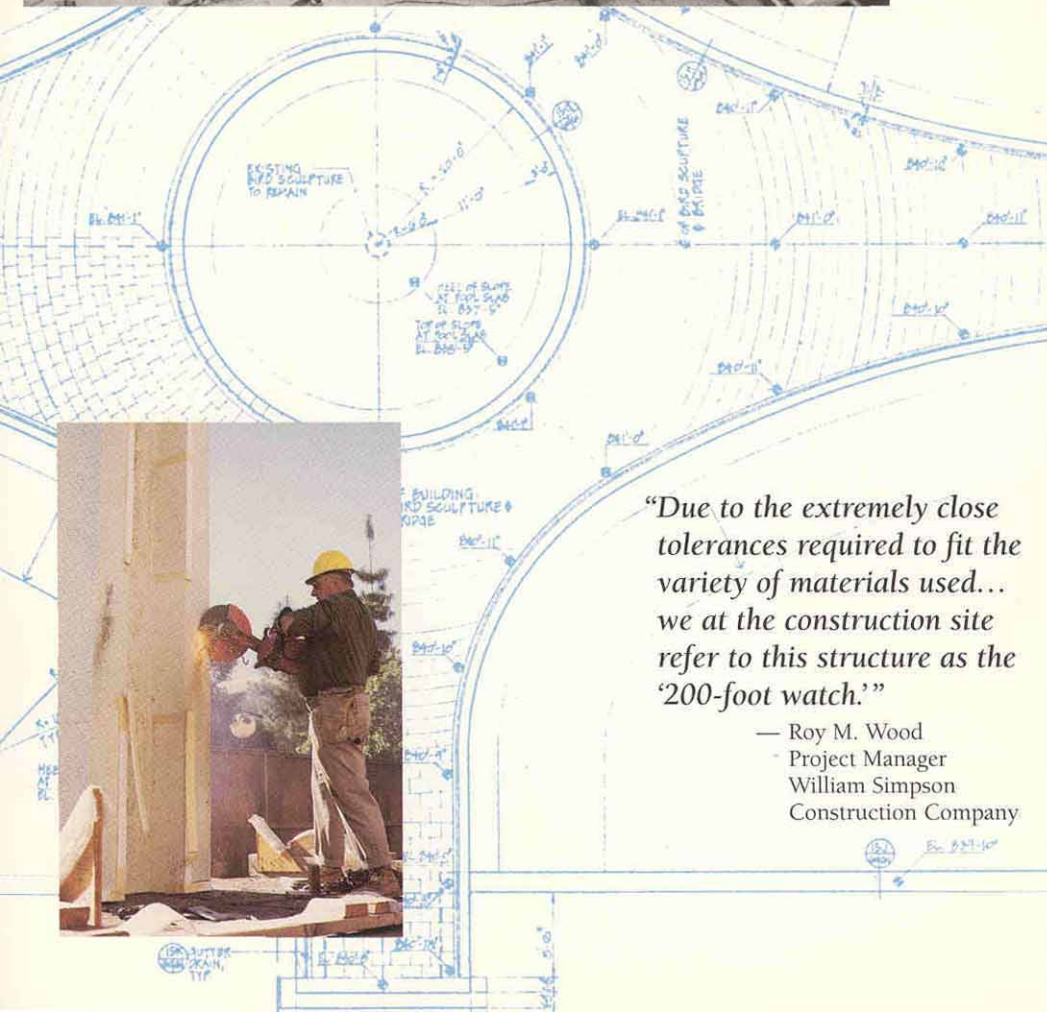
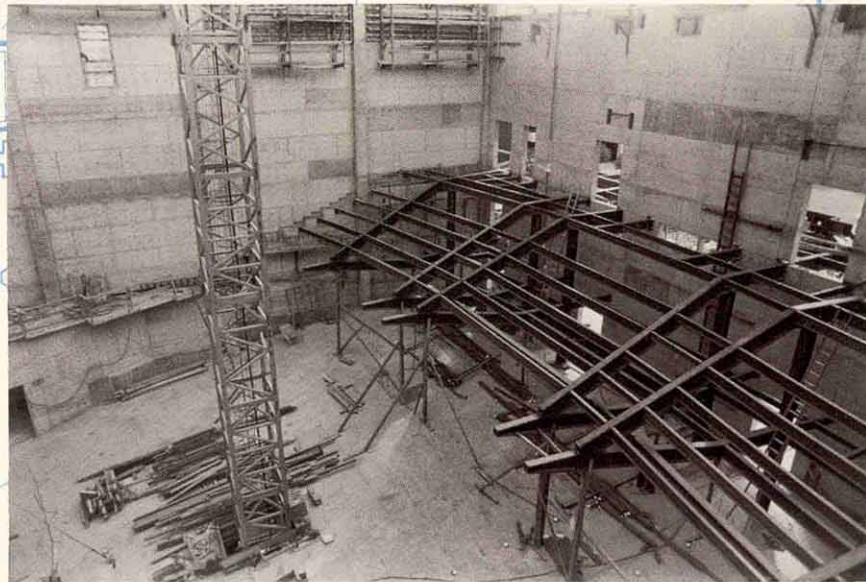
THE fountain centerpiece of the reflecting pool was installed four-and-one-half years before ground was broken for Ambassador Auditorium. The five bronze egrets, which rise in a circular pattern through a dramatic play of light and spraying water, were created by English sculptor Sir David Wynne to illustrate the theme of aspiration.

Sir David was approached by Mr. Armstrong in 1966 about designing the outdoor sculpture for the rapidly developing Ambassador grounds. The birds were originally designed as a freestanding work, but Pasadena city codes required a support pole to be installed at the center of the final assembly.

In June 1967, Sir David arrived in Pasadena and personally installed the egrets (above), which were cast in England. On July 10, 1967, Sir David unveiled his graceful work. He later expressed gratitude to Mr. Armstrong for his patronage. "The egrets were my first work that really established me in America," he said. "I also feel that they were one of my most successful works."

In 1968, the Pasadena Beautiful Foundation recognized the sculpture as "truly an inspired aesthetic improvement to the Pasadena scene. The project was executed with high artistic skill."

The sculpture stands 30 feet. Each of the five birds weighs one ton and has a wing span of 15 feet. The green patina finish of the bronze is the result of natural oxidation and acts as a protective coating for the metal against the elements. The fountain has three water jets operated by a pump under the Auditorium, which circulates water from the reflecting pool.



*"Due to the extremely close tolerances required to fit the variety of materials used... we at the construction site refer to this structure as the '200-foot watch.'"*

— Roy M. Wood  
Project Manager  
William Simpson  
Construction Company



*“God’s way of life is that of serving, giving, sharing. It is, therefore, our purpose and desire to share the benefits of this edifice on frequent occasions as a cultural contribution to the community.”*

— Herbert W. Armstrong  
from the Inaugural Program  
April 7, 1974

## A POLISHED JEWEL

The luminous, nighttime ambiance of Ambassador Auditorium (right) has been patiently created by countless artisans and craftsmen.

Days before the inaugural concert, rose onyx in the foyer received a final buffing, while hundreds of crystals were polished and individually hung on the bronze chandelier (below right and left).

The stairway and balcony-level handrails were crafted of shedua, a rare wood from Africa (opposite top left). Since rosewood, the primary wall covering throughout the main hall, is not obtainable in thicknesses greater than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch, a substitute was needed. Shedua was selected because its grain and color closely resemble rosewood.

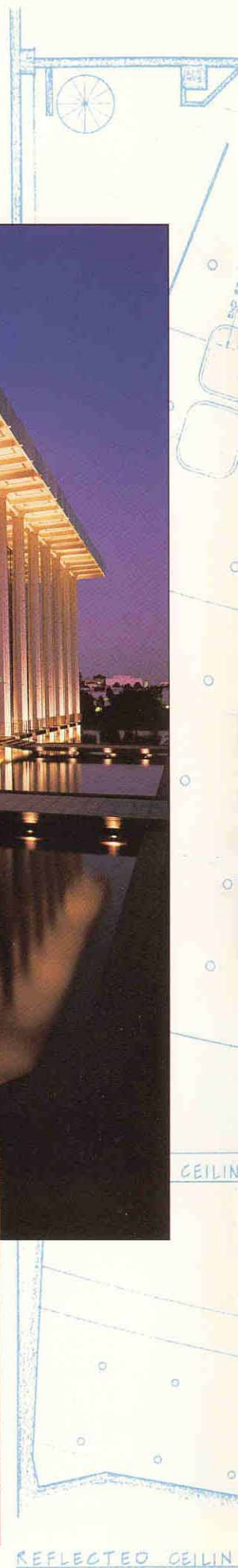
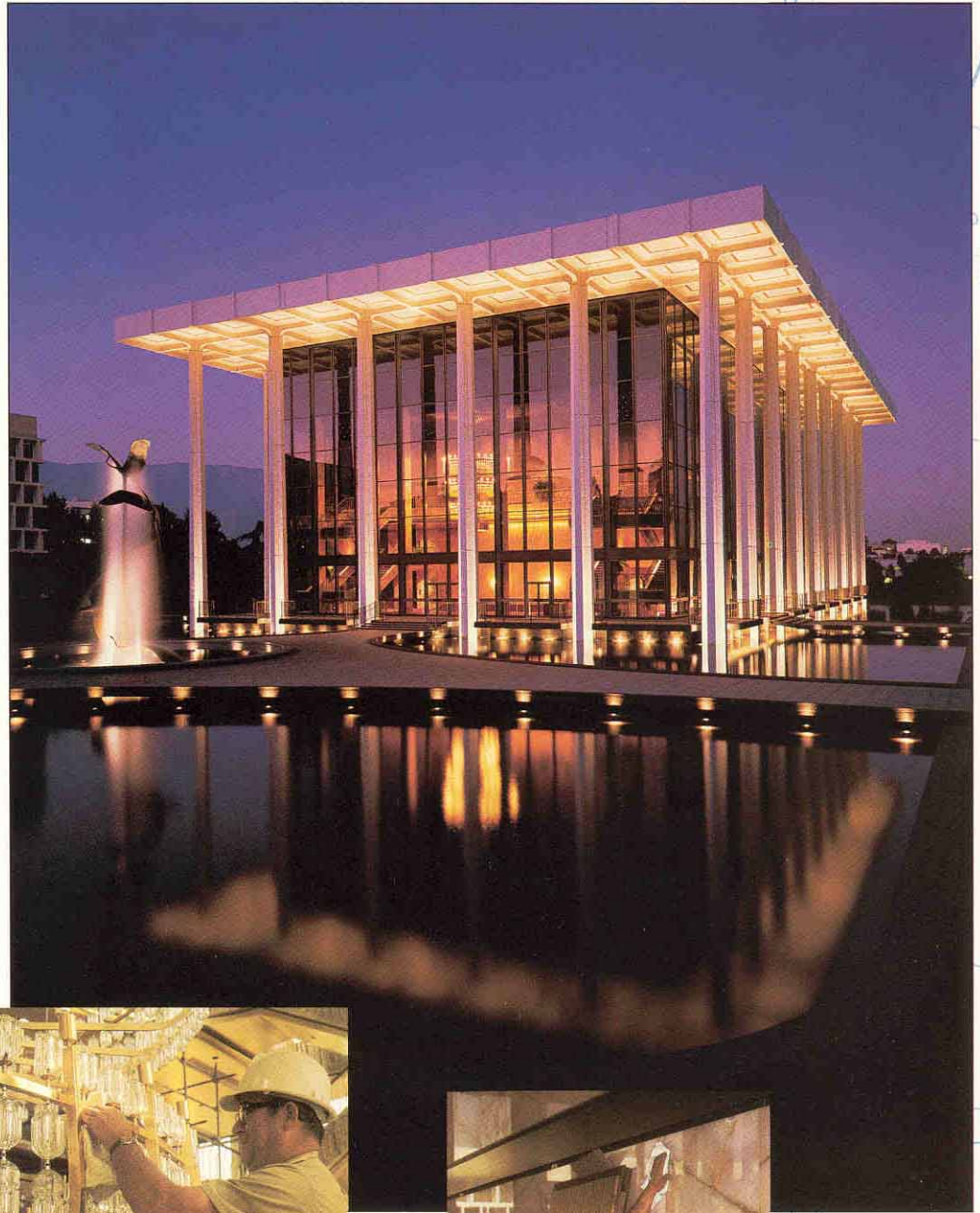
A skilled craftsman meticulously prepared rose onyx for installation as the afternoon sunlight revealed the translucent quality of the precious stone (opposite middle left).

The half-acre reflecting pool was carefully lined with ceramic tile during the final weeks of construction (opposite bottom left).

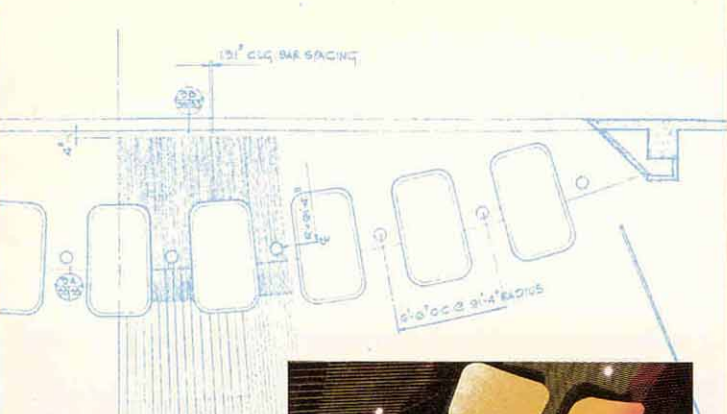
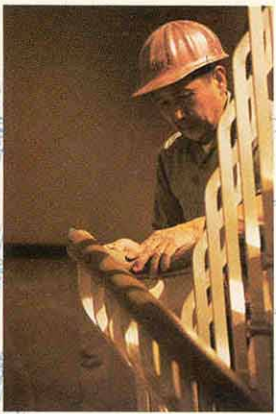
Suspended in the main hall are 37 gilded acoustical clouds (opposite top right), 18 above the main seating area, nine across the proscenium and 10 over the stage.

The 16 bronze theater doors, each weighing 200 pounds, feature door pulls designed by Ernest Shelton (opposite middle right).

A highly polished onyx stairway terminus in the lower lounge (opposite bottom right) exhibits a deep, variegated grain.







## A TOUCH OF GOLD

THE staircase and balcony-level soffits in the lobby of Ambassador Auditorium, as well as the 37 acoustical clouds in the main hall and above the stage, are gilded with 24-karat gold leaf.

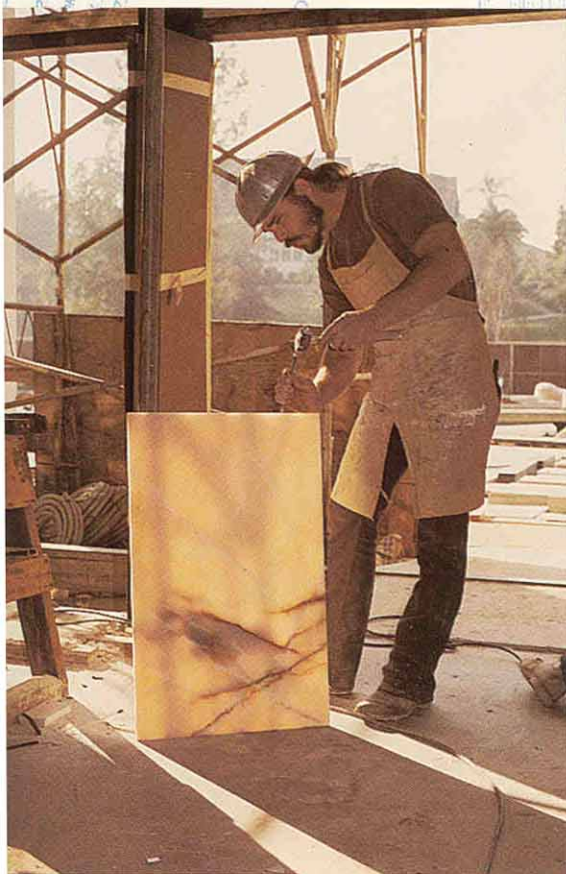
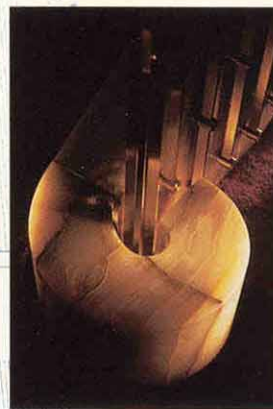
The gold leaf in the Auditorium was installed by Johnson and Turner Painting of Los Angeles. Gilding is almost a lost art. No other contractor placed a bid for the work because of the difficulty of this old-world craft.

Gold leaf is made from cast gold ingots about 10 inches long, 1 1/4 inches wide and 3/8 of an inch thick. These are rolled into ribbons about 1/1000 of an inch thick and cut into 1 1/4-inch squares that are placed between sheets of seaweed paper, a product of France. Two hundred layered pairs of gold and paper are wrapped in a durable parchment that can withstand the gold-beating process to follow. The parchment packet, called a "cutch," is placed in a press to compact the layers. After a drying period, the cutch is placed on the gold beater's granite block and beaten with a 17-pound hammer until the 1 1/4-inch squares expand to four inches.

The beaten squares are removed from the cutch, cut into quarters, wrapped and beaten a second time with a 9-pound hammer until the squares again spread to four inches.

This process is repeated with a 7-pound hammer until a thickness of three-millionths of an inch is achieved. An estimated 82,800 hammer blows is required to produce the delicate leaves. A shaped cutting tool made of Malacca reed cuts the fragile gold to its finished size of 3 3/8-inch squares.

Gold leaf, while opulent in appearance, is a superior and nearly maintenance-free coating. Gold is almost inert chemically and never tarnishes.



PLAN - BALCONY



# A CONCERTGOER'S DREAM

**A**MBASSADOR Auditorium is an international cultural center constructed and finished with materials and accoutrements from around the world. The veranda, walkways and bridges are covered with Norwegian Sandifiord gray granite, trimmed with black granite from Angola.

The 5,000-gallon, half-acre reflecting pool is illuminated by 365 submerged lights.

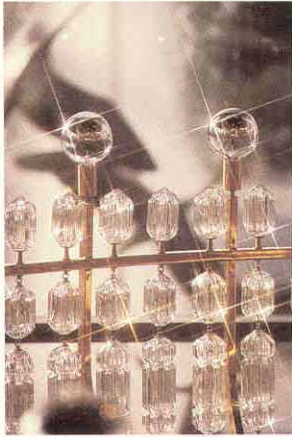
The emerald green granite used on the Auditorium's exterior walls is from Brazil and was cut and polished in Viareggio, Italy. The soffits, which extend 24 feet from the exterior walls, are supported by 26 quartz aggregate columns and feature white Italian mosaic tile with 24-karat gold tile accents.

The grand lobby and lower lounge walls are covered with rose onyx from Turkey and Iran, one of the largest installations of its kind in the world. The walls in the main seating areas are of Brazilian rosewood with vertical inlays of Burmese teakwood. The rosewood wall coverings are symmetrically patterned throughout, matching from panel to panel and across flush doors.

The two Steinway D concert grand pianos, constructed in Hamburg, Germany, were personally selected by representatives of Ambassador. Piano One was built in 1972 and acquired the following year, arriving in Pasadena even before construction of the Auditorium was completed. It was dedicated to Arthur Rubinstein after his historic Ambassador recital, January 15, 1975. The second Steinway was built in 1983.

The 100 percent wool carpeting in both the grand lobby and lower lounge was custom fabricated in Hong Kong. The abstract design of the grand lobby carpet is fashioned after the reflections of the chandelier's crystals. The royal purple and gold carpeting in the main seating areas is from Georgia.

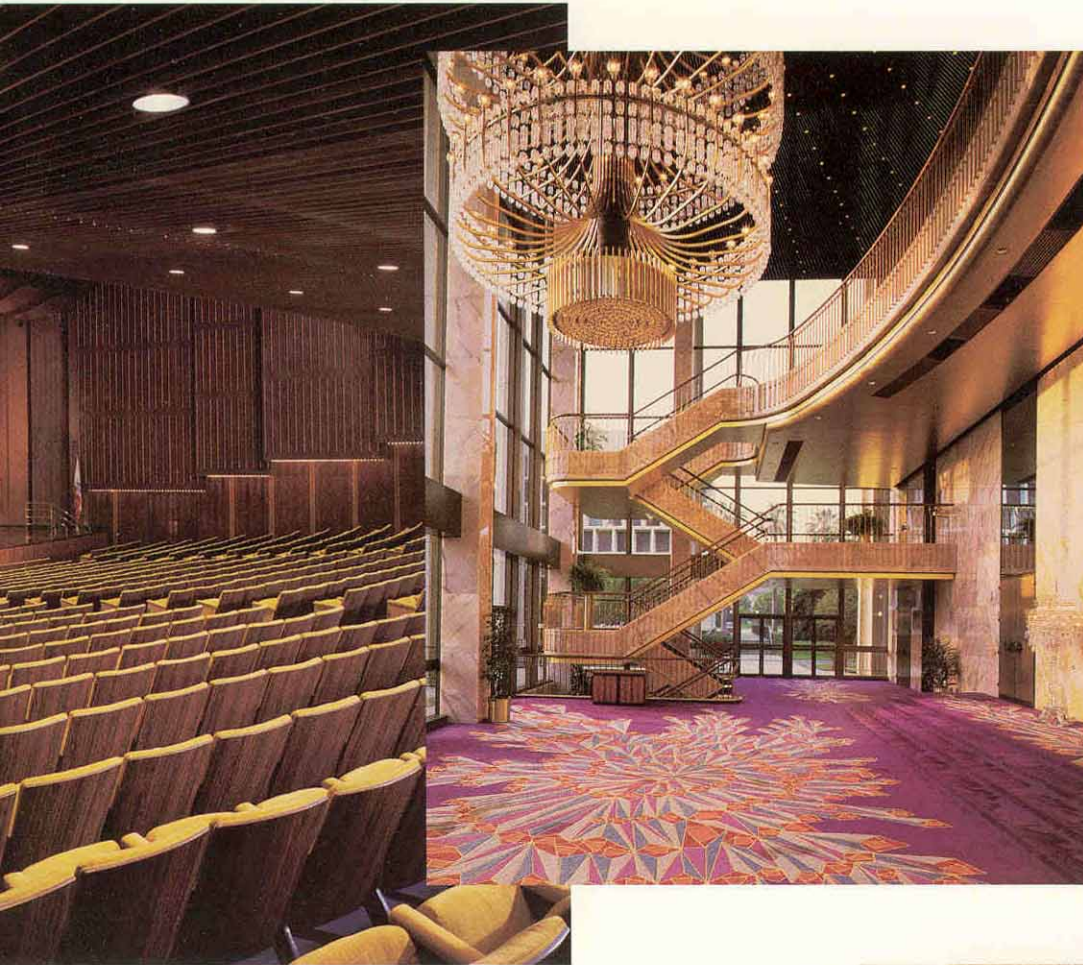
Ambassador Auditorium continues to enjoy a like-new luster, attributable partly to the excellence of building materials, selected for durability as well as beauty. From the outset, the Auditorium has also received a high standard of care and maintenance.





*“From beginning to end, the Ambassador is a concertgoer’s dream. The Ambassador Auditorium cuts a distinguished profile among American performing arts venues by both virtue of the sterling caliber of the artists it presents and its origins in a vision of global harmony that is both inspired and inspiring.”*

— Horizon

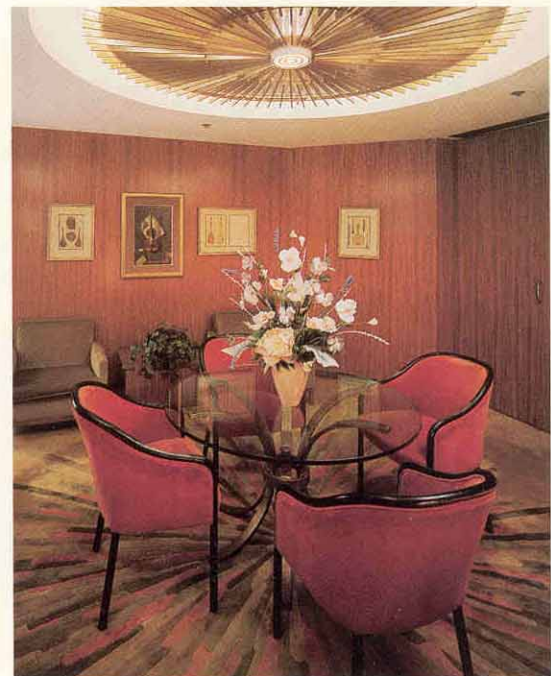


Ambassador Auditorium seats 1,262 — 912 in the orchestra level (center) and 350 in the balcony.

The centerpiece of the grand lobby (left) is a 2,500-pound, bronze chandelier suspended 30 feet above the floor. Three polished tiers, radiating 15 feet from its center, support 1,390 crystals from Germany. There are 99 lights among the crystals (opposite top), with 28 lights concealed in the bottom. The 30-foot chandelier was designed by Syd Dorner of Los Angeles. Matching banister spindles (opposite middle) are also of polished bronze.

The shimmering candelabra in the grand lobby (opposite bottom) are composed of Baccarat crystal from France. Each contains 802 hand-cut pieces, weighs approximately 650 pounds, and stands seven feet.

The lower lounge (below left) and the Founder’s Room (below center) are the settings for occasional receptions. The Green Room (below) is located in the lower level between rehearsal rooms.





# BEHIND THE SCENES

**B**EHIND Ambassador Auditorium's interior decor rests an impressive store of state-of-the-art technical support systems for audio, lighting and staging operations.

*The Auditorium's superb acoustics are made possible by a sophisticated system of operable sound surfaces and baffles. Sound can be absorbed, reflected or reinforced, depending on the requirements of the performance. Sound is further enriched by a folded plate plaster acoustical shell (right center) above the translucent bronze bar ceiling. Also concealed in this chamber are nine sound reflectors and eight cotton velour acoustical curtains. The normal reverberation time of two seconds in the main hall can be adjusted to one second by closing curtains in the side coves and above the ceiling.*

*A "Soundcraft" 8000B 40-channel house audio console, located in an open booth in the rear center section of the balcony (below right), interfaces with two recording studios in the lower level, as well as the stage and other areas throughout the Auditorium.*

The Auditorium's audio capabilities include digital signal processing, a 24-track digital audio recorder, an on-stage audio fold-back system, 196 microphone inputs, 83 line-level inputs and an equalized, three-channel stereo sound system with three independent speaker clusters. For the hearing impaired, performances can be transmitted via a wireless headset system.

House and stage lighting is controlled by an ETC "Expression" console with a capacity of up to 400 cues per show. Manual operation consists of 198 faders. The lighting system also supplies the stage with 192 dimmers.

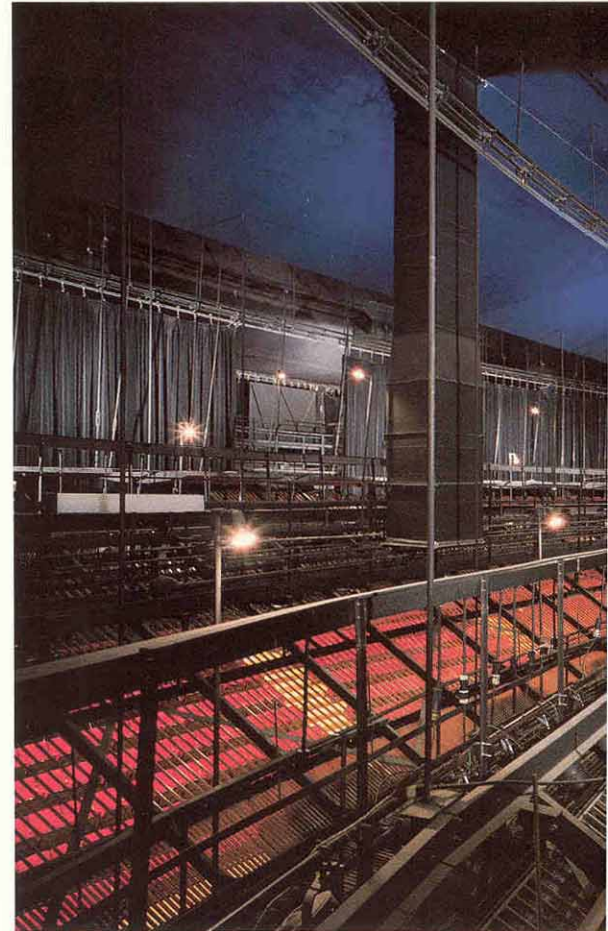
The main house curtain is in three tones of gold. The stage is also equipped with two cotton velour act curtains — one crimson, one black — five seamless backdrops and a system of stage masking and borders. The house orchestra shell is made of teakwood.

The 2,700-square-foot stage is approximately 48 feet deep (including the orchestra lift) with an on-stage performing area of 1,640 square feet. The proscenium is 58 feet across and 28 feet high.

The Auditorium is interfaced to the Ambassador television studio via 20 video lines. The house is equipped with three closed-circuit cameras, five videocassette recorders and 18 color monitors.

House projection systems include three 16mm high-intensity motion picture projectors, plus color video and 35mm slide projectors with fade/dissolve capabilities. The front projection screen measures 18 feet by 30 feet, and has a throw distance of 90 feet.

In the lower level of the Auditorium are two elegantly appointed star dressing rooms and two cast dressing rooms. Two carpeted studio/rehearsal rooms, each equipped with a 7-foot Steinway grand piano and 24-inch video monitor, measure 27 feet by 34 feet.



*The egret fountain is operated by a 300-gallon-per-minute pump (above) that circulates water from the reflecting pool.*





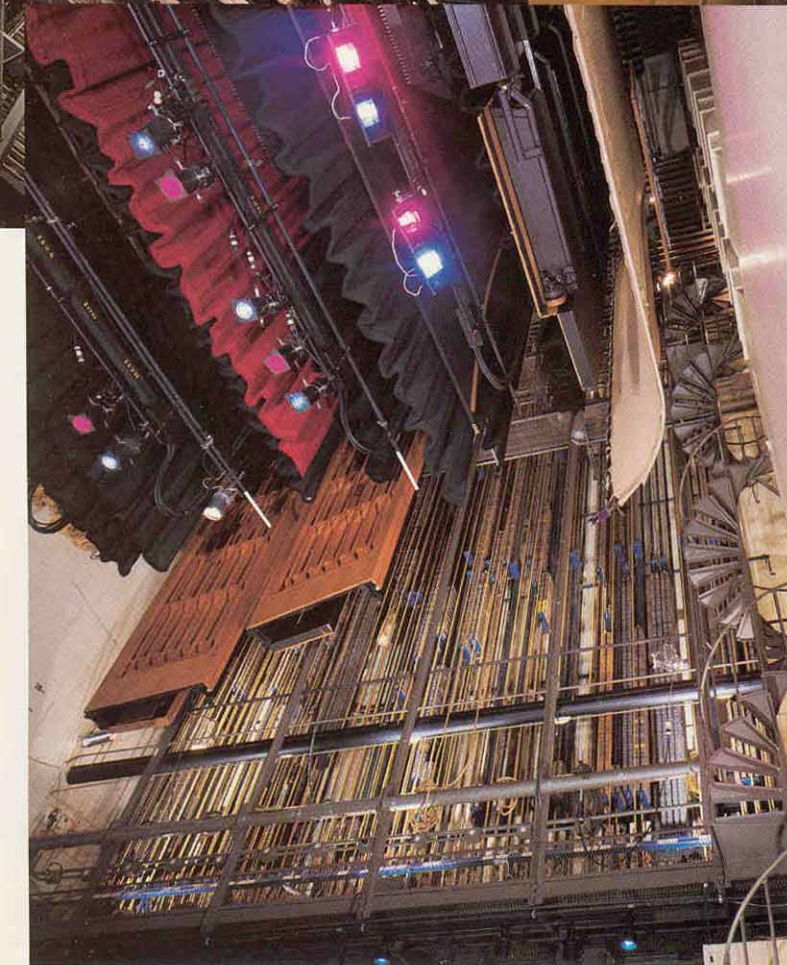
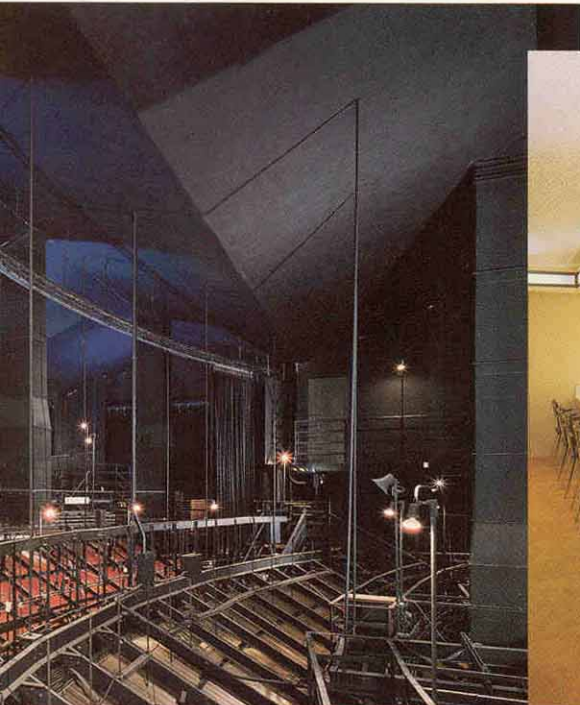
*“Most concert halls are single-purpose, but this one had to be multipurpose. One of the major design problems was how to achieve this. We solved it by using interior ceiling drapes to control reverberation for different hall usages.”*

— Harry B. Clausen  
Project Architect  
Daniel, Mann, Johnson  
and Mendenhall

Two cast dressing rooms (left) with lighted mirrors, restrooms, showers and closets, can accommodate up to 10 performers each.

The fly system (below left) consists of one motorized and 42 counterweighted line sets fitted with 75-foot battens. The batten and arbor system is a double compound ratio.

The maple-covered orchestra lift (below) has five preset levels that enable it to serve as an extension to the stage, augment audience seating for 80, or convert to an orchestra pit for up to 60 musicians. It can also function as a freight elevator and can be stopped arbitrarily regardless of a preselected level. The lift is operated by four hydraulic cylinders with a maximum descent of about 17 feet below stage level.





In 1902, millionaire O.S.A. Sprague built this imposing 28-room English Tudor mansion (right) as a winter home. Considered one of the most prominent businessmen in the nation, he was a senior partner in the Chicago firm of Sprague, Warner & Company, the largest wholesale grocery enterprise in the United States. The house is now known as Mayfair, after the elegant London district.



Lewis J. Merritt, father of Hulett C. Merritt, completed his Old English-style home (above) in 1907. The first floor exterior is made of clinker brick from 14 different yards, interspersed with large cobblestones near the foundation. Extensive use of redwood construction gives the house its rustic appearance. The house is now called Manor Del Mar.



Mr. Merritt used some of the finest woods obtainable in his exquisitely crafted interiors: curly birch, Hungarian ash, fumed oak, maple, slash-grained Oregon pine and myrtle. The music room (middle right) is finished in beautifully polished Peruvian mahogany.

The garden west of the home, shown in an early postcard view (far right), has been faithfully restored by Ambassador (right).





# THE HOUSES ON THE HILL



*“The old mansions have all been restored...to retain all the hardwood paneling, stained glass and special designs in their original state. Adaptation for use as student residences or classrooms has been done carefully to retain the flavor of the original.”*

— Los Angeles Times  
March 7, 1965

This Italian-style home (above left), renamed Terrace Villa, was built in 1924 for retired Chicago judge Stillman B. Jamieson.

The luxurious Italian Renaissance mansion (above), now named Ambassador Hall, was hailed as “the last word in formal architecture.” Its builder, Hulett C. Merritt, was the largest single stockholder in U.S. Steel and president or board chairman of 138 companies. He had made his first million by the age of 18 and began construction of this magnificent home in 1905, when he was only 32 years old.

Exterior and interior designs were based on drawings by Mr. Merritt, who personally supervised much of the interior decoration.

All of the downstairs rooms are finished in highly polished hardwoods. The veneered walls and floor in the living room (left) are of Honduras mahogany. The beamed ceiling, paneled walls and parquet floor of the grand entrance hall (bottom left) are a reflection of an age when quality, natural beauty and excellence of workmanship were highly prized.





# GROUNDS BEAUTIFUL

**A**WARD-WINNING grounds are a longstanding hallmark of the environs of Ambassador Auditorium. From the earliest property acquisition to the present, Ambassador has invested in beauty and careful stewardship of the grounds and its many coverings.

Ambassador's landscape personnel skillfully attend to six specialties: horticultural projects, floriculture and floral design, arboriculture, irrigation and water conservation, pest control, and grounds maintenance. Now that the major landscaping is virtually complete, the crews are smaller than in the developing years.

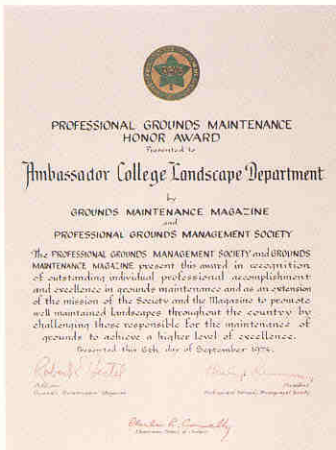
Water usage is monitored carefully and irrigation systems are audited regularly. Other ongoing water conservation programs include drip irrigation and experimental use of soil sensors. In 1991, Ambassador replaced 8 acres of dichondra with fescue, a cool-season lawn cover that stays green year-round and uses 20 percent less water.

Tree cuttings are mulched and recycled on-site instead of being discarded in landfills.

More emphasis on perennials, colored foliage and floral bed design have enabled Ambassador to reduce the complexity of its grounds while increasing their beauty. Since 1980, about 21,000 square feet of flower beds have been reduced to 11,000 square feet.

Ambassador is home to more than 1,200 trees. The oldest-known tree is about 100 years old, an Araucaria tree next to the Claypool house. The prized row of 25 Mexican fan palms along the Del Mar border predate the first property acquisition in 1947.

The 33-acre site nurtures 130 species of trees, 47 varieties of flowers and 40 kinds of shrubs. The original planting of 57 Brazilian pepper trees bordering Ambassador Auditorium's reflecting pool and walkways was replaced in 1991 with 24 queen palms, making the structure more visible from the central mall. Pepper trees in the adjacent parking lot were replaced with Canary Island pines.



*Since the early 1970s, the Ambassador environs have received both national and community recognition. Pasadena Beautiful honored Ambassador with the first of many merit awards in 1974. The Professional Grounds Maintenance magazine first acknowledged Ambassador's beautification skills in 1975. Other citations of merit include the 20 Years Award from Los Angeles Beautiful and the Alice Rickey Frost Award for Continuing Excellence in Landscape.*

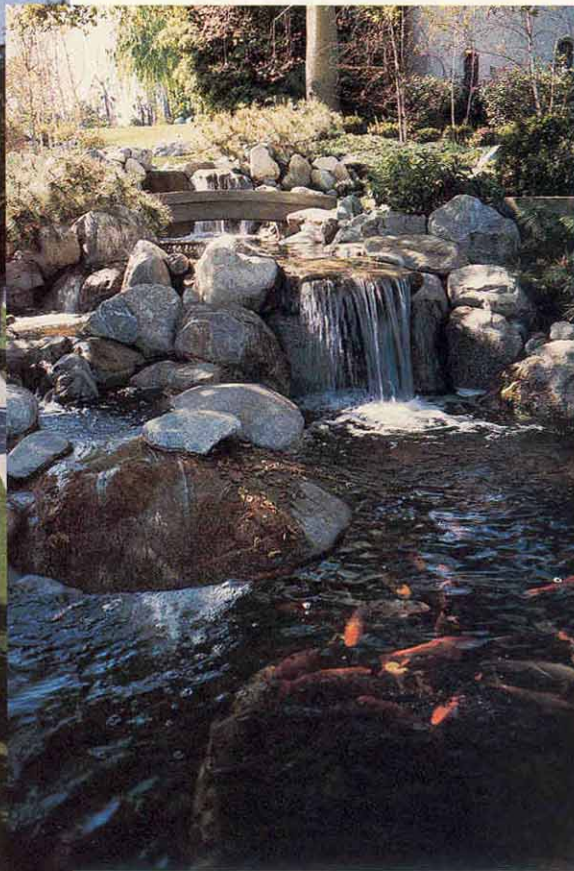






*“If you have never been to Ambassador Auditorium, or only have seen the grounds quickly as you rush to a nighttime concert, you owe it to yourself to take in the lush grounds and impressive buildings in an unhurried fashion.”*

— Pasadena Star-News



The southeast corner of Pasadena's Orange Grove Boulevard and Green Street enjoys a colorful, year-round rotation of Ambassador floral splendor (center).

In April 1974, as the inaugural gala of Ambassador Auditorium approached, landscape crews completed the first planting around the newly opened reflecting pool (above left).

Almost 15 years after its official closure, Grove Street was transformed into Grove Plaza (left), a multi-level walkway with bridges, converging streams, waterfalls and rock formations. The project took Ambassador designers and landscape architect John Myhre two years to plan; actual construction lasted 13 months.

Ambassador's restoration of historic properties has been complemented by careful landscaping to blend once-separate residential lawns into a unified outdoor setting. The east lawn of Manor Del Mar (below) was contoured and given an upgraded irrigation system in the 1980s.





# CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PERFORMING ARTS EXCELLENCE



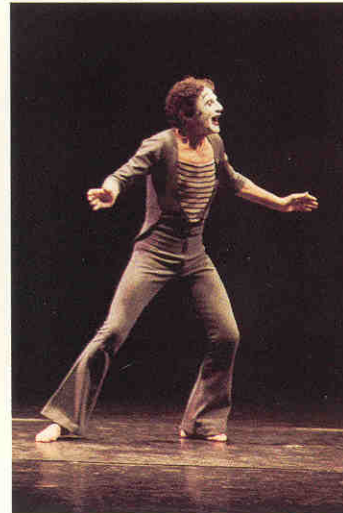
Following his benefit recital on January 15, 1975, celebrated pianist and beloved humanitarian Arthur Rubinstein was presented with a gift of Steuben crystal by Ambassador Founder Herbert W. Armstrong (above). Maestro Rubinstein's performance, on behalf of the International Cultural Center for Youth in Israel, was the first solo recital presented in Ambassador Auditorium.

AMBASSADOR Performing Arts began as the cultural vehicle of the Ambassador Foundation, which was established by the Worldwide Church of God in 1975 as an educational and humanitarian outreach program.

Ambassador's first season, in 1975-76, consisted of 64 performances on 16 series. Today, a typical Ambassador season offers about 100 events on more than 30 series presented from late autumn through mid-June. Artists who perform at Ambassador are the established legends and the brightest rising stars from many nations, representing a wide range of musical genres: classical, early music, chamber, solo piano, jazz, opera, guitar, big band, popular, brass band, country and folk.

Ambassador has made many of these concerts available to millions of American Public Radio listeners via *In Recital at Ambassador* with host Beverly Sills.

Community involvement is also an important part of Ambassador Performing Arts. Each year, Ambassador has cooperated in the presentation of concerts with numerous local organizations, including the Pasadena Youth Symphony Orchestra, Pasadena Unified School District, Los Angeles Children's Chorus, Young Musicians Foundation, Pasadena Young Musicians Orchestra, Local 47 of the American Federation of Musicians, 15th Air Force Band of the Golden West and the Pasadena Area Young Musicians Council.





*"The public in your wonderful hall  
made me feel warm and happy.  
I could have sung all night long."*

— Luciano Pavarotti



*Ambassador's first 20 seasons  
have featured a veritable  
"Who's Who" of performing  
arts luminaries — great  
artists and special events  
bringing life, laughter,  
music and memories:  
Vladimir Horowitz (top);  
Carlo Maria Giulini and  
the Vienna Symphony  
Orchestra at Ambassador's  
inaugural concert, April 7,  
1974 (center); and (left to  
right, row by row)  
Luciano Pavarotti; Mstislav  
Rostropovich; Mel Tormé;  
the Pasadena Jazz Festival;  
Sarah Vaughan, Pearl Bailey  
and Ella Fitzgerald; James  
Galway; the Juilliard String  
Quartet; Marcel Marceau;  
Victor Borge; Herbert von  
Karajan; Bing Crosby; and  
Dizzy Gillespie.*



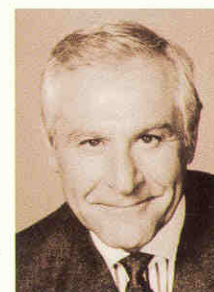


# THE AMBASSADOR AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

To recognize and reward excellence in humanitarian service, educational activities and the performing arts, the Ambassador Foundation established the Ambassador Award for Excellence in 1988. Presented in the form of a limited piece of Steuben crystal, the award is made on an

*“...the source of humanity that the Ambassador Foundation stands for...the source of support for everything that is good, never more than in music, which is my life.”*

— Leontyne Price  
April 7, 1994



Soprano Leontyne Price is presented with the seventh Ambassador Award for Excellence (left) by Ambassador Foundation Chairman Joseph W. Tkach, left, and Foundation Vice President David Hulme, right.

Previous recipients of the Ambassador Award for Excellence are (top to bottom) Sir Neville Marriner, founder and artistic director of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields (1988); Mstislav Rostropovich, cellist, music director of the National Symphony Orchestra and an internationally renowned activist in humanitarian efforts (1989); Arthur Mitchell, co-founder and artistic director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem and a humanitarian helping disadvantaged children (1990); the late Sam Wanamaker, founder of the International Shakespeare Globe Centre (1991); Plácido Domingo, distinguished tenor, conductor and humanitarian (1992); and Ivo Pogorelich, acclaimed pianist and dedicated spokesman for the musical arts (1993).

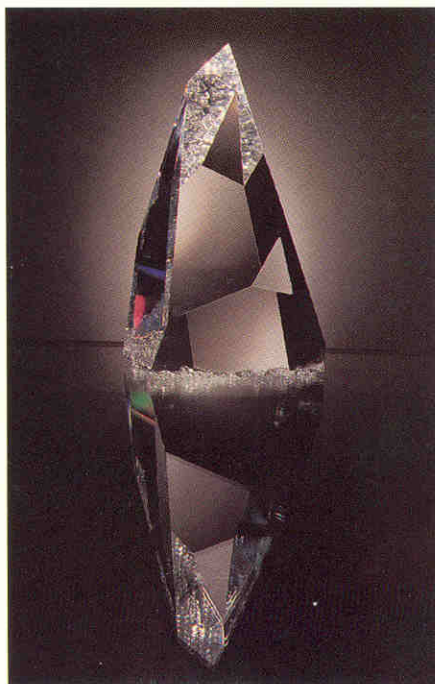
The Ambassador Award for Excellence (left) was designed by George Thompson. The Steuben crystal pyramidion, with irregular facets rising to a point, captures light in its pebbled, polygonal base.



annual basis to an individual who demonstrates exemplary service to humanity.

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the opening of Ambassador Auditorium, revered American soprano Leontyne Price was presented with the seventh Ambassador Award for Excellence at a special reception following her sixth Ambassador recital, April 7, 1994.

Regarded as one of the greatest Verdi sopranos of this century, Miss Price was given the award in recognition of her lifetime of outstanding artistic achievements and her generous and untiring humanitarian activities.





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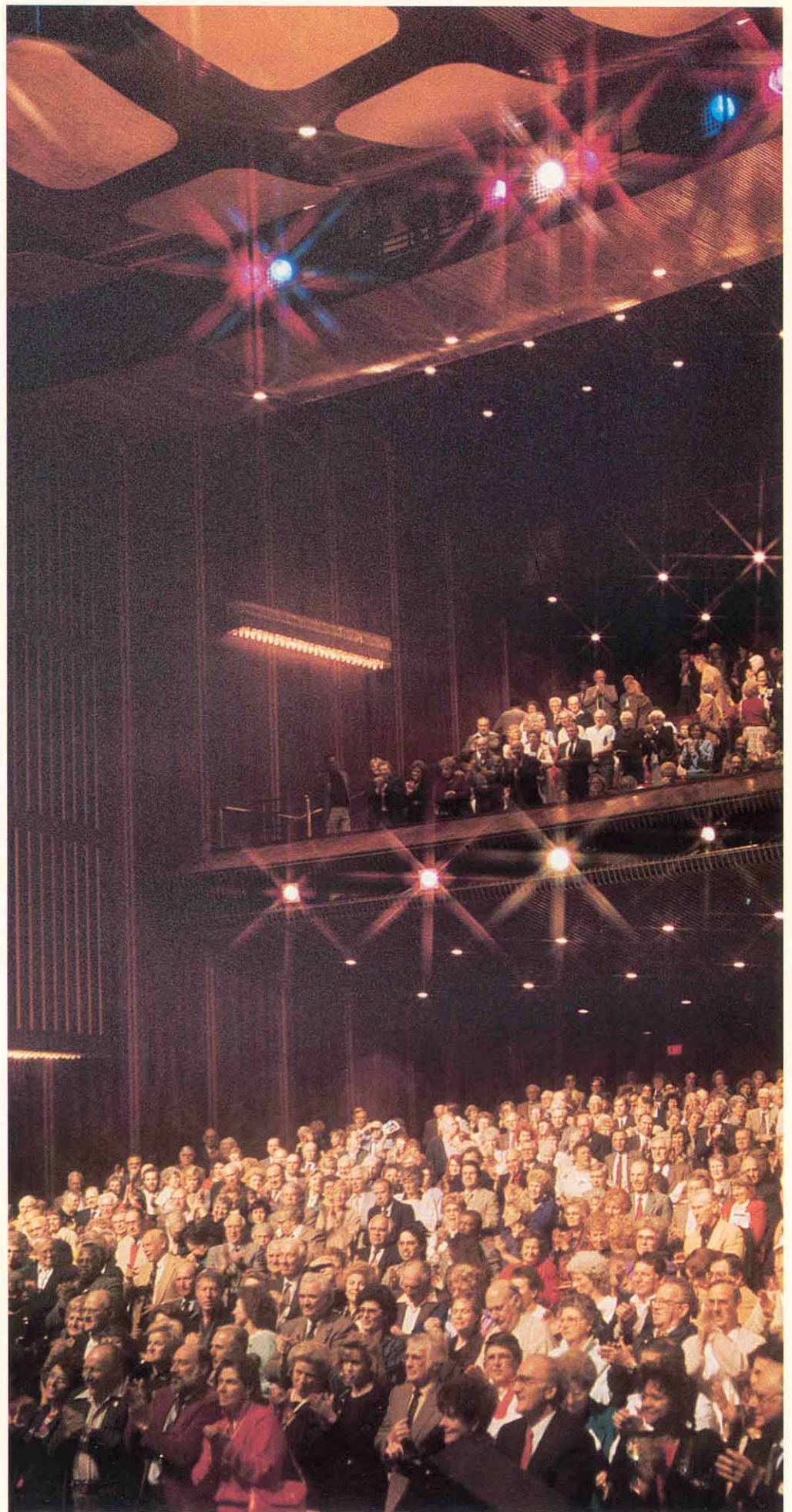
# THE FINISHING TOUCH

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IT has been observed that “we shape our dwellings, and afterwards our dwellings shape us.” To the last detail — the size, the furnishings and the environs — Ambassador Auditorium was shaped to enhance the quality and enjoyment of the performing arts.

But without the dynamic presence of an audience alive with anticipation, Ambassador Auditorium would be incomplete, less than the sum of its elegant parts — an unfinished monument of granite walls and quartz columns, teak and rose onyx, crystal and gold leaf, a soundless stage and empty seats.

It is for the audience that Ambassador opens the doors and turns on the lights. Ambassador applauds the many thousands who have filled the Auditorium with their appreciation and joy, adding the finishing touch to the Ambassador ambiance that nurtures the human spirit.













*“You’ve added a jewel to the Crown City.”*

— Donald F. Yokaitis  
Mayor of Pasadena  
April 7, 1974

**A**MBASSADOR Auditorium is the finishing structure in the master building plan initiated by the Worldwide Church of God — one of the first major redevelopment projects in Pasadena.

When the Church moved to Pasadena in 1946, it gradually acquired and renovated several distressed historic properties along Orange Grove Boulevard. As part of its redevelopment program, which spanned nearly 30 years, the Church also bought abandoned tenant housing and run-down businesses and replaced them with contemporary, multipurpose facilities — among them Ambassador Auditorium, the West Coast’s premier concert hall.

For more than 40 years, most of the grounds contiguous to the Auditorium served as the campus of Ambassador College, a four-year liberal arts institution founded by the Church in 1947. In 1990, when the college was consolidated with its sister campus in Big Sandy, Texas, facilities formerly used for the academic program were converted to other uses.

Today, 40 unique buildings, many of historic significance, rest on the 33-acre site that gently slopes uphill to the west of the Auditorium.



*“An imposing figure on the Southern California landscape is Pasadena’s Ambassador Auditorium.”*

— *Inside Performance*

**A**MBASSADOR’S master building plan was designed to blend elegantly the old with the new. Of the 40 buildings on-site, only six were built by the Worldwide Church of God. Of the existing structures renovated by the Church, five were among the very few remaining historical mansions of the famous “Millionaires’ Row” neighborhood that lined Orange Grove Boulevard from the turn of the century.

The six new facilities built on the site by the Church are the Recreation Complex (far left), completed in 1964; the multipurpose Dining Hall (third from left), opened in 1966; the Academic Center (far right) and Grove Terrace (second from left), both dedicated in 1968; the Hall of Administration (right foreground), opened in 1969; and Ambassador Auditorium (left foreground), dedicated May 6, 1974.

In the course of Ambassador’s redevelopment, four Pasadena streets were closed and, one by one, blended into the merging properties. Mentoria Court and Camden Street were approved for closure in December 1964. City permission to close Grove Street and a portion of Terrace Drive that traversed the site was granted in September 1969.

Text: Michael Miles and Kirk Myers

Research: Tim Morgan and Cindy Gehman

Design: Michael Miles

Photography: G.A. Belluche Jr., Hal Finch, Barry Stahl and Warren Watson





# A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF AMBASSADOR AUDITORIUM

