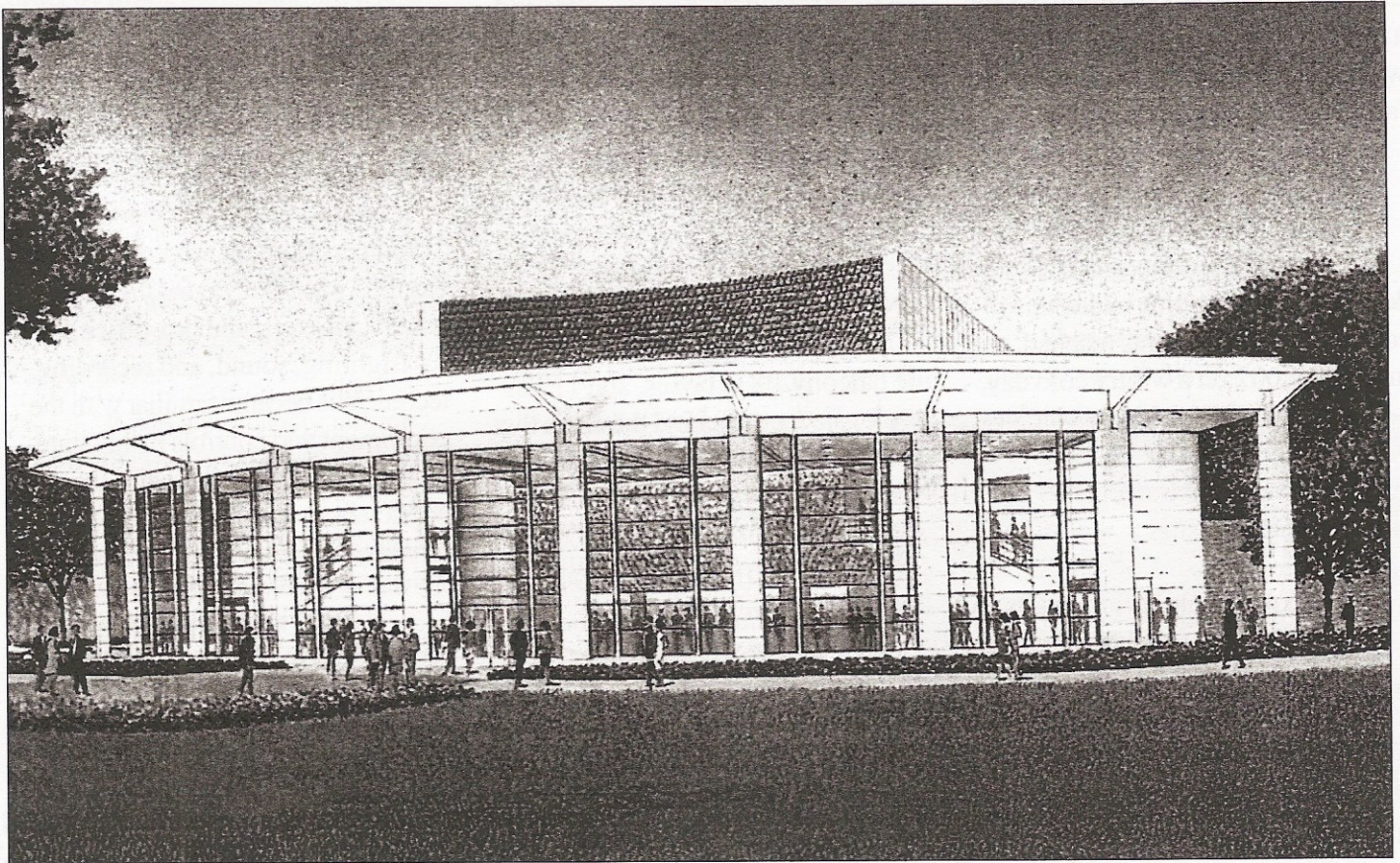




Notes



A Dream Fulfilled and Promises Kept . . .

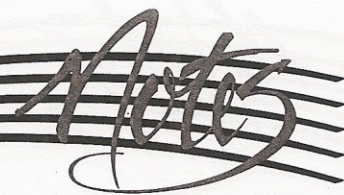
The sound of children singing broke the absolute silence, as the opening notes in a cascade of music reverberated around the room and into the ears and hearts of those who listened. The rich clear singing, enhanced by an auditorium that, like a fine instrument, amplifies the touch

and sound of a skilled performer, was stunning. It was the start of a memorable evening for performers and audience alike, the inaugural concert of the new Howard Performing Arts Center at Andrews University.

For over forty years, Andrews University has dreamed of having an

auditorium, an elegant facility in which to perform, a gathering place that would be a cultural focal point for both the university and the surrounding community. In October 2001, John and Dede Howard, musicians and philanthropists in the community, in response to hearing about this dream, met with Niels-Erik Andreasen, AU President, for the first





earlier by filling the auditorium with a "hard hat" audience and using various tests and measuring devices while different persons and groups performed.

Peter Cooper, chair of the music department and a piano soloist in the opening concerts, described his first practice there:

It was a profoundly moving experience, first because of the reality of the space itself and then the silence. It was completely silent. It was like the room was saying, "Just do something, but you have to know what you want to do."

He continued,

The beauty of this hall is that it is requiring everyone who plays there

to think more about the kind of sound they want to make. The sheer joy of doing anything you want and having the room produce it is both challenging and exciting.

Recent guest performers in a brass group, many of whom are graduates of one of the major conservatories in the country, were totally impressed. They felt that the conservatory had nothing like this.

It is an uncommonly wonderful acoustic auditorium. The hall works with you as you perform and the result is sheer joy. It is so far beyond any hall I have ever performed in. It is humbling to think that we have an auditorium like this at Andrews University.

reacted similarly:

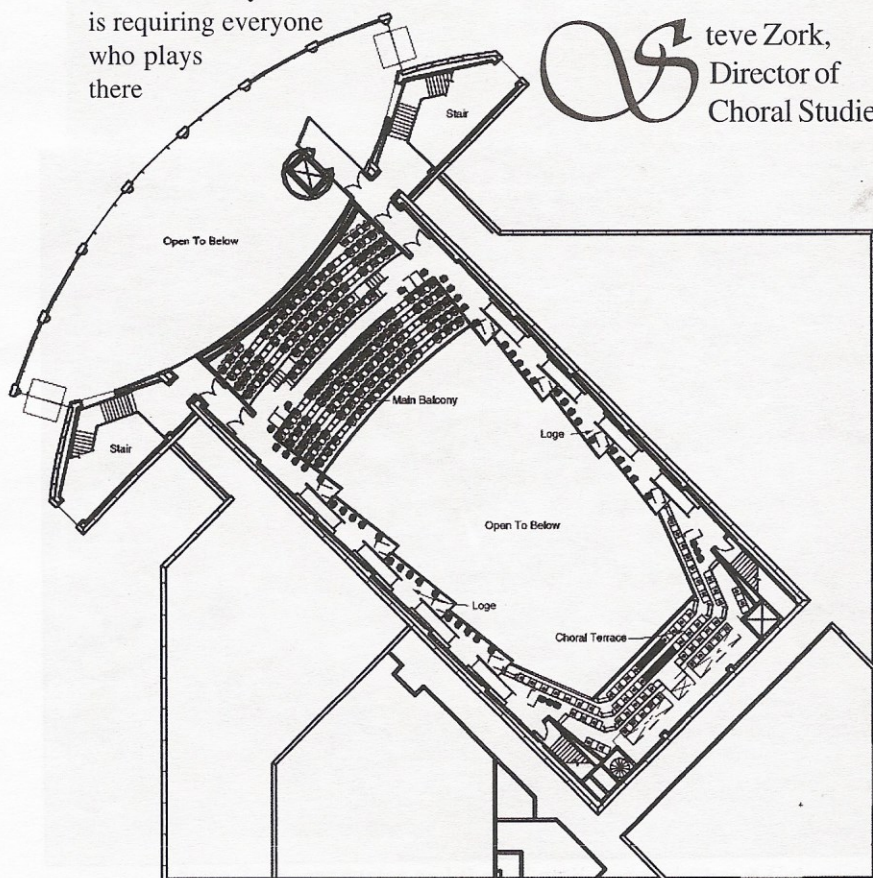
The openness of the room is breathtaking, a unique combination of airy spaciousness, yet inviting intimacy. The stage projection into the room, the closeness of the balcony, and the seating behind the stage in the choral terrace literally wrap the audience around the performers.

I had difficulty getting used to the silence, thinking at first that

Steve Zork,
Director of
Choral Studies,



Niels-Erik Andreasen thanks John and Dede Howard after presenting them with a photo of the building signed by the AU music students and faculty.



Howard Hall Upper Level

Lawrence Golan, conducting.



Julie Lindsay performs with the orchestra, Lawrence Golan, conducting.



perhaps it was the result of too much sound deadening. That concern was dispelled the moment the choir sang its first note and a rich warm sound filled the hall. I really enjoy the auditorium because I like a nice ambience on the stage but don't like reflected sound coming back at me.

Because of the control we have at the touch of a button over the acoustics, none of us has to compromise when multiple groups are in the same program. There is a difference between singing on the stage or from the choral terrace, one that arises from the fact that there are fewer reflective surfaces in the terrace. Even though you don't have the intimacy there that you have on the stage, it still works well and the audience loves that effect.

It is a very easy place in which to sing and the students love to sing there. While it is a flattering room, you don't dare to force the sound.

The reverberation is equally good whether the room is empty or full. When I have attended as a member of the audience, I have been thrilled with the full bodied, yet focused sound that surrounds you. It is an amazing hall, a great gift to the university.

Alan Mitchell,
Director of the
Wind Symphony,
also noted the silence, observing:

Performing in the hall is as close to a translation experience on this earth as one can have. After playing there you become much more aware of extraneous sounds present in the rehearsal room and at other performance sites. It

was a challenge to adjust to the total absence of sound.

We discovered that our best sound and balance happened when we were seated back on the stage. Once we made that change, the balance, blend, ability of the performers to hear, and the projection into the hall was great.

While sometimes the best place to hear what the band is doing is at the podium, in a walk around the room I found no dead spots but an evenness in balanced sound in all areas of the room. The students in the band particularly enjoy the "surround sound" effect, and the sight-lines they have as they play.

The inaugural concert, given on two successive evenings in mid-October, was a huge success, as close to perfection as is humanly possible. The concerts, following a

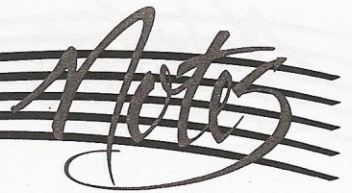
welcoming ceremony of recognition and thanksgiving that opened with the Berrien Springs Children's Choir, included music by AU soloists and ensembles, along with a regional string quartet and brass ensemble and guest conductors from the community.

The audience, aware of what they were participating in and hearing, responded enthusiastically throughout both evenings. The final number, Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*, featuring the AU orchestra with Cooper as piano soloist and the AU Choral Union, a group composed of AU choirs and the Andrews Academy Silhouettes, ended the evening on a transcendent and triumphant note.

The opening of Howard Hall was a magical event then and a vivid memory now for all who were there. Andreasen, in a printed program



The AU Orchestra, directed by Lawrence Golan, plays Bernstein's Overture to *Candide*

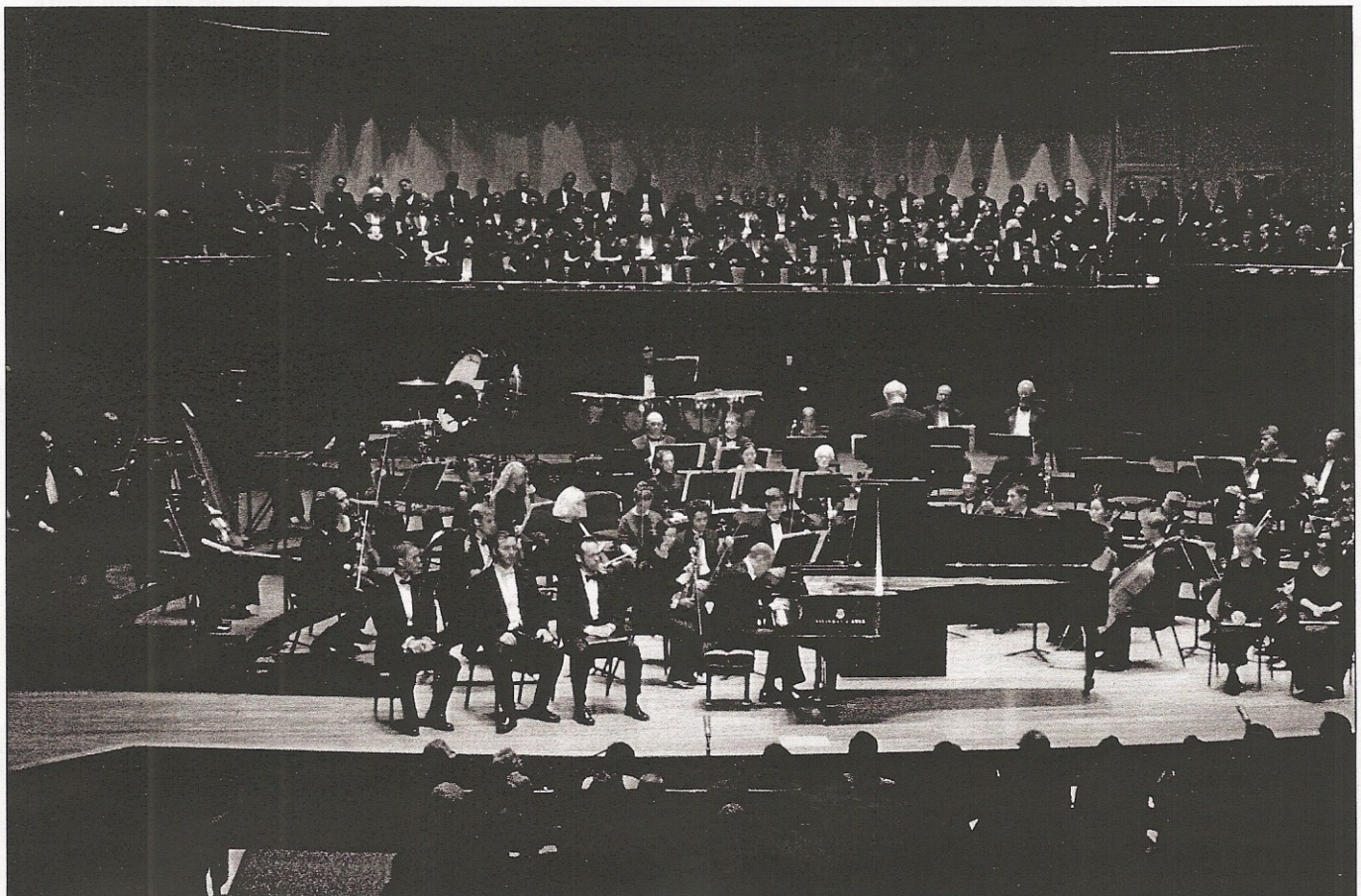


tribute to the many who had made the facility possible, referred to this accomplishment as "a dream fulfilled and promises kept." He concluded with a commitment on the part of the university to fill the hall with good music, to help future generations develop their musical talents in this "inspiring place," and to make it a place where campus and community can meet in friendship.

Dan Shultz



The AU Wind Symphony under the direction of Alan Mitchell performs Shostakovitch's *Festive Overture*



Steve Zork, conductor and the AU orchestra and Choral Union with vocal soloists and pianist Peter Cooper in Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*, the concluding number of the Inaugural Concert.