

Education ARCHITECT

ADDRESSING THE DESIGN NEEDS OF TODAY'S INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



*Flintridge Sacred
Heart Academy
Performing Arts
Opening Night.*

*Project designed by
Pica + Sullivan
Architects. Photo-
graph by Randall
Michelson.*

Take Your Seats! Performing Arts Center Opens

Since 1956 the Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy Auditorium has been the backdrop for dances, theatre performances, concerts, liturgies, volleyball and basketball games, Junior Ring and Candle Rose ceremonies, and more recently, stagecraft and 3D art

classes. At times it has functioned as a lunch hall and art gallery, accommodated both slumber parties and fashion shows, and hosted the popular ComedySportz competition.

It could have been called a "cafa-gymnasium" but even that would not cover its multiple and competing uses. FSHA graduate Jennifer Ricchizzi Richard recounted, "I vividly remember rehearsing for the fall shows and the constant thunder of the basketballs shaking the ground during practice in the background, even games sometimes – whistles, cheering, shouting – all during rehearsal. It truly was a multipurpose building with sports and art happening at the same time."

Anyone who attended a performance walked away astonished by two things: the incredible amount of student talent, and the fact that it all happened within a building that strained to make accommodation. While the stalwart structure had served faithfully – and provided many fond memories – the time had come to recreate the venue to exclusively nurture and showcase the visual and performing arts. After planning and strategizing (and then even more strategizing), the project moved into construction mode.

Thanks to the generosity of alumnae, parents and supporters, FSHA celebrated the opening of the newly transformed Arts Center and Mozilo Family Theater. The opening event included an evening of dining under the stars, heartfelt reflections by students, alumnae and trustees, the dedication by school President Sister Carolyn McCormack, O.P., and numerous performances involving the 60-plus member student dance troupe.

The inaugural performance truly showcased the Arts Center as a theatrical venue and community gathering. The entry court and arcade graciously welcomed the guests. Crowds of theater-goers gathered on the east terrace overlooking the Arroyo Seco and Rose Bowl. The "Front of House Call" ushered the waiting crowd through the lobby art gallery to the new wood paneled theater. While each seat was filled by parents, teachers, alumnae or donors, the students would not be denied. They arrived en masse – packing the aisles and walkways for the historic event. It was an enchanted evening and a joyous reminder of community.

The extensive renovation entailed structural and seismic retrofit of the Spanish Colonial building, a broadening and lengthening of the stage, and incorporation of a unique audience chamber air delivery system.

Designed by Pica + Sullivan Architects the new Arts Center features an elegant pre-function lobby and art gallery, a 237-fixed seat proscenium-style theater, high-

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**Pica + Sullivan
Architects Ltd**

Los Angeles, CA
(323) 653-7124

San Diego, CA
(619) 450-6200

PicaSullivan.com

1956 Cafeteria Transformation



*Flintridge Sacred
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Carolyn
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welcomes the
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tech production audio-visual system and theatrical lighting, a spacious interior ceramics studio and adjacent exterior kiln work area, and (yes!) new (and numerous) bathrooms! The building also includes a stagecraft workshop, dressing rooms and a state-of-the-art control room/teaching lab for hands-on theater tech training.

The extensive de-construction of the existing building revealed numerous surprises – most of which impacted schedule and cost. Tarzana, CA-based T. Viole Construction Company, Inc., worked tirelessly to stay within the strict budget and time constraints. Kudos to T. Viole Job Superintendent Ed Fortelny for his hard work and dedication.

The new Mozilo Family Theater was designed to accommodate enhanced vocal performances. As speech and music have differing resonance qualities, it was important to employ an acoustical strategy that would optimize each. To create the flexibility, Morro Bay, CA-based acoustical consultant Bill Dohn of Dohn and Associates, developed parabolic shaped reflectors at the stage perimeter. These assist in projecting and distributing sound. Reflective and absorptive surface material further modulates sound in the audience chamber.

Good sight lines are also critical to the success of any performance space. Theatrical consultant Edward Kaye of North Hills, CA-based JK Design Group developed an audience-seating layout to achieve this goal. The arrangement included stadium seats with staggered chairs to eliminate obstructions from fellow theater-goers. JK Design Group also specified the motorized rigging system, elaborate theatrical lighting and a state-of-the-art sound system.

Four hundred donors have made contributions to ***A Vision for Veritas...The Moment is Now***, FSHA's capital campaign. The project cost, including all construction, planning, and equipment and furnishing, was approximately \$9.6 million. Phase 2 of the Arts Center will include a dance studio, choral room, 2-D art studio and additional back-stage support.

In her Grand Opening address Sister Carolyn exclaimed, "The Arts Center will take your breath away, but I know you will agree with me that the true beauty of this space is the young women who fill it with heart and soul; grace and grit; and talent and determination." The newly transformed Arts Center and Mozilo Family Theater will echo with the music and talents of the FSHA community for many years to come.