

Press release

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Foster and Partners to design the Lyric Theater for the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts

The Board of Directors of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts Foundation has announced that Foster and Partners will design the 2,400-seat Lyric Theater, which will stage opera, ballet, music-theatre and other large-scale productions.

The announcement in Dallas on Monday 3 December concludes an 11-month search that involved several dozen firms from around the world.

Alongside the showpiece Lyric Theater, the \$250million complex will include an 800-seat theater to be designed by Rem Koolhaas. The architects were chosen on the basis of past work, site visits and interviews rather than drawings and models.

The Committees worked hard to select architects who could work together to create distinctive buildings that Dallas will be proud of, said board chairman Harvey Mitchell, "We want to make the Arts District both a center of performance and a civic destination".

The Dallas Center for the Performing Arts is the most ambitious cultural building project in the city's history and will provide Dallas with a world-class performing arts complex with venues for opera, theatre, music and dance. The complex of six performance spaces will allow a broad range of cultural organisations the opportunity to perform in state-of-the-art facilities serving audiences as broad and diverse as the groups themselves.

Lord Foster was "Over the moon" at the news. "The opportunity and the challenge will be to use the new buildings to break down barriers and tie the Arts District together" he said.

Partner Spencer de Grey, who will be heading the team for the Dallas Lyric Theater, said "It is a fantastic opportunity. The combination of the two new buildings and those already there will create an arts complex that is unrivalled in the world".

The Center will serve as the principal performance venues for the Dallas Opera, the Dallas Theater Center, the Dallas Childrens Theater and the Dallas Black Dance Theater. It will complement existing venues for such organisations as the Fort Worth / Dallas Ballet, Dallas Summer Musicals, TITAS, Turtle Creek Chorale, Womens Chorus, Young Audiences of Dallas, Shakespeare Festival of Dallas, Dallas Classical Guitar Society and host of other diverse community dance, music, and theatre groups.

Located strategically between the Meyerson Symphony Center and Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and complementing the Nasher Sculpture Center, the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts will complete a new Arts District in the centre of the city. The new buildings will

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be located around the Annette Strauss Artist Square, a popular outdoor space hosting a variety of festivals and performances throughout the year.

The City of Dallas, the Dallas opera and the performing arts community have spent \$13 million to acquire land for the site and \$96 million has already been pledged by individuals and organisations for the Centers construction.

Foster and Partners was selected on the basis of designs for major civic and cultural buildings including the Carr dArt in Nmes; the Sackler Galleries at the Royal Academy of Arts; the Great Court at the British Museum and the Music Centre in Gateshead. The practice will undertake a period of extensive research about the city of Dallas before starting design work in early 2002. Construction is expected to begin in 2004 and the buildings will be completed in 2007.

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