

Press release

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Groundbreaking initiates construction of \$275 million Dallas Center for the Performing Arts

Foster and Partners design for Winspear Opera House on schedule

DALLAS (November 10, 2005) Groundbreaking ceremonies for the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts were held Thursday morning, November 10, signaling the beginning of construction of the \$275 million project. The ceremony at the Centers future site in the Dallas Arts District included remarks by Academy Award-winning actor and Texan Tommy Lee Jones and many Texas government officials and other dignitaries.

The venues comprising the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts will represent the highest quality in design, acoustics, technical and creative support and audience amenities, including the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, designed by Foster and Partners. The Winspear Opera House will be one of two principal performance venues within the Center and will stage opera, ballet, music-theatre and other large-scale productions.

The Winspear Opera House will be a radical rethinking of the traditional opera house. It inverts the closed, hierarchical form creating a transparent, publicly welcoming series of spaces that wrap around the rich red drum of the 2,200-seat auditorium. An opera house for the 21st Century, the building is democratic, accessible and sustainable. Responding to the specific demands of the Dallas climate, an expansive canopy provides sheltered

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respite from the hot sun and creates its own microclimate and is an integral part of the buildings overall energy strategy. This inside-outside transitional space extends the building out to the public realm, the new grand plaza, which is further extended when the whole east faade is opened up with its vertical sliding glass panels.

The auditorium is designed to encourage a sense of intimacy with the performers. Its horseshoe plan and dramatic vertical stacking of tiers ensures that the audience is as close as possible to the stage. A special attention to detail and finishes, which improve the resonance of the human voice, allow the orchestra to sound rich and complex. There are means to adjust the acoustic performance of the space using retractable screens, which allow the flexibility to stage amplified or Broadway productions. These systems, together with the sound and lighting, convey a sense of immediacy to maximize the theatrical experience for artists and audience alike.

The building is transparent, its glass walls revealing views of the public concourse, upper-level foyers and grand staircase. Entered beneath the solar canopy, the transition from the Grand Plaza, through the foyer, into the auditorium is designed to heighten the drama of attending a performance - in effect, to take the theatre to the audience.

Leading the design team for Foster and Partners, Spencer de Grey said, The Winspear Opera House will balance the need to provide a civic space that is accessible and inviting, with the demands of creating an unrivalled performance venue for the city.

Additional venues comprising the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts will be:

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- Dee and Charles Wylie Theatre, serving as a gateway to the Dallas Arts District from the downtown Dallas business center and seating 600;
- Annette Strauss Artist Square, the Centers outdoor venue;
- City Performance Hall providing main stage production space to many of Dallas smaller performing arts organizations;
- Grand Plaza larger in size than London's Trafalgar Square that knits the Centers venues together in a park-like environment; and
- A 600-car underground parking structure.

Award-Winning Architects

Dallas will be the only city in the world that has four buildings within one contiguous block designed by Pritzker Architecture Prize winners. Included are the Nasher Sculpture Center designed by Renzo Piano, the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, designed by I.M. Pei, the new Dee and Charles Wylie Theatre designed by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture and Rem Koolhaas, the 2000 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate, and the new Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, designed by Foster and Partners, led by Norman Foster, was the 1999 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate, the architecture equivalent of the Nobel Prize.

London-based Foster and Partners known for its work on such projects as the Great Court of the British Museum in London, the world's largest airport in Hong Kong and the new German Parliament Building in Berlin is the design firm for the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House. The firm's founder, Norman Foster, and Principal Spencer de

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Grey, both internationally acclaimed architects, are leading the project.

The Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), with offices in Rotterdam, Netherlands and New York City, is the design firm for the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre. OMA is responsible for the design of such world-class facilities as the Rotterdam Kunsthall in the Netherlands and the Guggenheim Museum in Las Vegas. Other projects include the recently opened Seattle Central Library in Seattle. OMA founder and world-renowned architect Rem Koolhaas and Partner-in-Charge Joshua Prince-Ramus are leading the design of the project.

Good, Fulton & Farrell Architects (GFF) will design the underground parking structure that will serve patrons of the Centers venues and the eastern end of the Dallas Arts District. Headquartered in Dallas, GFF offers premier architectural, interior, and urban planning services locally, nationally and internationally. Consistently ranked as one of the largest firms in North Texas, GFF is currently involved in most of the major civic initiatives with the Central Business District, including the Inside the Loop Committee, the Downtown Transportation Master Plan, and the Downtown Parks Master Plan.

The City Performance Hall, to be constructed by the City of Dallas, is being designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill of Chicago and Corgan Associates of Dallas.

Construction Timeline

Construction will begin first on the parking garage. Following completion of the parking garage, construction of Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House and the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre will follow in fall 2006. All of the venues for the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts are scheduled to open in late 2009.

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About the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts Foundation

Organized in September 2000, the Foundations mission is to complete planning and raise funds to design and construct the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. When completed in 2009, the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts will provide unsurpassed settings for performances of opera, musical theater, classic and experimental theater, ballet and other forms of dance. The Centers theaters will become the main stage production facilities for The Dallas Opera, the Dallas Theater Center, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Texas Ballet Theater, Anita N. Martinez Ballet Folklorico, and many of the other performing arts organizations that serve Dallas and the surrounding area.

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