

JONES HALL

Construction for Jones Hall began in January 1964 and was completed in October 1966. Jones Hall was placed on the same site as the old City Auditorium, which was built in 1910.

The \$7.4 million it took to build Jones Hall was paid by the Houston Endowment, a fund established by philanthropist Jesse H. Jones, for whom the building was named.

In 1967, Claudill Rowlett Scott, and architectural firm that was based in Houston, was awarded the American Institute of Architects' Honor Award for their design of Jones Hall. The prestigious award is given out once a year to only one building in the entire country.

The theater was designed to be a performance hall for all of Houston's major arts groups of the day - the Symphony, Opera and Ballet.

Although the Houston Grand Opera and the Houston Ballet have since moved to the Wortham Theater Center, Jones Hall remains the home of the Houston Symphony Society as well as Society for the Performing Arts and the Houston Broadway Series.

The 133,000 square feet of travertine marble that makes up most of the building's structure comes all the way from Tripoli, Italy.

The lobby ceiling is 66 feet high and the outside columns are eight stories tall.

The lobby sculpture was designed and installed by American sculptor Richard Lippold. The sculpture is named "Gemini II," and it consists of several thousand rods that are suspended by piano wires. It took three months to hang the sculpture. The curve of the design seems to change as you view it from different lobby levels.

The brass letters utilized throughout the building follows the Trajanic alphabet, the first known form of advertising letter style ever used.

The theater ceiling is a network of 800 movable hexagons. These “pods” can easily be adjusted to fine tune acoustics depending on the type and size of the show. The pods can also be lowered so the balcony is completely closed. The ceiling design and its supporting equipment were the first massive alteration of volume by structural means ever accomplished in a concert theater of this size. It is still considered an engineering marvel.

George Izenour, a noted theater physicist and experimentalist of electronic movement of walls and ceilings, developed the unique revolutionary concept of the moving ceiling in Jones Hall.

In 1993, Jones Hall underwent construction and now complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. There is now easy access into the building and to the restrooms for all patrons of the arts.

There are a total of 13 dressing rooms backstage. Four private “star” dressing rooms on stage left have been utilized by such celebrities as David Copperfield, Faye Dunaway, Bruce Springstein, Sarah McLachlin, Sting, Tony Bennett, Steve and Eydie, James Taylor, John Denver, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Jesse Norman, and Bill Gates...to name a few.

Nine other dressing rooms are located on the Chorus and Wardrobe levels, which are situated two floors above the actual stage level. These rooms can accommodate 100 performers at a time, who must take the stairs or elevator to reach the stage. The dressing rooms are equipped with sound monitors so that the performers always know what is happening on the stage.