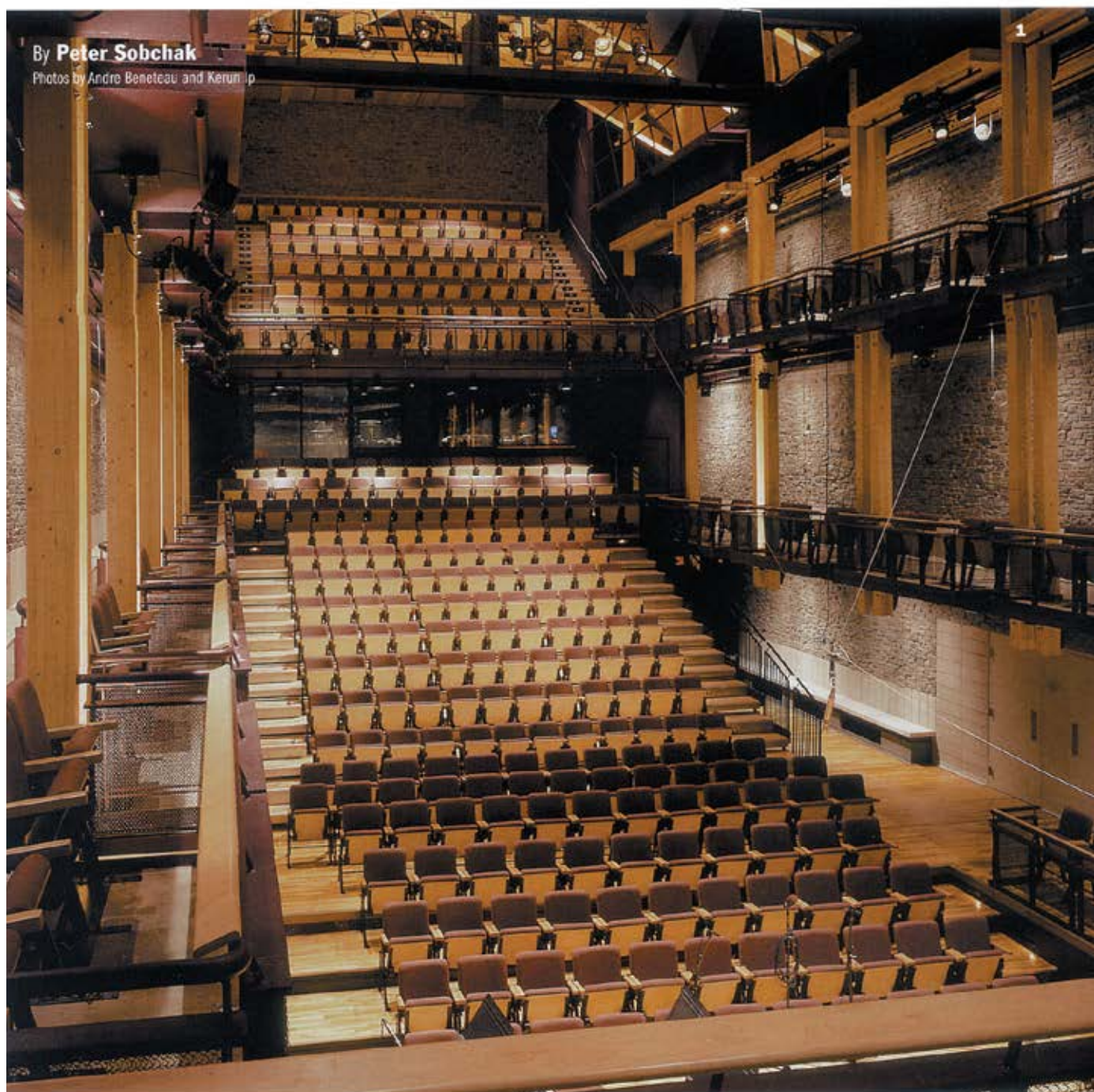


By Peter Sobchak

Photos by André Beneteau and Kerun Ip



A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN

The Charles W. Stockey Centre for the Performing Arts, overlooking Georgian Bay, is a unique and inspired pairing of art and sport, in a building that respects the regional vernacular.

PROJECTS

1. The performing arts theatre of the Stockey Centre melds wood, stone and metal, a range of materials and rough textures, to create a room of outstanding acoustical quality.
2. Acoustic considerations were paramount in seating design and arrangements. Metal mesh screens in front of box seats are acoustically superior to solid panels and the "random veil" effect softens other metal work.

The Charles W. Stockey Centre for the Performing Arts is a compelling reminder of the power of synergy. The new 26,770-square-foot, \$9.8-million facility, overlooking Georgian Bay in Parry Sound, Ont., boldly integrates classical music with Canada's favourite sport.

An odd pairing, it may seem, but necessary. For years, the Festival of the Sound, a world-renowned chamber music festival, existed nebulously without a permanent home, operating out of church basements and community centres around Parry Sound. Fortunately, the town of Parry Sound was also looking for a way to celebrate the life and

McAlpine Architects in joint venture with ZAS Architects of Toronto, for the facility's overall design; Artec Consultants of New York, to handle the important acoustic considerations necessary for a world-class concert hall; and Reich + Petch Design International, also of Toronto, for the Hall of Fame installations.

A 3.5-acre site at the heart of Parry Sound's waterfront district, adjacent to a rocky outcrop known as Bob's Point, with a northwest view over the Sound, was chosen for the centre. As design concepts were explored, the team decided it was important to create an informal atmosphere, enhancing the



until the acoustic engineers chopped it out," says Keith Loffler. Although abandoned, the fireplace became the inspiration for stone walls, which work remarkably well for acousticians, who are always looking for highly textured surfaces to facilitate sound reverberation. The team considered using patent concrete ("the el-cheapo way," Loffler calls it), until they found a nearby quarry in Parry Sound with the perfect kind of granite.

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career of hometown hero, hockey great Bobby Orr.

The need to permanently house these two attractions was clear: the population of Parry Sound ranges from 6,000 in the winter to approximately 100,000 in the summer, consisting mostly of long-time cottagers, many of whom are regular Festival of the Sound attendees. Jim Campbell, director of the Festival of the Sound, in an inspired moment, suggested a unique collaboration of sport and culture: a hockey hall of fame celebrating the career of Orr, and a multi-purpose, acoustically sound Festival Performance Hall.

To turn vision into reality, Parry Sound brought in a design trio that included Keith Loffler

casual cottage lifestyle that characterizes Parry Sound during the summer months.

Flexibility was also important, so a number of seating arrangements were conceived for the 468-seat theatre, from traditional raked rows for concerts and theatre performances, to a flat floor for receptions and conferences. Two balcony levels provide extra "box" seating, which surrounds the audience chamber. Yet despite the flexibility of the seating design, acoustics were always the number one priority.

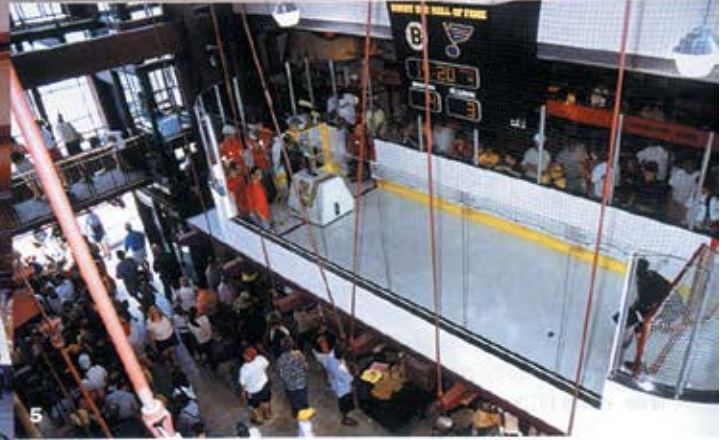
The theme for the theatre was to be "concerts at the cottage." In fact, the motif of a cottage fireplace was seriously discussed, to the point where early models had a large fireplace in one of the walls. "That was

and people associate coolness with stone, it was important to overlay the inside with warm materials like wood: British Columbian Douglas fir and maple. "The whole design became a play between the acoustic stone and the aesthetic wood," says Loffler. The wood was scored to create a rough texture, which disperses sound; heavy fabric draperies that can be drawn into the room reduce the reverberation time.

The fireplace motif was continued through the use of metal mesh screens in front of the box seats, which have the added benefit of being porous to allow sound to pass through, as well as provide the sense that the seated occupants are "screened," creating comfort and privacy. "The random veil effect of the screens also softens up the rest of the metal work, which has to be designed to take on very heavy loads," explains Loffler.

A truss design begun in the theatre is carried into the three-storey common lobby shared with the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame. Here, heavy wooden structures blend with glass walls, while walkways and other elements are suspended from trusses, creating an open, clean space, interrupted only by the Hall of Fame announcing its presence. Floating 10 feet overhead and jutting into the lobby, is a hockey rink complete with scoreboard.

Designed by Toronto-based Reich + Petch International, the Hall of Fame is a two-level, 4,306-sq.-ft. museum and entertainment centre. Reich + Petch's roster of projects include the Art Gallery of Windsor



3. The amorphous three-storey shared lobby is a union of glass, metal and wood, grand yet not so imposing that it overpowers either the Hall of Fame or the theatre.

4. The Stockey Centre's dramatic pitched roof refers to the former industrial buildings on the waterfront that provided inspiration for the centre's exterior appearance.

5. Taken on opening day, this view of the Stockey Centre lobby shows the suspended hockey rink and scoreboard, which hover over the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame entrance.

6. A life-sized recreation of Bobby Orr's famous Stanley Cup overtime goal in 1970. The sculpture's Boston Bruins uniform was soaked in resin and manipulated so it looks as it does in the photo of the winning goal. It was then covered in Luminor, a metal and plastic amalgam. The background is a series of crowd shots, blown up and mounted on drywall.

(*Canadian Interiors*, January/February 2003), the Saudi Arabia National Museum in Riyadh, and the Hong Kong Heritage Museum.

"We always start with a search for a narrative," says Ron Flood, Reich + Petch project coordinator. With exhibit designs, this often involves bringing in someone to come up with a communication plan, in essence a "story," to organize exhibits. In the case of the Hall of Fame, the narrative is simply the story of Orr's life.

Photo and artifact-rich showcases share spaces with interactive exhibits and games that trace Orr's remarkable career. As a finale, the Trophy Room features all of Orr's NHL trophies and two Stanley Cup rings.

His influence on the game and comparisons with other great hockey players are presented via touch screen video monitors and displays in theatrically themed zones. For example, dramatically positioned along one wall sits *The Goal*, a life-size recreation of Orr scoring the overtime Stanley Cup winning goal during the 1969–1970 season.

Reich + Petch employs subtle clues to suggest a hockey rink theme. A yellow strip of polyethylene lines the baseboards to simulate an ice rink; the floor is white; rafters and banners fill the ceiling; and the classic Orr logo is dramatically placed at "centre ice."

The Stockey Centre, both respectful of history and its natural surroundings, symbolizes Canadian ideals of compromise and ingenuity. In a salute to its dual inspirations, two musical compositions, one called *The Goal*, were specially written for the official opening last July. **C**



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