

Claremore Progress

Stars of Claremore Performing Arts Center are building design, technology

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The stage is being set, so to speak, for a multi-million dollar fine arts facility in Claremore that will boast state of the art sound and lighting equipment and technical design to accommodate every kind of production.

When the curtain goes up, the much-anticipated Claremore Performing Arts Center will provide an impressive arena for the arts in Claremore Public Schools and the surrounding area.

Frank Robson, who with his wife Ludmila, contributed \$8 million toward the facility's construction and \$3 million for an endowment fund for building maintenance and the employment of a director, said the general contractor's goal for completion of the project is May 1, 2006.

"What is planned but not in concrete yet is to perform the musical 'Oklahoma!' June 9-11," for the PAC's inaugural performance, Robson said.

Before that, contributors will be invited to an open house and short program "to give them a bird's eye view of how everything's going to function," he said.

While specifics aren't set in stone yet, construction is coming along and Executive Director Ruby Quinn is already on the job. A technical director will also be hired to oversee the total operation of facility and teach classes in lighting, sound and stage design.



BUILDING HIGHLIGHTS:

The grand two-story lobby will feature a large circle design the terrazzo floor and a display wall for art shows. The balcony rail will be etched glass.

A ticket office as well as offices for the executive director and technical director will also be at the front of the building.

An elevator and wheelchair lift will make the facility accessible to wheelchair users.

Inside the auditorium is seating for 650 on the main level and an additional 370 in the balcony.

"Every surface is curved for acoustic purposes," Robson said. "There are no straight walls."

The 114 by 45 foot stage has runways on each side. The orchestra pit is on a lift system, which allows the stage area to be expanded when the pit is not in use.

Above, catwalks cross the entire stage for easy access to lighting and set equipment.

Special attention was given to the design and number of restrooms, located on either side of the auditorium on both the main level and balcony, and more in the classroom part of the building.

"We talked to several women including those at my office (Robson Properties) and they said they wanted bathrooms where they didn't have to touch anything," Robson said.

Taking their advice, entrances to restroom areas are semi-circle, eliminating the need for doors. Sinks and toilets are automated and there are hooks on the backs of stall doors as well as shelves in each stall to set purses and bags.

Backstage, dressing areas for men and women are on either side of a large, central make up room with counters and special lighting. The walls of the dressing areas are lined with storage compartments, shelves and clothing racks.

But it's the back of the facility that will be used everyday.

Classrooms and offices for Claremore High School choir, band and speech and drama are spacious and include plenty of storage room for music, instruments, choir robes and band uniforms.

The speech, drama and debate area includes four soundproof practice rooms. The band room features high ceilings and acoustical panels so that "the sound they get in here should be as near perfect as possible," Robson said.

There is also a large ensemble room, a small ensemble room and soundproof practice rooms for band and choir.

Also at the rear of the building is a stagecraft area situated so that sets can be rolled onto the stage or into the versatile black box theater, which will house small productions with seating for 125-200.

Gigantic 4,000 pound soundproof doors leading to the main stage as well as the black box theater will eliminate noise from the backstage area while at the same time making it easy to move sets in

and out.

Set construction items and equipment will easily moved to the from the facility with the semi-trailer high dock, pick up high dock and ramp.

ONGOING FUNDRAISING:

The "Select-A-Seat" campaign stands at \$164,825, with a goal of \$214,000. Seats are \$200 each. To make a tax-deductible donation, make checks payable to Claremore Performing Arts Center, Inc. P.O. Box 986, Claremore, OK 74018.

Money is also being raised to purchase a baby grand piano for the facility. It will be stored in a special room with humidity and temperature control.

For more information on how to contribute to either project, call 341-3025.

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