

Memorial Hall and the Performing Arts at Carolina

History of the Performing Arts

Historically, the performing arts have been fostered by several entities within the Carolina family: PlayMakers Repertory Company, the Carolina Union, the Student Entertainment Series, the departments of music and drama, and student organizations such as Sound and Fury. Each group has brought distinctive performances to campus and enhanced the cultural experience of the University community.

Memorial Hall and the Performing Arts

Since 1931, Memorial Hall has hosted educational, cultural and ceremonial events for students, faculty, staff and area residents. Although an impressive structure of classical beauty on the outside, for many years Memorial Hall's functional deficits have limited its usefulness. The need to renovate and modernize the facility became even more acute in recent years with increasing requests for the use of the auditorium by various University groups, greater technical demands by performers and a need for more comfortable audience accommodations.

Thanks to generous support from the state and the generosity of almost 1,000 private donors, Memorial Hall is undergoing a \$15 million transformation that will allow audiences to experience performance as it is meant to be: comfortable, inspiring, thought-provoking and, most of all, entertaining. An opening gala celebration is scheduled for Sept. 9-10, 2005. Performers include Tony Bennett and Itzhak Perlman. The 2005-06 season, "A Movement to Greatness," will present more than 700 artists in more than 40 performances.

A Vision for the Performing Arts

Inspired by the wellspring of enthusiasm and support for the Memorial Hall Transformation campaign that raised over \$5 million from private donors, and the enthusiasm and interest in elevating the role of the performing arts at Carolina, the University is determined to provide the requisite leadership and resources necessary to make the performing arts second to none. It is the University's intent to make Carolina the center of artistic excellence in the region.

An Executive Director for the Arts

Central to this vision is the creation of a new leadership position—the executive director for the arts (EDA). On Jan. 1, 2005, Emil Kang, former president and executive director of the Detroit Symphony, became Carolina's first EDA. Kang is charged with marshalling the resources of various arts groups on campus, developing a strategy for fulfilling the vision and ensuring the highest possible quality of artistic performance. He oversees three main venues: Memorial Hall, Gerrard Hall and Playmakers Theatre.

Securing Resources for the Performing Arts

Although funds for the renovation of Memorial Hall have been secured, private gifts are still needed for a performing arts endowment and for a fund to support the immediate programming needs of the performing arts.

As with the Memorial Hall campaign, naming opportunities are available. For example, seats in Memorial Hall auditorium can be named for \$5,000 each. While almost 450 seats were named during the building campaign, nearly 1,000 unnamed seats remain. There are also several opportunities to name spaces in the Hall.

Gifts of \$5,000 or more should be designated to either the Performing Arts Endowment Fund or the Performing Arts Operating Fund.

Contact

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An artist's rendering of the renovated Memorial Hall

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