







A MUSEUM OF MUSICAL WORKS

The contemporary orchestra, in its protection of and performance of works from the past, is often criticized as a museum institution that is seen as increasingly separating itself from contemporary public life by remaining tethered to the performance practices of the 18th and 19th centuries. Despite the inaccuracies of such statements in consideration of the variety of ways that contemporary orchestras like the South Czech Philharmonic Orchestra are pushing boundaries and settling into news roles in the cultural life of cities, the idea of the orchestra as a museum carries potential ways of rethinking the layout of typical concert hall.

While concert hall design has generally remained tied to the traditional design of a shoebox hall within a larger monumental structure, contemporary museum design has turned to elements like public passage through the building, natural light, education spaces, and multiple layers of experience to push building for art into the next century. This design of a concert hall in České Budějovice considers the design potential of considering the concert hall instead as a museum as a way of giving the orchestra a unique presence in the city that fits with its mission.

The design is situated across an added avenue through the site that divides the existing area into portions that fit more within the fabric of the city, and this avenue moves into, through, and up the building. And rather than one monumental form, this concert hall is divided into several similar volumes, many of which can be experienced on their own, independent of a visit to the auditorium. Just as in many contemporary galleries, visitors may experience a visit to the restaurant, store, public archive or education spaces and catch glimpses of music, musicians and what a more complete visit might bring without even purchasing a ticket – all in areas flooded with natural light, a rarity in the concert halls of the past.

The KOMA modular system is used to emphasize these qualities of the building, with the small grain of the modules used to break up the usually monumental character of the concert hall and create a more meandering experience as paths are cut through them, leading either further into an individual volume or through the building as a whole. With the concert hall on the third floor, the inclusion of the modules in this meandering experience also allows them to structurally support the large hall, while the sawtooth pattern of the volumes alludes to gallery spaces, allows for a unique auditorium filled with natural light, and allows for natural ventilation. While descriptions of the concert hall as a museum are usually paired with equally misinformed predictions of the "death" of classical music, this project investigates the hidden architectural potential of a common criticism of the contemporary orchestra.

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