

Arch 464
ECS
Spring 2012

Name _____

Quiz #4

"Restoration Hall"

Read and look at everything before you write!

The newly remodeled Winters Building in Richmond, CA, houses the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts. Artistic director Jordan Simmons envisions using the second-floor theatre for public performances of organization's full palette of arts including dance, small musical groups, plays, film, and public speakers. Your role is to advise him on measures to be taken to assure appropriate acoustic environments for all of these uses.



Illustrations from *Architectural Record* 03:12. Photos © Tim Griffith.

The Winters Building is elongated on a North-South axis with storefront windows facing the South and East. The theatre space occupies most of the 25' high second floor and is daylighted by punched windows and arched clerestories.

East Bay Center for the Performing Arts

Mark Cavagnero Associates
Richmond, California

By Asad Syrkett

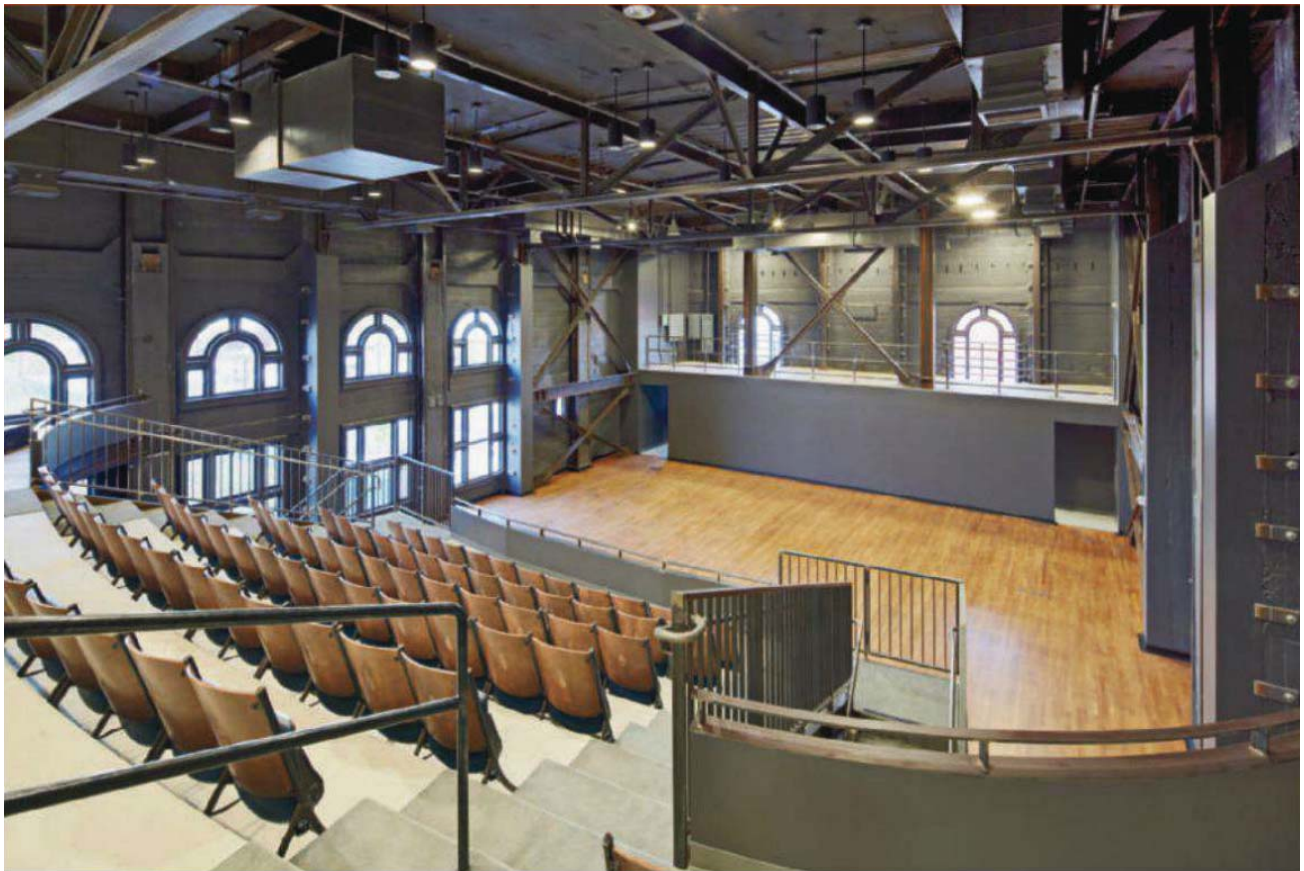
In the early 1920s, Adolph and Elisabeth Winters, recent German émigrés, hired a little-known San Francisco architect, Albert W. Cornelius, to design a center for ballroom dancing, concerts, and the occasional boxing match, in downtown Richmond, California. The Beaux-Arts structure became known as the Winters Building and, over the years, housed retail space and a bank. But by 1973, when the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts took up residence in part of the building, much of it had fallen into disrepair: Its roofs leaked, its ceilings were low, and the first level's stalwart concrete face gave it the look of a bunker. Add to that a town that had lost much of its population after World War II and was plagued by drug-related crime, and the setting was grim.

Enter Jordan Simmons, who, since 1985, has been the center's artistic director and its effusive champion. In 2005, Simmons commissioned Mark Cavagnero Associates Architects, of San Francisco, to complete an \$8.3 million rehabilitation of the old Winters Building, a 16,000-square-foot, reinforced-concrete-and-heavy-timber structure. In conjunction with a campaign to revitalize downtown Richmond, spearheaded by the city, funds became available from public, private, and corporate sources to pay for the renovation. "The original mission was not just about access to quality arts education, but also about creating a vehicle for social change," says Simmons. "The challenge for Mark was taking a narrow, long building and making it work for the program."

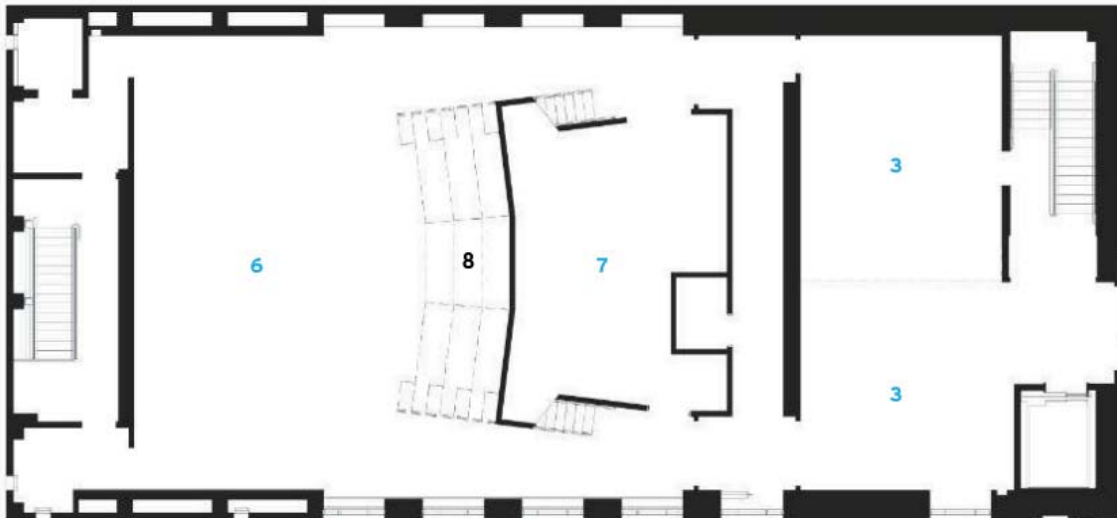
That program had to accommodate acoustically isolated practice rooms (in the basement), rehearsal spaces (throughout the building), an upgraded, 200-seat theater (on the second floor), and administrative offices (on the top level). Cavagnero undertook a gut renovation of the historic building, but aimed to keep it in line with the neighborhood's industrial aesthetic. The design team opted to expose new seismic bracing, which figures prominently in the first-floor reception area and in a 2,500-square-foot black box theater. Simmons insisted on simple, unadorned finishes overall that put the energy of the students, rather than architectural extravagance, at center stage. "We knew that the brackets and gusset plates and bolt connections would really be the only decoration," says Cavagnero. Vestiges of past occupants—advertising, signage, and decorative elements—are visible through windows on the newly transparent ground level, which replaces the previously impenetrable concrete facade with large glass panes and sleek black mullions. The firm also removed stucco from the exterior, exposing the original concrete and decorative details (including portraits of original owners Adolph and Elisabeth Winters), and put in new windows on the 25-foot-high second story.

As on the ground level, the floor of the second level is dance-ready sprung oak. While multiuse spaces generally act as preshow reception areas, on the first floor this space serves double-duty as a large-group rehearsal room and, on the second, an almost identical space is sometimes employed for children's dance instruction. The theater, which was created from the space left when an original second-floor mezzanine was demolished, is also flexible, with 75 spaces for folding chairs and 125 fixed seats. The space under these seats is used for storage. "We worked with Mark to maximize every square foot," Simmons says.

On a recent visit, students at the center mentioned the theater and the cluster of practice rooms on the basement level as their favorite upgraded areas: Each student has a space in which he or she can practice, free from self-consciousness about noise leaking into adjacent rooms. When asked if Richmond's reputation as a place for violent crime and poverty is changing because of the center, 17-year-old Andre, a countertenor, pianist, and budding thespian who is one of the center's newest students, paused for a moment. "Well," he said, "I feel like it's changing the way I am. And since I'm part of Richmond, it's changing the way Richmond is."



This view from the back of the lofted fixed seating toward the stage reveals the raw nature of the building's interior.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

The theatre plan shows the stage area (6), the fixed seating with storage below (7), the removable tiers for folding chair seating (8), and the lobby space for events with offices above (3). The east facing windows and clerestories are echoed by blind windows in the west wall. The theatre is 36' long from exterior wall to the wall separating the lobby from the theatre and is 21' wide.

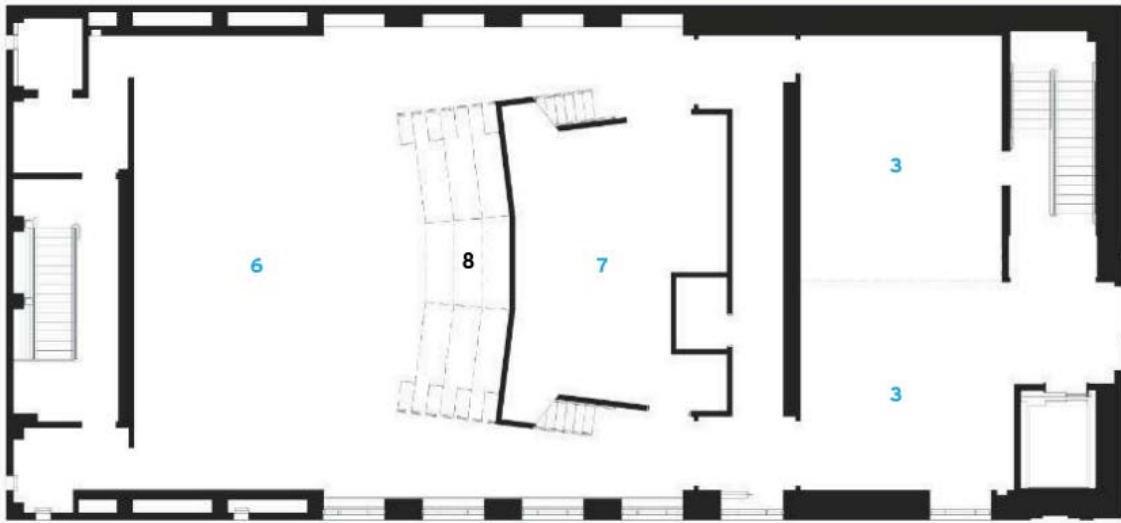
ANALYSIS

6 points

1. a. Cite a similarly configured performance hall, classifying it as one of the following: surround hall, wide hall, or shoe-box hall. Comment on its appropriateness for multiple acoustic uses.

b. Draw a S-N section of the performance hall below the plan on the next page. Note the acoustic characteristics of the surfaces in plan and section.

c. Calculate the reverberation time for this space. Is it appropriate for the intended use? Explain your point-of-view.



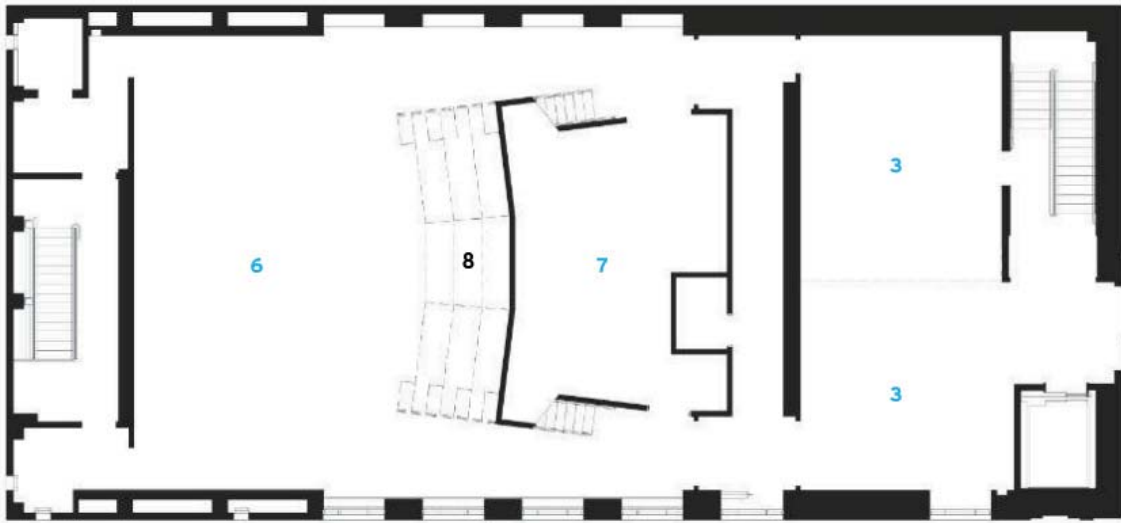
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

ADAPTATION

4 points
2. Suggest two new acoustic features for the performance hall—one that is permanent and suitable for all uses and one that can adjust the room acoustics for multiple uses. Draw them in plan and section on the next page and explain their roles and functions.

a. Permanent acoustic feature:

b. Adjustable acoustic feature:



SECOND FLOOR PLAN