

**THE CITY SUBLIME: ENABLING THE ARTS
BY ENGAGING WITH THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the ways in which architecture can be used to enhance and support creativity in music by engaging with the urban environment. The investigation will take the form of designing a community scaled performing-arts incubator in downtown Toronto. The arts incubator program is familiar across North America, but often takes the form of either a pastoral retreat or an urban revitalization tool with a focus on community development. This thesis aims to combine both ideas and create an arts-focused facility within the urban environment. Elements of the creative process of music are translated to program-specific, arts-focused design elements that are then described by their relationship to each other and to the city. This thesis aims to create a series of spaces that will enhance the capability of urban musicians to practice their craft and in turn elevate the cultural identity of the place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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And finally, I would like to thank my wife Melanie, without whom I would not be where I am. You are the best. I look forward to our next big adventure, whatever it may be.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

THESIS QUESTION

How can design enable artists to engage with and be enhanced by the urban environment as a catalyst for cultural development?

PRELUDE

Artists are creators and purveyors of culture. Through their art, they both interpret and reflect the environment they live in, and play a large role in defining the collective identity of a community. Despite the innumerable ways society benefits from the arts, critical support systems are lacking and individual artists are left subsidizing cultural production. This thesis explores architectural means of addressing this problem and aims to bolster existing support networks for the arts through design. In this exploration, music will be the subject to investigate architecture as an instrument for enabling artists to create. The dynamic nature of music allows it to represent a wide range of artistic disciplines, and the unique requirements of the craft provide interesting architectural challenges.

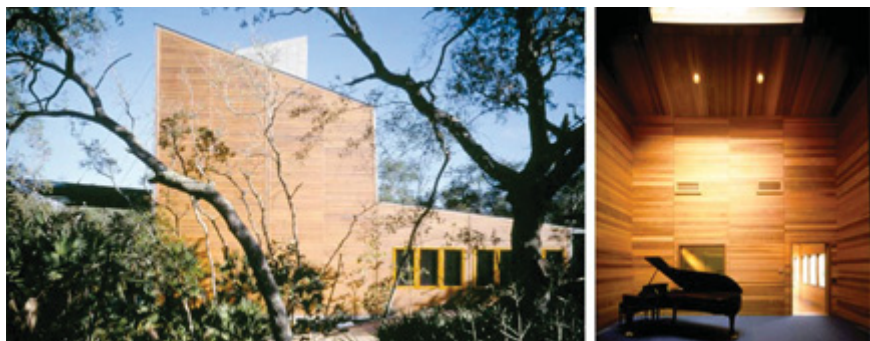
There is a strong connection between music and urbanity: music is inherently a social activity; the addition of an audience takes it from a self-indulgent process to a shared experience. Contemporary musicians often migrate towards urban centres in order to progress in the industry; success is derived from being around others who are doing the same thing and those who are willing to invest in the advancement of the arts. The Canada Council for the Arts reports that 45% of the nation's artists reside in one of the ten largest municipalities, compared to 29% of the overall workforce (Canada

Council for the Arts 2013). The benefits of urban life, however, are sometimes outweighed by the disadvantages posed by the requirements of the musician's craft. The need for space and sound isolation often finds the performer spending substantial amounts of money on rehearsing or creating, and it is regularly more than they can make from performing their craft. This, combined with the nature of the unconventional work schedule the artist is required to keep, often makes the practice of music-as-career untenable. This thesis will examine the creation of a platform for musicians to experience and reflect their urban environment, providing them with needed resources to practice their craft. It will examine ways of providing spaces to foster and enhance creative production, which will in turn elevate the cultural standing of the specific place and create a feedback loop of creativity and investment in artistic endeavours.

Existing Conditions

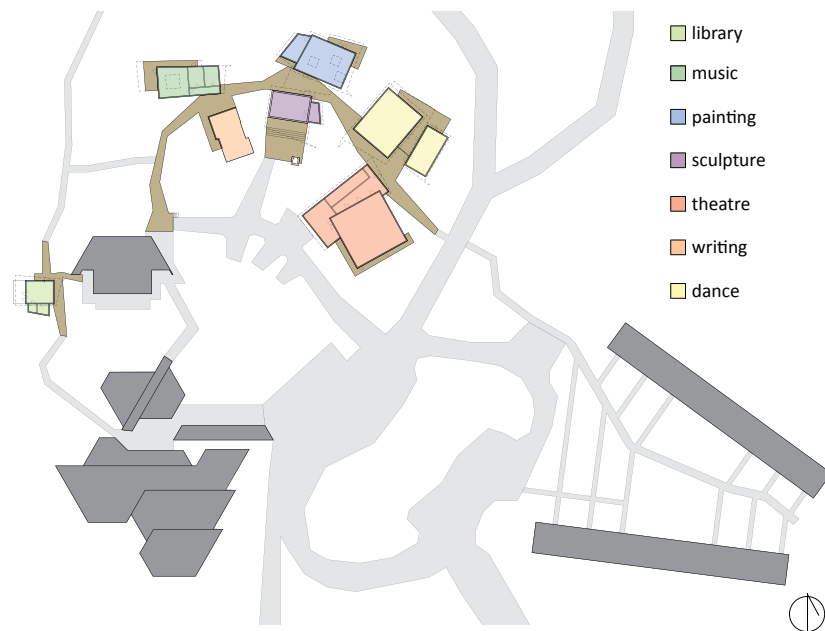
Support networks for artists take many forms, from government-funded grant programs to not-for-profit program support. Current resources aim to foster arts development through institutional or financial programming; the Canada Council for the Arts document *Public Engagement in the Arts* outlined a number of interventions used to foster engagement, ranging from grants and festival support through to touring programs for artists (Canada Council for the Arts 2012). Architecture does not make an appearance on the list. This thesis aims to demonstrate that good design can be a tool for engaging with and enabling the arts alongside existing financial or institutional programming.

To begin exploring how this can be achieved, it is necessary to examine what does exist in terms of architectural support for the arts. Many facilities act to support musicians and other artists, often giving them a place to escape from the stresses of daily life, find inspiration, and create in relative isolation. Other facilities attempt to harness the energy and creative output of artists to revitalize a certain area or community. The first type takes the form of the artists' retreat: a place away from the world with a mandate of inspiring creativity through isolation and immersion in some sublime setting. The second type typically exists in urban centres, particularly in underprivileged or undeveloped areas, and utilizes artistic accomplishment as a means for community revitalization. The retreat model caters to the artist as it fosters the creative process, while the revitalization model caters to the community and aims to harness the positive impact of the art once it is created. The arts incubator model that this thesis explores offers the opportunity to take lessons from both of these models. It will propose a design that combines the best of both models: one that truly takes advantage of its urban setting, creating an environment that fosters artistic creativity, which in turn benefits the community.



Exterior and Interior view of Music Studio - ACA (Atlantic Center for the Arts 2013).

An example of the artists' retreat model is Atlantic Center for the Arts (ACA) in New Smyrna, Florida. Founded in 1977, this non-profit organization provides residencies, studios, and programming for international artists of all disciplines. The original campus, along with the brand new gallery space, was designed by architect Will Miller, and 11 000 square feet of studio space was added to the facility by Charles Rose Architects in the 1990s. Each individual studio is designed for a specific artistic discipline and to take advantage of its surroundings: the music studio's full enclosure with cedar-lined walls ensures isolation and optimal acoustics, and the single skylight in the space frames a view of the spectacular Florida sky. The dance studio features sprung floors and sandblasted windows facing onto shared spaces to allow for optimal lighting while retaining privacy for the users. The boardwalk connecting these studios becomes an object in itself, acting as breakout space, collaborative meeting locations, and an impromptu performance venue (Atlantic Center for the Arts 2013).



Atlantic Center for the Arts site plan showing studios for specific artistic disciplines (plan from Charles Rose Architects 2013).

Similar to the ACA in mandate but at a much larger scale is the Banff Centre for the Arts in Banff, Alberta. Purportedly the world's largest arts and creativity incubator, the Banff Centre provides programming and support to more than 8000 artists, leaders, and researchers annually. Beginning as an adjunct faculty at the University of Alberta, the Banff Centre is now an autonomous non-degree granting institution that acts as a "catalyst for creativity." The centre is host to programs for all of the arts, from traditional visual art to dance. Music and theatre programs exist alongside business and mountain culture programming, raising the centre above the role of a simple arts incubator and closer to a large-scale educational institution. Non-arts-related activities serve to support the core creative programming (Banff Centre 2013a).



Banff Centre nestled among the mountains (Banff Centre 2013a).

A collection of eight individual studios and one collaborative studio exist on the Banff Centre campus and provide spaces for long-term artists residency programs. This colony of cabins is close enough to enable engagement with the larger creative community of the Banff Centre campus, but secluded enough to provide artists with a solitary retreat to focus on the production of creative works. Each studio was designed by a respected Canadian architect and given a specific moment of creative focus to enhance; three of the studios are geared towards writers, three to composers, and two to visual artists. The ninth studio is a larger space meant for collaborative work. The Banff Centre's mountainous environment is ideal for the production of creative work, providing artists with an inspiring workplace and a routine free from the stresses of daily life (Banff Centre 2013b).



Cardinal Studio at the Banff Centre - Douglas Cardinal, 1985 (Banff Centre 2013b).

An urban example of the arts centre model can be found in Toronto at the Daniels Spectrum, formerly known as the Regent Park Arts and Cultural Centre. This facility was created as part of the ongoing revitalization of Toronto's Regent Park neighbourhood, previously one of the city's poorest and most troubled areas. Spectrum houses a theatre, galleries, production spaces, teaching facilities, and shared office spaces for small business start-ups. The building has a three-tiered user access system: public spaces open to anyone, semi-private spaces used by tenant organizations and their clients, and private spaces for back-of-house operations. The public elements within the building are expanded to provide breakout space and filter visitors through to their specific destination. This mixed-use facility is an example of the arts centre as a catalyst for community development; though it is just one part of a much larger neighbourhood master plan, Spectrum is a point of pride for all residents of Regent Park. Spectrum operates as one building managed by Artscape with multiple tenants acting independently, and is one of the major features attempting to draw people into the formerly isolated neighbourhood (Toronto Artscape 2013).



Daniels Spectrum - Diamond Schmitt Architects, 2012 (Diamond Schmitt Architects 2013).

Critical Position

The locations chosen for artists retreats often reflect a desire for isolation from the stresses of daily life or for some specific inspirational environment. They are located on the outskirts of small towns or in idyllic mountain ranges where artists can disconnect from everything and focus on a specific project or program.

The urban arts incubator will create a place where the focused atmosphere of a retreat can be achieved without necessitating a complete disconnection from the world. The urban arts incubator provides a place for artists to take in and subsequently reflect the urban environment, with all that that entails, in their creative work. The element of retreat can still be achieved by providing spaces for residency, allowing artists to inhabit the building for longer periods of time and remove themselves from their own daily schedules. The selection of a definitively urban site, downtown Toronto, Ontario, allows inhabitants of the project to draw inspiration from all that the city has to offer: a diverse multi-cultural community, a rich and engaging street life, and the impressive and inspiring physical surroundings of the city.

This thesis aims to show how a music-focused facility can flourish in the urban environment, both enhancing and being enhanced by its surroundings. A focus on music in the programming of the arts incubator is advantageous due to the dynamic nature of the art form; creating, rehearsing, producing, and performing are all necessary elements of the process that have vastly different needs in terms of exposure/privacy, isolation/engagement, and surrounding environment. For a building to truly take advantage of its environment it

must be active at all scales; it must engage with the individual user, with the street, and with the city as a whole. An examination of the creative process of music reveals a similar range of experiences; certain elements of the process are entirely private and introspective while others are inherently public and expressive. A building developed specifically to enhance and enable the creative output of musicians will inherently be an engaging space across multiple scales and timeframes.



The best of both worlds - the City Sublime.

PRE-DESIGN

Sound and Space – One Person’s Music is Another’s Noise

Any design created specifically focused on the production and enhancement of music needs to deal with issues of sound. This provides an opportunity for the architect to go beyond the mitigation of unwanted noise and to use sound itself to shape experience within the building and to create a strong sense of place. To this end, I have undertaken a series of studies into the technical aspects of sound (reverberation, transmission) as well as the ways in which we experience sound and space. The technical investigations led to a series of frameworks that can be applied to the evolving design in terms of form and materiality. The main acoustic investigation involved reverberation time (RT60), which is the amount of time required for acoustic reflections to decay beyond 60dB, or become effectively inaudible. Architecturally, this is one of the most obvious facets of acoustic design, as spaces with improper RT60 can become effectively unusable for their stated purpose. For example, speech in a room with too high an RT60 will become muddled and unintelligible, while chamber music in a low RT60 environment will lose much of its lustre and become much less interesting. Based on principles laid out by William Cavanaugh in *Architectural Acoustics: Principles and Practice*, I developed an RT60 calculator to evaluate the acoustic performance of spaces based on their proportions and materials (Cavanaugh 2010, p 14). This will allow for the building to be tuned throughout the design process to perform in the desired manner.

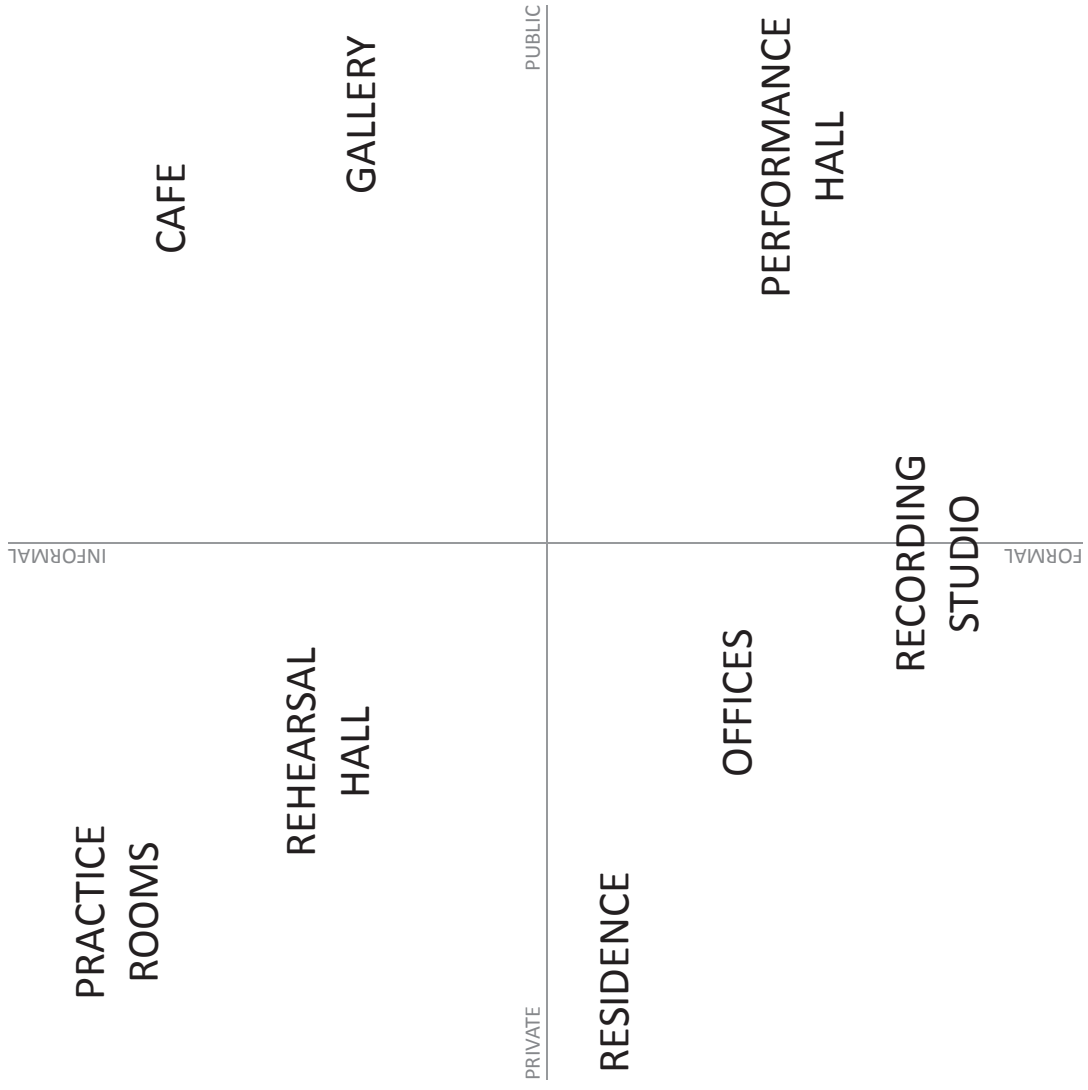
The experiential investigations focused on the effects of noise on

productivity, and on the concept of the soundscape as presented by R. Murray Schafer in his book *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and The Tuning of the World*. Schafer describes the soundscape (specifically the “soundmark”) as the distinct set of aural characteristics that exist in a given place (Schafer 1994, p 10). Juhani Pallasmaa provides some context for the importance of the soundscape in understanding place in *The Eyes of the Skin*: “We are not normally aware of the significance of hearing in spatial experience, although sound often provides the temporal continuum in which visual impressions are embedded” (Pallasmaa 2005, 49). These ideas are furthered through *Soundscape*, the journal of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology; Michelle Duffy and Gordon Waitt discuss the place-making potential of sounds. They talk about the intangible elements of auditory environments that lead to a universal understanding of place, and note the potential for using sound in mapping networks between inhabitants of a space and telling a story about the passage of time (Duffy and Waitt 2009, 20-24). This information becomes useful in the schematic design of the arts incubator as decisions are made about the placement of certain program elements in relation to one another to create an interior soundscape. The goal of the design is not to obscure the sounds being made within the building but instead to use them as a place-making tool. The user should know that they are in a music building and should be able to get a sense of the activity within the building, while at the same time the specific functions of the building should not be interrupted by unwanted noise. Just as the soundscape of a city gives clues about specific place, the soundscape of the building should help the users to orient themselves within the space.

Program

The first step in determining the program of the building is to examine the needs of the users, in this case the Toronto music community. Rather than focusing on one specific user group, the building will cater to a range of inhabitants. Music is a dynamic art form; the practice of it contains some elements that necessitate privacy and others that are wasted without an audience. The music-focused arts incubator will incorporate spaces for all aspects of the craft: from composition to recording and performance with varying levels of formality and accessibility.

Aside from performance spaces and recording facilities, the building will incorporate spaces for residency; three apartments accommodate visiting artists, each with a private studio and outdoor space. As well, space will be provided for a number of long-term arts-focused tenants. Potential users of these spaces include the Toronto Music Gallery, an organization dedicated to the creation and propagation of new and world music; a medical clinic catering to musicians; and a local music festival headquarters. Any of these organizations would benefit from a dedicated work space in an environment surrounded by the arts, and would help provide financial support for the building's programming. As well, these tenants would ensure dedicated usage of the building during times when performances are not taking place. Lastly, the building will provide dedicated rehearsal spaces for resident artists, tenants, and community members to practice their craft, work out new ideas, and collaborate with other musicians.



Program elements arranged according to public accessibility and formality.

Site

The thriving arts community and dense urban setting of Toronto make it an ideal choice as the setting for this thesis investigation. The specific location on Queen Street between Spadina Avenue and University Avenue takes advantage of a currently underutilized site in the heart of the entertainment district. Queen Street has long been a hub of the arts. Queen West is known for its artists lofts and galleries, while Queen East is home to Toronto's booming film industry. The entirety of the street is populated with music venues of all types, with the stretch between University and Spadina encapsulating both the most formal and the most casual (the Four Seasons Opera Hall and Horseshoe Tavern respectively). Also in the neighbourhood is Steve's Music, one of the city's largest music stores, as well as the MuchMusic television headquarters, which attracts performers from all over the world and hosts annual street-closing concert festivals.



Sidewalk at Queen Street and Soho Street.



Aerial photo of site at Queen St and Soho St with site highlighted - Toronto, ON (Bing 2013).

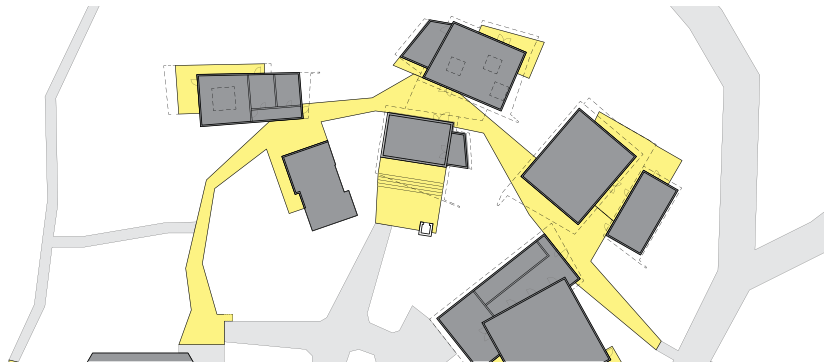
The site is located at Queen Street and Soho Street in what is currently a single-level paved parking lot. The surrounding buildings are generally two to four-level mixed-use structures with commercial enterprises at ground level and residential above. While many historical brick buildings remain, pockets up and down the street have been replaced by more modern storefronts. A good mix of bars, restaurants, retail locations and service providers surround the site, and the location is very accessible by public transit or bicycle. The sidewalk along Queen Street broadens directly in front of the site to a width of 10.5 metres, creating a boulevard-like atmosphere. Street trees rise to meet the extended awnings of local businesses, creating a covered and comfortable pedestrian avenue. This space is home to a vibrant and dedicated community of vendors and street performers who regularly turn the corner into an impromptu festival ground. Directly to the north of the site is a largely residential area with a mix of traditional two to three-level row houses and a series of mid-rise condominiums leading into the Grange Park and the Art Gallery of Ontario. To the south of the site is the city's entertainment district: a mixed-use area full of theatres, commercial ventures, government buildings, and an increasingly large amount of high-rise residential. Directly across the street from the site are a number of development applications for new high-rise buildings set atop podiums. The site sits on axis with Peter Street/Blue Jays Way, home of the Rogers Centre (formerly Skydome) and adjacent to the CN Tower. The view from the site is of the distinct Toronto skyline looking towards the lake to the south.



Skyline as seen from site.

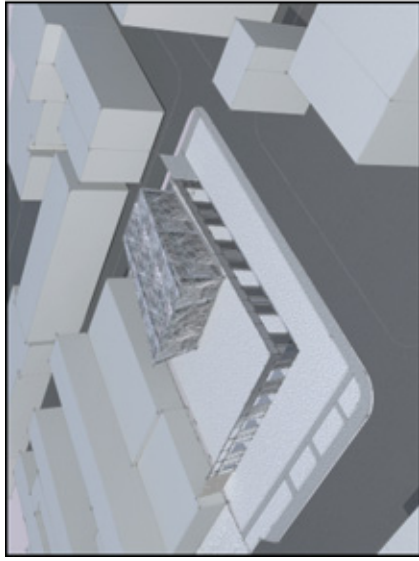
CHAPTER 2: DESIGN

The design of this building takes cues from its predecessors in the arts centre model, both urban and remote. The overarching strategy is based in function; each space is designed according to its specific needs, and is expressed explicitly. This leads to a series of distinct programmatic figures within the ground of the building form, which are defined by the void space surrounding and separating them. This void becomes a space for the public realm to inhabit and an object in its own right within the building, similar to the boardwalk space at the ACA.

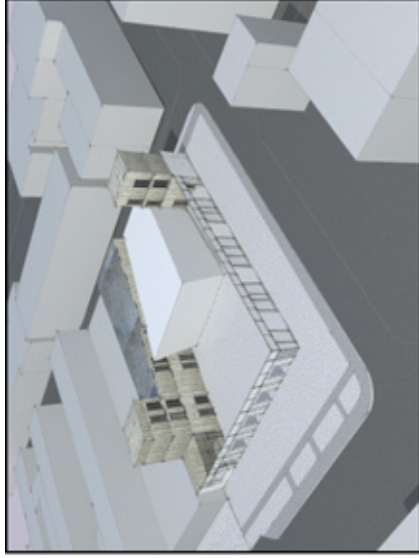


The boardwalk at ACA becomes a space for collaboration, interaction, and activity (plan from Charles Rose Architects 2013).

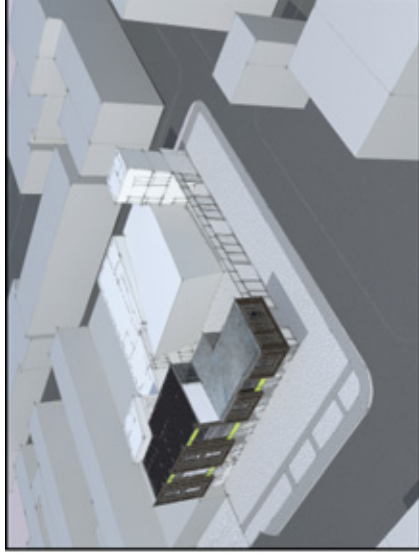
This connective tissue brings together disparate formal elements into a comprehensive whole, providing breakout space for building tenants and allowing glimpses behind the scenes for the uninitiated. A central staircase rises through the atrium, defined by the form of the performance hall and the openings in floors above. The prominent location of the stair frames a viewing area for performances below, with the broad landing providing a balcony. Stair landings are concrete, becoming literal extensions of the ground plane to the building's upper levels.



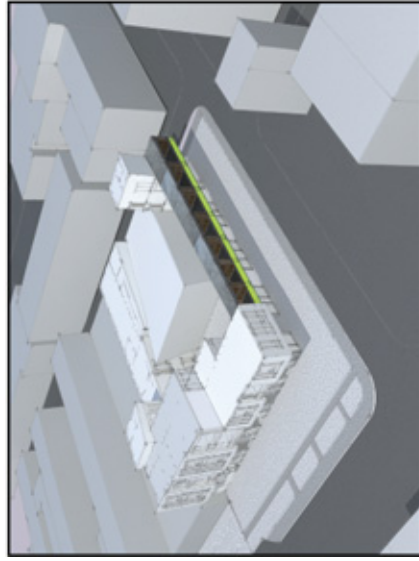
1. POROSITY / MONUMENT



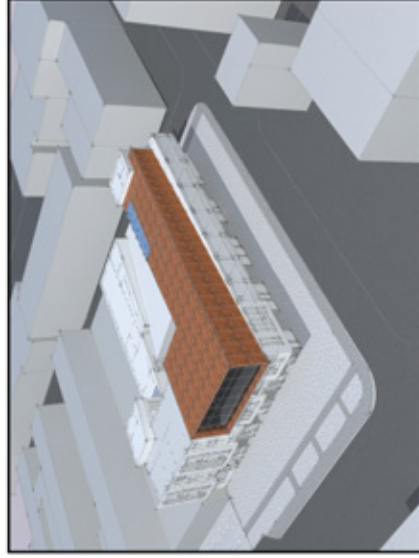
2. CIRCULATION / TECTONICS



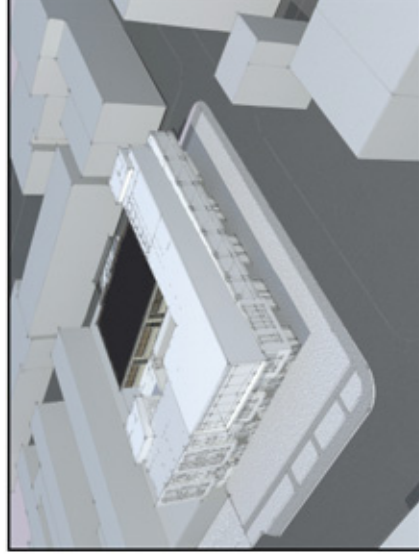
3. RHYTHM / OPERATIONS



4. AUTONOMY / REHEARSAL

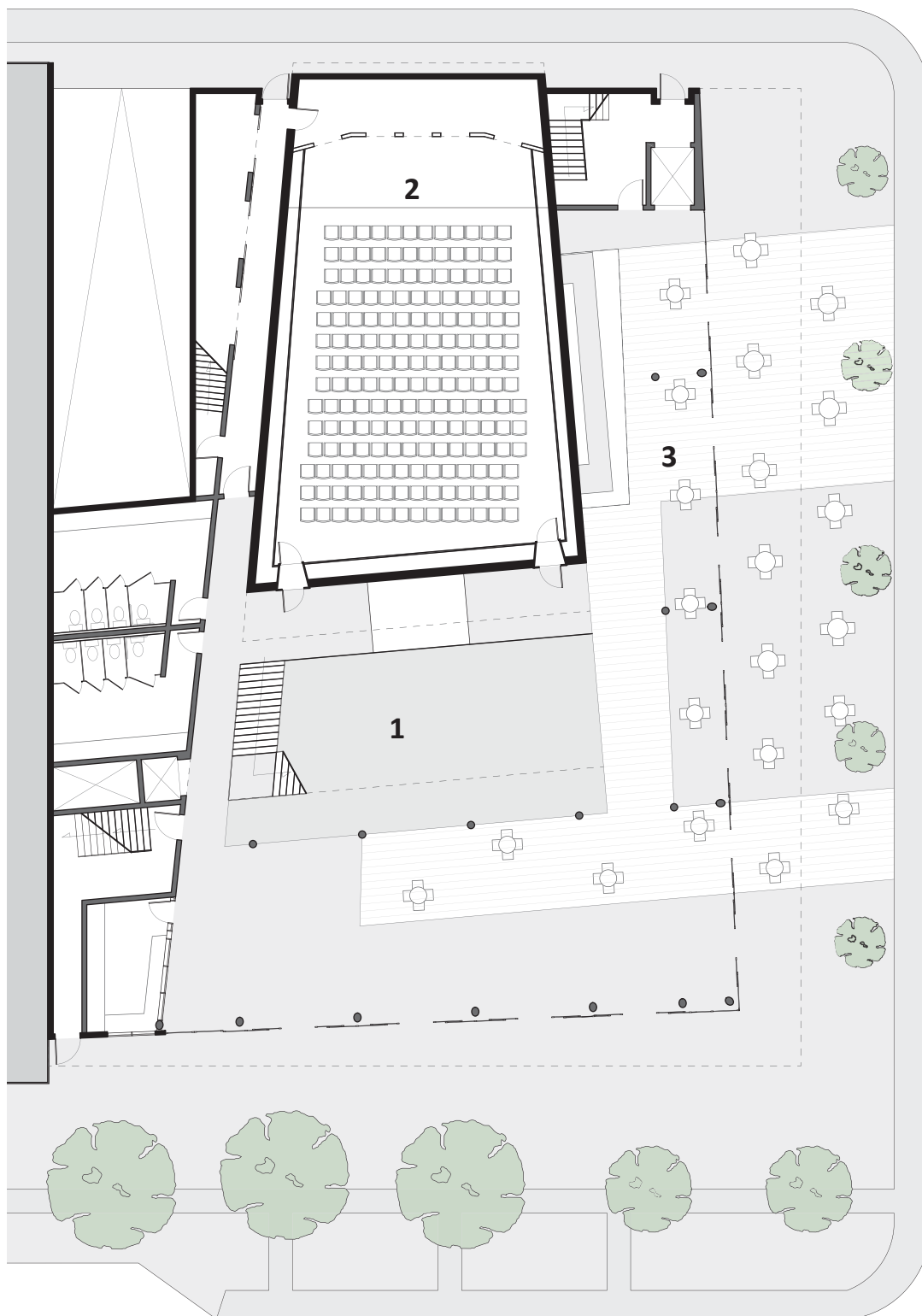


5. SPECTACLE / PRODUCTION



6. FOCUS / RETREAT

Process diagrams showing development and articulation of distinct programmatic forms.



- 1. Gallery
- 2. Performance Hall
- 3. Café

Queen Street



Soho Street

Ground floor plan.

PERFORMANCE

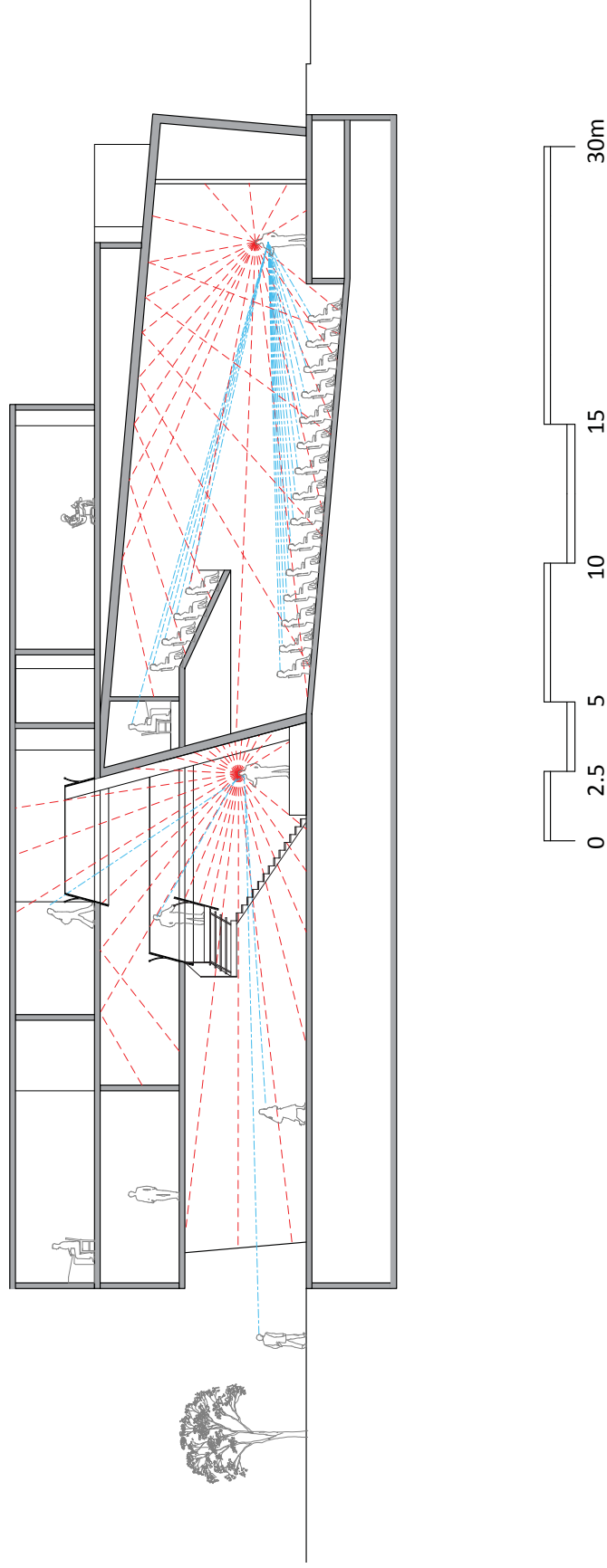
Public - Where the Street Ends

Music is (at least in part) a public art form. Whether it is created in isolation or collaboration, it is typically meant to be performed for an audience. Focusing on this aspect of the musical craft leads to the resolution that performance spaces within the arts incubator should be as open and inviting to the public as possible. To this end, performance spaces will be located at ground level, easily accessible to the public and visible to passers-by. Also to be considered is the formality of a given performance. For an example of this one must look no further than a block away from the site: the Horseshoe Tavern at Queen and Spadina is a concert venue famed for its grungy atmosphere and casual environment. At the other end of the spectrum is the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts at Queen and University, home to the Canadian Opera Company and a hot spot for high-class entertainment. It stands to reason, then, that the music-focused arts incubator should include spaces for performance both formal and informal.

The informal performance space provides an opportunity to connect directly to the building's surroundings; the sidewalk directly in front of the site widens to 10 metres, creating an impromptu stage for buskers and enhancing the creative atmosphere of the place. A high level of porosity in the ground floor of the arts incubator allows the creative energy of the street to flow inward and the activity within to spill out. The south and east walls of this space will be glazed with an operable panel system and set on an angle to the ground plane to create an unbroken visual connection. The rough

concrete surface of the sidewalk extends into the double-height ground floor, providing a sense of sameness between outside and inside and enhancing the connection to the street. Aside from hosting informal performances this space acts as a gallery for artistic installations, a marketplace for local vendors, and a gathering hall for community events. Taking a cue from the approach to the Daniels Spectrum building, the space will also host a small café along the building's east side at Soho Street, utilizing the glazed wall's porosity to spill out onto a streetside patio and drawing pedestrians further into and around the building. This space is demarcated by hardwood flooring that intersects with the rough concrete and extends onto the terrace in certain locations, enhancing the connection between inside and outside.

The formal performance space, while still accessible to the public, will require more enclosure than the informal space. This space is shaped by acoustic demands as well as the idea of spectacle that comes along with larger-scale performances; this space should be a monument to the activity within, standing out within the building and drawing people in from the street. The angled walls of the performance hall act to mitigate unwanted reverberation and to create a distinctive form within the arts incubator. The angle of the south face of the hall also acts to reinforce the performative qualities of the informal venue, providing a backdrop for early acoustic reflections into the gallery space. This is the building's major public attraction and should stand out as such; casual users should know immediately where the performance is going to happen and passers-by should be drawn in by the prospect of the spectacle within.

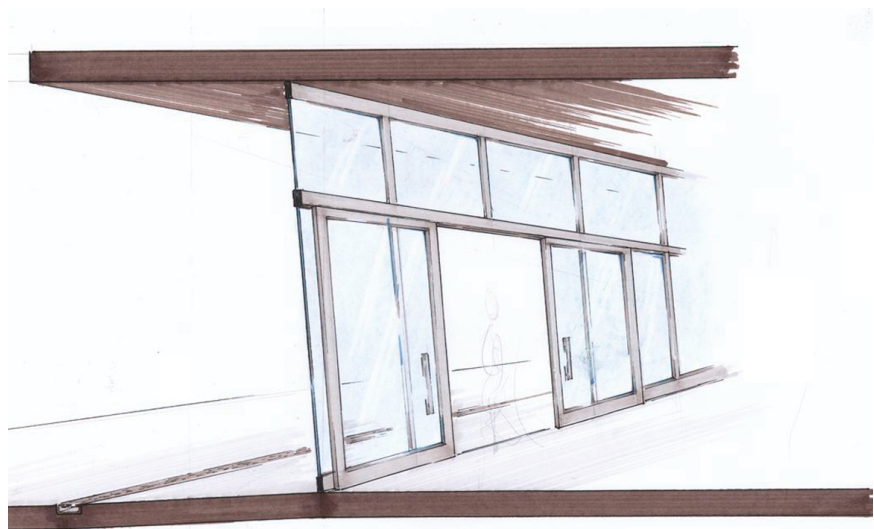


Building section showing acoustic reflections and sight lines. The angled form of the hall benefits acoustical considerations both inside and out. The staircase rising up through the atrium frames a viewing area and creates a balcony for performances below.

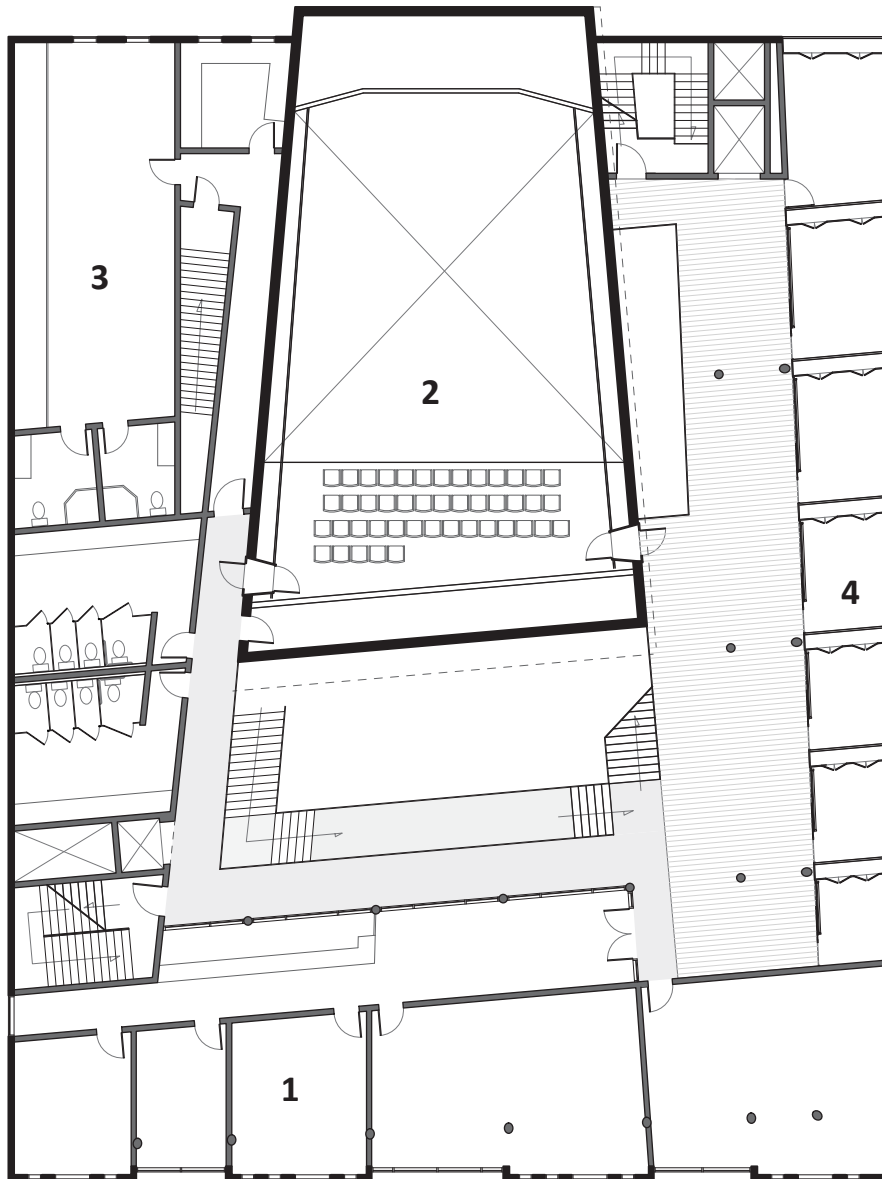


Abstracted rendering showing form and materials of ground plane and building elements.

Material choices for these spaces are driven mainly by technical requirements; basic decisions about detailing are based on RT60 calculations for each space. Starting with a base range for the open atrium space (based on concrete construction and amount of glazed surfaces), adjustments can be made to achieve the desired aural qualities. Stone cladding on the exterior of the performance hall gives the space a monumental character but creates a reflective atmosphere. Adding wooden detailing to the west wall brings the RT60 into a more reasonable range, and diffusive surface detailing helps to mitigate unwanted reflections. This acoustic-focused detailing also creates an aesthetic that ties into the building's purpose. The inside of the performance hall has a base RT60 that would render the space unusable but the addition of a wood wrapper around the back wall and ceiling of the hall brings it into a reasonable range. A series of adjustable panels (reflective on one side and absorptive on the other) allow the hall to be tuned to accommodate various types of performance and contribute to the unique aesthetic character of the space.



Detail of glazed wall with sliding panels.



- 1. Office
- 2. Performance Hall
- 3. Green Room
- 4. Practice Room



Second floor plan.

REHEARSAL

Semi-Public - Behind the Scenes

As with any creative art, performance is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the creative process. The public sees only a fraction of what the musician actually does, and as such this arts incubator will need to provide space for behind-the-scenes activities. These spaces need to be private enough to provide autonomy for users, but they also create an opportunity to engage the public and increase interest in and around the building. By offering a glimpse behind the scenes at the processes that go into creating a performance, this building allows the different tiers of user groups to interact and enhance each other's experience of the space. To this end, semi-private spaces for tenant organizations are placed on the second floor, elevated above the fully public realm but connected visually and aurally by an open atrium. This opening also adds to the monumentality of the performance hall by allowing the form to be seen more fully from the ground floor. Also on the second floor are the practice rooms for community members and building tenants, as well as access to the balcony within the performance hall. A second opening in the eastern side of the floor connects these spaces to the café below. These connections create a continuous soundscape within the building that is definitively of this specific place; people within will know that this is a building focused on music, and will be able to orient themselves accordingly.

The seven practice rooms sit along the east side of the building looking out over Soho Street and the café terrace below, and are walled with a curtain wall system. This gives pedestrians and diners the



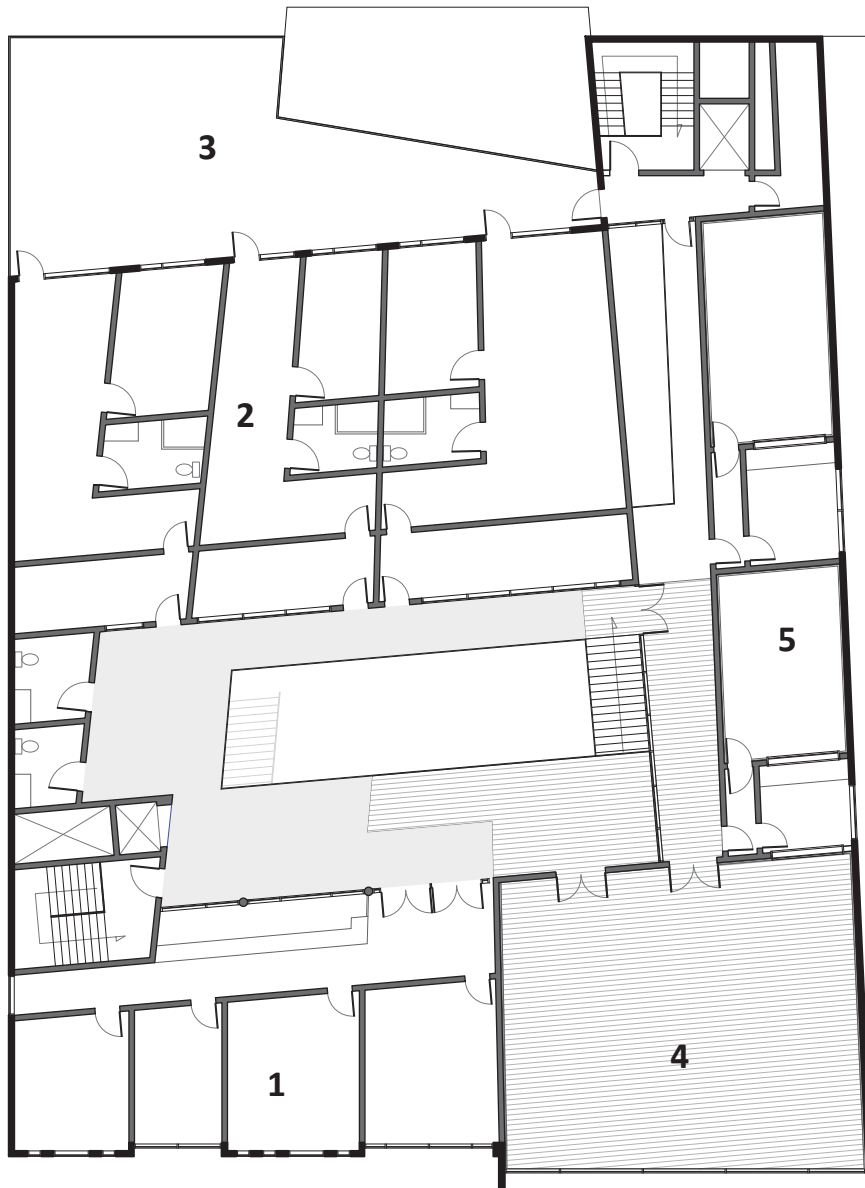
Detail of section model showing practice rooms in relation to terrace below and studio above.

opportunity to glimpse rehearsals without infringing on the privacy of those within and allows users to look out at the activity around them and draw inspiration from the city's energy. The inner wall of the practice rooms is glazed but incorporates a louvered screen system inside which shuts out most of the view for anyone outside and allows for the room's acoustic environment to be tuned. This angled surface is a continuation of the glazed wall on the ground floor, creating interior spaces that are trapezoidal in both plan and section. This means that each room is a different size, providing opportunities for different groups to utilize the spaces: some rooms are suited for no more than two people while others can fit seven or eight. The angled wall also serves to mitigate reverberation and acoustic reflections within the room to create an environment designed for making sounds. Millwork cabinets bolster acoustic isolation between practice rooms, create an absorptive surface to manage high RT60, and serve as instrument and equipment storage.

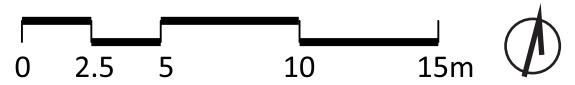
Offices take up the southern section of the second level, providing spaces for long-term arts-focused organizations that are private enough for autonomy but close enough to feel connected to the surrounding urban fabric. These spaces are for behind-the-scenes support work rather than performance or rehearsal, and as such the acoustic requirements are less severe than elsewhere in the building. The form of the spaces is meant to blend in both within the building and from the street. Design moves within these spaces are derived from the scale of nearby buildings along Queen Street and reflected in plan and elevation. Offices are separated from the public atrium space by a reception area and designed for flexibility in use as the tenant organizations change or grow over time.



Detail of Queen Street elevation showing street character and materiality.



1. Office
2. Residence
3. Terrace
4. Writing Room
5. Recording Studio



Third floor plan.

PRODUCTION

Semi-Private - Broad Horizons

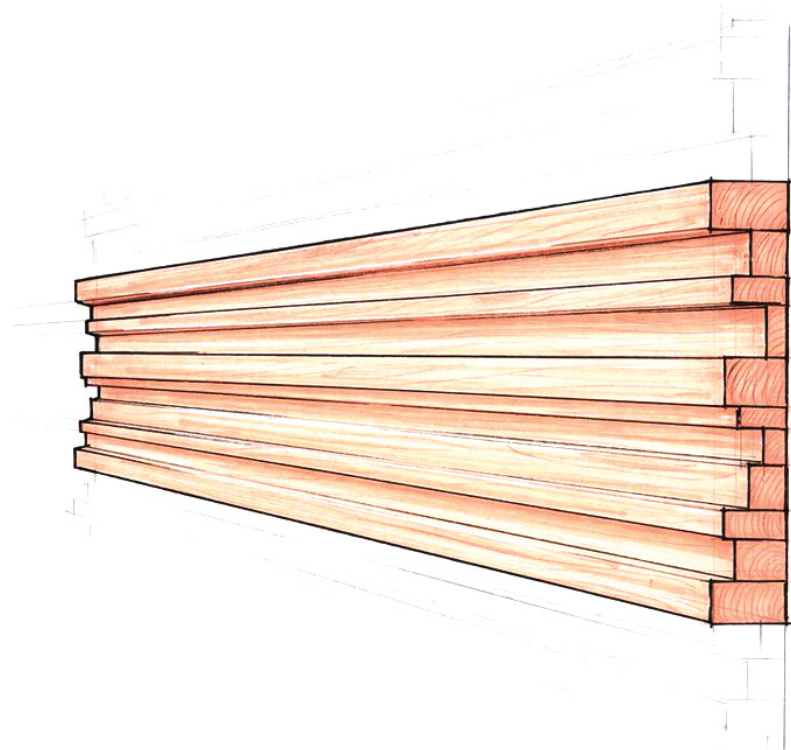
Performance is the method by which music engages the public directly, requiring an audience to be there in person. As such it is fitting that performance spaces sit on the ground floor. However, in-person performances are hardly the only way people appreciate music; recordings allow music to accompany listeners anywhere they can go. To reflect this, the arts incubator's recording space should have broader horizons than the rest of the building. Placing this space on the east side of the third floor allows for the required separation from the public realm and takes advantage of the building's axis with Peter Street to the south to capture a panoramic view of the city's skyline towards the lake. This view is the key feature of the large rehearsal and writing room within the studio, allowing artists to appreciate the scope of the urban environment and take inspiration from the sublime view of the cityscape. This space doubles as a small-scale performance venue accessible by ascending the spiraling staircase through the atrium. Material detailing within the room exaggerates the view; a series of wooden quadratic diffusers mounted horizontally on the walls create an appropriate acoustic atmosphere and direct attention towards the cityscape. This is a literal platform for taking in all that the urban environment has to offer and reflecting it back in the work created in the space.

Along the east side of the third level are the actual recording spaces, built as acoustically isolated boxes within the larger box of the building. Glazing in these spaces is minimal, and acoustic concerns take precedence in form and detail. In the southwest corner



Skyline view from writing room with acoustic detailing focusing the viewer's attention.

are office spaces attached to the studio: rooms for producers, directors, technicians and engineers as well as client meetings and back-of-house requirements. A wedge-shaped roof rising towards the south caps the entirety of the recording studio. This serves two purposes: one acoustic and one aesthetic. Acoustically, it creates a disparity in ceiling height within each studio space, allowing for a slightly different sound environment in each and enabling the inclusion of bass traps within the ceiling space to mitigate unwanted low-frequency resonance. Aesthetically, this creates a distinct form that differentiates the studio from the rest of the building and the surrounding city. This studio is an object in its own right and is able to be recognized as such. The panoramic window on the south side is cantilevered slightly over the sidewalk, acting as a beacon to people below.



Acoustic design elements, such as this quadratic diffuser panel, define the aesthetic quality of the building and assist in identifying it as an arts-focused facility.



View of the building with writing room as beacon of activity.

COMPOSITION

Private - The City Sublime

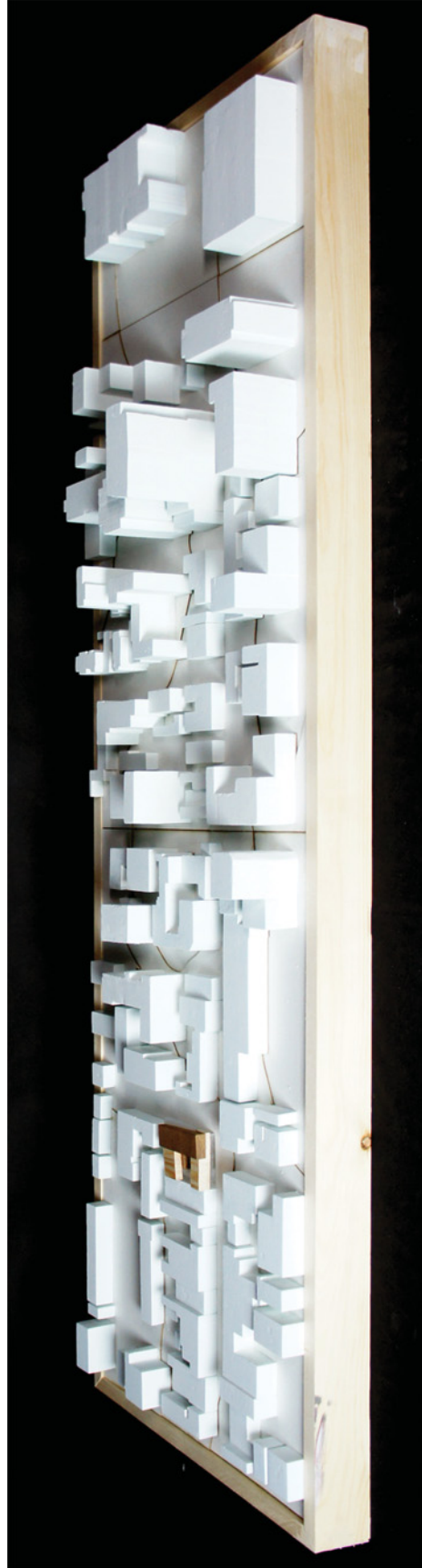
The most private portion of this arts incubator is the space reserved for visiting artists in residence. Sitting on the north side of the third level, away from the eyes of the public, these three residences provide visiting artists with a space to retreat from their own daily routines and focus on a specific project or program. Private studios give residents a dedicated workspace and act as a threshold between residences and the open atrium. Acoustic considerations in the residences are less thorough than elsewhere in the building, but isolation between units is ensured by use of staggered stud wall construction. Wood finishes and detailing inside the spaces give them a humane character and relate to the functional acoustic detailing found throughout the rest of the building. A rooftop terrace on the north side of the building creates a contemplative space where residents can reflect on the ambient energy of the city surrounding them; though not visually connected to the activity of Queen Street, the local soundscape envelops anyone in the area, rooting the building firmly in its place in downtown Toronto.



View of studio space as threshold between public and private areas.



Exterior view from Queen Street showing building form and street character.



Site model showing location of building and surroundings.



Long section model.



Short section model.



Detail of long section model showing building entry, office spaces and atrium with casual performance space.



Detail of long section model showing formal performance hall, residence, and terrace.



Detail of short section model showing cafe and terrace at ground level and practice rooms above.

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to explore architectural solutions to the problem of lacking support for artists. Beginning with an examination of existing architectural examples of arts-oriented design, the thesis identifies strengths and weaknesses of existing models and takes lessons from both. Elements of *retreat* and *revitalization* come together in the urban arts incubator, leading to the design of a facility focused on fostering artistic growth within the artist's own community. This building is truly a platform for artists to interpret and reflect their urban surroundings.

The design process is derived from an examination of the building's program and function. A focus on music allows for the exploration of the unique architectural requirements of the artistic craft; the thesis examines different parts of the musical process and proposes a design that enhances both the craft and the surrounding environment. By designing each element in terms of its relationship to the city as well as its potential for enabling the arts, this thesis creates a set of distinct programmatic figures that identify it as an arts-focused facility. The resulting design is robust in its attention to fostering artistic development and engages with the city at all scales. By enhancing the capability of artists, the cultural standing of the community is raised; this building is a resource for both the local arts community and the city of Toronto, acting as a beacon of artistic creativity within the urban environment.

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