



ROOM TO GROW

LENFEST HALL UNITES THE BELOVED TRADITIONS OF CURTIS WITH THE EXCITING POSSIBILITIES OF THE FUTURE. HERE'S A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE.

Students returning this fall have found “a Curtis that is exactly what they left last spring,” says President Roberto Díaz, “and at the same time completely unexpected and with a new dimension.”

The new dimension is Lenfest Hall—the school’s first major expansion in more than twenty years, doubling the size of its historic campus. Designed by Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Lenfest Hall carries Curtis’s rich musical heritage forward in a modern environment. Key features include a soaring orchestra rehearsal space; residences for nearly half the student body; dining facilities; 32 additional studios for teaching, practice, and classes; and up-to-the-minute technology throughout.

That’s some new dimension. So what’s the same? The size of the student body, for one thing—166 students. Curtis’s beloved historic buildings remain in full use—though perhaps

suffering a bit less wear and tear than in past years. And the school’s mission is unchanged. In fact “it was the time-honored aim to educate and train exceptional young musicians for performing careers at the highest professional level that inspired Lenfest Hall,” says Executive Vice President Elizabeth Warshawer, who has overseen the project from its inception in 2007 to its opening this fall.

“This is a transformational step for Curtis,” notes Curtis Board Chairman H. F. “Gerry” Lenfest. He and his wife, Curtis Overseer Marguerite Lenfest, provided substantial funding for the building project, whose final cost will exceed \$61 million. “The finest young musicians in the world come to study here, and now they have a state-of-the-art facility.”

On these pages, take a tour—and learn about Lenfest Hall from the inside. ♦



PHOTO: TOM CRANE

THE FUTURE OF TRADITION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ANCHORS THE INNOVATIVE DESIGN OF LENFEST HALL.

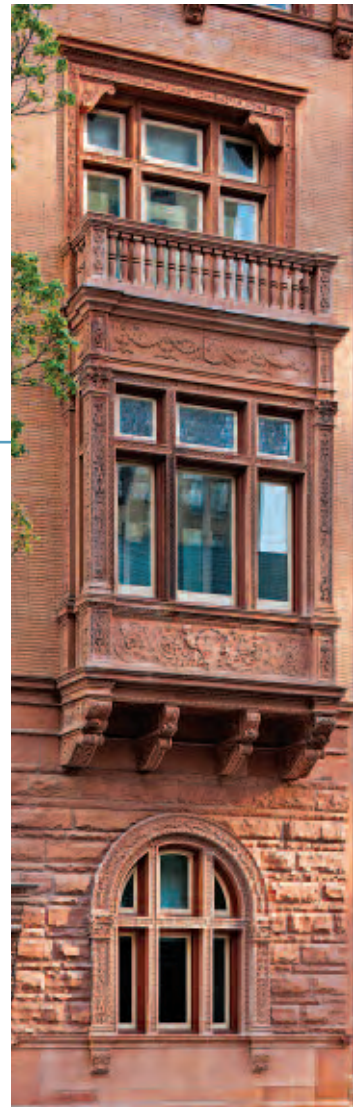
How does a modern architectural landmark live with 19th-century neighbors? In perfect harmony.

Lenfest Hall's design honors the streetscape of a venerable historic block. Carefully chosen materials and proportions help the new building fit seamlessly into a row of Victorian brownstones along Locust Street.

The design incorporates two significant historic façades, lovingly restored by VSBA and Noble Preservation with funding from the William B. Dietrich Foundation. At Lenfest Hall's eastern end, an arched window framed with elaborate sandstone carving recreates details destroyed in the 1930s. At the western end is a graceful curved bay, rescued from sad deterioration. These elegant bookends link Lenfest Hall to Curtis's own beloved historic buildings in the next block, and with the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood as a whole.

Decorative tracings of leaded glass in each façade are incorporated in the internal design. Looking outward, expansive windows onto Locust Street from every level provide unique perspectives on an architecturally distinguished neighbor: the Victorian Gothic St. Mark's Church, with its lush garden.

This deft balance of history and modernity lends to Lenfest Hall the "background of quiet culture" that founder Mary Louise Curtis Bok originally envisioned for her young charges back in 1924—yet one more way that the forward-looking Lenfest Hall builds on the foundation of Curtis traditions. ♦



Elaborate restored sandstone carving around the recreated 19th-century window on Lenfest Hall's eastern historic facade PHOTO: TOM CRANE

More Online

Discover Lenfest Hall at

www.curtis.edu/LenfestHall



Gould Rehearsal Hall is expansive and bathed in natural light, with an unmatched view of historic St. Mark's Church through double-paned windows.
PHOTO: TOM CRANE

SPACE TO PLAY

A NEW REHEARSAL HALL UNLEASHES THE EXPANSIVE ARTISTRY OF THE CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

"A new rehearsal facility for the orchestra is something Curtis has talked about for decades," says Curtis President Roberto Diaz. "Gould Rehearsal Hall is our response to those conversations." And an eloquent one it is.

Measuring 3,200 square feet and three stories high, Miriam and Robert Gould Rehearsal Hall nearly triples the orchestra's previous rehearsal space. It's "a much more comfortable experience for everyone," says violin student Rebecca Anderson. "It used to get kind of cramped in the string sections and you'd be poking your stand partner with your bow. Acoustically, too, it's so much better for playing repertoire for a really big orchestra." Conducting student Vinay Parameswaran notes that players and conductors "finally have the space to be at ease. The more flexibility and physical freedom you have, the more capacity there is for musical expression. That's when the real learning, artistry, and fun occur."

Beautiful surroundings don't hurt. A wall of windows washes the room with natural light. Cherry paneling, inspired by the patina of Mr. Diaz's Amati viola, lines the walls. Suspended acoustical clouds assure the finest sound quality, and massive draperies can be adjusted to suit varied ensembles and repertoire.

Then there's the convenience. The orchestra library is nearby. Storage for chairs, stands, and a nine-foot Steinway concert grand piano is next door. Adjoining the hall are teaching studios for the orchestra's largest instruments (funded by Baroness Nina von Maltzahn, Carole H. and Emilio A. Gravagno, and the Allerton Foundation), allowing harpists, double bassists, and percussionists to wheel their instruments right in for rehearsals. The Susan and Frank Mechura Audio Recording Studio looks down onto the hall from the third floor, providing the control center for sophisticated microphones and high-definition cameras, as well as playback systems.

Now "soloists are able to hear how their solos are sounding from the hall, section leaders are able to review the work of their sections, and conductors are able to hear their entire rehearsal from the vantage point of the listener," says David Ludwig, Gie and Lisa Liem artistic chair of performance studies and a member of the composition faculty. "And for composers working with the orchestra, being able to listen to recordings between sessions is a golden one.

"It's a whole new world for the orchestra." ♦



LIVING SOCIAL

GATHERING SPACES IN LENFEST HALL REINFORCE CURTIS'S TRADITIONAL SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

Now that the Curtis campus has expanded, Lenfest Hall is a natural social hub—by design. Its architects and planners specifically aimed to build on Curtis's characteristic sense of community.

Like the Graffman Common Room in Curtis's main building, the entire first floor of Lenfest Hall encourages students to congregate. Inside the main entrance, the Nina and Billy Albert Lounge offers expansive windows, comfortable soft seating, and convenient computer stations to check schedules and room assignments. The Bruce J. Gould, M.D. Commons connects the Locust and Latimer Street entrances, running alongside the bustling Gould Dining Hall. This welcoming dining room serves as a meeting place for the whole Curtis community while solving a perennial problem for overscheduled students: when, where, and what to eat. Convenient, nutritious, and high-quality snacks and meals are now available to eat in or carry out, with an emphasis on local and sustainable sources (such as Lenfest Hall's own vegetable garden; see page 15).

The Jill and Sheldon Bonovitz Concourse on the second floor welcomes students at orchestra rehearsal breaks and throughout the day with built-in benches and impressive views: to the north, historic St. Mark's Church; and to the south, the character-filled clubs and rowhomes of Latimer Street. Just off the concourse, the Bernice Gordon Computer Lab is open around the clock.

Up on the fifth floor, students are enjoying the Ladislaus Medveckis Media and Entertainment Room and the garden terrace (see page 15) overlooking Locust Street.

Dean John Mangan believes that Lenfest Hall's emphasis on gathering spaces reflects the "family" feeling of Curtis—"a place where everyone knows one another, where community really means something, where artistry is nourished, and where music transforms the moment." ♦

Ruoyu Huang and Rebecca Anderson enjoy a break on the second-floor Bonovitz Concourse. PHOTO: MATT WARGO

Right: Daniel Hanul Lee and Hannah Ji on the fifth-floor terrace of Lenfest Hall. Below, Rebecca Anderson finds a moment of solitude in the garden.
PHOTO: MATT WARGO



PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

FINDING A PRACTICE ROOM USED TO BE A DAILY CHALLENGE AT CURTIS. STUDENTS, SEARCH NO MORE.

“It’s a musician’s dream,” says oboe student Alexandra von der Embse. “Round-the-clock practice rooms!”

Lenfest Hall boasts 32 new studios for lessons, classes, chamber music rehearsal, and practice. After hours, they’re still open. In fact, resident students like Alexandra have 24/7 access. Nothing could please an over-scheduled Curtis musician more.

“This solves the biggest problem for a music student living in the city,” says Alexandra, who struggled to achieve a practice schedule acceptable to neighbors in her apartment building last year. Now she practices at all hours in soundproof studios. Percussionist Mari Yoshinaga echoes Alexandra’s enthusiasm. “It’s great to wake up, eat, and practice all in one place. I can divide my practice time in a smarter way.”

All teaching studios are equipped with audio and video recording and playback, so students can assess their performances (or the phrase they just played) with their teachers. And there are dedicated studios for large instruments—percussion, double bass, harp—conveniently located on the same level as Gould Rehearsal Hall.

The percussionists are especially grateful to break out of their cramped basement studios. Now they’ve spread their wings in two spacious rooms holding a panoply of percussion instruments both standard and exotic. In the Allerton Foundation Percussion Studios, “for the first time we feel like we can set up the instruments in the most efficient way for each piece we rehearse,” enthuses Michael Sparhuber. “This opens up a lot of repertoire for multiple players that we couldn’t explore before.” And, adds Mari, “we have windows!” ♦





GREEN IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

A GARDEN TERRACE OVERLOOKING LOCUST STREET EMBODIES THE SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION VALUES OF LENFEST HALL.

In a green retreat five floors above Locust Street, students are enjoying a four-season rooftop garden designed by famed landscape architect Jon Carloftis. Here they take practice breaks, access free wifi, and hang out—all with a lofty view of the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood around them.

Experts from Longwood Gardens, the horticultural showplace outside Philadelphia, consulted on soil composition to ensure the optimal planting environment. Then Mr. Carloftis went to work. In the terrace's raised border and in custom-designed planters, he combined indigenous shrubs, grasses, and flowering perennials—plus a selection of herbs and vegetables to be harvested for meals served in Gould Dining Hall.

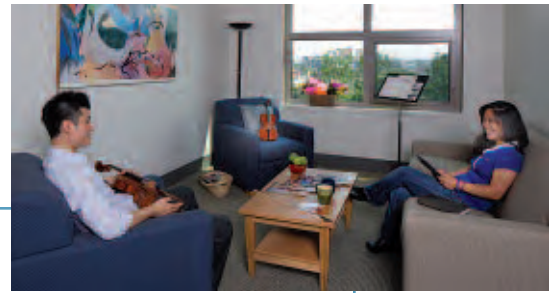
Movable planters, made of reclaimed Kentucky barn wood, frame benched seating areas but can migrate to the terrace perimeter for special events. Next to the raised garden is a green roof where sedum plantings and a piping system reduce energy use and mitigate storm-water runoff. Thanks to these and other “green” features throughout the building, Curtis is seeking LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification at the gold level for Lenfest Hall through the U.S. Green Building Council. ♦



Michael Sparhuber and Mari Yoshinaga have room to stretch out in the new Allerton Foundation Percussion Studios. PHOTO: MATT WARGO

THE SUITE LIFE

EIGHTY STUDENTS INAUGURATE
CURTIS'S FIRST-EVER RESIDENCE HALL.



Student resident assistants Daniel Hanul Lee and Hannah Ji
PHOTO: MATT WARGO

This fall 26 entering students achieved what no Curtis student before them had ever done before. These new arrivals neatly sidestepped a pressure-filled ritual endured by all their predecessors—finding an apartment in a new city while quickly adapting to conservatory life. Instead, they moved directly into safe, affordable, soundproof, and furnished new homes—here in Lenfest Hall.

The residential tower houses nearly half the student body, and a broad mix of students reflecting the overall Curtis student body. Each suite includes four single and double bedrooms, with a common lounge area and two baths. Residents can use a kitchen and laundry on the fifth floor, where a new assistant dean, Michelle Mack, presides over student residential life.

Under Ms. Mack's direction, five student resident assistants ("RAs") serve as a resource to their fellow residents. Oboist Alexandra von der Embse is one of them. Now in her third year at Curtis, this newly minted RA says she was initially skeptical about living in a residence hall. Soon, though, she embraced the idea of the suite life: "How could I turn down the opportunity to live in a brand-new building that offers so many things Curtis students need?" ◊

Mari Yoshinaga is one of Lenfest Hall's inaugural residents.
PHOTO: MATT WARGO

