



Mead Witter School of Music's Hamel Music Center opening this fall

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The first music performance in the under-construction Hamel Music Center came in April, when several UW ensembles entertained about 50 construction workers. Lunch was served from Ian's pizza. PHOTO BY BRIAN HELLER

Note to media: A following release will announce the opportunity for “first-look” media tours in September.

On a Friday afternoon in April, four UW–Madison students performed Ravel for an audience in neon t-shirts and hard hats lunching on take-out pizza. The 50 or so construction workers from JP Cullen and Strang Architects were the first to experience music in the Hamel Music Center, the Mead Witter School of Music (<https://www.music.wisc.edu/faculty/eric-siereveld/>)’s new performance venue.

Soon, with opening celebrations (<https://www.music.wisc.edu/event/hamel-music-center-opening-weekend/all/>) planned for the weekend of October 25-27, 2019, many more audiences will experience the center’s state-of-the-art acoustics and inspired setting.

Tucked into the corner of Lake Street and University Avenue, the Hamel Music Center features cutting-edge acoustic technology designed to prepare students to perform at the highest of professional standards. As a “learning lab,” it also provides students with a recording studio and access to lighting technology to gain valuable production experience.

For the first time in the School’s history, its large ensembles — including the Varsity Band, Concert Band, and Symphony Orchestra — will have their own practice and performance space large enough to safely accommodate their outsized sound.

As one of Wisconsin’s premier music performance venues, the Hamel Music Center has also been designed to better connect communities in Wisconsin

and beyond with the Mead Witter School of Music’s compelling performances — whether it’s in person or online through digital streaming technology.

“We like to say we’re ‘the Wisconsin Idea at its most audible,’” says Susan C. Cook (<https://www.music.wisc.edu/faculty/susan-c-cook/>), the Mead Witter School of Music’s Pamela O. Hamel/Board of Advisors Director.

State-of-the-art acoustics

Neighboring the Chazen Museum of Art, the Hamel Music Center welcomes visitors into the bustling East Campus Mall area just outside its windows. Delivering an exceptional musical experience *inside* those windows, however, required innovative design solutions and acoustical treatments to achieve sound isolation from one of campus’s busiest—and noisiest—intersections.

With expertise from acoustician (and Badger dad) Richard Talaske, architect Malcolm Holzman of the New York-based firm Holzman Moss Bottino Architecture (<https://www.holzmanmossbottino.com/>) in partnership with Madison’s Strang, Inc (<https://strang-inc.com/>). designed everything from the pre-cast concrete exterior walls to back-of-the-house HVAC systems with this goal in mind. The result is a calm, clear, adjustable soundscape in each of the building’s three performance halls.

Those spaces (<https://hmc.music.wisc.edu/about/>) include the 660-seat Mead Witter Foundation Concert Hall, the 300-seat Collins Recital Hall, and the Sing Man & Florence Lee/Annette Kaufman Rehearsal Hall. The two-story glassed-in lobby, including the Lau & Bea Christensen Upper Lobby, will provide a welcoming gesture to passersby, accommodate pre-and post-concert



The Solana String Quartet that performed consists of Anna Luebke, Maynie Bradley, Rachel Riese and Hannah Kasun. PHOTO BY BRIAN HELLER

receptions and promote regular interaction among students and faculty. (Music instruction will continue to take place in the Mosse Humanities Building, the School's administrative home, and in historic Music Hall.)

Built by—and for—Wisconsin

The Hamel Music Center at 740 University Avenue in Madison is the first academic building on campus to be built entirely with private funds. “We have been overwhelmed with the support and generosity of our donors (<https://hmc.music.wisc.edu/media/major-donors/>) —from around the corner and around the world,” Cook says.

Yet while no state dollars went into the project, Cook is quick to point out the dozens of Wisconsin businesses (<https://hmc.music.wisc.edu/media/wisconsin-built/>) that contributed to the meticulous craftsmanship and uncompromising acoustic demands of the facility. “It goes to show, when you invest in UW–Madison, you invest in the State of Wisconsin.”

Opening celebrations will take place the weekend of October 25-27, 2019. Events include a ribbon cutting, welcoming remarks from Chancellor Blank, open house receptions, and three days of performances showcasing the Mead Witter School of Music's undergraduate and graduate students, current and retired faculty, and alumni (<http://uwsomaa.org/>). As a gift to the community, admission to the opening weekend's public concerts will be free but tickets will be required. Ticket availability and program details will be announced in September: <https://www.music.wisc.edu/event/hamel-music-center-opening-weekend/all/> (<https://www.music.wisc.edu/event/hamel-music-center-opening-weekend/all/>)
