

The Theatre School at DePaul University
Chicago, IL
165,000 square feet/15,000 square meters

- The new home for The Theatre School serves as the western gateway to DePaul University's Lincoln Park campus and was conceived by the world-renowned architectural firm of Pelli Clarke Pelli, designers of the World Financial Center in New York and the Petronas Towers in Malaysia. The famed Cesar Pelli was integral in the initial stages of the design process for this facility.
- The design emphasizes openness and transparency, allowing the surrounding community to see both the theatrical and educational process firsthand.
- Openness and inclusiveness were also key elements of the design process, where faculty and staff took part and helped to shape the facility inside and out.
- Floor-to-ceiling glass on the ground floor places the scene shop and paint shop on display for the neighborhood. The scene and paint shop spaces are twice as large as the former shops, at 7,550 square feet.
- The building attained LEED Gold certification. Strategies to reduce energy consumption include frit glass throughout the building; day lighting for offices, design studios, and classrooms; and a green roof.
- The facility boasts the Fullerton Stage, a 250-seat thrust theatre, as well as the Sondra & Denis Healy Theatre, a 100-seat flexible theatre on the 4th floor. Audience members coming to the Healy Theatre will pass classrooms and rehearsal rooms in action, further minimizing distinctions between performance, process, and training workspaces.
 - o The Fullerton Stage houses a complete rigging and automation system featuring moveable spot hoists, motorized linesets, and current scenic technologies and automation controls.
 - o The Healy Theatre accommodates eight seating configurations, allowing for flexibility and creativity among directors, actors, designers, and technicians alike. A distinguishing feature is the completely transparent north wall overlooking Fullerton Avenue that can be light-filled or blacked out as needed.
 - o Two new theatres in this facility provide numerous opportunities to engage the DePaul Lincoln Park campus and its surrounding community in new and exciting ways.
- To engage pedestrians, facades are composed of a rhythm of vertical bands of glass and limestone that vary in width. Limestone was chosen to connect this building with other iconographic buildings on campus also constructed with limestone, such as the St. Vincent DePaul Church. The building mass is stepped back at both Fullerton and Racine to make the building appear smaller in scale.

- The school entrance opens into a lobby, lounge, and box office. The lobby serves as the 'living room' of the building, where theatre patrons, faculty, staff, and students congregate.
- A 'great staircase' painted in bright yellow provides a connection to all five floors of the building, and can be seen from the outside, providing visual interest and a fun alternative to elevator use.
- Throughout the building wide corridors, open lounges, and rooftop courtyards encourage interaction between students and faculty, and among theatregoers.
- Ten acting laboratories are also configured as performance spaces, and are enhanced with sound and lighting capabilities. Two of these labs are comparable to black box theatres. The new building also boasts two full green rooms and 14 dedicated dressing rooms.
- The building features three rehearsal spaces that are built to accommodate each of the three theatres, including DePaul's historic Merle Reskin Theatre in the South Loop, and the two new theatres, the Fullerton Stage and the Sondra & Denis Healy Theatre. The Merle Reskin Theatre continues to house our Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences Series, which welcomes over 30,000 audience members each year.
- The new script library contains 400 linear feet of shelving and offers a view of Racine Avenue from the fourth floor.
- The facility contains a centrally located large-scale freight elevator that can also transport up to fifty audience members at a time to the Healy Theatre on the fourth floor.
- The building fully supports the design and technical programs of the school and includes a CAD lab, design studio, scene and paint shop, rendering studio, light lab, sound lab, and full drafting lab. Design studios are located at the top of the building and offer stunning views of downtown Chicago.
- A double leaf hydraulic "drawbridge" connects the west and east sides of the second floor, allowing scenery to be transported from the paint shop to the Fullerton Stage without disassembly.
- The new home for The Theatre School is part of DePaul University's Fullerton Arts Corridor which includes the DePaul Art Museum, classes and studios for Visual Arts, and facilities and performance spaces for the School of Music.

Architect: Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects / Cannon Design

Theatre Planning Consultant: Schuler Shook - Robert Shook, ASTC; Joshua Grossman, ASTC; Lisa Bernacchi

Acoustics Consultant: Kirkegaard Associates; Joseph Myers, Principal Acoustics Consultant; Brian Corry,

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