

## St. Petersburg's New Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall

By Dr. Yasuhisa Toyota

Readers may recall my February, 2005 article about Nagata Acoustics design of the acoustics for the new Mariinsky Theatre Opera House in St. Petersburg, Russia. (In some countries outside Russia, the Mariinsky Theatre is still often known by its former name of Kirov Opera.) The new

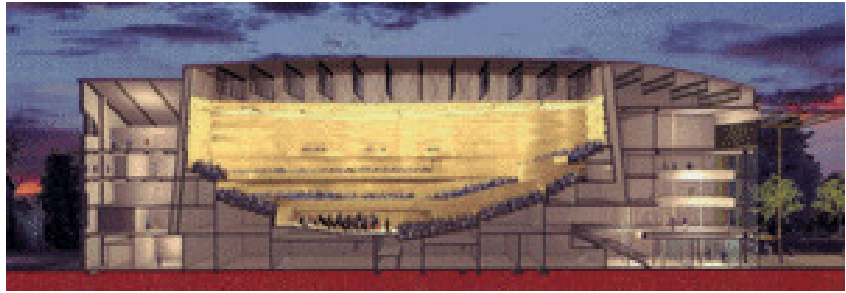


Figure 1: Section of Mariinsky 3

opera house project continues to make good progress and a companion concert hall project will now also be built on a nearby site. Observers and participants in the projects refer to the new opera house as Mariinsky 2 and the new concert hall as Mariinsky 3 to distinguish them from the existing Mariinsky Theatre Opera House building.

### A New Concert Hall from a Warehouse's Ashes

In September 2003, the Mariinsky Theatre's warehouse building for stage sets and costumes, located a few city blocks from the current theatre, suffered a devastating fire that resulted in big loss of the opera company's sets and costumes. Initially, the opera company's sudden loss of its sets, props and costumes created a performance obstacle requiring great effort, creativity and a flurry of activity in order to overcome and ensure that the opera company's foreign engagements and home performances could be staged as scheduled.

Artistic Director Valery Gergiev quickly found a way to give a silver lining to this tragedy by proposing that the land where the warehouse building had stood be used as the site for construction of a new concert hall. The outer structure of the building warehouse was fortunately remained and this was planned to be used as a part of the new hall's building. Fortunately, the size and shape of the warehouse site is well-suited for a medium-size, shoebox configuration concert hall. Artistic Director Gergiev wasted no time in approaching the governor about his proposal and requesting funding for this new project. The governor accepted Mr. Gergiev's proposal.

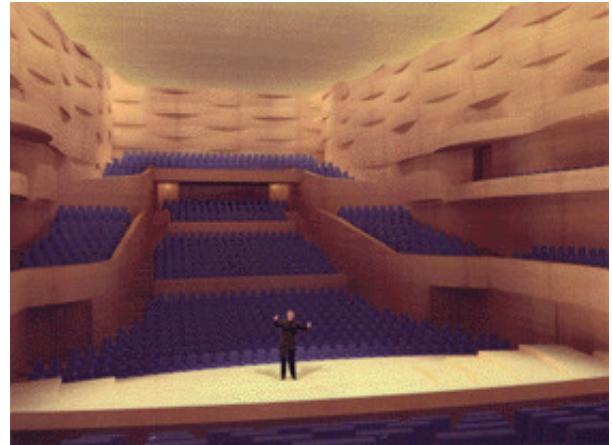
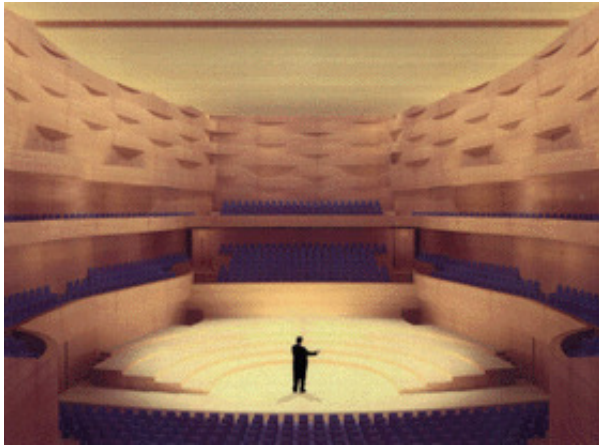
### Innovative Design Elements Enhance a Shoebox Configuration

While we based the Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall room acoustical design on a traditional shoebox configuration, we deviated from a traditional shoebox design by adding audience seating around the stage and a noticeable slope to the audience seating area of the hall's main floor. Thus, compared with the historical famous shoebox-shape concert halls such as Vienna, Boston etc., the Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall's shoebox will have some unique design elements.

### Project Participants and Fast-tracked Schedule

The Parisian firm of Fabre, Speller, Pumain is the architect for the Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall. Nagata Acoustics is the acoustical consultant for this project, in addition to serving in this capacity on the new Mariinsky Theatre Opera House project. At present, the design is nearly complete and the next phase of construction will overlap the production of construction documents and shop drawings with actual construction.

Our client, the Mariinsky Theatre, aims to open the new concert hall within the next year, 2006. This goal requires that the project follow a very aggressive schedule, and we are working with speed and dedication to support meeting the Mariinsky Theatre's desired opening date.



Interior of Mariinsky