

Orchestra Rehearses for the First Time in New Kansas City, MO Concert Hall

By Dr. Yasuhisa Toyota

Last month, I wrote about the first rehearsal held in Finland's new Helsinki Music Centre Concert Hall. This month, I have the pleasure of reporting on the completion of a new concert hall in Kansas City, Missouri and its first rehearsal, held on May 18 by the Kansas City Symphony. The rehearsal was captured on video and excerpts can be heard and seen on [YouTube](#).

Named Helzberg Hall, the new, 1,600-seat concert hall is designed specifically for the performance of classical music and, together with a new, 1,800-seat, proscenium-stage theatre comprise Kansas City's new [Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts](#). The Kansas City Symphony will use Helzberg Hall for all of its rehearsals as well as for performances.



Figure 1

Like the Helsinki Hall, Helzberg Hall's seating surrounds the stage on all sides in the so-called vineyard configuration. However, Helzberg Hall's footprint has a more elongated shape compared with the Helsinki Hall, making Helzberg Hall's configuration closer in some ways to a shoebox configuration. Perhaps this is why the Helzberg Hall's acoustics impress me as having greater density or weightiness than the sound in the Helsinki Hall, where I have more of an impression of the sound spreading spatially. This difference between the two halls cannot be classified judgmentally as one being better than the other hall. Rather, I'm simply aware of a difference in the acoustical personalities of the two halls. Also, in both these halls, we achieved very high levels of richness and clarity of sound. In terms of these characteristics, the two halls resemble each other greatly.

Currently, three months are being used to install the hall's pipe organ. The hall's grand opening concerts will be held this coming September 16 and 17. I will write more about this new hall and its concerts in a future newsletter.