

University of Wisconsin (Madison) Mead Witter School of Music

Location

Madison, WI

Size

57,000 sf

Completion Date

2019

General Contractor

JP Cullen

Architects

Holzman Moss Bottino
Strang
Fisher Dachs

Acoustic Design

TALASKE

Project Team

Lead Foreman: Mike Monaghan

Project Manager: Mike McQuade

Taping Foreman: Ray Lavallee

Carpenter Foremen: Matt Fochs, Miles Shultis

The Mead Witter School of Music at the University of Wisconsin in Madison is a state-of-the-art facility for musical performances. The 57,000 sf building includes an 800-seat concert hall, a 325-seat recital hall, rehearsal spaces, music department studios, and a recording area. Its grand 2-story lobby and curved staircase offer an elegant meeting area for this trendy artistic space.

To help turn this vision into reality, Wall-tech provided cold-formed steel framing, drywall, plaster, and finishing. Intricate steel stud soffit framing and prefabricated drywall shapes allowed for detailed and precise work that adhered to the project schedule.

Wall-tech was able to meet complex sound requirements thanks to its experience with some of the most complicated acoustics facilities in Wisconsin. This expertise, along with know-how in providing vibration separation between different substrates, allowed Wall-tech to take a proactive leadership role, working closely with the sound engineer. Throughout the project, Wall-tech drew upon its proficiency in executing high-level design intent.

Located on a busy street, the building utilizes extra wall protection measures to prevent urban noise entry and to isolate the acoustics of each venue. This includes special mineral wool insulation and four layers of drywall for density. Special curvatures and round openings in the wall design, part of the acoustical coffer system, also allow sound to be reflected and absorbed – for maximum acoustic quality. These critical features allow sound to be routed from 1.) the main stage areas through 2.) circular coffers and reverberation chambers into adjacent performance spaces before 3.) making its way to the audience.

Recessed GFRC panel coffers are used to facilitate absorption. Installation required the suspension of extra-large concrete units, each weighing thousands of pounds,



from wires located above the audience area. These ceilings hang from hundreds of sound string isolators to stop vibration from travelling.

“Instead of the standard 8-sound range that’s typically found in university settings, the design in this project called for a 12-sound range,” explained Wall-tech Superintendent Mike Monaghan. “To achieve this, Wall-tech worked on soffits that would enable a moveable banner capable of achieving the desired 12 sounds.”

In recognition of its work on this project, Wall-tech was given a 2019 BUILD Wisconsin Award (Specialty Contractor: Finishes).

