

NEWS RELEASE

Sound Acclaimed at Kauffman Center Inaugural Gala in Kansas City

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Toronto, October 7)— The \$413 million Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City, MO, opened to delighted audiences on September 16 with performances by Placido Domingo, the Canadian Brass, and the Kansas City Symphony, among others. Designed by architect Moishe Safdie, the Kauffman Center houses the 1,600 seat Helzberg Hall, a terraced concert hall-in-the-round that is home to the Kansas City Symphony, and the 1,800-seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre that will serve as the performance home of the Kansas City Ballet and the Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

The two venues have been described as the yin and yang of the Kauffman experience—the exuberant Muriel Kauffman Theatre with its proscenium and illuminated acrylic balcony fronts ringing the hall stands in marked contrast to the sleek and ethereal oval-shaped Helzberg Hall, that some visitors have likened to the interior of a wooden ship, with its warm, muted wood tones that recall the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles.

Noting this resemblance in both form and material, critic Steve Paul wrote in *The Kansas City Star*, “One important connection between these two concert halls was the work of Yasuhisa Toyota of Nagata Acoustics, whose choice of shapes, wood and physical components was paramount in creating the aural experience.”

Toronto consultants Engineering Harmonics Inc. worked with Nagata Acoustics in both Kansas City and Los Angeles, designing performance sound systems to integrate seamlessly with the natural acoustics. Judging from the critical acclaim that followed last month’s inaugural performances in Helzberg Hall, the result is a resounding success. The amplified sound is “ambient and natural-sounding,” wrote David Mermelstein in *Musical America*.

Paul added, “Insiders will argue whether Helzberg exceeds even Disney, a slightly larger hall, though time—plus word of mouth in the music community—will tell.”

“This was our second foray into the design of a sound system in a terraced hall with Nagata Acoustics,” noted Engineering Harmonics president Philip Giddings. “In Kansas City, we further developed and refined our approach to this type of venue, and we are more than encouraged by the response of performers, audiences and critics alike,” he said.

Headquartered in Toronto, Engineering Harmonics specializes in the design of performance sound and AV for performing arts centers, sports and conference facilities, corporate and government offices, lecture halls and houses of worship.

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