

# CARNEGIE HALL THEN & NOW

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF EXCELLENCE: 1891–1991



Carnegie Hall

### INTRODUCTION

For more than a century, Carnegie Hall has set the standard for excellence in performance. Its walls have echoed with applause for the world's outstanding classical artists, as they have for the greatest popular musicians of our time and for the many prominent dancers, politicians, authors, and crusaders who have appeared on its stage. From Gustav Mahler to Liza Minnelli, from John Philip Sousa to Leopold Stokowski, from Fats Waller to Woodrow Wilson, and from Ignace Jan Paderewski to Luciano Pavarotti, Carnegie Hall has been host to them all.

Every artist who stands on the Hall's stage is standing on a base of history, anchored by that tradition of excellence. For Carnegie Hall is more than bricks and mortar. It is a living entity: a participant in the dreams and defining moments of the world's most esteemed performing artists, and an embodiment of the aspirations of all those who have striven, on both sides of the footlights, to sustain our musical culture and convey it to future generations. Although the Hall bears Andrew Carnegie's name, he was "but the first of its many benefactors." Each decade has brought forth those, like Isaac Stern, who helped keep the dream alive so that it might continue to inspire, and those who have given the dream new dimensions and directions so that it might "continue to grow."

Under the guidance of these custodians, and with help from many, Carnegie Hall has already transformed itself from an institution that embodies the art of music into one that is also capable of engendering it on many levels. It remains, as it has been for more than ten decades, America's preeminent concert hall, a vital, active center of "culture that represents an ongoing moment of truth for performers and audience alike." "Who shall venture to paint its history or its end?" asked Andrew Carnegie, when the cornerstone of his new Music Hall was laid in 1890. "It is built to stand for ages, and during these ages it is probable that this hall will intertwine itself with the history of our country."

In the late 19th century, American culture was beginning to assert itself. Having completed a westward expansion, Americans of the era of Manifest Destiny began to look toward expanding their cultural horizons. At this time, New York City, the industrial and economic center of the country, began to take the leadership role in America's cultural life. Already home to the country's oldest orchestra – the Philharmonic Society, founded in 1842 – and the Metropolitan Opera Company, founded in 1882, the city still had no home for symphonic music. This need would soon lead to the creation of what would become one of America's most beloved institutions.

The story of Carnegie Hall begins at sea, in the spring of 1887, on board a ship traveling from New York to London and carrying a millionaire industrialist, his bride, and a young conductor. The conductor, Walter Damrosch, was then 25 years old, and had just finished his second season as conductor and musical director of the Symphony Society of New York and the Oratorio Society of New York. He was on his way to Europe for a summer of study with conductor Hans von Bülow. The bride was Louise Whitfield, daughter of a well-to-do New York merchant. Thirty years old and musically inclined, she had sung in the soprano section of the Oratorio Society for several seasons. The millionaire was the celebrated Scottish-born American steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, 52, who had courted Whitfield for six years, married her, and was taking her on a honeymoon to Scotland.

The *Fulda* set sail from New York on April 22, 1887. During the voyage, a lasting friendship developed between Damrosch and the newlyweds. The Carnegies invited Damrosch to visit them in Scotland at the conclusion of his studies. It was there, at an estate called Kilgraston, that the idea of Carnegie Hall was born.

For several years, Damrosch had been on a crusade to have a world-class concert hall built in New York City. He had inherited this vision from his father, Leopold, who had founded the Oratorio Society in 1873 and the Symphony Society in 1878. As New York's second-place orchestra (the Philharmonic Society was considered first), the Symphony Society had a difficult time booking concerts into any of the very few halls large enough to accommodate it, chief among them the Metropolitan Opera House. That facility was available only after its resident opera company, and then the Philharmonic Society, and finally various visiting orchestras and opera companies had scheduled their performances. The Oratorio Society was compelled to give its concerts in the showrooms of one or another of the piano companies – Chickering, Steinway, and Knabe – that maintained premises on 14th Street.

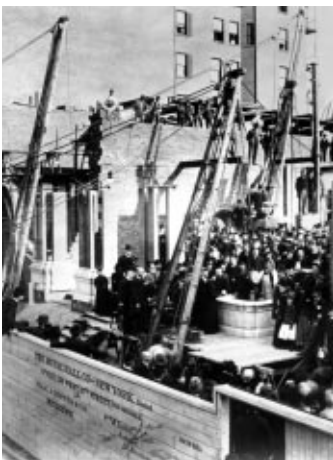
By the end of the summer, Carnegie had agreed to help turn the dream into reality and build a grandly scaled hall that would be the finest concert venue in New York. In 1889, he formed a stock company, The Music Hall Company of New York, Ltd., and acquired seven parcels of land that created a square form along the block of Seventh Avenue between 56th and 57th Streets, which were as yet unpaved. The location, at the edge of Goat Hill, a short distance from Central Park, was so far uptown it was considered suburban.

## THE HALL IS BUILT

William Burnet Tuthill, an architect with a fondness for music (he played the cello and had served on the board of the Oratorio Society), was appointed chief architect, with architects Adler and Sullivan and Richard Morris Hunt as consultants. Construction of the Hall began in 1890; on May 13 of that year Mrs. Carnegie cemented the cornerstone in place with a silver trowel from Tiffany's, a memento she would keep on her mantelpiece for the rest of her life. Mr. Carnegie's contribution to the endeavor eventually came to \$2 million – approximately nine-tenths of the total cost of the Hall.

The plans called for a rectangular six-story structure housing three performance spaces: the Main Hall (now Isaac Stern Auditorium), seating 2,800; a recital hall (later converted into the Carnegie Hall Cinema and now under reconstruction), located below the Main Hall, seating 1,200; and, adjacent to the Main Hall, a chamber music hall (now Weill Recital Hall), seating 250. Above the chamber music hall were assembly rooms which, according to the program from the Main Hall's opening night, would be "suitable for lectures, readings, and receptions as well as chapter and lodge rooms for secret organizations." Designed so that it would not require steel support beams, the edifice was built using the Guastavino process, with concrete and masonry walls several feet thick – a fortunate choice, considering the fine acoustical properties they proved to have. The building, with its striking Italian Renaissance-style façade of terra cotta and iron-spotted brick, was completed in the spring of 1891.

The five-day opening festival attracted the cream of New York society – arrayed in the boxes were Whitneys, Sloans, Rockefellers, and Fricks – who paid from \$1 to \$2 to hear performances by the Symphony Society and the Oratorio Society under the direction of Damrosch and the famed Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Horse-drawn carriages lined up for a quarter mile outside the Hall on opening night, May 5, 1891, choking the streets, while inside, the Main Hall was jammed to capacity. After a lengthy dedication speech from Bishop Henry Codman Potter, Damrosch led the Symphony Society in a performance of Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3*.



Mrs. Andrew Carnegie laid the cornerstone of the new Music Hall Building, South East corner 57th Street & Seventh Avenue, New York, May 13, 1890.  
Photo: Michael Oldford

Tchaikovsky then came to the podium to conduct his *Marche solennelle*. The concert ended with a performance of the Berlioz *Te Deum*.

It was clear right away that Andrew Carnegie had built a concert hall that was as pleasing to the ear as it was to the eye, and that he had furnished it with consummate luxury. Notwithstanding the talent onstage and the glamour in the audience, the reviews of that inaugural night concentrated on the Hall. One newspaper reported, "Tonight, the most beautiful Music Hall in the world was consecrated to the loveliest of the arts. Possession of such a hall is in itself an incentive for culture." Another exclaimed, "IT STOOD THE TEST WELL!" Critical and public reactions were unanimous. The "Music Hall founded by Andrew Carnegie" was an overwhelming success.

## THE ARTISTS

The term "Music Hall," to many European artists in particular, suggested a vaudeville palace rather than a serious concert hall. So during the 1894–95 season the name of the place was officially shortened to "Carnegie Hall." In the ten decades since, the prestige of making a Carnegie Hall appearance has unfailingly attracted the world's finest performers to its stage. Tchaikovsky's opening-night appearance set an auspicious precedent for the array of classical musicians to whom the Hall would become the essential venue in the United States. Even two weeks before the Hall officially opened, pianist Leopold Godowsky had put in an appearance, and in November 1891 pianist Ignace Jan Paderewski made his debut to such extraordinary acclaim that a legend was born. Henceforth, a success at Carnegie Hall would be the litmus test of greatness. Celebrated composer and pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff made his Carnegie Hall debut in 1909, playing his Second Piano Concerto as guest soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Vladimir Horowitz first rattled the rafters in 1928. A host of other great keyboard artists have made history in Carnegie Hall, among them Arthur Rubinstein, who made his debut in 1906 and said farewell 70 years later, and Josef Hofmann, whose 1897 debut had people pushing and shoving to get in. And surely one of the most dramatic moments in the Hall's history came when the 23-year-old Van Cliburn staged his triumphant homecoming after winning the gold medal in the first International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow.

The early years of the Hall's existence also saw celebrated violinists such as Fritz Kreisler and Eugène Ysaÿe appear in concert. Then, one warm October afternoon in 1917, with a revolution going on in his Russian homeland, the brilliant 16-year-old Jascha Heifetz made his debut. In the audience, violinist Mischa Elman turned to pianist Leopold Godowsky, and, dabbing at his forehead with a handkerchief, whispered, "It's warm in here, isn't it?" "Not for pianists," Godowsky shot back. Since then, the roster of violinists who have played in Carnegie Hall has come to include such eminent performers as the late Yehudi Menuhin, Isaac Stern, Itzhak Perlman, and Pinchas Zukerman. The greatest cellists of the 20th century, including Pablo Casals, Gregor Piatigorsky, Mstislav Rostropovich, and Yo-Yo Ma, have graced the stage on numerous occasions. Over the years, countless singers have appeared in concert and recital at Carnegie Hall, including such luminaries as Enrico Caruso, Plácido Domingo, Maria Callas, Paul Robeson, Lily Pons, Renata Tebaldi, Leontyne Price, Montserrat Caballé, Luciano Pavarotti, and Beverly Sills. And when a hall in the nation's capital was closed to her because of her race, the great Marian Anderson found herself welcome on the Carnegie Hall stage.

## THE ORCHESTRAS AND THEIR CONDUCTORS

In 1892, after a fire gutted the Metropolitan Opera House, the Philharmonic Society joined the Symphony Society in making its home at Carnegie Hall. The move ignited



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
Photo: Carnegie Hall Archives



James Levine conducting  
Photo: Steve J. Sherman

an intense rivalry that continued until 1928, when the two organizations merged under the name of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York, still the name by which the New York Philharmonic is officially known. The Philharmonic Society quickly contributed to its own prestige and that of the Hall: on December 16, 1893, one of the red-letter dates in American musical history, it gave the world premiere of Antonín Dvořák's Symphony *From the New World* in the Main Hall, with the composer in attendance.

Even in its earliest years, Carnegie Hall had a national and international significance. With orchestras beginning to tour as a matter of local and national pride, the Carnegie stop became the necessary one to make. The great American orchestras have been a staple of Carnegie Hall programming since the Hall's first decade, when both the Boston Symphony and Chicago Symphony made their first visits. Over the years it has become a home away from home for the orchestras of Philadelphia, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Washington, DC, among others. With their rich traditions and varied programming, these ensembles and others from around the country have contributed much to American culture and drawn inspiration and encouragement from the Carnegie Hall audience.

From the start, Carnegie Hall has been a favorite venue for the world's finest conductors. Gustav Mahler, Arthur Nikisch, Willem Mengelberg, Sir Thomas Beecham, Pierre Monteux, Fritz Reiner, Charles Munch, Leopold Stokowski, George Szell, and Bruno Walter all passed in glory through its portals. Arturo Toscanini electrified Carnegie Hall audiences for 28 years at the helm of the New York Philharmonic and the NBC Symphony, writing an unforgettable page in the Hall's history when, with son-in-law Vladimir Horowitz as soloist, he raised \$11 million for the World War II bond effort in a single benefit performance of the Tchaikovsky B-flat minor Piano Concerto. America's own Leonard Bernstein made his celebrated 1943 debut with the New York Philharmonic on the Carnegie stage, and in later years conducted more than 200 concerts there, both as the Philharmonic's music director and as guest conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic. Bernstein's mentor, Serge Koussevitzky, brought his Boston Symphony to Carnegie Hall on numerous occasions, introducing the New York audience to many new works, including Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra and dozens of scores by American composers. Herbert von Karajan took his first Carnegie Hall bow in 1955 with the group he would head for the rest of his life, the Berlin Philharmonic. Karajan's infrequent Carnegie Hall appearances over the years were always landmark events. Sir Georg Solti earned a place in the Carnegie pantheon thanks to his visits with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in the 1970s and '80s, visits which helped secure that orchestra's preeminent reputation among American ensembles.

## JAZZ, FOLK, POP, AND PUBLIC FORUM

From its inception, Carnegie Hall has prided itself on its importance as a showcase for American cultural development. It has succeeded in this role in part because it has drawn from every genre of performance; no other venue in the country can lay claim to the variety that marks every season at Carnegie Hall. The Hall's openness to every style of music, and to much else besides, is a unique quality and one of its strongest assets.

In the days before radio and television, Carnegie Hall gave a prominent public forum to anyone with a cause. Jack London spoke on communism in 1905; Emmeline Pankhurst lobbied for women's suffrage, and Margaret Sanger for birth control. A young Winston Churchill spoke on the Boer War, and Mark Twain and Booker T. Washington shared the stage at a Lincoln Memorial Meeting. Clarence Darrow debated Ernest Howe on the merits of prohibition and found there were none.



Carnegie Hall Jazz Band with Jon Faddis  
Photo: Steve J. Sherman

Early jazz was first heard at Carnegie Hall in 1912, in a concert of African-American music by James Reese Europe's Clef Club Orchestra. This performance foreshadowed many stellar evenings featuring a cavalcade of jazz greats that has included Fats Waller, W. C. Handy, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Charlie Parker, Oscar Peterson, Sarah Vaughan, Gerry Mulligan, Mel Tormé, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane. A 1938 concert by Benny Goodman and his band, one of the most celebrated events in Carnegie Hall history, marked a turning point in the public acceptance of swing. Duke Ellington made his Carnegie Hall debut in 1943 with the premiere of his tone poem *Black, Brown and Beige*, and when Norman Granz toured his legendary "Jazz at the Philharmonic" programs, featuring the greatest names in jazz, Carnegie Hall was the New York base.

In 1933, John Jacob Niles became the first folksinger to perform at Carnegie Hall. Following in his footsteps have been Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Judy Collins, Arlo Guthrie, Bob Dylan, and Joan Baez. Popular entertainers who have performed at Carnegie Hall include Josephine Baker, Judy Garland, Ethel Merman, Nat King Cole, Lena Horne, Frank Sinatra, Liza Minnelli, and Tony Bennett. In 1964, The Beatles made their New York concert debut, their third live appearance in the U.S., onstage at Carnegie Hall. They were followed by The Rolling Stones that same year, and thereafter by The Doors, Bob Dylan, Elton John, David Bowie, and Stevie Wonder, to name but a few.

Throughout its history, Carnegie Hall has been the site of numerous television and radio productions – among the more famous, Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts, the televised NBC Symphony concerts led by Arturo Toscanini, "Horowitz on Television," "Carol Burnett and Julie Andrews at Carnegie Hall," weekly radio broadcasts by the New York Philharmonic from the 1920s through 1962, and "AT&T Presents Carnegie Hall Tonight" in the 1980s. And "Live From Carnegie Hall" recordings by an endless list of great artists and entertainers – Paul Robeson, Sviatoslav Richter, Edith Piaf, Glenn Miller, Ike and Tina Turner, Groucho Marx – often qualified as among those artists' definitive statements. The name of Carnegie Hall was thereby carried to audiences around the world who came to associate the Hall's name with the finest in performance.

## CRISIS AND RESCUE: 1955–1960

In 1925, six years after Andrew Carnegie's death, New York realtor Robert E. Simon bought Carnegie Hall. At the time of the purchase, Simon promised Mrs. Carnegie that he would not demolish the building for a period of five years, or use it for purposes other than those for which it had been originally intended. Following Simon's death in 1935, his son, Robert E. Simon, Jr., took over management of the Hall, and for a while actually made a profit on its operation. By the mid-1950s, however, the music business had evolved in such a way that it was impossible to continue to operate Carnegie Hall in the same fashion. The practically minded Simon offered the New York Philharmonic an option to buy Carnegie Hall for \$4 million, since the orchestra, which rented it more than 100 nights a year, was the major tenant. But plans were already being made for the Philharmonic to move to a new home at Lincoln Center, and the orchestra declined the offer.

While Simon wanted to be a benefactor to the Hall and keep it running, he was forced to put it up for sale beginning in 1955, always under the condition that if a way could be found to save it, the contract would be null and void. That year, a deal was struck for the sale of the Hall to a group of developers who planned to demolish it and erect a 44-story office tower on the site. The deal fell through, but not before the September 9, 1957, issue of *Life* magazine had shown an artist's rendering of the garish, fire-engine-red monstrosity the developers were contemplating. By decade's



Isaac Stern, now 35, made his debut with San Francisco orchestra at 11

### A Fiddler Saves Carnegie Hall

Just as Wreckers Were About to Demolish New York's Famous Music Hall, Isaac Stern Became Hero of the Hour

One of many newspaper articles that appeared throughout the United States covering the news that Isaac Stern had succeeded in leading the effort to save Carnegie Hall, 1960

Photo: Carnegie Hall Archives

end, with the Philharmonic's departure imminent, Simon had run out of options and could no longer afford to keep Carnegie Hall in operation. The date of March 31, 1960, was set for its demolition.

As early as 1955, various committees had been formed to save the Hall – some by tenants, others by employees. But none of these groups had the political clout to make the difference. It was only at the eleventh hour that the Committee to Save Carnegie Hall, headed by Isaac Stern with administrative and financial assistance from the likes of Jacob M. Kaplan and State Senator MacNeil Mitchell, was able to stop the impending demolition.

On May 16, 1960, as a result of special state legislation, New York City was permitted to purchase Carnegie Hall for \$5 million, and a new nonprofit organization called The Carnegie Hall Corporation was chartered. Stern was elected its president and remains so today. Not only had Carnegie Hall been saved: it had been reborn as a public trust. Not only would its corporation manage and rent the concert hall, as had previous owners, but it would soon sponsor events as well. Carnegie Hall had entered a new phase in its history, free to serve its owners, the people of New York, in new and unique ways. The Hall that founder Andrew Carnegie had hailed as an idea “which will affect the world” was poised to take an active role in shaping the destiny that Carnegie had predicted.

Carnegie Hall has had two distinct kinds of boards in its history. The first was Andrew Carnegie's hand-picked advisory board, a group Edith Wharton would surely have recognized. But the activities of this Gilded Age group were largely ceremonial. The real philanthropy began at the moment of the Hall's reorganization in 1960, when The Carnegie Hall Corporation was formed and a board of directors pledged to ensuring the Hall's financial and physical health took control of its destiny. This was the moment of Carnegie Hall's birth as a nonprofit organization, and the beginning of its history as a public-private partnership.

## BECOMING AN INSTITUTION

During the 1960s and '70s, The Carnegie Hall Corporation became increasingly active as a concert-presenting organization, hosting a number of international ensembles and soloists in the Main and Recital Halls under its own artistic aegis. While the Hall presented comparatively little of its own programming in the years immediately following its incorporation, it did manage to present a number of important visiting ensembles to New York beginning as early as the 1961–62 season with its International Festival of Orchestras. By the 1964–65 season, the Hall was showcasing 15 orchestras in four different subscription series. (The IFO and its offshoot series, Great American Orchestras, are still going strong today.) Under Julius Bloom, the Hall's executive director from 1960 to 1977, new music also received a great deal of attention, along with “new” artists such as Alfred Brendel, who was little known to the concertgoing public when first presented by the Hall in 1973.

While the core of Carnegie Hall's presentations remained classical during Bloom's tenure, the programming did branch out into jazz, dance, and non-Western music. As the Hall searched for a way to make itself part of the community and at the same time financially viable, no genre was left untouched. The resulting diversity of presentations brought in a more diverse audience than would have been possible in a venue with a classical-only format. This continues to be one of the Hall's great strengths. Stewart Warkow, whose association with Carnegie Hall began in 1968 when he became house manager, took over as executive director in 1980. He guided the Hall through its 90th anniversary season, which concluded with a gala re-creation of the opening concert of May 5, 1891. Between 1982 and 1986, Seymour Rosen served as



Leonard Bernstein, Isaac Stern, Vladimir Horowitz, and Mstislav Rostropovich rehearsing for “The Concert of the Century” at Carnegie Hall, 1976  
Photo: Isaac Stern Archives

artistic director, with Edward H. Michaelsen and Norton Belknap in succession as the Hall's managing directors. During this period Carnegie Hall hosted an acclaimed series of concert-opera presentations, and saw some remarkably innovative programming in the areas of jazz, contemporary, and folk music in the Recital Hall.

The evolution of the Hall through the 1970s saw growth in many directions, not least in its fundraising capacity, which during this time developed from enthusiastic amateur efforts into professional broad-based outreach. Much of this was spurred by James D. Wolfensohn, who joined the board in 1973, served as treasurer under the chairmanship of Richard Debs, and succeeded him as chairman from 1979 to 1991. Among his accomplishments was success in attracting an ongoing stream of board talent, which included Sanford I. Weill, who co-chaired the 1986 Capital Campaign and the 1990–91 Centennial Season and became chairman in 1991.

By 1980, thanks to Wolfensohn's leadership in the corporate community, 350 companies were giving money to Carnegie Hall; that same year, the development department, which had been created as recently as 1975, was able to report \$800,000 to support a budget of \$5 million. Hall President Isaac Stern and Wolfensohn felt that Carnegie Hall could and should make a claim as a national center of culture, and they pushed for recognition from the National Endowment for the Arts. That recognition came in 1979, in the form of an NEA challenge grant for \$750,000 targeted toward presentations and commissions, requiring a three-to-one match.

In 1976, with an eye toward endowment, Wolfensohn and Stern had already organized one of Carnegie Hall's first major galas, "The Concert of the Century," to mark the Hall's 85th anniversary. The concert featured a stellar group of classical artists including Stern, Yehudi Menuhin, Mstislav Rostropovich, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Leonard Bernstein, and Vladimir Horowitz. The concert brought the fledgling endowment fund up to \$1.2 million, which, it was hoped, would eventually serve as seed money for a major endowment like those of older institutions, such as the Metropolitan Opera. Having built up the Hall's annual funding from individual and corporate sources, the Board's Executive Committee began to position the institution for an endowment drive that would guarantee both its leadership position in American musical life and its future financial stability. But concerns were already mounting about the physical condition of the Hall, and when the 1981 architectural evaluation showed just how serious was the need for renovation and capital funding, Carnegie Hall's fundraising policy was immediately redirected. Endowment was put on the back burner, where it would remain until 1991, when separate and general endowment drives were set in motion with the intention of raising \$75 million before the end of the century.

## THE HALL IS RESTORED: 1986

The exterior of the Hall had undergone many changes since the 1891 opening. In 1900, the first of several marquees was added to the front entrance to shelter arriving concertgoers; a few years later, city building codes dictated the addition of a fire escape across the entire Seventh Avenue façade. Further exterior changes to Carnegie Hall came during the Depression, when the Hall's management decided to carve six storefronts out of the ground-floor masonry around the building, compromising some of the gracefulness of the original design. Until these fronts were removed in 1986, they housed four restaurants, a barber shop, a drugstore, a violin maker, a dry cleaner, a nightclub (located below the lobby), and a thrift bookshop.

While the exterior of Carnegie Hall underwent various changes as the decades passed, the structure itself continued to age. For many years, only patchwork repair and renovation was possible. In 1978, the Board of Trustees commissioned an



Carnegie Hall exterior  
Photo: Don Perdue

architectural evaluation of the building. This evaluation, announced in 1981, resulted in a nine-phase Master Plan devised and implemented by the architectural firm of James Stewart Polshek and Partners for the most extensive restoration, renovation, and expansion of the Hall's facilities in its history.

In 1985, Carnegie Hall celebrated the 25th anniversary of its "saving" by announcing a \$60 million capital campaign committed to the restoration and renovation of the building. Presiding over this initiative was a 50-member steering committee co-chaired by James D. Wolfensohn and Sanford I. Weill.

On May 18, 1986, Carnegie Hall closed its doors for the keystone phase of the Master Plan. During this seven-month shutdown period, the Main Hall lobby was rebuilt at street level (and later named in honor of trustee Lester S. Morse, Jr., and his wife, Enid), with the box office expanded and repositioned in a convenient location opposite the entrance, and elevator service was installed for the first time in the history of the Hall. The Main Hall interior received new seats, carpeting, floor, and stage floor; the ceiling shell above the stage was restored. In addition, ornamental and damaged plaster was repaired, and the entire interior was freshly painted. The entire backstage area was renovated and reconfigured, including the creation of a stage wing that had been sorely lacking in Carnegie Hall's original design.

A complete renovation and restoration of the smaller Recital Hall was also undertaken, involving a new floor, seats, carpet, and chandeliers; removal of such recent additions as a false proscenium arch, curtain, and wood paneling; and the building of a new stage. In January of 1987, this space was reopened as Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in honor of Joan and Sanford I. Weill.

Still to come in the next five years would be the acquisition of expansion space in the Carnegie Hall Tower to be built next door, which would provide additional backstage and public areas. But meanwhile, the eagerly awaited Gala Reopening concert of the restored and renovated Carnegie Hall took place on December 15, 1986. With a roster of guest artists that included Isaac Stern, Vladimir Horowitz, Yo-Yo Ma, Marilyn Horne, and Frank Sinatra, and with Leonard Bernstein and Zubin Mehta leading the New York Philharmonic, the concert gave musicians and audience alike cause for celebration. The stage had been reconstructed according to its original design, the Hall had been returned to service in pristine condition, and once again, music sounded within its walls.

## THE CENTENNIAL

The arrival of Judith Arron as general manager and artistic director in early 1986 coincided with the renovation of the Main Hall and a succession of major milestones in Carnegie Hall's recent history. (In 1988 Arron was named executive director, upon the retirement of then-managing director Norton Belknap.) Mrs. Arron passed away on December 18, 1998, but in the near-13 years of her leadership, the Hall witnessed extraordinary strides in programming and a renewed commitment to excellence in every aspect of its operation. Philanthropic funds and the Carnegie Hall "family" of committed supporters have grown directly in response to this excellence. That a new plateau had been reached was evident to all by the end of the 1990–91 season, when Carnegie Hall marked its centennial with a season-long international celebration encompassing more than 150 events and featuring an unprecedented roster of the world's great artists in the Main Hall and Weill Recital Hall. Special centennial activities included the inauguration of a permanent Commissioning Project endowed with a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, with the premieres of 13 new works by major composers commissioned by Carnegie Hall and performed by major artists throughout the season; an inaugural series of Professional Training



Judith Arron

Workshops, including a choral workshop under the direction of the late Robert Shaw, a contemporary music conductor's workshop led by Pierre Boulez, and a workshop on the presentation of educational concerts; a festival of folk music of the Americas in Weill Recital Hall; special commemorative exhibits in museums and galleries in New York and in major national and international concert halls; and the opening of the Rose Museum at Carnegie Hall. These events led up to a ten-day festival of concerts, culminating in an internationally televised Centennial Day Gala on May 5, 1991.

The Centennial Season also saw the completion, after ten years, of the Master Plan for renovation and restoration of Carnegie Hall. After painstaking renewal of the century-old building itself, the plan's final phase resulted in the first actual additions to the building since 1896. Demolition crews broke through the exterior brick wall of Carnegie Hall in February of 1990 in order to connect the hundred-year-old hall with its new next-door neighbor, Carnegie Hall Tower (a 60-story office building), and open up approximately 25,000 square feet of new space. The Hall's heretofore cramped backstage and artists' facilities expanded into the space, which allowed for an enlarged stage wing, more dressing rooms, a freight elevator, and a new backstage area for Weill Recital Hall. The public spaces of Weill Recital Hall were augmented with an enlarged lobby, a new elevator, and a new patron lounge with bar. The capstone was the creation of a new wing of public spaces for the Main Hall, christened the James D. Wolfensohn Wing, and incorporating the Rose Museum at Carnegie Hall for display of exhibitions relating to Carnegie Hall's history, the Carnegie Hall Gift Shop, and the Rohatyn Room and Shorin Club Room reception areas.

## RECENT MILESTONES

In the last ten years, a host of new programs have expanded the scope of Carnegie Hall's activities. In 1991 the Centennial Commissioning Project was established to present world premieres of new works. That same year Carnegie Hall announced the formation of The Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, which made its debut on October 22, 1992, and quickly earned the reputation for distinct programs highlighting new perspectives on the jazz band tradition, through specially commissioned new arrangements and thematic programs. In 1995 Carnegie Hall inaugurated a Composer's Chair, a position filled by a notable composer who collaborates with Hall staff on the creative aspects of the Hall's activities, including concert programming, education projects, and the commissioning program. The current occupant of the Composer's Chair is Pierre Boulez.

Also over the last decade Carnegie Hall's education projects have expanded dramatically. During the 1995–96 season, the Hall inaugurated a Family Concerts series to offer parents a way to introduce their children to classical music. Since 1990 the acclaimed Professional Training Workshops have tapped into the creative energies of some of the greatest classical artists of the day, allowing them to share their expertise with younger performers, and beginning in 1995, the Hall began its Professional Development Workshops for Teachers program, which offers primary and secondary school teachers the opportunity to work for a day with a well-known artist on technique, research, and repertoire.

Looking to the future, Carnegie Hall will open a new auditorium in 2002. The Judy and Arthur Zankel Hall, to be located below Isaac Stern Auditorium, will be the site of a broad spectrum of performing and educational events that will make Carnegie Hall a vibrant musical center in the years to come.



Computer rendering of Zankel Hall  
by dbox, Inc.