

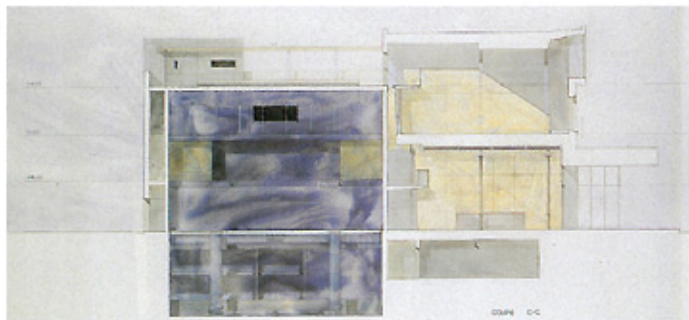
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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

ARCHITECTURE DESIGN LANDSCAPE URBANISM WORLDWIDE



CANADA'S NEW WAVE
Grimshaw's joints
Aalto's Viipuri library



cross section

Montréal scène 1

Ingenious in both use of space and economy of detail, this new theatre conversion has been designed to realise the potential of a restricted urban site.

The Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui, an experimental company based in Montreal, is committed to the production of Québécois drama. The company required a centrally located performance space, not limited by restrictions imposed by traditional auditorium form. Set within a turn-of-the-century block on rue St-Denis, the new theatre has been planned within two existing houses. Only a few details – railings, staircase, a sculpture and the new window frames – provide a subtle hint of the renewal of this piece of the urban fabric.

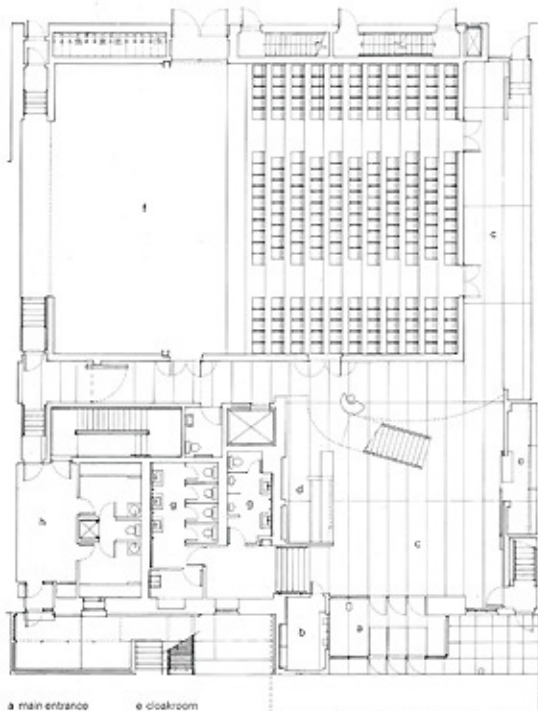
By contrast the performance space, a masonry box clad in gun-metal blue ship-lapped steel plate, is expressed emphatically. Located within the volume formerly occupied by a cinema but designed so as to be clearly visible from the street, it is brightly coloured and planned within a generous foyer which opens directly off rue St-Denis. The blue box is a free-standing object surrounded by the foyer which is intended to be read as an extension of the street. Within the performance space itself, all internal surfaces have been designed to allow the volume to be changed to satisfy the different demands of a changing

programme of performances. Based on ideas for creating flexible theatre spaces, developed by designers such as George Izenour and Jules Fisher, the ground plane here can be adapted through systems of hydraulic floor lifts and seating modules allowing a wide range of different configurations to be created, from the traditional proscenium to theatre in the round.

The walls are made up of a system of reversible hinged panels which are faced in wood on one side and painted black on the other. They can be arranged to suit the demands of a particular director and to describe the shape of changing seating layouts within the space. The ceiling is a grid of steel wires that can be used by lighting operators.

Above the foyer, there is a large rehearsal room which has been planned so that it can be rented out as an independent performance space. It has direct access from the street and is also linked to a mezzanine that opens onto a rooftop terrace already used as an outdoor theatre space during the summer. B.C.

Centre du Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui, Montréal
Architects
Saucier + Perrotte



- a main entrance
- b ticket office
- c foyer
- d bar
- e cloakroom
- f auditorium
- g w.c.
- h dressing rooms

ground floor plan





1. The generous, expressive foyer, dominated by the steel clad volume of the auditorium.
2. From the outside, there are few clues as to the nature of the space within.
3. The highly flexible auditorium.



Montréal scène 2

This second theatre by Saucier + Perrotte creates a new world within a world, by means of sensitive, well-crafted architecture that expresses a Modernist formality.

The Théâtre du Rideau Vert is the oldest theatre company in Quebec and is home to a number of notable Canadian dramatists and directors including Michel Tremblay. The company first moved into the building in rue St-Denis in 1960 and after 30 years in that location received a grant to completely demolish three adjoining timber structures and rebuild the theatre.

While the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui (p80) was largely contained behind existing

facades, this new theatre on the same street creates a new front within a block of three-storey limestone fronted buildings built in the late nineteenth century. The main facade of the new theatre presents an elemental and restrained image onto the street. It is predominantly solid with a series of stone panels articulated by three windows and the canopy above a maroon wall to the street. The original canopy, which has been carefully restored, locates the main entrance.

Within the building envelope, which is precisely defined by existing streets and adjacent buildings, the performance space has been set back from the street and planned asymmetrically, creating an L-shaped foyer. Within this, the theatre itself has been designed to read as a distinct object. This concept has been emphasised by cutting away an elliptical void in the upper floor of the two level foyer to form space around the object while the auditorium itself has been shaped



1 Unlike the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui on the same street, the larger Théâtre du Rideau Vert has a discernibly new frontage.

2 The bulk of the auditorium is emphasised as a kind of free-standing volume.



- 3
Inside the impressive auditorium.
4
The foyer with its curving balcony.

and coloured to underline its significance. The back wall of the performance space is raked back and coloured dark green. This makes it clearly visible from both levels of the foyer and also creates a distinct threshold between the public spaces and the world of the imagination within the theatre itself. A long stair, extended through the foyer and along the side wall of the auditorium, further emphasises the procession through the building and from one world into another.

The timber-lined auditorium has a traditional proscenium layout and a total of 426 seats. The balcony accommodates 129 seats and additional backstage facilities for dressing rooms, stores and lighting control are planned at this level. Two lighting catwalks allow complete flexibility of lighting arrangements and there is a 5 m diameter rotating platform integrated into the stage floor.

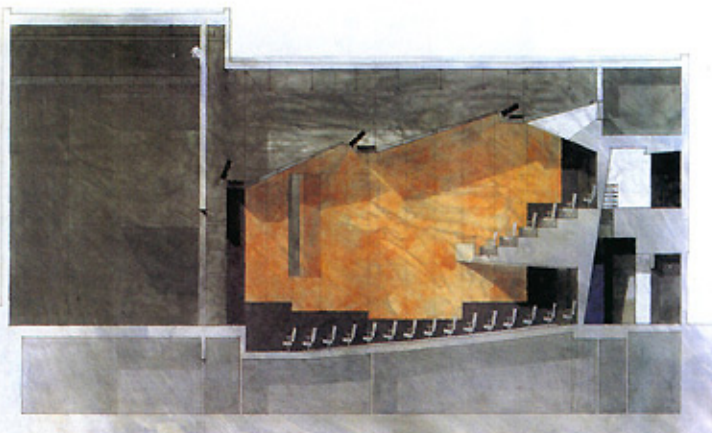
This modest scheme successfully integrates the design of a range of diverse and

demanding public and private activities within a confined urban space. And it successfully creates a new world within a world with a sensitive well-crafted architecture that expresses a Modernist formality on the street. B.C.

Théâtre du Rideau Vert, Montreal
Architects
Saudier + Perrotte



3

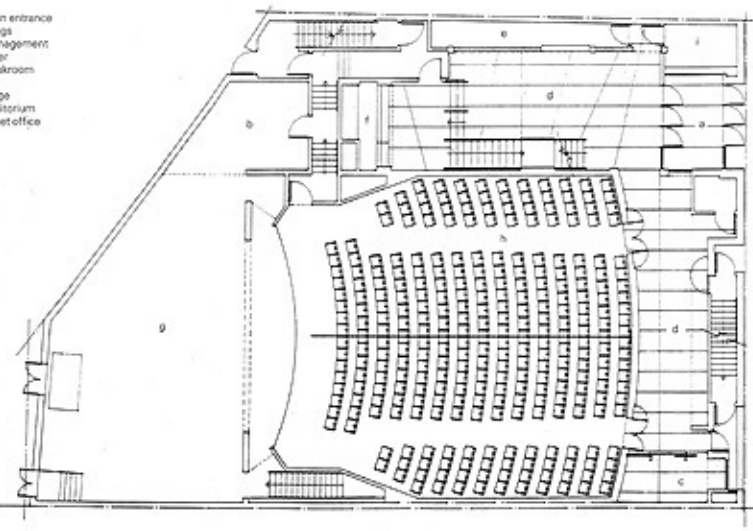


cross section through auditorium



4

- a main entrance
b wings
c management
d foyer
e cloakroom
f bar
g stage
h auditorium
i ticket office



ground floor plan