



Restoration and Renovation Highlights

Designated an historical site by the City of Toronto, the Sony Centre For The Performing Arts has completed the first phase of an extensive \$30M renovation and restoration process to restore the elegance and grandeur of architect Peter Dickinson's original O'Keefe Centre. Iconic features including the marquee canopy and R. York Wilson's lobby mural "*The Seven Lively Arts*" have been preserved. More than 200 local trades people were employed during the two-year project, which ran from June 2008 to October 2010. The Sony Centre For The Performing Arts will re-open on October 1st, 2010 exactly 50 years to the date of the Centre's original opening night.

The restoration process was governed by a respect for the building's inherent "good bones" and eliminated a number of architectural interventions added to the theatre over five decades. Design choices underscore a commitment to preserve and showcase the fine quality of the materials used in the original construction: Carrera marble, cherry wood, limestone and bronze. The building's design set the tone for strong geometric shapes and lines, thus new fixtures were chosen to follow the same design vocabulary. R. York Wilson's lobby mural "*The Seven Lively Arts*" was the prime inspiration for the colour palette. Inside the theatre, the original interior finishes, as designed by architect Colin Vaughan in 1960, have been painstakingly restored and revitalized.

Phase Two begins in 2011 with the construction of the new permanent backstage facilities and the "L Tower", a 57-story residential tower designed by Daniel Libeskind. The final phase of the renovations, encompassing the Sony Centre's external cityscape design and public plaza, will begin in 2013, following the completion of the "L Tower", and are scheduled to be unveiled in 2015.

Lobby Restoration highlights:

- The original Carrera marble that had been hidden in previous renovations was uncovered. The lobby's colour palette was chosen to enhance the marble's natural beauty.
- Glass panels that covered the original coved ceiling were removed and new LED lighting was installed to provide a range of colour options.
- The ceiling tiles were painted in a metallic gold to match the signature bronze finishes throughout the Centre.
- The extraordinary cantilevered stairs are an architectural rarity, originally built with steel and clad with granite. New lighting installed underneath the stairs gives the impression that the stairs are floating.
- The 1016 bronze handrail pickets were numbered, removed, restored and reinstalled by wood and bronze specialists, Soheil Mosun.
- The 189 bronze doors throughout the building were removed and refinished. Today, each door would cost \$30,000 to replace.

Theatre Restoration highlights:

- The 1700 cherry veneer wood panels that lined the theatre were in a serious state of disrepair – chipped, scratched and dry— since they hadn't been treated over the years. Each panel was restored *by hand* to its original glory by craftspeople from Soheil Mosun. The laborious process involved cataloguing and removing each panel, followed by stripping, sanding and re-staining. Panels deemed beyond repair were re-veneered.
- The undulating acoustic wall spanning across the back of the theatre consists of 1572 rosewood slats that were painstakingly hand restored. Great care was taken to catalogue and replace each specifically designed slat in its original position to re-create the acoustic bounce.
- All the wood restoration in the theatre was completed over a period of six months.
- All 3191 seats were replaced with custom ergonomic seats designed by Ducharme Seating, each with its own cup holder.
- In the original designs, the theatre had a curtain running under the balcony that could be used to create a more intimate 1000-seat house. A new curtain has been installed so that the Sony Centre can be used for a range of events including smaller theatre productions and corporate events.
- Repairs to the theatre's cantilevered ceiling involved hand scraping the plaster ceiling prior to re-plastering, painting, and installing 500 new support hangars and refitting the existing hangars.
- Modern light fixtures were installed in the theatre to improve the quality of the house lighting.

Renovation Highlights:

- Sony of Canada Ltd., the naming sponsor of the Centre, will further enhance the theatre's environment by providing state-of-the-art Sony entertainment solutions throughout the venue. In addition to the latest Sony Bravia® panels, visitors can expect to see cutting-edge multimedia technologies like the new Sony Ziris Canvas, a high end feature application where high definition digital content stretches across wall-to-wall screens. Comprised of 21 screens, this video wall is the largest installation of its kind in North America. This Ziris Canvas will greet visitors as they enter the main foyer of the Sony Centre, and in the north-west corner of the renovated building, visitors can explore more Sony technologies in a new Sony retail store. Also in the main lobby, visitors can enjoy the latest 3D technology shown on a 3D wall just steps away from the Sony Store.
- The thirteen washrooms have been gutted and redesigned – each unique. Ladies washrooms have been added on the second floor and one of the men's washrooms has been converted into a ladies room.
- Temporary backstage space has been set-up on the east side of the building to replace the old backstage space which has been demolished (formerly on the southwest side of the building). The new two-storey trailers (approx. 6000 sq. feet) can accommodate seventy people and are fully equipped with bathrooms, showers, and vanities. The permanent backstage and dressing rooms will be constructed on the southwest corner and completed in early 2012.
- With the neighbourhood shifting to a greater mix of residential and business, reducing the noise from loading and unloading shows was a priority and a considerable investment was made to address this issue. The old loading dock was demolished and re-poured to allow trucks to completely pull in off Scott

- Street and drop the cab which results in a significantly quieter unload. The new loading dock can accommodate a 16.15 m (53 foot) trailer.
- All the mechanical and electrical systems were relocated from the west side of the site, the future site of the L-Tower, to the east side of the building in a three-story penthouse next to the stage tower. To accommodate the load, all the existing steel columns had to be reinforced and new cross-bracing added.
 - Prior to the demolition on the west side of the site, 400 exterior limestone panels were removed and put in storage for use in future repairs of the exterior façade since it is impossible to procure matching limestone replacements today. Similarly, 30 pieces of granite were saved from the balcony on the west side and stored for future repairs.
 - The Walls of Fame featuring photographs of all the artists who have previously performed at the Centre have been scanned and will be featured on screens located in the lower lobby.
 - The new Balcony Bar will open October 7th and operate Monday to Friday from 4 pm, and on weekends 2 hours prior to every performance.



The Seven Lively Arts Mural by R. York Wilson

The lobby of the Sony Centre For The Performing Arts is dominated by R. York Wilson's mural *The Seven Lively Arts*, a 15 ft x 100 ft panorama of the arts through the ages. At the time of its completion in 1960, it was the largest mural in Canada and deemed an important contribution to Canadian art. When the building opened, Peter Dickinson's futuristic O'Keefe Centre and York Wilson's glorious mural combined to achieve the perfect marriage of architecture and art.

R. York Wilson was selected for this project by a prestigious search committee headed by the renowned A. J. Casson from the Group of Seven. Wilson was exhibiting his paintings internationally and had completed several successful murals, most notably for the Redpath Library at Montreal's McGill University and the Imperial Oil Building in Toronto. Reviews of his work had catapulted him to the top of the Canadian art world. As Wilson was recognized for his modernist abstract style, his artistic vision was well suited with the building's architectural and interior design.

In the 1960s, Wilson was internationally renowned and his work flew off gallery walls and into private and corporate collections. In 1978, Marshall McLuhan wrote that his abstractions were "dramatic and majestic." The Uffizi Gallery in Florence commissioned Wilson to paint a self-portrait in 1981 to hang in its Vasari Corridor alongside such greats as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, making him one of only two Canadians to be so honoured (the other is David Blackwood). Before his death in 1984 at the age of 76, Wilson was acclaimed as one of Canada's greatest muralists.

Wilson's mural *The Seven Lively Arts* is made up of seven panels painted in an abstract, highly modernist style, each focusing on one of the lively arts, which include: painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, dance, drama.

Wilson included both early examples of each of the arts as well as major events in their evolution. The panel on architecture for example shows the Parthenon, a large Gothic church, a high rise from the 1950's and an interior of no particular period. The panel on literature shows an open book with, on the left page a man and woman (representing human relationships—a perennial literary theme) and on the right a sailing ship and an equestrian battle (representing the themes of adventure, travel and war). There is also a Chinese proverb by Confucius which means: "Learning without thought is labour lost; thought without learning is perilous."

The colours used in the mural were greatly influenced by the building's interior designer Herbert Irvine who ensured that the colours used in the painting would compliment the colours of the Carrera marble walls and carpets.

To create the mural, Wilson first made small colour paintings which were photographed and then projected onto the lobby walls, so that outlines could be made directly onto the wall. The work was done by York and two assistants, graduates from the Ontario College of Art (Robert Paterson and John Labonte-Smith).

In January 1960, shortly after Wilson and his assistants began to paint the mural onto the wall he was approached by the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America Union who informed him that he and his assistants could not continue their work unless they joined the union. They claimed that Wilson's work was completed when he finished the initial design and that by painting on the wall of the theatre he was entering into their jurisdiction. Their claim, which attracted a negative response around the world, nearly caused a strike which would have delayed further construction on the building. As Wilson refused to join, holding to his principles that artists should remain independent, a legal battle ensued, which Wilson won on Feb. 12, 1960 when the union, under considerable pressure, decided to drop its claim.

The painting was applied to the wall using a special type of polyvinyl acetate chosen by Wilson for its stability and colour permanence. Conservator Diane Falvey, who oversaw the cleaning of the mural in the late 1980's said Wilson was ahead of his time in his choice of material. After its cleaning, the mural looked as fresh as the day the building opened in 1960.

During the Sony Centre's recent two year restoration process, the mural was carefully covered as per the conservator's orders in order to protect it from damage. New lighting has been installed to make the mural's rich details more clearly visible.



The Sony Centre International Food Experience

The Sony Centre has partnered with Sodexo, a world leader in food services, to create a culinary experience that reflects and compliments the diversity of the onstage programming. Exclusive caterer of the Sony Centre, Sodexo brings an unparalleled level of expertise to enhance the patrons' dining experience. Prior to every show, Sodexo will offer an affordable menu featuring signature foods from the particular country showcased, such as Russia, Japan, or China. In addition, patrons will be able to enjoy specialty ABSOLUT cocktails at the new Balcony Bar. The Balcony Bar officially opens October 7 and will operate Monday through Friday beginning at 4 p.m.; and on weekends two hours prior to the start of the performance.

Stephen Lee, Executive Chef

Executive Chef Stephen M. Lee has been with Sodexo for over six years and prior to that he spent 20 years in the hotel, resort, and campus food industry in Southern Ontario. Most recently he was the Executive Sous Chef for Sodexo at the Whistler Olympic Village at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Chef Lee also spent three weeks this summer as a guest chef at The British Open in Scotland. Chef Lee won the distinguished award for Sodexo Chef of the year in 2009. Chef Lee lives in Burlington, Ontario with his wife of 23 years and two children.

Catered Events

Sony Centre For The Performing Arts is a premium venue for private functions of all varieties and offers full event management services. Sodexo specializes in planning and executing private events and corporate functions while catering to cultural and ethnic preferences with impeccable quality. With a completely new and renovated kitchen, menu development, décor coordination, and special requests fulfillment services, Sodexo can match the style, need, and budget of all types of events at the Sony Centre For The Performing Arts.

Whether corporate or individual, on a performance night or a dark night, the Catering team can offer several different spaces and set ups depending on the client's needs and objectives. For more information contact Scott North at 416-393-7466 or scott@sonycentre.ca .



About The Sony Centre For The Performing Arts

The Sony Centre For The Performing Arts is Canada's largest soft-seat theatre with a capacity of 3200, including standing room. Designated an historical site by the City of Toronto, the theatre opened on October 1st, 1960 as the O'Keefe Centre, and has played host to a tremendous variety of international stars of music, dance and theatre including legendary performers Julie Andrews, Richard Burton, Ethel Merman, Mickey Rooney, Sir Laurence Olivier, the Duke Ellington and Count Basie orchestras, Harry Belafonte, Yul Brynner, Dame Joan Sutherland, Marilyn Horne, Dame Margot Fonteyn, Rudolf Nureyev, and more recently, great contemporary artists including k.d. lang, Tragically Hip, LaLaLa Human Steps, Diana Krall, Harry Connick Jr. and Michael Bublé. In addition, the Centre was home to The National Ballet of Canada (1964-2006) and the Canadian Opera Company (1961-2006).

Following two years of renovations and restorations (2008-2010), the Sony Centre re-opens on October 1, 2010, exactly 50 years to the date of the building's very first opening night. The extensive renovations have restored the elegance and grandeur of the landmark modernist design of the original O'Keefe Centre. Many iconic features such as the theatre's marquee canopy and R. York Wilson's lobby mural "The Seven Lively Arts" have been preserved. Restoration of the wood, bronze and marble that were hallmarks of the original facility have been undertaken, along with improved audience seating, new washrooms, a new catering kitchen, and re-configured lobby spaces housing a new art gallery, and the new Balcony Bar. A favourite of visitors in the past, the Walls of Fame featuring photographs of all the artists who previously performed at the Centre have been scanned and will be featured on video screens located in the lower lobby.

State-of-the-art technology provided by Sony Canada Ltd. throughout the venue will further enhance the theatre experience. In addition to the latest Sony Bravia® panels, visitors will see cutting-edge multimedia technologies such as the new Sony Ziris Canvas in the main foyer of the Centre. Comprised of 21 screens, this video wall is the largest installation of its kind in North America. In the north-west corner of the renovated building, visitors can explore more Sony technologies in a new Sony retail store. Also in the main lobby, just steps away from the store, visitors can view the latest 3D technology shown on an impressive 3D wall.

As it embarks on its 50th Anniversary Season, the new **Sony Centre** promises to be a nexus of arts, culture and technology, bringing performances to Toronto that reflect the diversity and sophistication of 21st century Toronto audiences.