

## MONTREAL CONCERT HALL OPENS SEPTEMBER 7th

TORONTO – Music lovers rejoice. Montreal has a new sound: a concert hall for our times where musical expression can be seen and heard in comfort and style. The Montreal Concert Hall adds a new dimension to the city's dynamic cultural identity and completes the downtown arts complex, Place des Arts, with an inviting and engaging structure that is every bit a part of the life around it.

Diamond and Schmitt Architects with Aedifica Architects, and a team of acousticians and consultants re-interpret the rectangular 'shoe-box' theatre configuration with an intimate three-balcony, 1900-seat auditorium designed principally for symphonic use. The new home of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and other arts groups is an initiative of the Quebec Government and developed by Groupe immobilier Ovation, a subsidiary of SNC-Lavalin.

Lead architect Jack Diamond creates a dynamic sense of occasion for the concert-going experience. The hall is accessible from the street, from the plaza as well as the subway, and beckons with a double-height reception room, side lobbies and a strong visual sense of the activity within through extensive glazed curtainwall.

"This transparency both respects the prime position of the hall at the terminus of a major artery and anticipates the contrast of entering the opaque auditorium," says Diamond, Principal with Diamond and Schmitt Architects, whose portfolio of international performing arts projects includes the Four Seasons Centre in Toronto and the Mariinsky Theatre now underway in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The building expresses a reverence for sound where the gentle overlapping curves of the auditorium's wood-lined walls extend above the roofline to reveal the same sculpted forms that shape the very musical dimension of the hall. "There is nothing arbitrary about the design; it is a true display of the architecture of sound," says Diamond.

Design excellence extends to the details that ensure audience comfort, clear sightlines and supreme acoustics. The hall is a soundproof 'box-within-a-box' that is separated from the surrounding public lobbies and rehearsal rooms and rests on rubber and steel pads that inhibit unwanted vibration and noise from entering the room.

"It's all about the musical experience," adds Matthew Lella, Project Architect with Diamond and Schmitt. "A monochromatic palette of colours creates a calm, cohesive and elegant environment in the hall to draw the audience's attention to natural, unamplified performances."

Mr. Diamond, in collaboration with Aedifica and Cassavant Frères, designed the striking array of organ pipes that grace the wall behind the stage. The result is a bold, confident composition, an asymmetry of exuberant diagonals, which – like the concert hall itself – is a contemporary expression of the fundamental forms that have served the best concert halls the world over.

Diamond and Schmitt Architects ([www.dsai.ca](http://www.dsai.ca)) is a leading Canadian full-service architectural practice. The firm is recognized for its award-winning portfolio of performing arts centres, academic and research buildings, commercial, residential and health care institutions.

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A complete description of the Montreal Concert Hall and follows in the Backgrounder.

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