



Meervaart: Theatre and Conference Centre

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

History

The Meervaart was built as a community centre and theater in the district Osdorp, an urban expansion designed in the 1950's and 60's. It opened its doors in 1975, and was an immediate success. The cultural centre had an open plan, and housed a 450 seat multifunctional theater space, an art-film house seating 120, and branches of the public library, the school of music and a creativity centre. Thanks to progressive theater programming and live talk-shows that were broadcasted on national television, fame of the Meervaart spread wider than the local community. A strong mix of theatre and music festivals attracted an audience from all over the region,

and to finance all the cultural activities the building was used as a congress centre during weekdays. Due to this extensive use and the vast audiences, the building with the open floor plan soon became unworkable. Pupils from the school of music interfered with the attendants of commercial congresses, and sounds from the theatre disturbed the public library. And vice versa. After 15 years planning for alterations and extensions began.

Project

In 1994 Zaenen Spanjers cs was selected as architect for what then was to be an extension of the



existing building. The firm was known for its experience in building for theatre and renovation and re-use of old buildings, such as the world famous 'Beurs van Berlage' in Amsterdam, which became a concert hall. In a process of sketching, calculating and conceiving a program, architects and Client worked closely together and draw up a plan that ultimately existed of a total renewal of the old building, leaving only a part of the concrete frame as a starting point for the design.

The new building includes a 840 seat main auditorium with a fully equipped stage area, a 300 seat studio theatre, 10 additional conference rooms in various sizes, as well as foyers, catering facilities etc. Also the public library and the school of music got there own expanded spaces and separate entrances, enabling them to function autonomous.

Still, it was the aim of the designers to bring back some of the old buildings flexibility into the new design. Therefore the main auditorium is designed as a flat-floor hall with a fixed balcony and side balconies. Specially designed retractable tribunes with full comfort retractable seating provide two main seating plans; with low risers for musical and opera, and with higher risers for drama and ballet shows. Also, the tribunes can be fully removed using air cushion lifting system

(and stalled underneath the main stage). Then, the back wall of the auditorium can be fully opened to connect the auditorium and the foyer, thus creating an open space capable of housing 2000 spectators for pop-concerts and the like.

The studio theatre is located above the entrance hall, and has a 12 meter wide and 7 meter high window on the back stage, overlooking a large pond. With this window the natural scenery and sunsets can be used as a

set-design, but of course the window can also be fully blacked-out to provide a more intimate theatre atmosphere. Thanks to this window the black-box theatre can also be used for receptions, parties and a range of other activities.

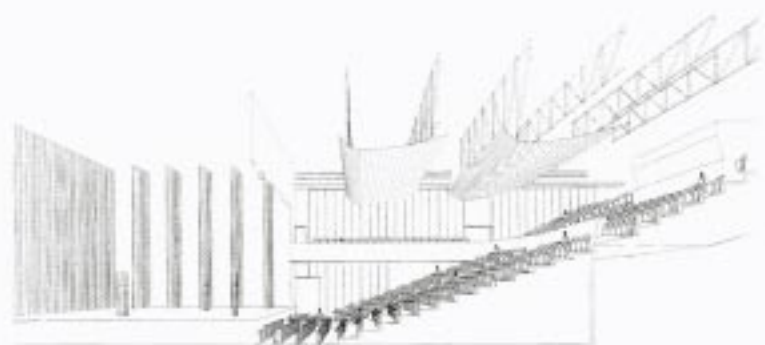
Facilities for congresses in various sizes of up to 800 people are available, including break-out rooms, catering facilities, multi-media equipment etc.

The interior design is adopted to accommodate all the different audiences, varying from a small scale drama audience or commercial congress to a large scale pop-concert audience. Natural and strong materials are used for floor and wall coverings, providing a warm atmosphere and yet a durable finish.

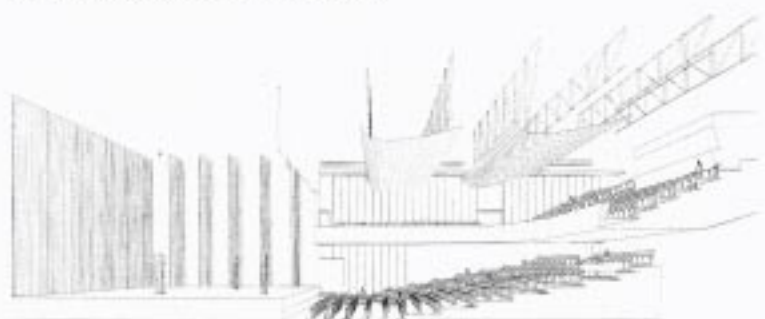
Much attention has been given to acoustics and acoustic isolation of the building, as the main programming of the theatre is music and musical productions. Also, the new school of music is equipped for the study of amplified instruments, including three fully isolated pop-studio's.

The new Meervaart opened in september

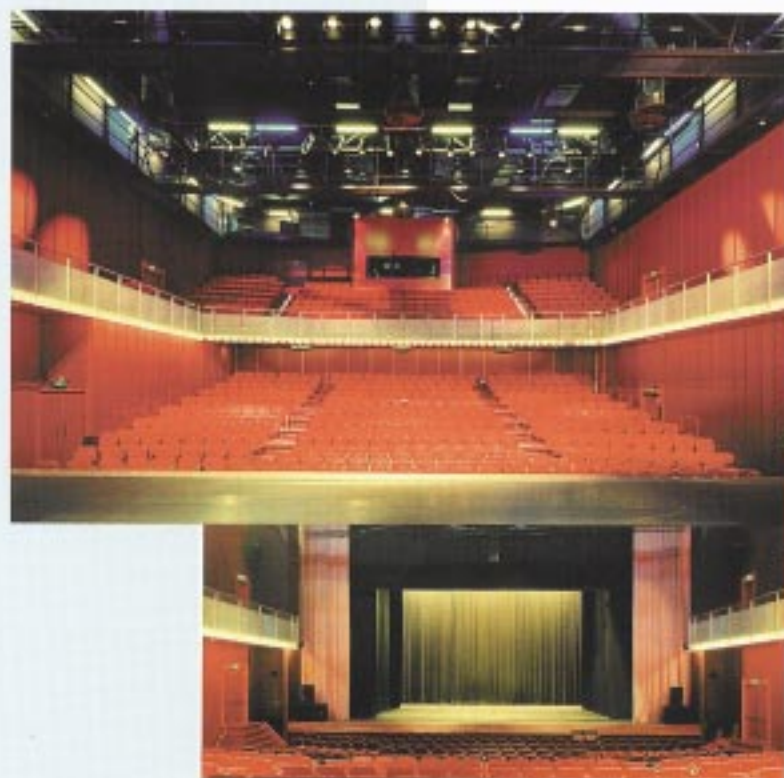
1999.



Doorsnede over theateropstelling A



Doorsnede over theateropstelling B



Projectdata

Design	1994 - 1997
Construction	1998 - 1999
Construction costs	ca. € 10.000.000,00 (1999)
Gross Area:	ca. 9000 m ²
Client:	Stichting de Meervaart and ING Vastgoed Ontwikkeling BV
Architect:	BV Zaanen Spanjers Architecten BNA BNI
project architects:	Kees Spanjers and Gerrit Goudkuil
Interior design:	BV Zaanen Spanjers Architecten BNA BNI Kees Spanjers and Radboud van Beekum
Acoustics and building physics:	Adviesbureau Peutz and Associates BV Ir. Rob Metkemeijer
Mechanical Engineer:	Boer en Post BV
Construction Engineer:	Ingenieursbureau Zonneveld BV
Theatre technical engineering:	BV Zaanen Spanjers Architecten BNA BNI and technical staff de Meervaart
Stage equipment and flies	Stakebrand BV
Retractable seating:	Jezet Seating

Technical Data main stage:

Surface of stage:	22 meter wide x 14 meter depth
Orchestra pit:	20 meter wide x 3 meter depth
Proscenium opening:	19 meter wide x 9 meter high (max.)
Sidestage left:	6 meter wide x 8 meter high
Sidestage right:	3 meter wide x 8 meter high
rear stage:	33 meter wide x 6 meter depth x 8 meter high
Fly facilities:	42 computer controled mechanical flies, 19 m. lifting hight
Fly tower:	22 m wide x 14 m depth x 22 m high Lighting towers (manteaux) and electric spot bar, 3 lighting bridges in auditorium 200 dimmers (2,5 kw 220 V) Compulight console Apogee sound system with Soundcraft mixing console Infra red system

Technical data studio theatre:

Area:	14 x 25 meter, stage 14 (w) x 12 (d) meter, retrac table seating area 14 x 13 meter. Hight 7 meters under lighting bridges, 9,5 meter total hight.
Lighting bridges:	grid with 5 bridges
Fly facilities:	10 mechanical flies, 9 meter lifting height
Sound system:	Apogee with Soundcraft console
Light:	72 dimmers (2,5 kw 220V) BEO, Photon and Spark console

