

OBERLIN

COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

Office of Conservatory Communications

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Westlake Reed Leskosky Recognized by Chapters of American Institute of Architects; Building Scheduled to Open May 2010

Editors Please Note: Effective April 22, 2010, the Litoff Building was renamed.

Oberlin's new home for jazz studies, music history, and music theory is now the Bertram and Judith Kohl Building.

OBERLIN, OHIO (December 4, 2009) — Even before it is completed, the new Litoff Building at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, is being recognized by chapters of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for its design excellence and sustainability.

The design of the Litoff Building by Westlake Reed Leskosky is being honored with the AIA Western Mountain Region 2009 Honor Award for Unbuilt Work. In conjunction with an overall master plan for the future growth of the Oberlin conservatory, the project has also been cited with awards of merit in the 2007 AIA Ohio Design Awards and AIA Cleveland Design Awards in the unbuilt categories.

When it opens in May 2010, the Litoff Building will serve as the innovative home for the Oberlin Conservatory of Music's acclaimed Department of Jazz Studies and its highly respected academic programs in music history and music theory. The building features a world-class recording studio; flexible rehearsal and performance spaces; teaching studios and practice rooms; a glass-enclosed social hub for interaction; and an archive for the largest private jazz recording collection in America, rare musical instruments, and a rare collection of jazz photographs from the 1950s, among other holdings.

The new three-story building inhabits a former back lot shared by the conservatory and downtown retail merchants in the city of Oberlin. By re-establishing the founding axis of Oberlin, an entirely new precedent is created on campus. As a complement to the campus setting and gardens of the existing conservatory, this project focuses on making a street for public engagement, and a new building dense with activity.

Physical, visual, and intellectual access shapes the design. The component parts of the building all work in the service of providing these varied but complementary ways of entering the project. It is formally composed of three basic elements: an aluminum exterior which wraps and encloses the programmatic elements, and is cut and peeled away to create openings and bring daylight and views into the building; the third floor volume of 'offices within a garden;' and a vertical circulation system, both internal and external, that invites engagement with the building. The building's ability to house and facilitate innovation will be its measure of success.

Cleveland-based architects and engineers Westlake Reed Leskosky have designed the 37,000 square foot project to meet its challenging program goals as well as the high standards for environmental stewardship and sustainability that are central to Oberlin College's mission. The Litoff Building promotes green building practices and sustainable strategies and planning opportunities; including geothermal heating and cooling with radiant panels, energy efficient systems and lighting, roof gardens, storm water run-off collection and filtration, and the use of local, recycled, and sustainably harvested materials. Its design intention—to achieve the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold rating for a facility exclusively dedicated to

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music—is remarkable given the engineering innovation required to attain such an appellation while meeting the exacting acoustical standards of a music building. The Litoff Building will serve as a pioneering model for sustainability and energy efficiency for music facilities of its type with stringent acoustical requirements.

The project is the result of the exemplary collaboration of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, an internationally renowned professional music school that is consistently cited as one of the nation's most environmentally responsible schools, and Westlake Reed Leskosky, a nationally recognized integrated architectural and sustainable engineering design practice with award-winning specialization in cultural arts.

Dean of the Conservatory David H. Stull says: "The Litoff Building will be the premier facility of its kind anywhere in the world. It is brilliantly conceived to emulate who we are and what we stand for. It is about bringing us together, pursuing great art, fostering harmony within our community, and reminding all of us of the imperative need to steward our environment. It will constantly inspire us in our mission to seek perfection while achieving excellence. It is highly innovative in both form and function, which is emblematic of the conservatory's approach to all of its endeavors."

"This is the single most important project undertaken at the Oberlin Conservatory since the construction of the music building almost 50 years ago," says Associate Dean of the Conservatory Michael Lynn. "Its significance speaks to our commitment to jazz education in a powerful and compelling way. In the Litoff Building, we now have the facilities to match the high quality of teaching and the students in our program."

Paul E. Westlake, FAIA, managing principal and a lead designer of Westlake Reed Leskosky, says: "Oberlin College has remarkable values. There is a conspiracy of excellence in its processes and people. Innovation is embedded in the DNA and culture of Oberlin. The college has an environmental soul and conscience that is exemplary, creating models and initiatives that will have meaningful impact locally and nationally."

Jonathan C. Kurtz, associate and project designer at Westlake Reed Leskosky, speaks to the importance of strategically creating places for "intellectual loitering" and the "assembly of creative ideas."

"The Litoff Building heightens Oberlin's visionary approach to education," says Kurtz. "It will make the conservatory education visible and provide new opportunities for the daily life of students. The goal is that the students, faculty, and community have a physical place of exchange; that the building and landscape generate unforeseeable interactions and elevate everyday experience."

The \$24 million project, which includes specialized equipment and an endowment, honors Wendell Logan, professor of African American music and chair of the jazz studies department, and the late Phyllis Litoff, New York City jazz impresario, to whom the lead gift from alumnus Stewart Kohl and his wife Donna pays tribute. Among other key donor organizations and individuals are the Kulas Foundation, Chicago-based alumni Clyde McGregor and Joseph Clonick, jazz recording collectors James and Susan Neumann, and jazz photographer Frank Kuchirchuk.

As part of the collaborative team, GroundView of Somerville, Mass. has served as landscape architect, working together with Westlake Reed Leskosky to create synergies between the building and the landscape and to integrate both into the campus and urban fabric. Kirkegaard Acoustic Design of Downers Grove, Ill. worked closely with the conservatory and Westlake Reed Leskosky to achieve a highly creative, sustainable and cost effective acoustic environment.

PCS of Cleveland provided cost estimating services. Krill Construction of Cleveland, Ohio is general contractor for the project.

About the Oberlin Conservatory of Music

The Oberlin Conservatory of Music, founded in 1865 and situated amid the intellectual vitality of Oberlin College since 1867, is the oldest continuously operating conservatory in the United States. Renowned internationally as a professional music school of the highest caliber and pronounced a “national treasure” by the Washington Post, its alumni have gone on to achieve illustrious careers in all aspects of the music world. For more information about Oberlin, its commitment to environmental sustainability, and the Litoff Building, please visit www.oberlin.edu/litoff.

About Westlake Reed Leskosky

Westlake Reed Leskosky (www.WRLdesign.com) is based in Cleveland, Ohio, with studios in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Phoenix, Ariz. The firm bases success and growth on comprehensive building design services with building specialization in cultural, educational, healthcare, and work place environments. This expertise is delivered using Building Information Modeling with highly integrated specialized capabilities of structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing engineering, LEED/sustainable design, interior design, data transport/IT and technology design, security design, theatre technical services, acoustical, audiovisual and lighting design, assistance in historic and new markets tax credits, and cultural arts planning.

Widely published, the firm has been recognized with more than 200 design awards in the past 10 years, including numerous American Institute of Architects chapter awards, several honors from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, United States Institute for Theatre Technology, and International Downtown Association for cultural arts projects, a General Services Administration Design Award, the National Endowment for the Arts Federal Design Achievement Award for work with the National Park Service, and design and industry publication awards.

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