

PERFORMANCE SPACE

Center stage

The Greece Central School District, North Greece, N.Y., began a 20-building, five-year capital-improvement project in May 2000. The flagship of the project was the performing-arts center addition to Athena High School/Middle School.

The Athena Performing Arts Center houses four large vocal/instrumental rehearsal spaces, a voice studio, a dance studio, two music-theory classrooms and an auditorium that seats 1,664 people. Dressing rooms, scenery shops, costume shops and support spaces have been provided to accommodate special star events and large school-based productions.

Theatrical systems such as motorized rigging and select sound reinforcement were installed to maximize safety and flexibility. An orchestra lift allows the apron of the stage to function at various heights and a full orchestra to bolster theatrical performances without becoming the focus.

The addition was situated to untangle traffic patterns and to allow zoned access of the facility from public to private. Circulation through the lobby was designed to create a zigzag traffic pattern that would look like a



Athena Performing Arts Center, North Greece, N.Y.

Photo courtesy of David Revette Photography, Inc.

dance when viewed from outside.

The grounds surrounding the building were landscaped to accommodate runoff requirements by allowing a slow release into the municipal storm system. This creates educational opportunities for science classes to study the system.

The architect is The Thomas Group (Ithaca, N.Y.).

ATHLETIC FACILITY

A fresh look

The 23,580-square-foot physical-education building at Raritan Valley Community College, North Branch, N.J., had unfinished concrete walls and ceilings that created reverberation levels so high that unintelligible sound was produced at athletic events. Dim lighting and bland architecture added to the unappealing environment.

The architect saw potential for the space itself to work as an architectural element. Using the ceiling's grid of concrete T-beams as a framework, the architect installed a series of bowed acoustical panels, wrapping their curved fiberglass forms in sailcloth over the gym and moisture-resistant PVC above the pool.

Ambient illumination was created with glass pendant fixtures. Accent lights were installed inside wall recesses, turning them into light wells. For the pool, in addition to pendants, the walkway was lined with lamps and the walls behind the bleachers with sconces. Translucent tubing was projected along an internal reflector to provide an even glow.



Raritan Valley Community College, North Branch, N.J.

Photo courtesy of Mark La Rosa

The floors were clad in a standard poured rubber ideal for basketball games, and the bleachers by the pool were epoxy-coated to prevent spectators from slipping.

The architect is Peter Johnston Architect, PC (Hoboken, N.J.). ■