

# WHY MASONRY?

*CASE  
STUDY*



**TUTOR FAMILY CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS**  
**CHAMINADE COLLEGE PREPARATORY – CHATSWORTH, CA**



**Supplier:** Angelus Block Co., Inc.

**Architect:** JPDarling Associates

**Owner:** Chaminade College Preparatory

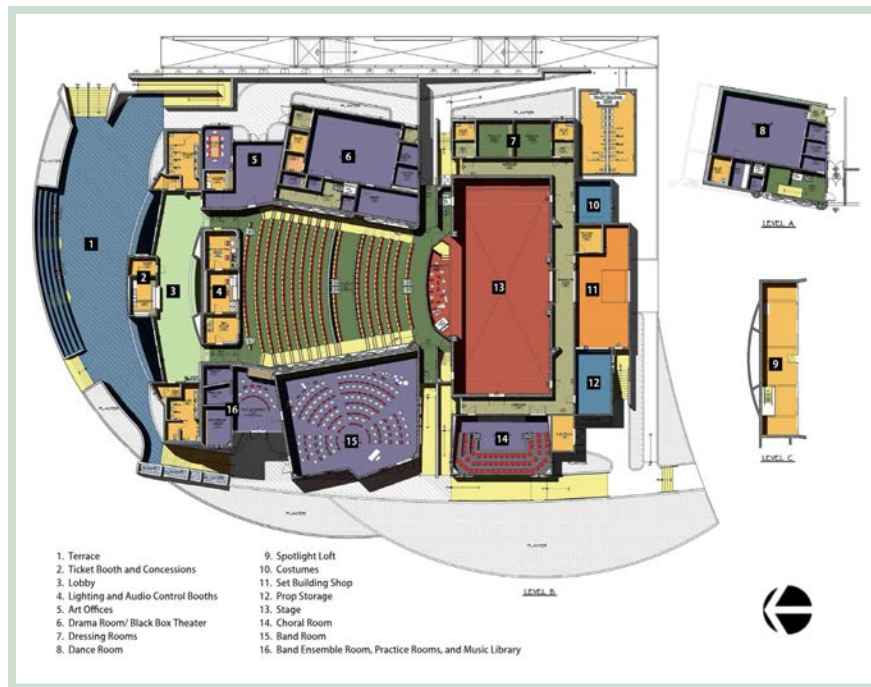
**General Contractor:** EPI

**Mason:** Nibbelink Masonry Construction

**Structural Engineering Firm:** STB

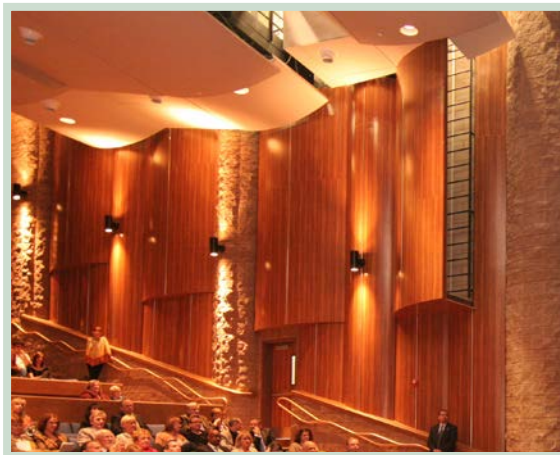
**The newly opened Tutor Family Center for the Performing Arts has become the signature building for the West Hills high school campus of Chaminade College Preparatory. For the past fifty years, the school's performing arts program used the cafeteria to hold stage plays, recitals and concerts, converting back to a cafeteria between performances. The new 23,000 square foot center now provides a permanent home for the performing arts students and faculty as well as a venue for many of the school functions formerly held in the gymnasium.**

The building plan of the Performing Arts Center was developed for a constricted site that sloped eighteen feet from front to back and an average of twelve feet laterally, from the existing adjacent buildings to the street. The optimum auditorium sight lines were determined to be less than the slope differential so a transitional amphitheater with a gathering terrace was utilized at the main entrance.



The project goal was to have each classroom of the Performing Arts Center be an independent teaching station for each of the institution's performing arts curriculum. The resulting plan allowed use of all the classrooms individually and simultaneously, without opening the main auditorium. This allowed for maximum building use interface and flexibility, with the added benefit of sound isolation by solid masonry walls, of each use from the adjacent space and from the auditorium proper.

The main auditorium was programmed for more varied uses than stage plays and music so a standard theater-type suspended "cloud" ceiling was replaced with a solid sculpted ceiling. The ceiling design has curved elements that are sound reflectors with concealed sound absorptive materials on the flat planes. Since many intended functions require the house lights to be lit during the performance, the rolling ceiling adds visual drama to the space.





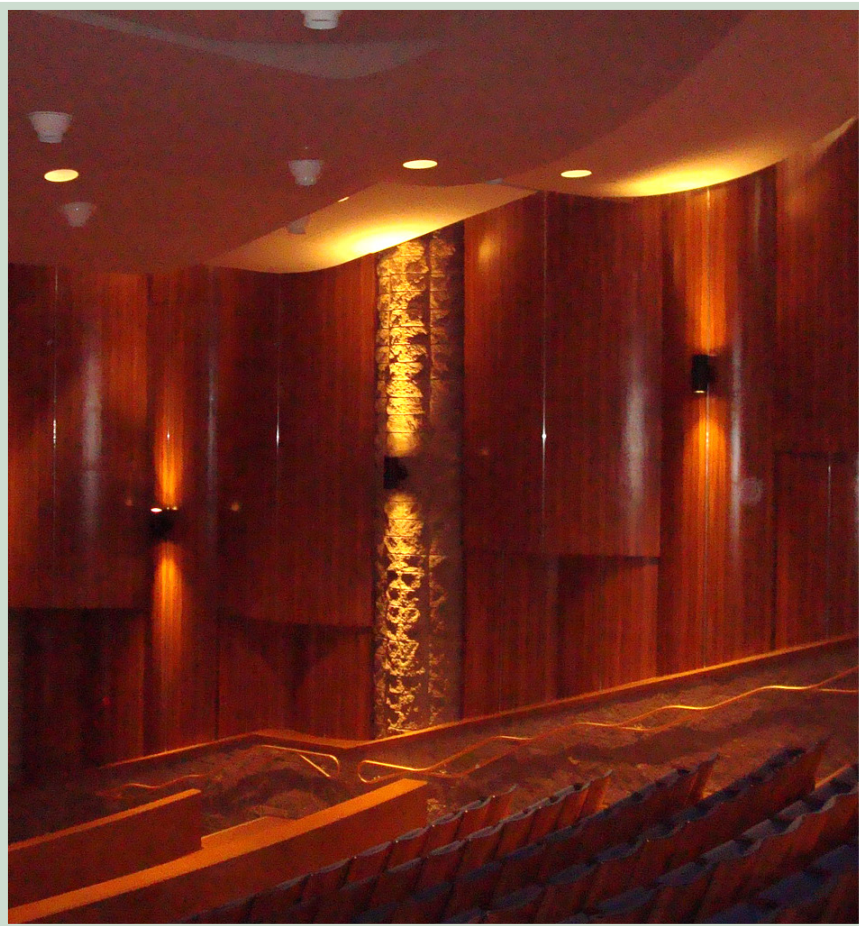


## Why Masonry?

The nature of student activity on a high school campus is a natural testament for the use of integral color masonry blocks for its initial and ongoing durability and rustic beauty.

The modulated exterior elevations were derived from designing the exterior walls only as high as they needed to be for the interior use. The building outer elements “step” down the hill with the main auditorium anchoring the assemblage at its central core and splaying the adjacent secondary structures away from the higher auditorium walls.

The split face masonry block elements in differing configurations provided the necessary acoustic, structural and most importantly the aesthetic character of the building. With the ability to use the same structural block for the site retaining walls and the various planters and stairs, the split face masonry produced a cohesive and tightly grouped architectural statement.



The stage house height of over sixty-five feet was constructed of twelve and sixteen inch wide masonry units built with 4-score block centered on three sides of the stage structure to alleviate a high, broad and plain expanse of masonry on the exterior. The stage house, with catwalks and scene rigging, required interior clear height roughly two and half times the proscenium opening. The masonry wall spans between interior concrete structural columns that delineate the proscenium arch upstage and the overhead access door backstage.

The split face masonry recurs on the interior of the auditorium with structural elements of built up, split face columns alternating with wood veneer acoustical wall undulations. The auditorium and the public spaces leading to the theater proper, use many of the exterior masonry design cues that repeat and reinforce the architectural rhythm of the exterior.



## Additional Photos

