

BUDDY HOLLY HALL OF PERFORMING ARTS & SCIENCES

LUBBOCK, TEXAS

PROJECT PROFILE

Wenger® | RCLANCY
CREATIVITY OF ENGINEERING



CUSTOM DIVA® ACOUSTICAL SHELLS

“These acoustical shells help elevate our facility to world-class status, both in aesthetics and acoustics.”

- Charlton Northington,
General Manager Buddy Holly Hall



CHALLENGE

Design, build and install two acoustical shells in new performing arts center.

WENGER SOLUTION

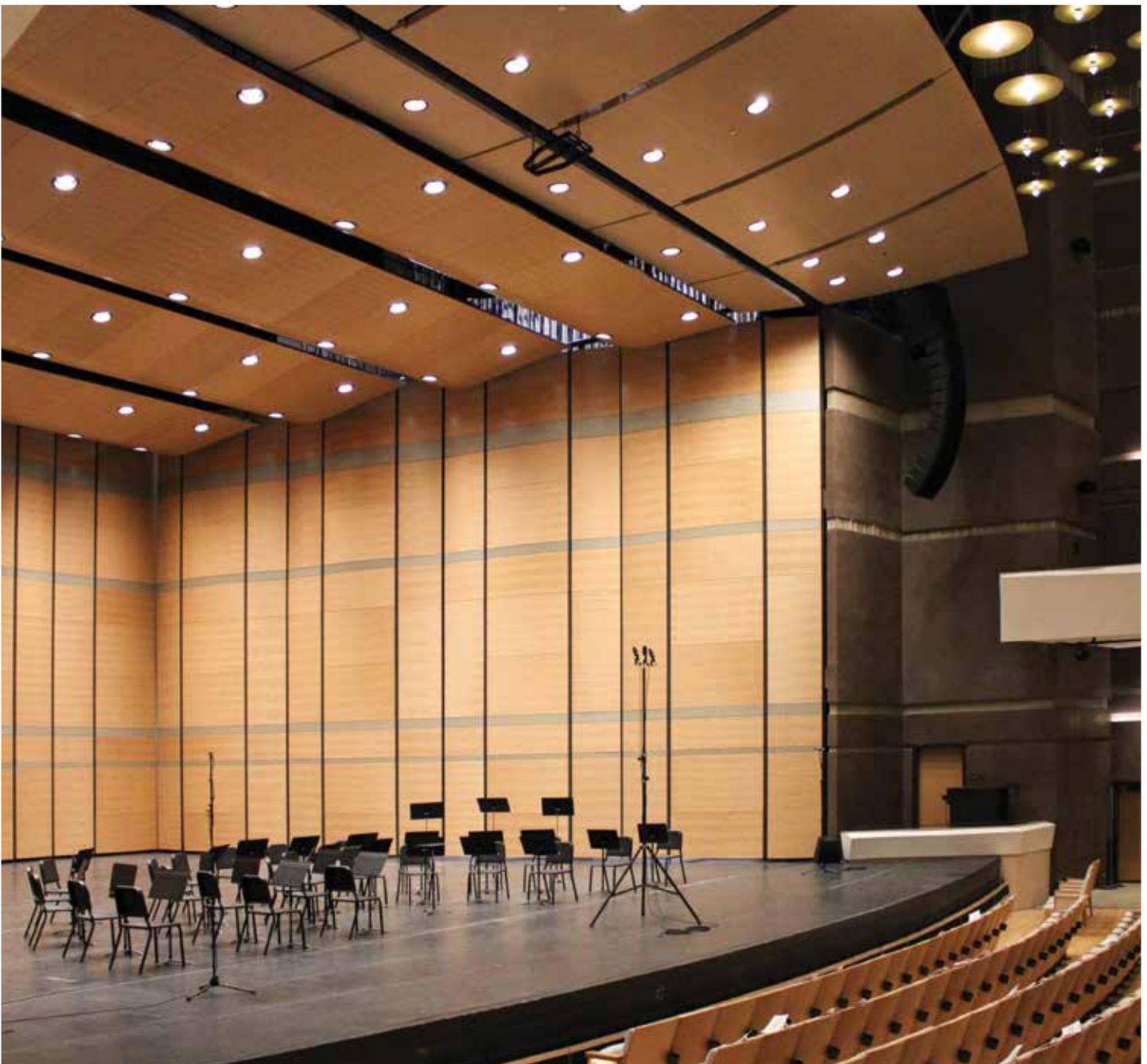
Provided the Helen DeVitt Jones Theater and Crickets Theater at Buddy Holly Hall with custom Diva Acoustical Shells to maximize aesthetics and versatility while ensuring premium acoustics for performers and audience members alike. Also outfitted the theaters with seated risers, chairs and conductor's equipment to help the performers flourish.

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BENEFITS

- Aesthetic features visually coordinate with hall design
- Acoustical support aids audience and onstage performers
- Flexible setup options offer versatility for various events
- Compact storage footprint maximizes limited space
- Advanced LED lighting enhances visibility and conserves energy
- Custom doors and cutouts access power and A/V panels



HIGHLIGHTS

"We believed the Diva shells would meet and exceed our expectations – and they certainly have," says Rick Wilczak, Vice President, Design & Construction, with Garfield Public/Private LLC, the development firm behind the Buddy Holly Hall of Performing Arts and Sciences (BHH), which opened in Lubbock, Texas, in early 2021. BHH's two theaters – 2,297-seat and 415-seat – each feature a Diva® acoustical shell.

From the project's onset through completion of the punch list, Wilczak praised his experience working with Wenger. "Anytime I needed information or required clarification, Wenger's staff was always there to assist," he remarks. "Even during the installation phase, Wenger's efforts were exceptional."

He also complimented Wenger's expertise designing, fabricating and installing the two shells, adding that the audience reaction to the completed theaters and shells has been "astounding".

Charlton Northington, BHH's General Manager, agrees. "These acoustical shells help elevate our facility to world-class status, both in aesthetics and acoustics," he says. BHH is owned by the Lubbock Entertainment / Performing Arts Association (LEPAA) and managed by ASM Global.

"Community-based performing arts centers like BHH are a growing trend we're seeing in smaller cities like Lubbock," notes Michael Lukasik, Senior Associate with Diamond Schmitt Architects (DSA). On the BHH project, Lukasik teamed with colleague Matthew Lella, Principal, who supervised DSA's activities.

Maximizing BHH's aesthetics and versatility within a fixed budget was a top priority; Lukasik praised the project team's creative solutions and teamwork. "We found solutions that kept all the players satisfied, which was sometimes challenging," he recalls.

Making Connections: Main Theater

In the Helen DeVitt Jones Main Theater (DJV), the walls of the audience chamber feature undulating patterns of horizontal stripes, right up to the proscenium. These physical reveals, which aid in high-frequency sound diffusion, flatten out as they approach the stage. Onstage, they continue as silver-stained horizontal stripes inlaid into the acoustical shell towers' white oak veneer.

"The audience chamber's walls seemingly melt into the shell," explains Lukasik. "The design intent of this visual connection was accomplished beautifully – the performance space almost becomes an appendage of the audience chamber."

Above the proscenium, the visual effect is similar. The shell's ceiling panels blend into the two large reflectors of the audience chamber that help frame the shell. Numerous discussions about the complex technical requirements of the forestage area facilitated properly accommodating lighting fixtures for the shell.

When fully deployed, the DJV shell consists of four towers on each side, four along the back wall, and four rows of ceiling panels. The shell's size can also be adjusted to suit smaller ensembles or solo performers.

While the audience can see the visual link between the shell and house, they can also clearly hear the acoustical connection between the spaces – on the main level and all three balconies. The shell is an integral part of the theater's fully adjustable acoustic system that also includes acoustical banners. Onstage, the shell also improves communication among the musicians.

The acoustical consultant was Jaffe Holden; Associate Principal Carlos Rivera spearheaded the project. "Wenger was integral to the success of Buddy Holly Hall," he comments. "Their familiarity with Diva shells enabled them to make creative suggestions based on their manufacturing capabilities and feasibility."

For example, Rivera recalled how Wenger helped achieve enhanced airflow through the stage, which the project's mechanical engineer requested. Wenger provided critical input about how to subtly implement openings, including designing elongated trim strips where the towers meet and slightly raising the shell's height off the stage floor. "These solutions enabled additional airflow without compromising acoustical performance or sightlines," he explains.

The shell's ceiling panels feature built-in Lieto™ light fixtures, which Rivera believes offer acoustical advantages. "The brighter LED light means fewer fixtures are required," he explains. "This reduces the number of ceiling openings, helping maintain the panels' integrity from a reflectivity standpoint."

The large size of the DVJ Diva towers – each 34' tall – was partly dictated by the hall's three balconies and Lubbock Symphony Orchestra's unique arrangement that includes platforms for woodwinds and brass; they also occasionally perform with a large chorus. In performance position, each tower opens to be 12.5' wide. In storage position, the dozen towers nest in an upstage area measuring only 143 square feet.

"We were pushing the limits with these towers," Rivera explains. "But we were confident the shell could be executed successfully and safely -- both its constructability and operation." He adds, "Wenger leveraged their expertise and experience providing acoustical shells all over the world."

Providing Access: Studio Theater

The smaller venue, the Crickets Theater (CT), was designed primarily for local Lubbock ISD students, providing them an accessible, high-quality venue to learn to practice and perform all aspects of performing arts, including technical production, from concerts to competitions. Rivera's goal was an acoustically supportive environment that enabled instructors and students to hear each other clearly.

For several reasons, including easier setup and turnover, the design team chose to permanently mount the CT shell's rear towers to the upstage wall; curtains cover them when not needed. As in the larger theater, this shell's side walls are comprised of movable towers for flexibility.

This permanent mounting presented some challenges for accessing necessary electrical outlets and A/V panels on the back wall. Kimberly Corbett Oates, Partner with theater consultant Schuler Shook, believes the solution was successfully accomplished: a combination of cutouts and doors built into the shell.

"These cutouts were a very technical element and a good example of how the project team successfully collaborated," she states. Corbett Oates recalled a jobsite team meeting where important goals and design criteria for these panels were identified. "Wenger took that input and recommended options that would best maintain the towers' structural and acoustical requirements," she notes.

Aesthetically, to provide some uniformity and masking of the CT fly loft, particularly for the first few seating rows, Wenger implemented a unique, pivoting front fascia panel on the downstage-most ceiling panel.

"Neither of these shells were simple off-the-shelf items," Corbett Oates concludes.

"But past experience gave us confidence that Wenger could deliver high-quality products to meet each venue's specific needs."

PRODUCT LIST

Custom Diva® Acoustical Shells, StageTek® Seated Risers, Nota® Premier Chairs, Student Chairs, Move & Store Carts, Conductor's Chairs and Acoustical Shields.

ABOUT WENGER | J.R. CLANCY

Wenger and J.R. Clancy provide the widest array of innovative, high-quality products and services for the performing arts industry. Their advanced products provide the highest levels of safety, reliability and aesthetics, helping transform performance venues and engineer unforgettable experiences.



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