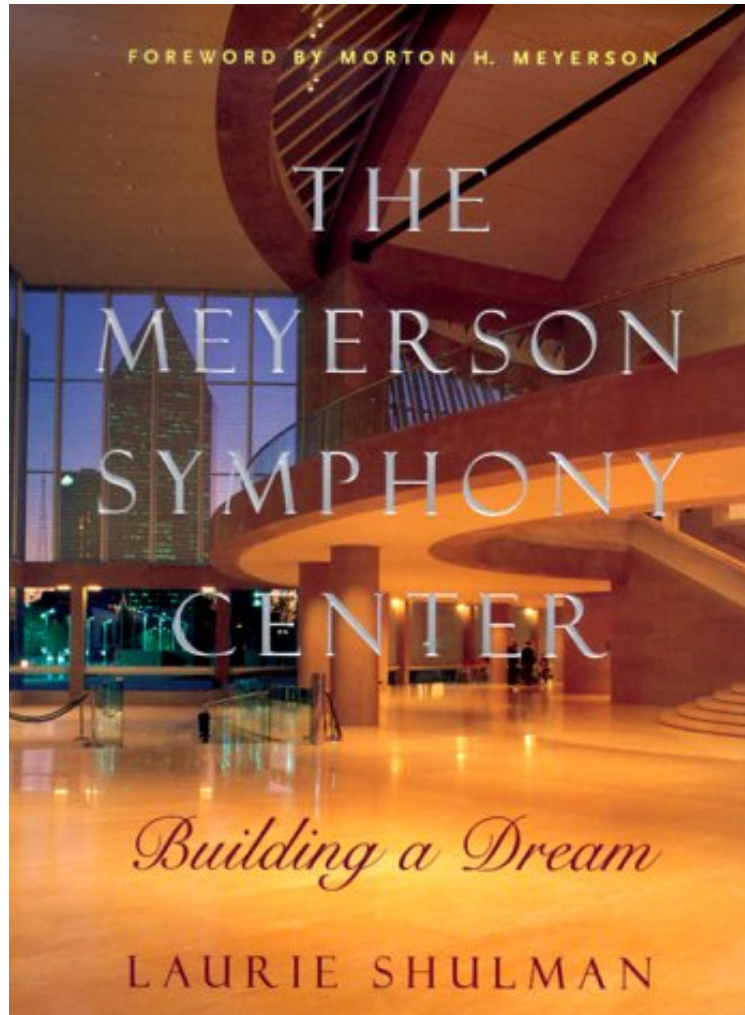


(Free) The Meyerson Symphony Center: Building a Dream

The Meyerson Symphony Center: Building a Dream

Laurie Shulman

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Laurie Shulman : The Meyerson Symphony Center: Building a Dream before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Meyerson Symphony Center: Building a Dream:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great Book for a Great Achievement in Concert Hall DesignBy ShooshieThe Meyerson Symphony Center is amazing in more ways than I can count. Fortunately, Laurie Shulman counted them. Her book is an excellent accounting for how this wonder among concert halls came to be. Hall design had been locked into a "too expensive to fail" dilemma, whereby the basics were copied from principles originated between 1900 and 1925. They were made large for economic reasons; more people meant more tickets, which meant more revenue. Big fan-shaped halls, unfortunately sounded terrible. Dallas gambled on an acoustician (Russell Johnson) who had devoted his life to studying why halls work or fail. He had come up with some revolutionary designs, and the Dallas hall would be his first chance to combine them all into a fabulous building.Dallas is a football

town, so getting the money for the hall took more than the regular philanthropy. It became a huge political issue. The city spends ten times more on sports arenas, but by anyone's accounting the final cost of the Meyerson Symphony Center was astounding in 1988. (over \$80 million) Political futures dangled in the balance. If the revolutionary designs didn't work, this would be a flop of inconceivable proportions. But Johnson stood solid on his designs, and the DSO board backed him. The gamble paid off. It worked. The hall revolutionized acoustics and new halls based on such designs began popping up around the world like mushrooms. Now another hall--an opera hall--is going up right next door to the Meyerson, presumably based on similar principles. The story of this hall reads like a thriller. It's a page-turner, and a hard book to put down. Knowing the locals who are in the book perhaps makes it more interesting to me, but if I didn't know a single name, I'd still find the book every bit as suspenseful and informative. Even knowing that the building was finished, and having heard many concerts there, there were times in the book during which I found myself worried that they wouldn't finish it! Shulman's story is painstakingly researched, and like its subject, beautifully presented. For anyone who is interested in symphony orchestra management, arts and cultural politics, or in acoustics and the story of a hall that breathed life into concert hall design after 100 years of stagnation, this book is a must-read. In addition, it is a beautiful book, and one that any book lover would be proud to own. As for the hall itself, I shall never forget the inaugural concert in which the great cellist Mstislav Rostropovich performed a movement from a Bach Cello Suite. As his bow gripped the last few vibrations of the string, everyone in the hall heard it, including Rostropovich, who grinned ear to ear like a little boy, stood up and applauded the hall and Dallas for building it. He'd just performed in the newest of the world's great halls, and it excited him to hear such perfection. I'd heard him play often, but never did I see him so genuinely enthused as that evening at the Meyerson. Get the book. It's wonderful. Shooshie (written in 2009, 20 years after the first concerts at the Meyerson Symphony Center) 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A sure hit! By Susan Gleason A sumptuous read - Laurie Shulman's inimitable wit and style grace the pages of this handsome book. The details she shares are as fresh and lively as her trademark program notes. Like many others who worked in the Arts District, I watched the Meyerson being built - from crater to finished perfection. The knowledge Shulman imparts expands my appreciation and most certainly will enhance my enjoyment of another concert in this dream hall, the Meyerson. 15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Building the spectacular I.M. Pei symphony Hall By Mr. Lynn Goldstein One of the great architectural achievements of the second half of the 20th century is an exciting story in Ms. Shulman's well written book. This musicologist has been able to capture all of the fascinating nuances in this amazing project from its conception, political and economic issues, design, building, the grand opening and the Meyerson's very positive impact on the community.

Shulman's book places the Meyerson in its socio-political context, tracing its history back to the early 1970s when financial collapse forced the Dallas symphony to spend operations. Her narrative shows how the orchestra's recovery process led to a splendid new hall.

"Laurie Shulman, who writes the eloquent notes for the Dallas Symphony programs, tells the story beautifully." -- Legacies From the Publisher MORE THAN ten years in planting and construction, the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center has become a major landmark in North Texas and a source of prestige and pride for Dallas citizens. With its combination of extraordinary acoustics, distinguished architecture, and a magnificent concert organ, the Meyerson has joined the ranks of the World's great halls, comparing favorably with Carnegie Hall, Vienna's Musikvereinsaal, and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. Laurie Shulman's book places the Meyerson in its socio-political context, tracing its history to the early 1970s when financial collapse forced the Dallas Symphony to suspend operations. Drawing on interviews with more than 100 individuals as well as documentary resources, her narrative shows how the orchestra's recovery led to a splendid new hall. A series of plot twists adds suspense and drama to the saga. Plans took shape during an economic boom, then faltered during the steep recession of the mid-1980s. Financing was structured through a unique public/private partnership that has become a model for other communities around the United States. Three bond elections, the first of which failed, took place before the public sector's commitment was ensured. H. Ross Perot's signature donation of \$10 million named the hall not for himself, but for Morton H. Meyerson, the driving force behind the decade-long project. The steering committee assigned equal authority to architect and acoustician alike, an unprecedented arrangement that led to heated arguments about visual vs. aural aesthetics. Delays in securing a site in Dallas' fledgling Arts District contributed to escalating costs, which in turn prompted political opponents to level accusations of elitism and profligate spending. The Meyerson Symphony Center: Building a Dream weaves all of these strands by relating this compelling story through the words of the people who made it happen. It is a riveting, behind-the-scenes tale of urban planning and reclamation, triumph over adversity, and unflagging commitment to the highest standards. Shulman incorporates a wealth of information about city politics, a boom-to-bust economy, and the challenges of press and public relations, as well as significant new information about acoustics, architecture, and organ design. About the Author Laurie Shulman, holds a B.A. from Syracuse University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in historical musicology from Cornell University. She is well known in North Texas and throughout the United States as a program annotator for orchestras, chamber music series, and summer festivals, and as the author of compact disc liner notes.

Her writing has appeared in Chamber Music Magazine, Tempo, The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, and The New Grove Dictionary of Opera. She has also published articles about sports, travel, and early childhood education. An active amateur pianist, Shulman and her husband, William Barstow, reside in Dallas.