

# The Music Hall

## Request for Proposals

### Interior design work at The Music Hall Loft, a Center for Performing Arts & Education, Portsmouth, NH

**Due Date:** April 30, 2010

**Submit proposals to:** Attention: Lee Frank, Interior Design RFP  
The Music Hall  
104 Congress Street  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

The Music Hall in Portsmouth, NH is calling interior designers to submit proposals to design the interior of the new Music Hall Loft, a Center for Performing Arts & Education. The 5,670+/- square foot, tri-level condominium space will house the theater's administrative offices, an 80-120-seat performance venue and associated support space, educational space, and concessions and ticketing/retail space.

#### Eligibility

- This is an open invitation to all interior designers with preference given to professionals in the Seacoast region of New Hampshire, Maine and northern Massachusetts.
- Applicants with design experience working with performing arts centers and/or office design preferred.
- The panel will not discriminate against any applicant artist on the basis of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or disability.

#### Organizational Overview

The Music Hall is a nonprofit performing arts center that entertains 100,000 patrons, including 20,000 school children, annually with acclaimed film, music, theater, and dance performances. Its historic 900-seat theater, built in 1878, is the oldest in New Hampshire and was designated an "American Treasure" by the U.S. Senate in the Save America's Treasures Program administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service. Living out its mission to be an active and vital arts center for the enrichment of the Seacoast community, The Music Hall presents diverse and relevant programming, including its signature series and innovative community outreach programs, and hosts numerous community fundraisers and celebrations for the benefit of more than 40 local nonprofits. A cultural anchor in a thriving Seacoast economy, The Music Hall and its patrons will contribute \$5.5 million to the local economy in the 2009-2010 season, through visitor- and show-related spending, up from \$3.8 million five years ago. With the restored theater and new Center for Performing Arts & Education ("the Loft") drawing greater audiences, The Music Hall projects its annual economic impact will swell to \$6.4 million and 180 jobs by 2012 (Source: Arts and Economic Prosperity III Calculator Americans for the Arts.) The Music Hall is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt, fiscally responsible nonprofit organization, managed by a volunteer Board of Trustees and a professional staff.

**The mission of The Music Hall** is to *present the very best of diverse performing and related arts at The Music Hall as an active and vital arts center for the enrichment of the Seacoast community.*

**The vision** is to be the “*Seacoast’s premier performing arts center, an anchor cultural organization in our community and to emerge as an American Treasure through a combination of vibrant programming and a dynamic restoration of our historic hall. As a highly focused performing arts center we will enliven our community with a diverse array of performance genres and an outlook that is contemporary, inclusive, and classic. We are invested in the health of our community through our commitment to outreach to the underserved and educational opportunities for children and adults alike. We will leverage our opportunity to bring trademark programming to build our brand as we deliver high quality performances that bring joy, delight, inspire and promote understanding to contemporary concerns.*”

### **Treasure the Future Capital Campaign**

The Music Hall is at a critical turning point in its history. The past five years have been a period of enormous growth. Overall revenues jumped from \$1.9 million to \$2.8 million as ticket sales for live performances have grown 90%. Memberships have risen from 900 to 3,000 households, and a record 175 corporate partners now annually pledge \$250,000 in financial support. Three hundred volunteers from all walks of life donate thousands of hours to the day-to-day operation of The Music Hall. The organization is delicately balancing this aggressive growth and the building’s physical age, fragility and space limitations. The Music Hall recently announced the ***Treasure the Future*** capital campaign to address several critical needs including the ones listed below which The Loft will directly address:

- **Relieve Limited Space** for educational programs. Master classes, meet-the-artist gatherings, panels and discussion groups are currently held in make-shift spaces.
- **Maximize Role as Community Resource** by providing dedicated, on-site Community Partners performance, classroom, and meeting spaces along with safe pick-up and drop-off for children and those needing extra assistance.
- **Broaden Programming** by utilizing new, dynamic spaces to allow The Music Hall and its Community Partners to offer a broader variety of full-scale and innovative programming and enhance its two-way connection with the community.
- **Move to a Sustainable Business Model** that will not only secure its economic health but contribute to the economic well-being of the region.

The advancements made possible through the *Treasure the Future* campaign, and specifically the Loft, will make The Music Hall sustainable as a modern arts center in these critical ways:

- Centralize scattered offices currently located in separate buildings in the heart of The Center for Performing Arts & Education to foster a more integrated, coherent organization.
- Release funds now tied up in off-site rental space commitments costing \$40,000 annually.
- Open up new performing, reception and administrative spaces in The Loft, creating a visible link between the inner workings of the organization and Portsmouth’s “Main Street”.
- Allow launch of two new, weekend-long festivals that will draw the highest caliber of performers and audiences from afar. *Kids RULE!: The World* and *American Originals Singer-Songwriter Festival*.
- Locating its administrative offices in the new Loft building will guarantee rich and dynamic interaction among the currently isolated administrative team and the performance/education/outreach experience of audiences and students alike.
- This same front-row interaction will only enhance two-way communication between The Music Hall’s administrative team and the not-for-profit partner organizations it serves and mentors.

### **Project Description**

The Music Hall Loft, a Center for Performing Arts & Education, is located at 131 Congress Street in Portsmouth, NH. The 5,670+/- square foot, tri-level condominium space will house the theater’s

administrative offices, an 80-120-seat performance venue and associated support space, educational space, concessions area (including a full bar), retail space and a ticketing kiosk. With the help of a respected design firm and office and theater experts, The Music Hall has developed a sense of what the brand and “feel” of the Loft will be. Architectural plans have been developed by TMS Architects based on recommendations of these consultants. Specifically the space must be intimate, collaborative, creative, educational, urban and hip (without feeling sterile or overly trendy), energetic, i.e. “a hive of activity”, welcoming and designed with adult aesthetics even though it will be used frequently by children as well.

Keeping in mind these branding priorities and the three core priorities for this space – value, style and flexibility - and in collaboration with the design firm mentioned above, the interior designer will be expected to:

#### **The Overall Space**

- Propose design concepts that will support the creation of a cohesive, creative, inclusive and dynamic arts center including both public and private areas of the Loft
- Ensure maximum flexibility for the entire space – flexibility is enormously important with such a small space
- Utilize design concepts that will result in a “loft-like” space with an urban, hip feel avoiding sterile design sensibilities
- Integrate “green aspects” into the design where possible- sustainability is important

#### **Office Space**

- Propose several workable furniture/equipment options and layouts given the limited square footage allotted in the existing architectural plans
- Recommend lighting options for the office space (non-architectural lighting)
- Retain natural light wherever possible and maintain an open, transparent aesthetic while maintaining some privacy and noise consideration between offices

#### **Lobby Area**

- Propose design options for the concessions, bar, retail and ticketing areas

#### **Theater/Educational Space**

- Present options for design elements including flooring and wall materials, finishes, décor, and lighting

### **Selection Timeline & Process**

- Proposal due Friday, April 30, 2010
- Shortlist/interview week of May 10, 2010
- Designer selected Tuesday, May 18, 2010
- Selection committee consisting of board and staff members of The Music Hall will select the proposal that best meets the evaluation criteria with an eye towards value, style, and flexibility.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following:

- Fee Proposal
- Responsiveness to expectations listed in the Project Description section
- Understanding of project goals and issues
- Qualifications/Experience of applicant

- Availability for the time period between the May 18, 2010 selection date, the start of construction in late summer 2010 and the anticipated move-in date of January/February 2011
- Preference given to designers who live and work in the Seacoast region of New Hampshire, Maine and northern Massachusetts

### **Application Instructions and Materials to be Submitted**

- **Letter of interest/Fee Proposal** that addresses the designer's concept based on the architectural drawings and/or site visit and indicates a fee proposal for services
  - Please describe your approach to and experience with collaborative space planning for public spaces with specified branding requirements
  - Please contact Lee Frank to schedule a site visit or to view the floor plans prior to submitting your proposal
- **Resume/CV** including current contact information
- **References**, please provide three viable names with, title, relationship to you, and contact information
- **Documentation** of previous work –
  - Up to fifteen (15) digital images of previously completed relevant design work
  - All images must be numbered (1 through 15)
  - Digital files must be submitted on disk in JPG format, 300 DPI, 5 MB or smaller
  - Annotated image list to accompany the fifteen images. Include the image number, year of completion, and a brief description of the project.
  - Video will be accepted, please make sure the format is Windows Media or Quick Time compatible
  - Include any press or relevant material from past projects
- **Self-addressed stamped postcard** for the notification of receipt of application
- **Mail** application to: The Music Hall, Attn: Lee Frank, 104 Congress Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801
- **All materials must be received by April 30, 2010. Late submissions will not be accepted.**
- Selected designer to be notified by May 18, 2010 with anticipated construction to begin in late summer 2010

### **For Questions or Clarifications**

- Contact Lee Frank
- [LFrank@themusicall.org](mailto:LFrank@themusicall.org)
- Subject line: Interior Design RFP