THE GREAT HALL AT THE BAY CAMPUS
Swansea University Arts
Swansea University is a world leading campus based University. Building upon its existing Singleton Campus located within a Park near a beach, the new Bay Campus is a beach-facing facility adjacent to a site of special scientific interest with European significance. Opening in September 2015 the Bay Campus represents a £450m investment over two phases and is one of the largest knowledge economy projects in Europe providing internationally acclaimed scientific research and teaching facilities, including high specification and beautifully designed student residences. Swansea University has built a new community which provides a whole life experience for students, staff and members of the public with dining, bar, bank and supermarket facilities: the aim is to support a dynamic ethos in a location of outstanding beauty.

At the heart of the new Bay Campus is the Great Hall. This £32m facility was designed by the world renowned architect Dr. Demetri Porphyrios and incorporates lecture theatres and break out teaching spaces on the ground floor and a 700 seat Auditorium and café / bar on the first floor with a balcony with unrestricted vistas over Swansea Bay. From its exterior galleries, the Great Hall provides breathtaking views where there will be an opportunity for the campus and the wider community to socialise and admire exhibitions housed in the gallery. The ground floor provides the front door to the University and is the reception area for the Auditorium.
The Great Hall has been envisioned as a multi-purpose space that will fulfill a number of roles:

- it will host a cultural programme of professional music performances, public lectures, small exhibitions of the university archives and research projects and musical performances of different genres by the student performing arts societies;
- it will be a setting for major University events such as graduation ceremonies and the Student Ball;
- it will host community arts and cultural events and festivals;
- it will provide a major international conferencing venue with supporting facilities;
- it will be a major venue for community and schools outreach.

As a traditional “shoe box” design, the Great Hall provides near perfect acoustic qualities in its main Auditorium. It provides a new space for a reimagined cultural arts and concert venue for the University reaching out beyond the Campus Community. It builds and complements the University’s cultural arts offering at Taliesin which offers a professional arts programme of theatre, dance, music, visual arts and craft and cinema and also works as a creative product developing creative projects which tour in Wales and beyond.

In addition, the Great Hall will be the ‘home venue’ for our musically-talented students who, under the leadership of a Music Director, will form the core of Swansea University’s revitalised music programme. With access to quality instruments and a world-class venue, Swansea University will host frequent performances by its very own student orchestra and other groups. This will greatly increase the number of classical and other music events in the area, in turn, it will cater to existing classical music enthusiasts as well as introducing new audiences by providing convenient and low cost access to quality programming.

As we approach the university’s centenary in 2020, the Swansea University Arts and Cultural offering at Taliesin and the Great Hall will be major venues, hosting a wide range of programmes and events and offering truly inspiring facilities and a fitting setting for our students, staff, friends and members of the public to enjoy.

At the Bay Campus

As a traditional “shoe box” design, the Great Hall provides near perfect acoustic qualities in its main Auditorium. It provides a new space for a reimagined cultural arts and concert venue for the University reaching out beyond the Campus Community. It builds and complements the University’s cultural arts offering at Taliesin which offers a professional arts programme of theatre, dance, music, visual arts and craft and cinema and also works as a creative product developing creative projects which tour in Wales and beyond.

In addition, the Great Hall will be the ‘home venue’ for our musically-talented students who, under the leadership of a Music Director, will form the core of Swansea University’s revitalised music programme. With access to quality instruments and a world-class venue, Swansea University will host frequent performances by its very own student orchestra and other groups. This will greatly increase the number of classical and other music events in the area, in turn, it will cater to existing classical music enthusiasts as well as introducing new audiences by providing convenient and low cost access to quality programming.

As we approach the university’s centenary in 2020, the Swansea University Arts and Cultural offering at Taliesin and the Great Hall will be major venues, hosting a wide range of programmes and events and offering truly inspiring facilities and a fitting setting for our students, staff, friends and members of the public to enjoy.
Specialist designers have been engaged to provide the necessary specialist input in relation to the auditorium design (layout, technical and acoustics) as well as the modification and additions necessary to the base build mechanical and electrical infrastructure.

ACOUSTICS

To accommodate the disparate uses of the Hall, a variable acoustic system has been designed to modify the room response so that it is appropriate for both orchestral acoustic music and amplified events. The “variable acoustic” will be achieved with movable drapes and banners which can be deployed to reduce reverberance for amplified performances (e.g. amplified jazz, conference and pop concerts).

In its “natural” condition, with the variable absorption retracted, the Great Hall will be appropriate to accommodate recital, chamber music and small orchestra performance (up to 50 piece orchestra) and orchestral rehearsal.
The use of the space as an orchestral concert hall places specific demands on the buildings accommodation as follows:

AUDITORIUM SEATING
- Partially demountable flexible stage platform with additional temporary risers to be provided for an orchestra of 50 musicians
- Audience seating to be provided for between 650 and 700 people
- Retractable forward-facing seating is to be provided at the rear of the hall
- The auditorium seating system has been designed with pocket sprung, fully upholstered seats for maximum comfort, with an innovative tip-up mechanism to maximize walkway space

TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
- A projector / lighting / sound control room is provided at an upper floor to the rear of the hall
- A lighting gantry and fly bar system is provided at high level for suspension of technical equipment
- A goods lift / grand piano platform lift
- Sophisticated production and house lighting
- Professional standard sound and video systems to support live music and conferencing
- Technical communication systems to link the Hall with backstage spaces and control rooms
- Fire detection design by specialist (system to be compatible with smoke machines used during concerts etc)

ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION FOR PERFORMANCES
- Green room
- Conductor’s dressing room and shower / restroom
- Soloist’s dressing room and shower / restroom
- General orchestral changing rooms and showers / restrooms
- Separate artist’s access to the stage / back of house area
- Ticket office at reception with supporting admin / office space
- Cloak room facilities

* for larger view see page 16
Front of House — The main north lobby reception provides the primary meeting place for visitors to the Bay Campus and an access point for the first floor facilities.

The reception area — functions as the box office and ticket sales point from which building users will be directed towards the north stair lobbies and lift core for access to the auditorium and gallery spaces.

A theatre office — sits adjacent to the reception space, and an existing lecture theatre (to the North West) will be made available as a cloakroom on an ‘as required’ basis.

Back Stage — The back stage facilities are located to the south side of the ground floor plan, where dressing rooms, changing and shower facilities are provided.

A goods lift — is installed adjacent to the south doors for transporting technical equipment / instruments etc.

A cable route has been incorporated (with access from the south-west lobby) to allow outside broadcasters to connect external equipment.

Controlled access doors within the ground floor circulation route will separate the public and private spaces, whilst allowing the performers access to restrooms etc. as required. The lecture room to the South West of the plan will be utilised as a green room space, when the lecture facilities are not in use.

Back Stage — The back stage facilities are located to the south side of the ground floor plan, where dressing rooms, changing and shower facilities are provided.

A goods lift — is installed adjacent to the south doors for transporting technical equipment / instruments etc.

A cable route has been incorporated (with access from the south-west lobby) to allow outside broadcasters to connect external equipment.

Controlled access doors within the ground floor circulation route will separate the public and private spaces, whilst allowing the performers access to restrooms etc. as required. The lecture room to the South West of the plan will be utilised as a green room space, when the lecture facilities are not in use.
Gallery – The public lift and stair cores to the north west and north west open onto a large open plan gallery space which surrounds the auditorium on three sides and benefits from natural lighting and views from every angle. The Gallery leads to a large balcony with commanding views across the Swansea Bay.

Front of House Facilities – The front of house supporting facilities including restrooms, bar, kitchen and flexible use spaces, are distributed around and open onto the main gallery space. The gallery and auditorium are served by four flexible use spaces, each of which can be utilised as storage or concession spaces.

Flexible Use – The open gallery space offers flexibility for uses including formal and informal seating, exhibition or merchandising space etc. Sliding folding partitions at the south end of the gallery can be utilised to subdivide the gallery space, creating a 'backstage' area with access into the stage right / stage left wings via the south stair cores.

Back of House Facilities – Sliding folding partitions at the south end of the gallery can be utilised to subdivide the gallery space, creating a 'backstage' area with access into the stage right / stage left wings via the south stair cores.

Supporting Facilities

- Gallery / informal seating space
- Flexible use spaces for furniture / instrument case storage / concessions etc
- Toilet facilities required to meet regulations for the total occupancy (max capacity of 750 occupants to first floor)
- Kitchen and bar facilities (the kitchen is designed for small scale catering facilities and the bar will serve bottled beverages and services necessary to support additional temporary bar locations)
The mezzanine level provides technical accommodation including a control and projection room and a dimmer/technical rack room to the north and south of the auditorium respectively. Circulation cores are provided from the first floor to serve the technical and plant accommodation above and a lift shaft extends to the mezzanine level. Circulation cores are provided from the first floor to serve the technical and plant accommodation above and lift shaft 04 will be extended to the mezzanine level.

A new technical balcony accessed via the control room level, with gated access into the auditorium enables a sound engineer to be located within the main auditorium space during rock concerts etc.

The lighting and technical gantry has been designed in a figure of 8 formation allowing flexible lighting of the space for different events. The gantry can be accessed via a lobby from the circulation core to the north or from the existing stair core to the south. The new circulation core terminates at the lower plant room level.
AUDITORIUM CONFIGURED FOR ORCHESTRAL USE

EXTENDED STAGE LAYOUT
- Bleacher seating
  - 312 Seats
- Floor seating
  - 281 Seats
- Total seating capacity: 593

AUDITORIUM CONFIGURED FOR CONFERENCE USE

FIXED STAGE LAYOUT
- Bleacher seating
  - 312 Seats
- Floor seating
  - 395 Seats
- Total seating capacity: 707

Auditorium design and images by: powelldobson ARCHITECTS
CONFERENCING AT THE GREAT HALL

The Great Hall provides a unique venue for the hosting and delivery of major national and international conferences within the Swansea Bay region. Its scale, flexibility and facilities are unparalleled and provide organisers and delegates with a unique and inspiring experience.

In addition to the generous 700 seater auditorium space, which has the flexibility to accommodate major plenary sessions, exhibitions and social programmes, the ground floor of the Great Hall features a wealth of additional spaces ranging in capacity from 15-360 persons. These rooms and theatres are ideal for either smaller events or as breakout spaces to support the auditorium.

The technical infrastructure, ancillary facilities and on-site catering, provide a holistic setting and conference centre style environment, meeting the needs of the most prestigious events. Couple this with the wider academic and service infrastructure of the Bay Campus including over 1000 onsite bedrooms and it is clear that the offering is amongst the best academic conference venues in the country.

Conference opportunities are available at the Great Hall during the weekends through the year plus University Easter (non-residential) and Summer (residential) vacation periods.