

Learning Places Fall 2016  
Chin/Swift

# **SITE REPORT [part 2.1: performer/spectator] Lincoln Center Metropolitan Opera House**



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10.07.2016

## **INTRODUCTION**

Lincoln Center is known for its unique architecture located in the busy city of New York. It is a place where performance it's welcomed through the realms of architecture and space.

## **PRE-VISIT REFLECTION**

PRIOR to visiting Lincoln Center, I thought we were going to look at concert halls and determine how the architecture of the theatre or hall would influence the performance for both the performer and audience. I assumed that it would have been at least halfway as crowded as Times Square, full of tourist attempting to capture the essence of the theatrical atmosphere,

In class, we learned about vertical datum, columns, architectural representations of power, building materials and entrance design, I assumed that those topics were related to what we would observe during our site visit.

## **SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos/sketches)**



This is one of the arches of the Metropolitan Opera House. In the photo above, you can see its tall columns, high arches and framed window panes. This view in particular, conveys the buildings' dominance and sense of power.



The photo above shows the Metropolitan Opera House interior. The red, gold and off-white colors imitates and kings robe in medieval times. These colors give a sense of high economic status.

## QUALITATIVE SITE OBSERVATIONS

1. Description of the performance object, person, or technology (costume, media, text, props, sets, etc.)

Lincoln Center has the Metropolitan Opera House, which is centered in-between David Geffen Hall and David H. Koch Theatre. It is composed of five arches, travertine stone and black frames windows. Inside the met, the color scheme was grand and royal, with off white walls, gold ceilings and furnishings along with royal red carpeting, The double staircase was curvilinear that led to the different halls levels.

Looking from the outside in, the performance of the area appeared to be static rather than having an essence of fluidity. However, observing from the inside out, the performance had a continuity. From the inside, the glass doors gave insiders a view of a large performance space.

2. Choreography of performance

The choreography of performance was coupled with sophistication. It displayed a sense of power and command with the travertine stone.

3. Description of performance limits (ground, walls, barricades, streets, buildings)

We were only allowed to enter the opera house through one set of double doors. There were ropes that prevented us from going any further.

4. Description of audience (static, moving, direction of attention)

Koch theatre and Geffen hall created an aisle that lead to the metropolitan opera house. On arrival, the opera house caught my attention because it was located in the center. Although the building was not in motion, the audience created the movement. At every angle, the audience was able to see something new.

5. Description of audience (socio-economic, community identity)

The socio-economic identity would be middle to upper class. Looking at the interior, the atmosphere felt rich. The expensive tickets also helped me to assume the socio-economic identity of the audience. Although they do have \$35 tickets, the seats are located way up at top back section of the theatre.



**QUANTITATIVE DATA for Area of Study**

Subject	Data
Size of performance space	90X 103 feet STAGE 110 person orchestra pit
Size of spectator space	3794 seats, 250 person standing area,
Range of dynamic change	
# of points of focus	(n)

Number of spectators (range)	4000
Time period of performance	Up to 4 hours
# of repetitions	2/day
Cost of performance (if any)	\$25-750, however, it all depends on the show. Looking at the building as a performance is FREE
Other data	Designed by Max Abramovitz, Wallace Harrison 14 stories. 9 above ground and 5 below.

## QUESTIONS TO RESEARCH FURTHER

### QUESTIONS:

1. Was the original purpose of this building for Opera Performance?
2. What is the name of the first performance to take place at this theatre?
3. Are there any other theatres designed by the same company?

### RESEARCH METHOD/SOURCE FOR EACH QUESTION ABOVE:

1. Question 1
  - a. Metopera.org
  - b. Built in 1883 for businessmen who wanted their own theatre. The first few performances were in Italian, then German.
  - c. Nypap.org
2. Question 2
  - a. Encyclopedia.com
  - b. First performance occurred on October 22, 1883.
  - c. Name of performance was Gounod's *Faust*
3. Question 3
  - a. Nycago.org
  - b. They did not designed any other theatres, however, they designs all have something in common. STONE and CONCRETE. The designers used a sense of power that commanded the viewers' attention. They unique, dominating style

was definitely notices.

c. [Wikipedia.org](https://www.wikipedia.org)

#### SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

Honestly, I was unaware of how a building could create a feeling of power. Along with its vertical datum, high arches, travertine stone, and bold style, I felt like the designers had in mind of building something for the upper class. If I were to attend this facility, I would most likely feel inferior to those who are in an entirely different financial class as I am. The exterior part of the building was cold, and I am not sure if I would necessarily feel invited. However, the warm rich tones of the interior felt royal. Although the site drew the attention of the audience, I am not sure if its strong design invited people of all classes. I can certainly say that I myself did not feel like I belonged,