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Architectural Programming | 549

Project-3: Research Exhibit

In preparing for Terminal Thesis, I am looking at various elements that go into the architectural programming of a college of music facility. Among these elements, I purpose that at a college of music, rehearsal space is the most important type of space. For the intent and purpose of this paper, I visited Portland State University Music Department and toured their facilities. I documented my experience by note taking and photographs. In summary, my findings brought a new understanding to the two types of music schools. First and foremost, when analyzing a school of music architectural program, it is important to make the distinction between the academic and performance based curriculum. In the academic type, students almost never perform and mostly study music on the theoretical level. In this case, rehearsal space is of little to no importance. Performance based programs focus on developing performing musicians. Therefore, this program type has a high demand for rehearsal space. Various rehearsal spaces are used from the large 30 person ensemble space, the intermediate 10 – 20 person combo space, and to the small individual practice rooms. PSU's music curriculum is rooted in performance.

Upon my visit to Portland State University Music Department, I met with Krystyna Kowalska, Department Office Coordinator and Brian Johansson, Department Chair. I spent some time at their office where I was able to ask general questions about the music program. Located in the Extended Studies Hall a two story building located on campus, the music department is organized within a square shape plan. Small offices around the perimeter, large lecture and lab spaces clustered in the center and the main stairs are located adjacent to the main entrance. Another stair well exists on the opposite side of the entrance but located toward the corner of the building.

PSU's music program currently has 417 majors with 35 to 40 students per class at about 63 classes per week. The largest classroom can hold up to 80 students and is used for lectures. Although Mr. Johansson stated that a music performance school should have a ratio of (1) practice room per (10) majors, PSU has only (8) individual practice rooms. This leaves the

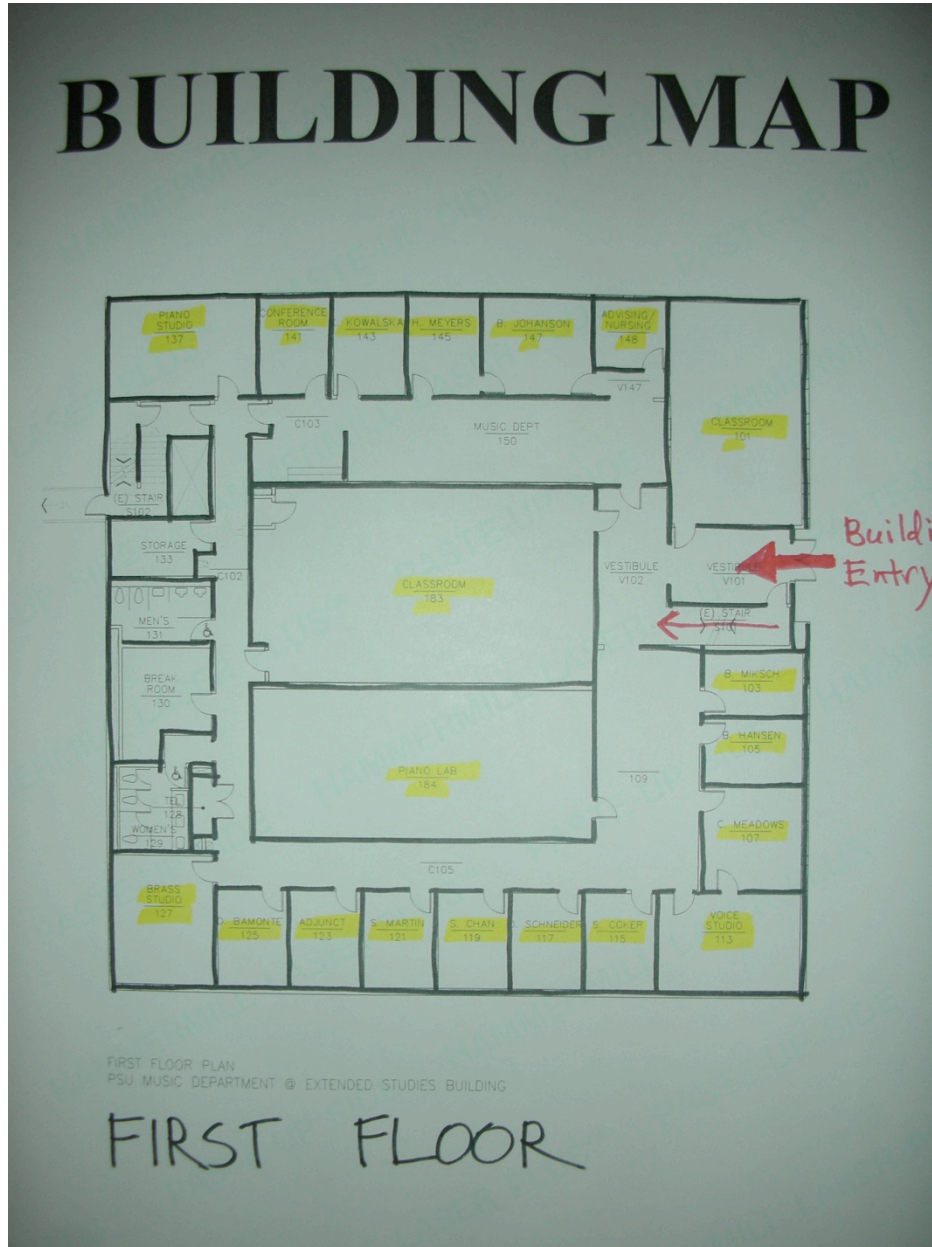
facility shy by about 33 rooms. The individual practice rooms are free standing as opposed to built in and are arranged with in a larger space located in the basement of the building. Varying in size, the rooms accommodate individual students, small trios and piano rehearsals. One large 30 person ensemble space and two medium 10 person rehearsal spaces are located in the basement as well. On the ground and upper floor, small offices have been converted into rehearsal space and used by vocal musicians.

Storage was another space that was in short supply. Most of the department's large equipment is currently being stored offsite in a warehouse. While walking through the facility, it was apparent that music students are limited in practice and short term storage. As a partial solution to short term storage, instrument lockers were purchased and located in the corridor spaces. Consequently, the corridors have become too narrow and do not allow safe passage in accordance to ADA requirements. Students were found in the crowded corridors waiting for the limited rehearsal space which compounded the problem further.

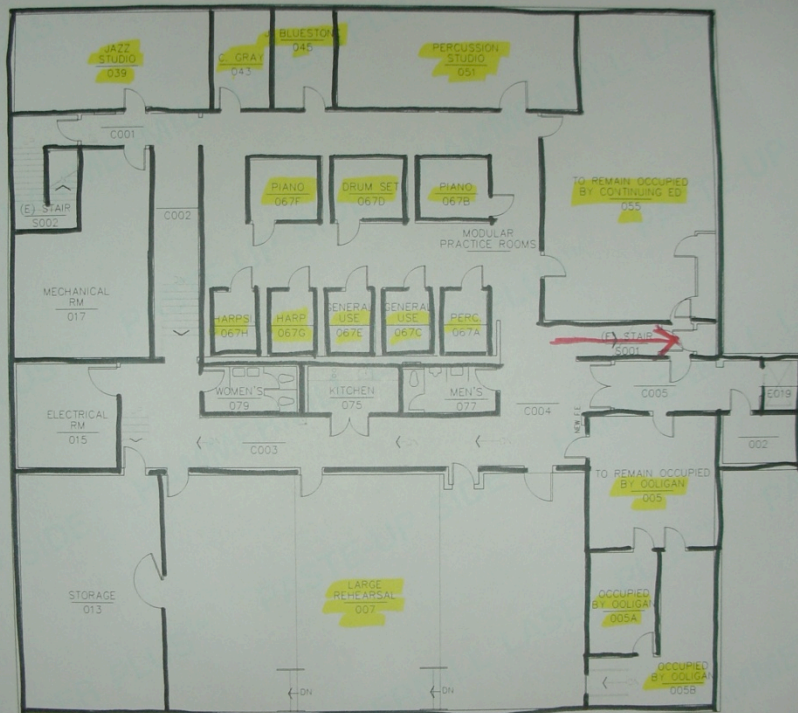
Furthermore, Mr. Johansson stated that a student lounge and congregating area were important spaces as students often use them for impromptu rehearsals. On my tour I could not find these defined spaces nor did I find any student practicing outside the formal rehearsal spaces. The best I could find were segments within the corridor where the central classroom, labs, and stairs juncture. The corridor becomes wider and creates an area where students can gather while in between class. Information boards with events are located in this area. In general, the corridors feel dark and narrow and the centralized classrooms and labs seem closed off to the rest of the building as there are no windows. Perimeter rooms have excellent natural light quality located along the perimeter of the building. Other than a door to the rooms, there is no connection to other rooms, corridor space, or the rest of the building.

In conclusion I recognize there is a substantial difference programmatically between the academic and the performance based music curriculum. Therefore, I restate my thesis as, at a college of music whose curriculum is performance based, rehearsal space is the most important type of space. As seen within the case study above, disregard for rehearsal space creates a dysfunctional facility as a whole. Spaces most used are deprived of natural light. Areas for rehearsal seem to be add-ons rather than integrated spaces. Service spaces such as student storage and congregating/lounge areas become after thoughts as well. Corridor spaces become

dead zones as both the perimeter and centralized zones turn away from the circulation. And last but not least having enough practice/rehearsal spaces for the population of students is vital.



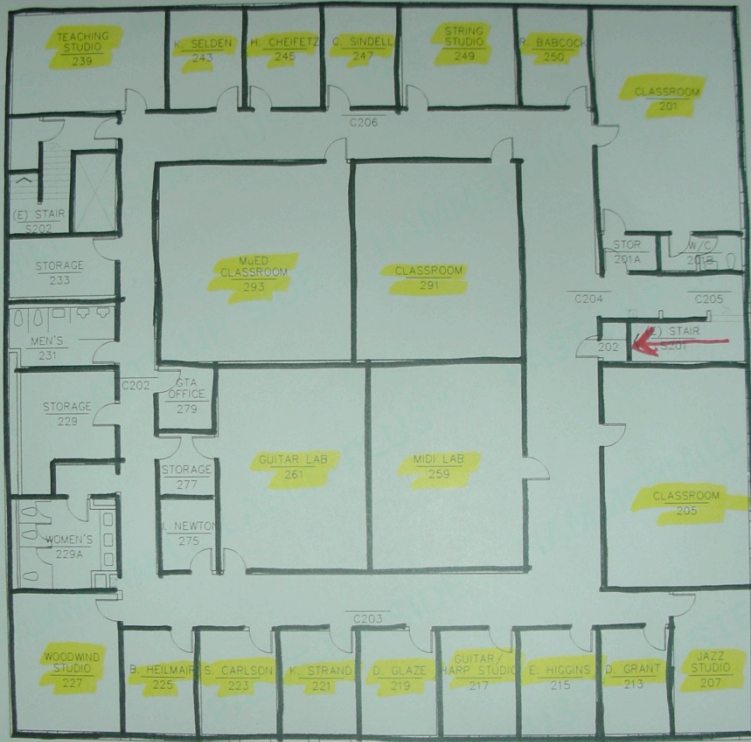
BUILDING MAP



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
PSU MUSIC DEPARTMENT @ EXTENDED STUDIES BUILDING

BASEMENT

BUILDING MAP



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
PSU MUSIC DEPARTMENT © EXTENDED STUDIES BUILDING

SECOND FLOOR



Front of Extended Studies Building | Music Department



Main Entrance



Large Ensemble Room Located in Basement



Medium Combo Room Located in Basement



Individual Free Standing Practice Room | Located in Basement



Same Room as Above



Storage with in Corridor Space Outside Individual Practice Rooms



Corridor Space Outside Large Ensemble Room



Central Core Classroom



Supposed Student lounge/Congregating Space