

GCSU debuts new Music Rehearsal Hall

Georgia College hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house Oct. 10 for its new \$4.45 million Music Rehearsal Hall, the university's first space built specifically for music and choral rehearsal.

The 10,400-square-foot building, located at the corner of Wayne and Montgomery Streets, represents a much-needed improvement for the Department of Music and its students.

"What I found when I came to Georgia College four years ago was that we had a wonderful music program in facilities that just didn't match the quality of our instruction," said GCSU President Cathy Cox. "It is a tremendously nice addition to our music program."

In Porter Hall, opened in 1939, sound would bleed through the building's thin walls into other rooms, and the low ceilings were unsuitable for rehearsal acoustics.

The new Music Rehearsal Hall, on the other hand, has two layers of drywall and 3-4 inches of insulation between every room, plus high ceilings and controlled humidity and temperature. It was built with sound in mind at every step.

"There have been a lot of other buildings on campus built, but nothing like this. This is totally

different," said Dr. Don Parker, professor and chair of the Department of Music. "You can't hear between the rooms."

That soundproofing in every room means that choral practice, band practice and ensemble practice can all take place simultaneously, which had not been possible in any other music facility at Georgia College, Parker said.

"Having a purpose-built space for some of our high-touch areas is hugely important," said Seth Walker, vice president for University Advancement. "When we're able to be thoughtful about the design and what's going to go in there, it allows students to really have something tailor-made for their needs."

The choral space on the left and band space on the right are the two largest sections of the building, but it also has storage areas for pianos, percussion and string instruments, a percussion studio, and several additional practice rooms for ensembles or soloists to practice in smaller groups.

"The everyday rehearsal work of our choral and instrument programs in music will be improved just by having improved acoustical space," Cox said. "Our students will benefit every day they're in that building."



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Following the ribbon cutting, student musicians performed in the various rehearsal spaces.

The new hall also helps the Department of Music build on its requirements for maintaining National Association of Schools of Music accreditation. Since 2014, GCSU's instrumental ensembles were in a leased facility near campus, but the music department's needs for more acoustically and environmentally controlled accessible space had grown with the development of the program.

Along with meeting ADA

accessibility standards, other improvements the Rehearsal Hall provides include 24/7 key card access and student collaborative spaces in which to work or study.

"It's just a very student-centered building from start to finish," Cox said.

The music department can also livestream from both the band and choir rooms, allowing for wider public consumption and more interactivity.

"Let's say there was a composer that wanted to talk to the group about the piece that they're performing," Parker said. "We could live stream the composer in, and they could play for him and he can give comments, and it'd be great."

With all its features, the Music Rehearsal Hall provides an opportunity to attract prospective students.

"It will also be, we believe, a real boon to our recruitment abilities, for music students to come to visit campus and see a first-rate facility like this for everyday rehearsal and to know that we've made this kind of investment," Cox said.

Two donors have made philanthropic gifts to name spaces in the building: Dr. Maidana Nunn ('57) and Sandra Rosseter ('62). Both Nunn and Rosseter attended the ceremony Friday and helped cut the ribbon.

"They come to all our events," Parker said. "They have been avid supporters of the program for a long time, and I can't thank them enough for everything that they've done and provided."

Some naming opportunities are still available. Darla Pyke, development officer for the College of Arts & Sciences, is available to discuss these opportunities.

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