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11th OISTAT Theatre Architecture Competition

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Foreword

This is the 11th OISTAT Theatre Architecture Competition (TAC) organised by The OISTAT Architecture Commission. The competition is normally organised every 4 years to coincide with World Stage Design. The last competition took place in 2017 and was exhibited at World Stage Design in Taipei, Taiwan. This competition has been delayed by a year due to the postponement of World Stage Design in Calgary, Canada from 2021 to 2022, as a result of the global pandemic and the travel restrictions imposed in many countries. It is therefore taking place five years since the previous competition.

The number of entries received was 15. This is a disappointingly low number and we will need to understand why this is. We suspect it is related to the pandemic and travel restrictions but may also be related to insufficient marketing and disruption of teaching in many architecture schools globally. The only consolation is that the entries that were received were generally of a good standard.

A conventional theatre is a complex building type; a public building at the front, an industrial complex at the back and at its heart an auditorium, where the actor and audience meet and the space must be shaped to enhance and support the crucial interaction of a live performance. In recent competitions the brief has been designed to try to focus entrants on considering the theatre space as their primary concern, by making the requirements for the rest of the building as simple as possible. This is because in the past more conventional briefs have tended to produce an emphasis on the external design of a building, at the expense of the theatre space itself.

The site for the competition is at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, 130 km to the west of Calgary. Founded in 1933, Banff Centre is a learning organisation built upon an extraordinary legacy of excellence in artistic and creative development. What started as a single course in drama has grown to become a global organisation leading in arts, culture, and creativity across dozens of disciplines. From its home in the stunning Canadian Rocky Mountains, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity aims to inspire everyone who attends its campus – artists, leaders, and thinkers – to unleash their creative potential. The centre currently has an outdoor amphitheatre used for summer events. The competition challenge was to devise a new structure, which could extend the short summer season and cater for a range of sizes and types of performance.

The jury were due to meet in person at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in May 2022, in order to view the site and hold their deliberations in person. However, as a result of the small number of entries and the cost and environmental impact of international travel it was decided we would meet online. I would like to give special thanks to my fellow members of the jury Maaïke Westinga, Nathan Medd, Elena Giakoumaki and Yeong-Sik Yoo, who have given freely of their time and expertise and without whom we would not have a result. Special thanks are also due to April Viczko and Lisa Russell from World Stage Design for their untiring support and liaison with Banff Centre and to TAC coordinators Autumn Sali and Aidan Sparks for their help with the jury meetings. I would also like to thank Charcoalblue for their generous sponsorship.

I hope you enjoy the interesting and exciting work which appears in the exhibition and this catalogue.

Tim Foster
chair of the jury





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Design Brief

Introduction

The OISTAT Theatre Architecture Competition is an international ideas competition, aimed at students and emerging architecture practitioners, and is organised by the Architecture Commission of OISTAT (International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians). The winning entry is unlikely to be built but cash prizes will be awarded, and the best entries will be exhibited at the World Stage Design exhibit to be held in Calgary in August 2022. Terms and Conditions are provided in a separate document. The site for the competition is located at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, about an hours drive to the west of Calgary. This document provides a design brief, which is to be read in conjunction with the Terms and Conditions and associated site drawings and photographs.

Banff Centre is interested in seeing innovative ideas for a structure(s) that could be built to provide the best use and highest value for an area of campus currently known as the Shaw Amphitheatre. This incredible piece of land boasts stunning views of the valley that holds the Banff town site nestled between iconic Cascade and Sulphur Mountains and looking off onto stunning Mount Bourgeau in the distance.

How do we currently use the site?

The Shaw Amphitheatre currently holds events in the open air in summer, typically live music concerts, with a capacity of 2000 persons, with space for 300-500 on the stepped concrete risers and standing space in front of the stage, and 1500 on the lawn behind. The capacity also corresponds to the space available in adjacent buildings to evacuate patrons, artists, and staff (before considering social distancing) in the event of severe weather or another emergency.

The current stage structure, which is erected each summer, is a Thomas Engineering truss roof with side wings to rig the left and right line array speakers, and a goal post style truss structure for front-of-house lighting. The stage structure sits on paving stone and concrete pad that is level with the access road behind, which is a fire route and must be maintained in design proposals. Site setup in its current configuration takes approximately 2 weeks to complete.

Why doesn't the site work as it is?

The Shaw Amphitheatre is an absolutely beautiful venue to see a live outdoor concert, provided you catch a show on the day when the weather is just right. Being situated in Canada's Rocky Mountains, there is a limited window of opportunity where reasonable conditions for outdoor performances exist. Banff is usually under snow from October to April. While winter has usually concluded, heavy rainfall can be expected through much of May and into early June. On the other side of summer, average temperatures usually begin to drop significantly in September.

*"We already know how to run the site for 6 weeks of the year.
How would you develop this site to run for 10 months of the year?"*



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The variability of weather conditions has been a challenge that has limited our ability to present certain types of performances at this site. Specifically, performances involving classical music (including opera) have been a challenge to present at this site owing to the risks posed to instruments by sudden drops in temperature and potential exposure to precipitation. These same hazards make it a challenge to feel confident in programming any dance programming at the site. Of the diverse artistic disciplines that Banff Centre engages with, the site is really only viable for commercial concert presentations. This suggests that the stage area should be fully protected from the weather, while a lightweight roof to protect the audience in summer would be welcome.

An additional challenge of the site in its current use is the large size of the staffing contingent required to safely operate a performance in this venue. This is part due to the procedures that must be enacted to respond to severe weather events. Also with no fixed infrastructure for concessions on the site, all the necessary equipment must be manually setup for each event. Locations for bars and food concessions which can be connected to services (power, water, and drainage) and removed in winter should be considered.

If the site didn't require a complex evacuation process for typical severe weather events, then it would not require such a large staffing compliment.

What are we looking for?

Banff Centre is looking for ideas for the best use of the Shaw Amphitheatre site that would provide the best value to the organization. We do not want to place undue limitations on ideas that may be developed in this design competition, and accordingly only ask that the solutions developed:

- Capitalize on the natural beauty and stunning views of the site.
- Facilitate safe and efficient operation for at least 10 months of the year.
- This should include consideration for the safe deployment and removal of any temporary structural components.
- Maximize the potential for revenue generating opportunities by creating a flexible space that can support a diverse array of activity, including banquets of up to 400 attendees.
- Support facilities, including public wash rooms, kitchens and foyer space will be provided in the existing buildings adjacent to the site.
- Maximize the flexibility of the space to support arts performances and events from a wide array of disciplines in a variety of audience configurations and sizes.
- Performance types considered should include at a minimum: commercial music artists, classical ensembles, orchestra, theatre, opera, and dance.
- If possible, audience sizes should be able to range from 200 to 2000 – essentially retaining this capability from the current venue's design, including the feeling that the venue isn't too big when it is set for only 200 in a theatre configuration. It is envisaged that due to the climate challenges the venue will provide a secure indoor venue for smaller events in winter but will transform into a larger partly open air venue in the summer months.
- Provide essential services for artist support such as dressing rooms (both single and choral/ensemble), washrooms, greenroom space, and kitchenette.
- No costs are required but the jury will favour proposals which are practical and realizable.



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Climate Considerations

Severe Weather

For all past outdoor programming in the Shaw Amphitheatre, Banff Centre has contracted a professional meteorologist to work on-site and assist in the identification of developing severe weather conditions that could impact the live safety of individuals attending the event. Primary weather considerations are lightning, strong winds, drastic changes in temperature, and heavy precipitation in the form of rain, hail, and snow (including in the summer months). When necessary, a performance may need to be suspended due to a severe weather event and the site evacuated. Evacuation details are specific to each event but generally have guests, artists, and staff hold in one of the adjacent buildings until conditions are safe to either resume the event or go home. Complete evacuation of the site can take as long as 25 minutes (depending on the crowd size, demographics, and other variable conditions of the event) so the advanced warnings provided by the meteorologist are critical to ensure evacuation is complete before the severe weather hazard is occurring.

Environmental Considerations

Banff National Park

Banff Centre is located in Banff National Park. Accordingly, there is a rigorous screening process for any new projects that is administered by Parks Canada. This is in addition to the approval process one would regularly expect from the municipality (Town of Banff) and considers the potential ecological and environmental impacts of a project.

Noise

Noise emanating from the site may be one of the easiest environmental concerns to miss. Amplification of our artists to high sound pressure levels is a fundamental to an effective concert, and so the environmental hazard hides in plain sight under the cover of its necessity in the work we are producing. The noise created by events in the Shaw Amphitheatre can cause undue stress for the animals that call Banff National Park home and should be mitigated as best possible in a future design for large public assembly events on this site. In a similar act of mitigating the negative effects of noise on the animals of the park, Banff Town Council chose to eliminate the hazard in their decision to ban fireworks displays in favour of quieter pyrotechnics.

Physical Considerations

Site Situation

The Shaw Amphitheatre site is situated on the lower portion of campus and is flanked by the *Kinnear Centre for Creativity and Innovation*, the *Jeanne and Peter Lougheed Building*, the *TransCanada Pipelines Pavilion*, and the *Max Bell Building*. During a severe weather event or other evacuation, the Kinnear Centre and Max Bell buildings serve as evacuation sites for the audience and artists, while the crew evacuate to the Jeanne and Peter Lougheed Building closer to the stage.



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- Kinnear Centre for Creativity and Innovation
Three floors of conference and meeting spaces.
Maclab Bistro, a public restaurant.
- Jeanne and Peter Lougheed Building
Rice Television Studio
Telus Audio Studio
Media editing and creation suites.
Artist studios and offices.
- Max Bell Building
Max Bell Auditorium
Meeting spaces for conferences and programming.
- TransCanada Pipelines Pavilion
Lecture hall and smaller meeting spaces.

Access Control

Access to the site during performances is currently controlled by temporary fencing installed around the perimeter of the site, enclosing the area shown by the red circle above.

Aesthetics

Per Town of Banff website:

The Banff Design Guidelines provide a framework for evaluating the aesthetic quality of development proposals. The intention of the guidelines is to ensure that the town's built environment reflects the spectacular surrounding natural environment while recognizing Banff's location in a national park and a World Heritage Site.

Banff's unique character and "Rocky Mountain Style" is rooted in its rich built heritage with common design themes including:

- *sensitivity to nature,*
- *the use of rustic natural materials,*
- *emphasis on structural expression and strong roof forms,*
- *respect for the pedestrian environment,*
- *use of decorative details and finishing that provide relief and texture.*

The Banff Design Guidelines are an integral component of the Banff Land Use Bylaw.



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The Jury



Tim Foster

United Kingdom / chair of jury
MA Dip Arch (Cantab) RIBA

Tim Foster is a consultant to Foster Wilson Size, the architectural practice he founded in 1979. Over a period of more than 40 years he has been responsible for the design and remodelling of over fifty theatres, from low cost conversions and start-ups to major refurbishments and new buildings.

Tim was chair of the editorial board and a contributor to *Theatre Buildings: A Design Guide*, published by Routledge in 2010 and currently is leading the preparation of a revised edition. He is chair of the ABTT Theatre Planning Committee and a former chair of the OISTAT Architecture Commission. He was elected a Fellow of the ABTT in 2012 and was a trustee of The Theatres Trust, the national advisory body for the protection of theatres in the UK, from 2009 to 2015. He was a member of the international jury at the Prague Quadrennial in 2019.



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Maaïke Westinga

Netherlands / chair of OISTAT Architecture Commission
MA Dip Architect (TU Delft)

Maaïke Westinga is an architect and director of TenBrasWestinga architecture / interior design and urban design, the architectural practice she has run together with Roel ten Bras since 2008.

Maaïke has been responsible for the design and realisation of a variety of theatres and cultural centres. She has managed to combine the interests of the practice and the client in a balanced manner. In controlling the design and construction process, Maaïke strives for consistent elaboration, simplicity combined with a strong expression, good build-ability and smart integration of structure and installations in the architecture.

Maaïke is an active member of BNA (Royal Institute of Dutch Architects). Since 2017 she has been a member of the board of the VPT (Dutch association for stage technology) and was elected as chair in 2019. In 2020 Maaïke became chair of the OISTAT Architecture Commission. Maaïke has served on several architectural juries in the Netherlands.



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Nathan Medd

Canada

Managing Director of performing arts at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity

Nathan Medd currently serves as managing director of performing arts at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, overseeing residencies, training programs and creation development. Co-founder of several vital performance creation spaces in western Canada, including Progress Lab 1422 in Vancouver and the Metro Studio in Victoria. As a theatre producer, Nathan has produced work from six separate laureates of Canada's highest honour in theatre, the Siminovitch Prize. Former managing producer for North American performance ensemble Electric Company (Olivier award recipient for best new dance production).

While serving as managing director of English Theatre at the National Arts Centre of Canada, supported the establishment of the world's first Indigenous national theatre, helping to redefine one of the global community's most distinctive and diverse national theatre programs. Cover subject of International Arts Manager Magazine (2018). BFA theatre and English literature University of Victoria, and ALM management Harvard.



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Elena Giakoumaki

Greece/United Kingdom

MArch (Hons) Masters in Architectural Design, Bartlett School of Architecture
Diploma in Architecture, National Technical University of Athens

Elena is an architect having studied at the Bartlett School of Architecture in London and the National Technical University of Athens. She has over a decade of experience as a senior theatre consultant at Charcoalblue, providing consultancy in venue design, auditorium planning, seating system design, functional planning, sightlines and accessibility. Before this she had eight years' experience with UK architectural practices specialising in theatre design and a further two years' experience with a leading set designer in Athens.

Elena has consulted on projects including Soho Place Theatre, London; Theatre Royal Drury Lane, London; Leuven PAC, Belgium; Boulevard Theatre, Soho; Theatr Clwyd, Mold; Malvern College; The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Chicago; Pier 55, New York; Dorfman Theatre at the National Theatre London.



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Jeong-Sik Yoo

Korea / vice-chair of OISTAT Architecture Commission
MFA, ETCP Certified Rigger - Theatre and Arena

Jeong-Sik Yoo is a theatre practitioner and consultant at Ghost LX, architectural and technical studio, founded in 2017. During his MFA program at the David Geffen School of Drama in Yale, he won three awards for academic theatre design competitions run by USITT, ASTC, and ASA.

After some experience in theatre consulting companies in the USA, he moved to Seoul in Korea, founding Ghost LX, responsible for the design and remodelling of theatre projects in Korea and South Asia. He served as technical supervisor for the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics opening and closing ceremonies.

He also teaches architectural and technical stage technology classes at the Art Council of Korea. He is a vice-chair of the OISTAT Architecture Commission and the Health and Safety Committee of USITT. He is in the Doctoral architecture program at the National University of Seoul and is leading the Art and Technologies Lab project for the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in Korea (MCST).



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Jury Procedure

The members of the jury were:

- Tim Foster (United Kingdom) chair of jury
- Maaïke Westinga (Netherlands) chair of OISTAT Architecture Commission
- Nathan Medd (Canada)
- Elena Giakoumaki (Greece/United Kingdom)
- Jeong-Sik Yoo (Korea)

The jury coordinator was:

Aidan Sparks

The jury met online on 23, 24, and 25 May 2022. All entries were submitted electronically via the World Stage Design portal on Submittable. The closing date for entries was 30 April 2022.

15 entries were received from 9 different countries, as follows.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Canada | 1 |
| China | 1 |
| Czech Republic | 1 |
| Hungary | 1 |
| Netherlands | 1 |
| New Zealand | 1 |
| Slovakia | 2 |
| Syria | 1 |
| Taiwan | 6 |

The entries were registered on receipt and allocated project numbers 1-15. The identity of the entrants was not disclosed to the jury until after they had completed their selections.

Jury members were given access to the Submittable system to allow them to view the entries approximately one week before the first meeting. They were asked to score all entries out of ten.



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Round 1 Meeting / 23 May 2022

The meeting opened with an introduction to the site and the principles of the competition. Jurors' preliminary scores were then collated to create overall scores. It was agreed that the ten highest scoring entries would proceed to the next round. The ten projects selected were:

357845, 280015, 901220, 220426, 192002, 102623, 440611, 502502, 842168, 220412

Round 2 Meeting / 24 May 2022

In the second round, the entries selected in the first round were viewed and discussed by the whole jury, who individually awarded new scores out of ten. Entries outside the top ten were also viewed to check they had not been misjudged. Jurors' scores were then collated to create a new order. To ensure consistency of scoring it was agreed all jurors would re-score the entries overnight, ranking them from 1-10, and awarding 10 to the highest and 1 to the lowest.

Round 3 Meeting / 25 May 2022

Jurors' overnight scores were collated to create a new order. It was agreed the top scoring six would receive prizes. The six projects selected were:

357845, 280015, 901220, 220426, 102623, 842168

After further discussion the prizes were awarded. The jury decided to award two first equal prizes, with the first and second prize money shared equally between them. They then agreed the third prize and the remainder were awarded the three equal additional prizes. It was agreed that in light of the small number of entries no honorary mentions would be awarded. The jury then discussed the contents of the Jury Report and exhibition. It was agreed that all remaining entries should be included in the exhibition, with the exception of three entries. These were number 201512, which was deemed incomplete, having failed to provide the required AO panel, and numbers 192002 and 616029, which contained appropriated imagery from Indigenous communities. Canada and other countries are working towards a decolonized and reconciled approach to relationships with Indigenous communities. After taking advice from Banff Centre and WSD it was decided these projects could not be included in the exhibition.

All decisions of the jury were unanimous.



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Jury Report

Jury Overview

The site for the competition at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity is a place of outstanding natural beauty and any intervention in this place needs to be made with a sensitivity which respects this. Consideration also needs to be given to the impact of the design on existing buildings, particularly the nearby Kinnear building, which currently provides audience facilities serving the amphitheatre and enjoys sensational views of the landscape.

The jury were reminded that this was an ideas competition aimed at students and young practitioners. It was therefore necessary to strike a balance between practicality and imagination. In an ideas competition an exciting concept will often take precedence over the ability to actually build it.

The jury felt that the key characteristics they were looking for in the entries were:

- Recognition of the climate of the site and the need for summer and winter use
- A sense of place derived from the unique character of the site and its surroundings
- Theatricality and the creation of performative space
- The making of a public meeting space which is welcoming and festive
- A high standard of presentation

The jury thought that the quality of the entries was generally high, although in some cases the explanation of the design intent was not as clear or well developed as it might have been. Those entries that demonstrated an appreciation of the existing site and the opportunities it offered tended to find more favour than those that did not. In the context of a theatre design competition, with the stated aim of exploring theatrical space, the designs of the actual theatre spaces were for the most part a little disappointing and lacking in ambition or understanding, with many competitors retaining the existing amphitheatre, which was not a requirement of the brief. Only a few entries took the opportunity to reimagine the performance space.

The standard of presentation was generally high, although the clarity of the board layouts and text was sometimes confusing. Entrants were asked to provide a video as well as a flat panel and in many cases the videos were more informative than the drawings.



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The jury's reports on the individual prizewinners are as follows:

EQUAL FIRST PRIZE

PROJECT NO. 357845

Elevate Performance Pavilion

Chris Johnson / Keller Ziesmann (Canada)

This was a proposal which was modest in scale but executed with great assurance and a convincing sense of place. The existing amphitheatre is retained and a new permanent stage house is created, providing shelter and appropriate technical facilities for the presentation of a range of summer performances. A free standing structure within the stage acts as a screen, which creates a backstage zone and enclosure for dressing rooms and other facilities. The rear wall is fully glazed allowing partial views through the stage to the landscape beyond. In winter large glazed sliding/folding doors enclose the stage, which can be reconfigured as a studio theatre. A separate pavilion to one side of the stage provides an entrance lobby with supporting washrooms and a box office and coat check area, supporting the winter use. The materiality is well expressed using sustainable materials with a form which is simple and evokes traditional mountain architecture. A number of entries adopted a similar design strategy but this was by far the best developed.

EQUAL FIRST PRIZE

PROJECT NO. 280015

The Ring

Tayssir Takieddine / Saeed Al Raddawi (Syria)

This is a highly poetic proposal which takes the existing amphitheatre and elevates it to another level with some deceptively simple interventions which create a compelling sculptural object in the landscape. A circular path encircles the back of the amphitheatre, extending via curved bridges on either side to connect to the roof of a solid semi-circular block behind the stage, housing a flexible performance and gallery space for winter use. The whole composition is expressed as a smooth red object providing a striking counterpoint to the otherwise green surroundings. It sits low on the site by exploiting the sloping land, allowing open views to the landscape to be retained from the adjoining buildings. The jury felt there were some missed opportunities, particularly the lack of access from the rear building to the outdoor stage and the lack of any weather protection for the stage, but felt these omissions could easily be remedied. Overall, the strength of the vision and the powerful performative space it creates made it a deserving equal first prize winner.



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THIRD PRIZE

PROJECT NO. 102623

Parasite Theatre

Karolína Gavroňová / Nina Olekšáková (Slovakia)

This proposal is for a flexible structural system based on equilateral triangles in both plan and section, which is placed over the existing amphitheatre, with the potential to create a roof over both the stage and auditorium. The geometry is used to develop a complex and multi-layered asymmetrical form which retains a high level of transparency and creates walkways and ramps from the back of the site to the upper levels, providing a theatre seating gallery and viewing platforms on the roof. The structure provides for longer spans over the theatre and the ability to hang technical equipment. In winter solid and glazed panels can be added to provide greater enclosure. The jury felt the work involved in making these changes was likely to be very time consuming but it nevertheless demonstrated an understanding of the need to enable winter performances. Despite the lack of technical development, the jury felt this was a visually exciting and highly flexible idea, which sought to address many of the key issues.

ADDITIONAL PRIZES

PROJECT NO. 220426

Lake in the Forest

Jun-You Huang / Han-Yu Lai (Taiwan)

This proposal consists of a large technical stage enclosure facing the existing amphitheatre, with glass enclosures at the sides and rear but not on the audience side. An array of rotating and tilting mirrored panels over the stage allow the audience unusual views of the performance or can be used to reflect lighting. Separate pavilions on either side of the stage provide backstage accommodation. The proposal is beautifully presented in the visualisations and video, which create a strong sense of theatricality. However the jury felt an opportunity had been missed in the failure to allow the stage to be enclosed in winter and that the columns within the stage space would be an unwelcome obstruction.

PROJECT NO. 842168

Theatre at the Park

Shelly van Gogh / Robin Peijnenburg (Netherlands)

A series of spiral ramps are placed over the existing amphitheatre which wind up and around the performance space, allowing views into the performance and out to the landscape. It is a highly poetic vision, which is well presented, particularly in the video, but it is essentially a sculptural object which provides little shelter from the elements. The jury felt that the performative potential of the form had not been fully realized, where audiences could line the ramps watching a performance, and that a more centralized in-the-round performance space would have responded much better to the form of the ramps than the retained end stage amphitheatre.



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PROJECT NO. 901220

Chunky Shell

Ching-Wen Huang / Iano Huang (Taiwan)

In this proposal a large shell is placed over the whole site. The amphitheatre steps are removed and the audience sit on the sloping ground. At the stage end a connection is made to the basement of the Kinnear building with a terrace above. The shell is made up of a series of tapered arches which interlock with glazed gaps between them providing views out to the landscape and a stepped profile to the walls and roof, which benefits the acoustics. In many ways this proposal is well resolved and answers the need for a year round space more than any others. However, the jury felt that its scale and height would cause unacceptable obstruction of views from the Kinnear building and would have a detrimental effect on its setting.