



2019-20 Season

Architectural History

The Curtis Institute of Music is located on Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square and occupies what were formerly four private homes—the George W. Childs Drexel mansion at 1726 Locust Street, the Edward A. Sibley house at 235 South 18th Street, the Theodore H. Cramp house at 1720 Locust Street, and the building at 1718 Locust Street.

The **Main Building** (the former Drexel mansion) was designed by the distinguished Boston firm of Peabody and Stearns and built in 1894. Certified by the Philadelphia Historical Commission, this building is notable for its Romanesque and Renaissance architectural details. Inside the main entrance is a handsomely appointed reception area called the Gary and Naomi Graffman Common Room, which has wood paneled walls and ceilings, a beautifully carved limestone mantel, Oriental carpeting, and a grand stairway. Over the years, the Graffman Common Room has been host to elegant receptions, impromptu post-recital gatherings, weekly Wednesday afternoon teas, commencement processions and celebrations, and the casual, daily comings and goings of students and faculty.

West of the Common Room, overlooking Rittenhouse Square, is the **Bok Room**, named for the school's founder. Originally the Drexels' living room, then library, it housed the Curtis library until 1978, when it was restored to its original splendor. The Bok Room is now used for board meetings, receptions, and other functions. Adorning the ceiling are three murals by noted Philadelphia painter Edwin Blashfield. These murals were a gift from the Drexel family to the Curtis Institute of Music. In the alcove facing Rittenhouse Square stands a chinoiserie-decorated grand piano that belonged to Mrs. Bok's father, Cyrus H. K. Curtis.

Field Concert Hall, a 240-seat auditorium, adjoins the main building on the east. Designed by Horace Wells Sellers, it was constructed in 1927 on the site of the former garden and greenhouse. Field Concert Hall is used for over 100 student recitals annually, in addition to other concerts, private lessons, master classes, and orchestra rehearsals. Renovations in the summer of 2000 included upgrading the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system, and improving the lighting, mechanical support, and acoustics. A lift enabling access for the handicapped was added and completed during the 2001–02 season.

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Originally named Casimir Hall, after the father of then-director Josef Hofmann, the auditorium was known as Curtis Hall for most of its history. It was renamed Field Concert Hall in 2001 in honor of Joseph and Marie Field, whose leadership gift covered much of the cost of the renovation and provided an endowment to cover the Hall's operations.

The wrought-ironwork in Field Concert Hall and throughout the interior and exterior of all three buildings was designed by Philadelphia master craftsman Samuel Yellin. Mr. Yellin also designed the lectern and the pewter lamp in the Bok Room.

The **Sibley House**, which adjoins the main building on the south, was a gift to Mrs. Bok from her husband, Edward Bok. He believed one should buy not only the building one intends to use, but also the building next to it. This proved a wise purchase: The building has been in use by Curtis since 1924. It was annexed onto the Drexel mansion while converting the spaces for educational use. Renovations have uncovered an overmantel mirror, plaster ceiling decorations and an elaborately tiled floor by 19th-century architect Frank Furness in the room that is now used as the school's faculty lounge.

The **Milton L. Rock Resource Center**, which houses the John de Lancie Library and the Curtis Archives, is located at 1720 Locust Street, across Mozart Place from Field Concert Hall. Built for Theodore Cramp in 1908, this Beaux-Arts mansion was designed by Philadelphia architect Horace Trumbauer. One of the original buildings purchased by Mrs. Bok in 1924, this building was originally known as Knapp Hall, named after the founder's mother, Louisa Knapp Curtis. It remained part of the school until 1943, when it was purchased by the Elizabeth Arden Company. Curtis repurchased the building in 1970, and it was renamed the Milton L. Rock Resource Center in 2000, in honor of the retiring board chairman.

In 1988, still heeding Edward Bok's advice, Curtis bought another adjoining building, **1718 Locust Street**, just east of Knapp Hall. This building, designed in 1903 by the Philadelphia architectural firm of Cope-Stewardson, houses some of Curtis's administrative offices, studios, and classrooms, and offices for the liberal arts department.

In 2011 the school doubled the size of the campus with **Lenfest Hall**. Located at 1616 Locust Street, the building is named in honor of Gerry and Marguerite Lenfest, who provided substantial funding for its design and construction. Designed by renowned Philadelphia architects Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Lenfest Hall provides affordable housing; convenient dining facilities; inviting community spaces; and significantly expanded space for lessons, individual practice, and rehearsals. Lenfest Hall honors the streetscape of a venerable historic block, preserving two ornate nineteenth-century townhouse façades while providing a state-of-the-art educational setting.

In 2012 Curtis purchased 1620 Locust Street, which adjoins Lenfest Hall to the west, and the building was renamed the **Rubenstein Centre** in honor of Mark and Robin Rubenstein, who provided significant funding for the building's purchase. The former brownstone mansion, built in 1850, was designed by John Notman, the Scottish architect who also designed Philadelphia's Saint Mark's Church. The Rubenstein Centre now houses the Advancement Department offices.

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