

## Theater offers intimate experience

At the heart of the Tempe Center for the Arts, scheduled to open in 2006, is a 600-seat performance hall, able to accommodate dance, drama, small scale opera, musical theater, orchestral performances and solo recitals.

The auditorium incorporates four seating levels – an orchestra level, parterre and two balconies. To the sides of the auditorium, boxes extend and nearly connect to the stage. This very tight spatial relationship helps to reduce the scale of the auditorium, enhancing the relationship between the performer and the audience member, thus increasing the intimacy of the hall.

“The space combines intimacy between the performer and audience with flexibility for variations in the forestage,” Cultural Services Director Jody Ulich said.

This flexibility includes an orchestra pit (the main part

of which is an elevator) that is capable of housing orchestral groups or forming a down-stage extension or a forestage.

The forestage can be reshaped as required or stairs can be added to lead directly into the auditorium. Above the forestage, an overhead grid allows suspension of scenery, lighting or sound equipment.

The stage deck is a resilient “sprung” floor construction that provides an appropriate surface for dance, but that can accommodate the heavy loads often required for scenery.

In the theater there are control rooms for lighting, sound and viewing at orchestra level, scenic and film projection at the balcony level and follow spots above the balcony level near the ceiling. Additionally, draperies will allow for acoustic adjustment of the auditorium.



*Views from the balcony provide intimacy between the audience and the performers.*

“A state-of-the-art computerized control system will offer maximum flexibility for the lighting,” Cultural Facilities Administrator Don Fassinger said. “The latest in audio-video and communication systems technology and show control relay systems complete the technical package.”

The theater is provided with office space to accommodate visiting production and stage management functions, dressing rooms, a performers’ lounge and wardrobe/laundry facilities to support about 45 performers and crew.