

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 1
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: ORCHESTRA HALL

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 220 South Michigan Avenue

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Chicago

Vicinity: N/A

State: IL

County: Cook

Code: 031

Zip Code: 60604

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local:

Public-State:

Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District:

Site:

Structure:

Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

 buildings

 sites

 structures

 objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ____ Entered in the National Register _____
- ____ Determined eligible for the National Register _____
- ____ Determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- ____ Removed from the National Register _____
- ____ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Recreation & Culture	Sub:	Music Facility
Current:	Recreation & Culture	Sub:	Music Facility

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals
(Colonial Revival)

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Limestone
Walls: Brick, Limestone
Roof:
Other:

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
Page 4**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.****DESCRIPTION OF SITE:¹**

Constructed in 1904-05 to the specification of architect Daniel H. Burnham, Orchestra Hall consists of an auditorium seating 2500, a ballroom, and some office space. The facade fronts Michigan Avenue and Lake Michigan in Chicago, and is of Georgian Revival design.

The ground floor has three major limestone portals leading to a vestibule containing ticket offices, west of which is the main lobby leading to the auditorium. The second floor exterior has three two-story arched windows surmounted by Georgian fanlights that light the second floor ballroom. On either side of this row of windows a smaller window capped by a classical pediment. This level has limestone quoins, window surrounds, and arch spandrels. Above the second floor, a projecting limestone band inscribed with the names of five composers (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Wagner) separates the three-story base from the next four floors. These four floors have simple double hung windows whose lower light is a single pane and the upper one has a two-by-four pattern of small panes. This portion is all brick except for limestone quoins and flat window arches. Above these four floors is an elaborately treated limestone top floor which acts as an entablature for the entire building. Its double hung windows, smaller than their mates below, are placed at the frieze level, with brick only in the spaces between the windows. Below, a string course acts as an architrave. A classical cornice terminates the building and is surrounded by a limestone balustrade that hides a later ninth floor addition. To the south is a narrow section only one window wide, more simply treated than the rest of the facade.

The auditorium space is four stories high and extends the entire depth of the property. Above the fourth floor, the building is only one office space deep, creating a light court at the rear of the building which admits natural light to the buildings on either side of Orchestra Hall.

The auditorium spreads back fan-like from a stage that thrusts outward slightly. The graceful curve of the stage's back complements the curves of the seating rows, balconies and boxes. There is four levels of seating: the main level, a string of boxes entered from the second floor, a lower balcony, an upper balcony, and finally a gallery. There is no proscenium to separate the hall from the stage, rather a series of arches draw the stage and the hall together. Smaller arches radiate out from a central point in the ceiling above the front of the stage, seemingly enclosing the orchestra within a great shell niche. The hall's decoration is simple, including Georgian wreaths and mouldings in the hall, and three great arched openings housing organ pipes at the back of the stage.

The second floor ballroom is a two-story space at the front of the building, facing Michigan Avenue. This room is used for receptions and small chamber concerts.

In 1907-08 Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw designed a ninth floor addition to house the Cliff Dwellers Club. The barrel-vaulted room runs the full length of the building

¹ The information for this section draws on the following sources: "Orchestra Hall: A Chronicle of its Architecture and Acoustics," prepared for the Orchestral Association by the architecture firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; Leo L. Beranek, *Music, Acoustics and Architecture* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1962), 117-22; "Orchestra Hall," preliminary summary of information prepared by the Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks, June 7, 1976; National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, prepared by Carroll Williams Westfall, Landmarks Preservation Council, Chicago, May 6, 1977.

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
Page 5

but is set back from the balustrade to provide a terrace overlooking Michigan Avenue. A kitchen was added in the 1920s behind a low wall at the north end of the space, and later a small library was also added. The space is still leased from Orchestra Hall by the Cliff Dwellers Club, and has remained unaltered.

Orchestra Hall has undergone a number of renovations since 1904 most to improve the acoustical qualities of the concert hall. The size of the hall is considered small given the audience capacity and acoustical problems have been attributed to the configuration of the stage shell. The hall was modified four times, each alteration affecting the acoustical quality.

In 1905, the first major alteration to Orchestra Hall occurred. Lockers located behind the stage were removed, and the rear wall was moved back about three feet. A curtain was hung behind chorus seats and organ bays, much plaster ornament was removed from the shell and wire mesh infill material was replaced with painted flannel and canvas. Furthermore, the panels between the organ bays were made smaller, covered in painted canvas highlighted with gold trim. Also, the balcony, right and left aisles were straightened so as to lead directly to the tunnel exits. In 1911-12, the original hard back seats in the auditorium were replaced with upholstered seats. In 1929, the canvas infill of the shell was replaced with acoustical plaster.

Extensive renovations were conducted again in 1966 in order improve on-stage hearing for the orchestra, incorporate a full range sound system, and control the noise of a new air conditioning system. As a result, a new perforated metal ceiling was installed, the stage was lowered one foot and the depth increased by three feet, the seats were reupholstered. In 1967, gypsum board was placed over the shell from above and behind, thus hardening it and improving sound quality.

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: ___ Locally: ___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B X C ___ D ___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G ___

NHL Criteria: 1, 2

NHL Theme(s):

Areas of Significance: Performin Arts

Period(s) of Significance: 1904-1942

Significant Dates: 1904, 1905

Significant Person(s): Theodore Thomas
Frederick Stock

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Daniel H. Burnham & Co. (original concert hall)
Howard Van Doren Shaw (club addition, 1907-08)

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:**

In the period between 1860 and 1920, institutional foundations of music were organized. This period saw the establishment of music conservatories, the addition of music to the curriculum in schools and universities, and the building of major concert halls across the country. These concert halls were built as a result of private fundraising and included the Philadelphia Academy of Music (1857), Cincinnati's Music Hall (1878), the Auditorium in Chicago (1889), Carnegie Hall (1891) and the Metropolitan Opera House (1882), both in New York. New York quickly emerged as the performance center due to its large population and audience support; the first permanent orchestra had been established in New York in 1842.

Chicago's cultural institutions were firmly established in the late nineteenth century, around the time of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Prior to 1893, professional and amateur artists performed in Chicago; the Musical Union, an amateur singing society, gave its first concert in 1857 and the city's first semi-professional orchestra, the Philharmonic Society, was founded in 1850.

Conductor Theodore Thomas first visited Chicago in 1869 with his own travelling orchestra, the Theodore Thomas Orchestra. Based in New York City, this musical troupe spent most of the year travelling. They visited Chicago frequently, performing in the Crosby Opera House, and were always well received. By 1880, the Thomas Orchestra was playing annually at a series of Summer Garden Concerts. This arrangement continued for another decade, when Thomas and his orchestra was offered a permanent home in Chicago.

Theodore Thomas had absolute control over the new Chicago based orchestra; he had the right to create all musical programs without regard to box office receipts. The orchestra consisted of eighty-six men, twenty-four of whom were Chicagoans. They performed twenty weeks each year, on Friday afternoons and Saturday evenings, in the new Auditorium building. The business affairs were handled by the Orchestral Association, formed to provide \$50,000 each year for the first three years in order to guarantee against box office losses. Thomas' new orchestra premiered October 16 and 17, 1891.

In 1893 Thomas was selected as the Director of the Bureau of Music of the World's Columbian Exposition. He persuaded a number of prominent musicians such as Anton Dvorak, Jan Paderewski, Jules Massenet, Hans Richter and Camille Saint-Saens to appear with the orchestra. Unfortunately, disagreements between Thomas and the fair's committee members led him to resign. The Theodore Thomas Orchestra did not perform.

Nevertheless, Chicagoans continued to support Thomas' orchestra. By the 1896-97 season, Thomas felt they needed a smaller, more permanent concert hall. Sharing the Auditorium with others proved to be difficult when conflicts in engagement dates occurred. Furthermore, the orchestra rarely filled the large Auditorium hall, and empty seats resulted in low morale. At this time, the Orchestral Association was in financial difficulty and was unable to support a new hall. Thomas resigned in 1901 amidst newspaper criticism. He was censured for his choice of programs, lack of large audiences and the financial difficulties of the Orchestral Association. The Association's trustees began to look for smaller quarters in order to convince Thomas and his Orchestra to stay in Chicago. In 1902, Bryan Lathrop, an Orchestral Association trustee, purchased property at 220 South Michigan Avenue and began to raise funds for the construction of the building. Architect Daniel Hudson Burnham donated his time to design the building. Burnham designed Orchestral Hall according to Theodore Thomas' specifications. Thomas wanted the auditorium to look like a conservatory; the original steel mesh of the shell looked like glass.

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

On December 14, 1904 the first concert in the new Orchestra Hall took place. Theodore Thomas conducted, and the program included works by Wagner, Strauss's "Death and Transfiguration," Beethoven's "Symphony No. 5," and the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's "Messiah." Thomas died less than a month after the inaugural concert, on January 4, 1905. As a result of his hard work establishing a permanent orchestra in Chicago, the Orchestral Association renamed the orchestra the Theodore Thomas Orchestra.

Following Thomas' death, violinist Frederick Stock moved into the position of conductor. A member of the orchestra since 1895-96, he aided Thomas by conducting when the orchestra played out of town, and he also conducted occasionally when they played in Chicago. With Thomas' death, the Orchestral Association was in chaos; Thomas had not only conducted the musicians, he also arranged tours and provided inspiration for the orchestra. The orchestra needed a strong personality in order to continue.

Stock was appointed as acting conductor while the Orchestral Association searched for a suitable candidate. Throughout 1905 and 1906, various conductors were approached but none were a good fit. Eventually, the trustees of the Orchestral Association selected Stock to replace Thomas.

The Theodore Thomas Orchestra continued its popularity in Chicago. By 1909, Friday concerts were completely sold out, and other performances had good attendance. Stock selected works by Weber, Dvorak, Liszt and Strauss, appealing to audience preferences. In December 1909, Sergei Rachmaninoff was a guest conductor; the audience responded well to his music. Stock tried to introduce the works of such composers as Schonberg, Scriabin and Mahler but the audiences were not supportive.

In 1913 the name of the Theodore Thomas Orchestra was changed to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Also at that time, the orchestra began "popular concerts," performing works such as Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite," and other favored Wagner and Strauss pieces. Stock and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed during the summers at the Ravinia Festival, located twenty-five miles north of Chicago in Highland Park beginning in 1911. By 1936, they were performing there annually. By the 25th anniversary of the Orchestra in 1916, fifteen musicians had been members twenty-five years. Frederick Stock composed "Festival Prologue" especially for the silver anniversary celebration.

Following World War I, Stock began a series of Youth Concerts in order to educate young Chicagoans. He also organized the Civic Orchestra which served as a professional training orchestra. It opened with fifty-four students who studied using the scores of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

The 1940-41 season marked the 50th anniversary of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Stock commissioned several works in celebration, including Stravinsky's "Symphony in C," Roy Harris's "American Creed," Milhaud's "Symphony No. 1," Kodaly's "Concerto for Orchestra," Gliere's overture "Fete Ferghanaise," Casella's "Symphony No. 3" and Walton's "Scapino Overture." This season also marked Stock's thirty-fifth year as conductor. He died unexpectedly the following year, on October 20, 1942.

The Cliff Dwellers Club is housed in the ninth floor of Orchestra Hall. Founded in 1907 as an arts club by Chicago novelist Hamlin Garland and sculptor Lorado Taft and their friends Charles Francis Browne and Ralph Clarkson, it served as a meeting place for practicing artists. The name is from the novel *The Cliff Dwellers* by Chicagoan Henry B. Fuller. Prominent members included architects Daniel Burnham, Louis Sullivan and Dwight Perkins, writer George Ade and conductor Frederick Stock. The Cliff Dwellers hosted informal concerts by members, and was visited by guest artists performing at Orchestra Hall.

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
Page 9**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES****Primary Sources:**

The chief repository of documents on Orchestra Hall and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is housed in the Orchestra Hall Archives, founded in 1990 during the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's centennial. The collection includes all audio-visual materials, programs, photographs, and institutional records documenting the activities of the CSO and other events held at Orchestra Hall, along with architectural documentation on the construction and alterations of Orchestra Hall. Of particular interest is "Orchestra Hall: A Chronicle of Its Architecture and Acoustics" prepared for the Orchestral Association by the architecture firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, October 1980.

The Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois, houses the Theodore Thomas papers, and a wide range of secondary sources in music history and theory.

The Art Institute of Chicago, houses the Daniel H. Burnham papers which include correspondence between Burnham and Theodore Thomas, Rose Fay Thomas, and Frederick Stock. Of particular interest is microfilm roll # 20 "D.H. Burnham and Co., Orchestra Hall, 1905."

Secondary Sources:

Beranek, Leo L. *Music, Acoustics and Architecture*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962.

Gilbert, Paul and Charles Lee Bryson. *Chicago and Its Makers*. Chicago: Felix Mendelssohn, 1927.

Hitchcock, H. Wiley. *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988.

"Home of Symphony to Mark 50th Year--Jubilee for Orchestra Hall." Art Institute of Chicago: Scrapbook of Art & Artist of Chicago, 1954.

Izenour, George C. *Theater Design*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1977.

Marsh, Robert C. "Orchestra Hall Remodeled: The Eye is Pleased, But ..." *High Fidelity Magazine* (January 1967).

Moore, Charles. *Daniel H. Burnham, Architect, Planner of Cities*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921.

Nickel, Richard. "Sullivan's Theater-Front Design: A Mystery Set to Music." *Inland Architect* (October 1969).

"Orchestra Hall." *Architectural Record* 38 (July 1915).

Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks. "Orchestra Hall: Preliminary Summary of Information," June 7, 1976.

Otis, Phio Adams. *The Chicago Symphony Orchestra: Its Organization, Growth and Development*. Chicago: Clayton F. Summy Co., 1924.

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 10

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Randall, Frank A. *History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago*. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1949.

Russell, Charles E. *The American Orchestra and Theodore Thomas*. 1927.

Sturgis, Russell. "The New Thomas Music Hall." *Architectural Record* 16 (August 1904).

Sullivan, Louis H. *The Autobiography of and Idea*. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1956.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 Previously Listed in the National Register. **[PART OF HISTORIC DISTRICT]**
 Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
 Designated a National Historic Landmark.
 Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency
 Local Government
 University
 Other (Specify Repository): Orchestra Hall Archives
Newberry Library, Chicago
Art Institute of Chicago

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 11

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Less than one (1) acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
A 16 448160 4636280

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is identified with the city of Chicago Index Number 17-15-105-014.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary is that which has historically been associated with the property. Chicago identifies each parcel with an Index Number for the purpose of tax identification. The Index number is the most accurate way to identify a single structure within the city boundaries.

11. FORM PREPARED BYName/Title: Jill S. Mesirov, Historical Consultant
414 Green Park Court
Deerfield, Illinois 60015

Telephone: 708/405-9168

Date: December 22, 1993

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 12

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

PHOTOGRAPH 1

- 1) Name of Property: Orchestra Hall
- 2) County and State: Cook County, Illinois
- 3) Name of Photographer: unknown
- 4) Date of Photograph: ca. November 1904
- 5) Location of original negative: Orchestra Hall Archives, Chicago
- 6) Description of view indicating direction of camera: Exterior, eastern facade

PHOTOGRAPH 2

- 1) Name of Property: Orchestra Hall
- 2) County and State: Cook County, Illinois
- 3) Name of Photographer: unknown
- 4) Date of Photograph: ca. 1910
- 5) Location of original negative: Orchestra Hall Archives, Chicago
- 6) Description of view indicating direction of camera: Exterior, eastern facade showing Cliff Dwellers addition

PHOTOGRAPH 3

- 1) Name of Property: Orchestra Hall
- 2) County and State: Cook County, Illinois
- 3) Name of Photographer: Jim Steere
- 4) Date of Photograph: ca. 1992
- 5) Location of original negative: Orchestra Hall Archives, Chicago
- 6) Description of view indicating direction of camera: Exterior, eastern facade

PHOTOGRAPH 4

- 1) Name of Property: Orchestra Hall
- 2) County and State: Cook County, Illinois
- 3) Name of Photographer: unknown
- 4) Date of Photograph: 1904-05
- 5) Location of original negative: Orchestra Hall Archives, Chicago
- 6) Description of view indicating direction of camera: Interior, music hall stage, facing west.

PHOTOGRAPH 5

- 1) Name of Property: Orchestra Hall
- 2) County and State: Cook County, Illinois
- 3) Name of Photographer: unknown
- 4) Date of Photograph: ca. 1960
- 5) Location of original negative: Orchestra Hall Archives, Chicago
- 6) Description of view indicating direction of camera: Interior, music hall, facing east

ORCHESTRA HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 13

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

PHOTOGRAPH 6

- 1) Name of Property: Orchestra Hall
- 2) County and State: Cook County, Illinois
- 3) Name of Photographer: unknown
- 4) Date of Photograph: ca. 1960
- 5) Location of original negative: Orchestra Hall Archives, Chicago
- 6) Description of view indicating direction of camera: Interior, music hall stage, facing west

PHOTOGRAPH 7

- 1) Name of Property: Orchestra Hall
- 2) County and State: Cook County, Illinois
- 3) Name of Photographer: unknown
- 4) Date of Photograph: 1990-91
- 5) Location of original negative: Orchestra Hall Archives, Chicago
- 6) Description of view indicating direction of camera: Interior, music hall stage, facing west

PHOTOGRAPH 8

- 1) Name of Property: Orchestra Hall
- 2) County and State: Cook County, Illinois
- 3) Name of Photographer: unknown
- 4) Date of Photograph: ca. 1905
- 5) Location of original negative: Orchestra Hall Archives, Chicago
- 6) Description of view indicating direction of camera: Interior, ballroom, facing north