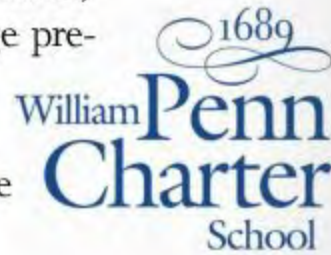
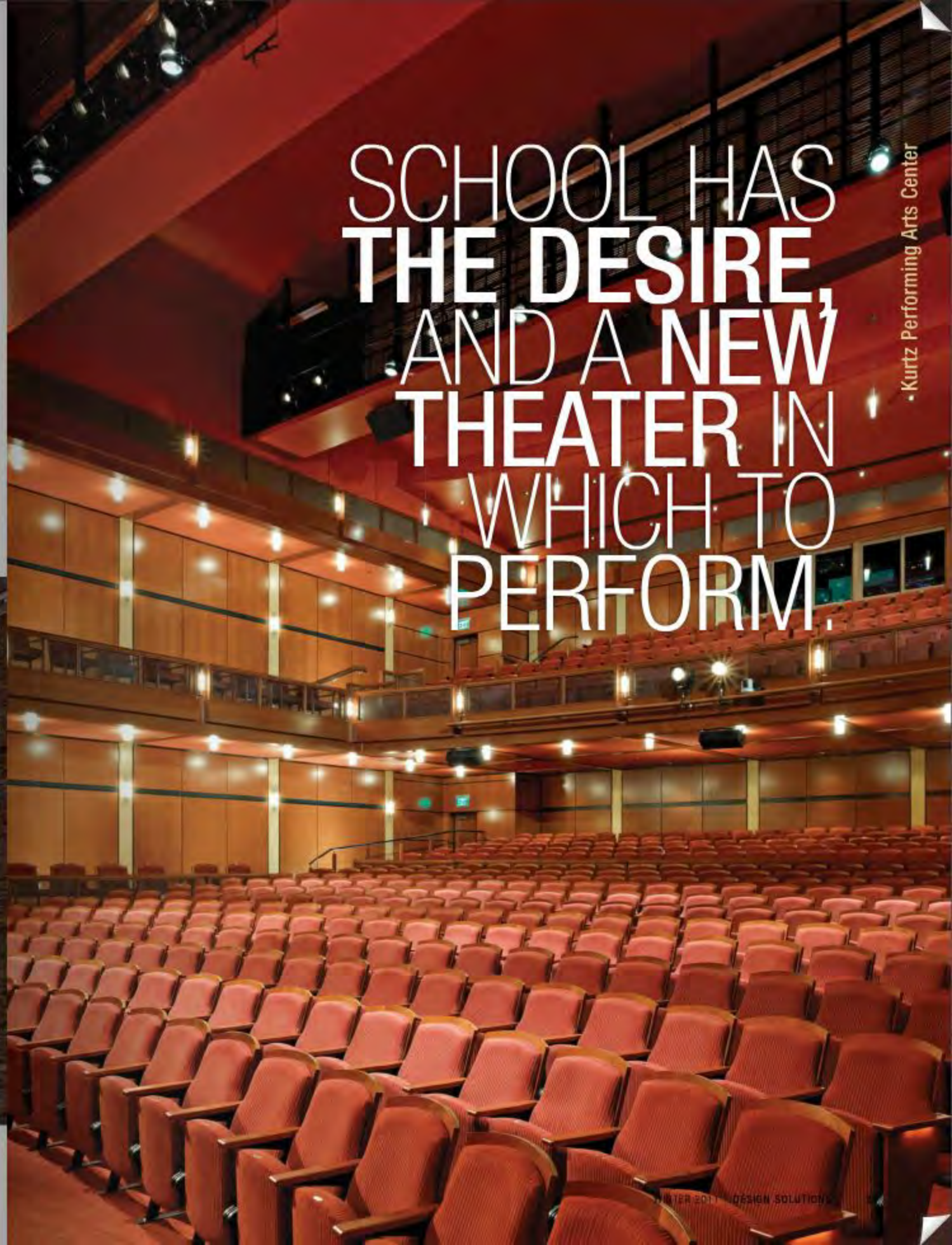


**W**illiam Penn Charter School was established in Philadelphia in 1689 by members of the Religious Society of Friends. In response to a charge by William Penn, the school continues its commitment to Quaker spiritual and educational testimonies. A coeducational, pre-kindergarten through 12, college preparatory school, Penn Charter is committed to training the mind, quickening the spirit, cultivating the aesthetic and developing the body.



SCHOOL HAS  
**THE DESIRE,**  
AND A NEW  
**THEATER IN**  
WHICH TO  
**PERFORM.**







Penn Charter rests on a 44-acre campus in the East Falls section of Philadelphia. The divisions operate in their own buildings, each of which is designed to meet students' academic and developmental needs. Students have access to multiple sports facilities including a swimming pool, squash and tennis courts, and a field house. And now they have access to the new David L. Kurtz Performing Arts Center which opened in 2010.

The Kurtz Center for the Performing Arts is the first major "green" building in East Falls. The school won LEED Gold certification based on the building's sustainable design, related to site development, water savings and energy efficiency, materials and indoor environmental quality.

As the school's CFO, Hal Davidow,

notes, "It was important that we create a building that maintains a link to our historical context yet has the look and feel of a world class performance venue. The use of wood allowed us to do just that, and to achieve the caliber of acoustics that we were after."

◀ **DETAILING IN THE THEATER** is a modern interpretation of a traditional concert hall.



#### WOOD SURROUNDS

The team put together to design and build the Kurtz center included Voith & Mactavish Architects, LLP, headquartered in Philadelphia, and CBR Woodworking, LLC, an AWI member firm from Hainesport, New Jersey.

Architectural woodwork for this project included exterior trim and mouldings, crown cornice with dentil blocks, arched window casings and column wraps. Interior millwork included Cherry wall panels and trim, curved railings with metal mesh, and a Cherry proscenium. Cherry stair mouldings accent the band room, while White Oak curved risers and nosing finish the chorus room. The lobby includes painted mouldings and panels.

"In keeping with the LEED regional material requirement, American Black Cherry was harvested within 200 miles of the school," reports Chris Robbins, Sr., project manager from the woodworking company. "All material was NAF FSC certified. The plain sliced veneers were center balanced and sequenced per floor. The Cherry, matched to the architect's control sample by our finishing manager, produces a warm ambience to the theater."

#### DESIGN CUES

It was important that the new structure complement and respect the existing campus aesthetic, points out Robert Piasecki, AIA. "At the same





## AT A GLANCE:

AWI MANUFACTURING MEMBER: **CBR Woodworking, LLC**

LOCATION: **Hainesport, New Jersey**

FOUNDED: **1989**

FACILITY: **30,000 square feet**

SERVICES: **A blend of old world craftsmanship and today's technology to create custom architectural woodwork**

*"We start with a vision that our work will stand out, and always exceed the expectation of our clients. We are passionate about what we do, working as a team, we continually improve our process."*

**– Chris Robbins, Senior Project Manager**

time, there was a strong desire for the theater to have a contemporary feel. Throughout the building wood is used in both traditional and non-traditional manners, the end result being a creative and lively building that is bolstered on both large and small scales by the inherent qualities of real wood."

The interior of the theater is warm and inviting, a contrast to the visually cooler exterior. The detailing is a modern interpretation of a traditional concert hall. Pilasters on the theater walls recall columns, while the rich Cherry panels, seat backs, doors and trim give the impression of being inside a music box. The red seats, ceiling, carpet and curtain conspire to create an exciting environment supportive of both the performer and audience.

The Kurtz Center is primarily a teaching theater so it was important to bring the audience as close to the performers as possible. This was accomplished with balconies and making their fronts visually transparent. When instrumental or choral performances are on stage, an orchestra shell comprised of a Cherry paneled back wall, hanging side walls and ceiling panels is deployed. "The wooden shell not only pushes the sound out into the hall," says Piasecki, "but also visually brings the hall onto the stage as the shell pan-



