



SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS COLLEGE

CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Constructed at the same time as Guerin Hall (1911 to 1913), the Conservatory was built on the site of the second Saint Mary-of-the-Woods village church and cemetery. The property was sold to the Sisters of Providence in 1866. The current Village Church was built the following year, followed by the gradual transfer of the cemetery to the Village before the Conservatory was constructed on the site. The Conservatory is a three-story structure of white brick and Bedford limestone, in the Italian Renaissance style with classical Ionic details and Beaux-Arts classical influences.

The heavy limestone block foundation and rusticated base give way to brick and stone upper floors, and pressed copper cornice hides built-in guttering. Engaged columns over a raised entry create a classical procession to the interior seen on many of the major campus buildings. Columns are an assemblage of Doric, Ionic & Corinthian styles. The entrance incorporates decorative elements that are not structural but are expected of the Italian Renaissance style and added for appearance only, such as huge scrolled consoles and vegetative elements including the acanthus leaves common to that period, and composite capitals with scrolls, garlands and cartouches. The stone frieze is ornamented by the lettering of the building name. The second story windows have less ornamentation and are trimmed with classically molded stone.

The foyer has Ionic columns of Pavanazza marble with capitals worked in plaster, Sienna marble doorways, English veined Italian marble wainscoting and Venetian mosaic floor. Lobby has terrazzo floors and pediments common to the College buildings. Marble stairways are trimmed with bronze railings ending in a bronze newel. Most of the interior columns and borders are faux marble or constructed of scagliola, a type of early imitation marble made of gypsum and adhesive.

In the center of the building is the 724 seat Cecilian Auditorium. The Auditorium is patterned after the Leipzig Conservatory in Germany, founded by Felix Mendelssohn in 1843. The cantilevered balcony projects 30 feet from the rear wall for an unobstructed view of the stage. The auditorium with its leaded glass dome replicates the European acoustical egg theory, providing near perfect acoustics. As with many functional details across the campus architecture, the proscenium lights around the stage are incorporated as architectural element. Over the years, hundreds of student theatre and musical performances were held. Nationally and internationally renowned artists and speakers shared their talents.

The building houses classrooms, chorus rooms, studios, music faculty offices, and performance space. In 2003, the College revised the electrical systems and hired Historic Plaster and Restoration of Indianapolis to restore plaster columns and bordering in the Cecilian Auditorium.



Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College
celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the
Conservatory of Music and the Anne-Thérèse Guérin Hall

August 26, 2013