

# WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

## B r e a k s   G r o u n d

To the sounds of Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man," and with the downtown Los Angeles skyline as the backdrop, more than 500 people witnessed the December 10th groundbreaking for Walt Disney Concert Hall. This much-anticipated, long-awaited event was the culmination of five years of hard work, and a lifetime of achievement for the world's most masterful storyteller, Walt Disney. Ninety-one years after the birth of the man whose boundless imagination touched the hearts and minds of millions, work will commence on a building that is itself a celebration of the imagination.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony, Diane Disney Miller, daughter of Lillian and Walt Disney, commented, "My father would love this hall as it reflects his innovative and artistic nature. Like him, it will serve as a lightning rod for new musical ideas and concepts."

### UNPRECEDENTED GIFT FROM DISNEY FAMILY

The Frank Gehry-designed concert hall is the result of a \$50 million gift from Lillian Disney in 1987 in memory of her late husband, Walt Disney. The Disney gift is thought to be the largest cash donation in the history of art philanthropy in the United States. Additional Disney family gifts and accrued interest bring the family's total contribution to \$93.6 million.

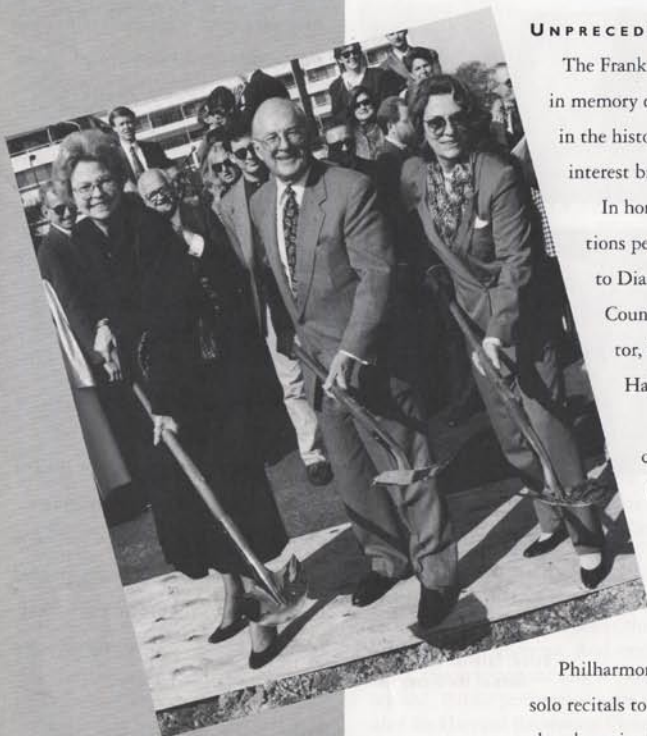
In honor of its new home, members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's brass and percussion sections performed at the December groundbreaking. Speakers at the ceremony included, in addition to Diane Disney Miller, Sharon Disney Lund, Supervisor Ed Edelman, chairman, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; Ernest Fleischmann, executive vice president and managing director, Los Angeles Philharmonic; Frank Gehry; Fred Nicholas, chairman, Walt Disney Concert Hall Committee; and James Thomas, chairman, Music Center Board of Governors.

The groundbreaking commenced on the hall's garage, which is beneath the 2,380-seat concert hall and contains the base of the hall. The garage will take approximately 24 months to complete. Work on the hall is expected to commence by January 1995 and to be complete in spring 1997, with the official opening planned for fall 1997.

### INCREASED PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL GROUPS

The fourth theatre in the Music Center complex, Disney Hall, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic as its primary tenant, has been designed to accommodate live music performance from solo recitals to symphony orchestras. It will also house ethnic music performances, jazz and folk music, and choral music. Additional performance areas include a 600-seat, pre-concert auditorium, one formal and two informal amphitheatres, and a chorus rehearsal room that doubles as a 200-seat theatre.

As with the other Music Center theatres, Disney Hall will be managed and operated by the Music Center Operating Company, on behalf of the County of Los Angeles. The hall will be located south of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion on a 3.6 acre site at Grand Avenue and First Street.



Sharon Disney Lund,  
Fred Nicholas and  
Diane Disney Miller  
break ground for  
Disney Hall.



• "Downtown Los Angeles has now taken a giant step forward in fulfilling its potential as a major cultural center. Disney Hall ties together the existing Music Center facilities with the Museum of Contemporary Art and the soon-to-be completed Library Square, creating a cultural corridor that will be unsurpassed – a legacy for future generations."

*Frederick M. Nicholas, chairman, Walt Disney Concert Hall Committee and president, The Hapsmith Company*

• "This is a great day for the musicians of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and myself. As every musician needs the finest possible instrument, every orchestra needs the finest possible concert hall to achieve its full potential. ...I'm confident that we are now on our way towards creating a great concert hall for 21st century Los Angeles."

*Esa-Pekka Salonen, music director, Los Angeles Philharmonic*

• "Disney Hall reaffirms the Music Center's commitment to our city at a critical time and sends a powerful, positive signal to local business leaders as well as the community at large. But, while the hall brings great economic benefits, my excitement goes beyond dollars and cents. Disney Hall is a big boost to the arts and their ability to bring people together – to celebrate the best that is within each of us. These qualities are central to our community's future."

*James A. Thomas, chairman, Music Center Board of Governors and managing partner, Maguire Thomas Partners*

## Walt Disney ...

*(Continued from Cover)*

When both the Philharmonic and the Los Angeles Master Chorale begin performing at Disney Hall, much-needed rehearsal and performance time for opera, musical theatre and dance will be available at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Moreover, the new hall will provide performance opportunities campus-wide for locally based arts groups and international arts organizations which reflect the community's cultural heritage. It will also enable the Philharmonic to plan its programs with greater flexibility, and to expand its education and other community services.

### ACOUSTICS AND DESIGN FLOW TOGETHER

In designing the concert hall, Pritzker Prize-winning architect Frank Gehry has worked extensively with one of the world's leading acousticians, Dr. Minoru Nagata of Nagata & Associates, Tokyo. A series of increasingly specific studies involving state-of-the-art laser and computer testing of models has led to extensive refining of the hall's interior, in an effort to fulfill Mrs. Disney's mandate to build an acoustically superb concert hall. A \$1 million gift from Toyota Motor Sales for the purchase of an organ for the hall will further enhance the hall's musical qualities.

The concert hall, enveloped in a flower-like wrapper of white limestone and stainless steel, reaches out to welcome the community with open sculptural composition, a warm wood interior, and acoustic intimacy. With seating surrounding the stage on all sides, the hall is configured to foster interaction between musicians and their audiences. An outdoor park with extensive public gardens further fulfills the Music Center's and Lillian Disney's mandate to maximize public accessibility to the hall.

### GREAT ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Disney Hall is expected to have significant immediate as well as long-term effects on the Southern California economy, with \$200 million in public and private funds to be invested directly into the local economy. The hall will create thousands of new jobs, including nearly 1,000 immediate construction jobs. Revenues from the garage, facility fees and sales tax will directly benefit county and city budgets, providing vital long-term income.

The concert hall is being built at the direction of the Walt Disney Concert Hall Committee, under the authority of the Music Center's Board of Governors. Frederick M. Nicholas, a member of the Board of Governors, chairs the Walt Disney Concert Hall Committee.



• "To find myself at the intersection between music and architecture at this stage of my life is an extraordinary experience. Add to it the support from the Walt Disney family and the world of music – for me, that's heaven."

*Frank Gehry, architect, Walt Disney Concert Hall*

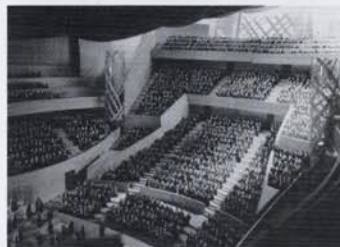
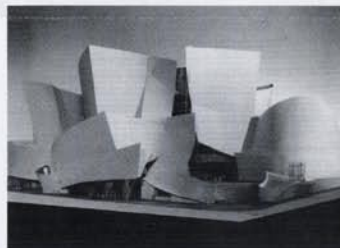
• "Mother said the building has got to work from the inside out, and it does. It serves its purpose. And part of that purpose is to provide a wonderful downtown space for a city that really needs it.

I guess you would call it a populist hall as opposed to an elitist place. We need some soul, something for the spirit."

*Diane Disney Miller*

• "Disney Hall gives us the means to reach the broad and diverse populations of Southern California. We will be putting the performing arts to their highest and greatest use – to educate, to communicate and to unify spiritually."

*Esther Wachtell, president, The Music Center*



Top: Let the celebration begin! Jeffrey Reynolds conducts brass and percussion sections from the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Disney Hall groundbreaking.

Below: Exterior and interior shots of the Disney Hall.