

**For Immediate Release: 4.19.2021**

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**TRAHAN ARCHITECTS ANNOUNCES NATIONAL AIA INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AWARD**

**New Orleans, LA/ New York, NY** –Trahan Architects, a global architecture firm with studios in New Orleans and New York City, announced today that it has received the 2021 Interior Architecture Award for the Coca-Cola Stage at The Alliance Theatre presented by the National Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). Trahan Architects was founded by Victor F. “Trey” Trahan, III, FAIA on the belief that the mindful design of everyday spaces can elevate human experience.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) whose Interior Architecture jury included Carol Bentel, FAIA, Chair, Bentel & Bentel, Michelle Watanabe, AIA, Leo A Daly, John Harrison, FAIA, GreenSlate, Venesa Alicea, AIA, NOMA, Heather Rose-Dunning, IIDA, and Yellow Dog Studio, honored Trahan Architects for its project, the Coca-Cola Stage at the Alliance Theatre located within the Woodruff Arts Center campus in Atlanta, GA.

Says the AIA, “At the heart of a celebrated arts center campus in Atlanta, the Coca-Cola Stage at the Alliance Theatre has been transformed, demonstrating what is possible when a multi-disciplinary team works in concert. Perfectly tuned acoustically to deliver world-class performances to its patrons, the project also moved the 650-foot chamber 10 feet closer to the stage and challenged historic notions of segregation and discrimination by removing the separation between the balcony and orchestra. As an additional unifying feature, all seating zones are accessible from every entrance within the chamber.”

“It is an honor to be recognized for our work, especially this project which was rooted in designing for equity and inclusion,” says Trahan. “The collaboration of our incredible team of designers and consultants, along with the leadership team of the Alliance Theatre, created a high design space that will continue to serve the community and provide access to the arts.”

The AIA went on to say, “Recognizing that the project should be both compelling and warm, the team listened intently to what the client hoped to achieve. The artistic director shared with the team several objects from the theatre’s holdings, including a bowl from the Atlanta-based Moulthrop family. After digesting the director’s

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descriptions of the bowl—a warm, wooden, shared space with no sense of hierarchy—the team quickly oriented the project around the form.

Given a bowl's curved form, the team knew that mimicking its curves could prove to be a costly endeavor for the theatre. It engaged a world-renowned wood sculptor Matthias Pliessnig specializing in steam-bent oak millwork and adopted the process to create many of the proposed architectural details on a one-to-one scale. The collaboration between architect, artist, and fabricator led to the beautiful steam-bent millwork guardrails and balconies that adorn the theatre. Through the merger of handcraft and mass production, the team clearly communicated the theatre's blended concept.

Importantly, the project was also guided by a desire to design for equitable communities. Across the American South, theatre balconies are vestiges of racism for many people of color. As the team moved through the design process, the idea emerged to blend the balcony and the orchestra to create a space with no separation and provide circulation between both seating heights. Box seating has historically included separate access through a segregated lobby sequence, but in this project, it exists as a continuum to create a democratic space.

The team also focused its design on better accommodating differently abled patrons, who are often tucked into less exciting seating separated from the rest of the audience. This project challenges that standard and provides a performance space where everyone can have a unique experience. Ambulatory-assisted seating is provided at the center of the orchestra, upper orchestra, and balcony seating, and two of the box seating elements feature ambulatory, full-access seats. The theatre's high-caliber acoustics ensure that no one seat is better than another and that the entire audience enjoys a dynamic experience."

Trahan Architects would like to thank its client group, The Woodruff Arts Center and the Alliance Theatre, for their unwavering support throughout the project. The project would not have been possible without the collective expertise of the consultant team. Trahan Architects shares this honor with our collaborators: Matthias Pliessnig, CW Keller Associates, Theatre Projects Consultants, Talaske Group, Uzun + Case, DLB Associates Consulting Engineers, Fisher Marantz Stone, Thirst, Jensen Hughes, Cost+ Plus and Lerch Bates.

Trahan Architects is a multi-disciplinary firm ranked the number one design firm by Architect 50, the annual ranking by Architect magazine, the official publication of American Institute of Architects, which topped the list by building "dramatic, sumptuous and well-detailed projects." Trahan Architects has received over 100

national, regional and local awards, as well as several international design competitions, including five National AIA Awards.

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