

# FLOORNATURE

## Estudio Barozzi Viega designs the new Szczecin Philharmonic Hall

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*The new Szczecin Philharmonic Hall designed by Barozzi Viega studio of Barcelona stands on the site of the old Konzerthaus. Szczecin Philharmonic Hall is a building with a bold identity that has already become a landmark in the city.*

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Standing on the site of the old "Konzerthaus", damaged by bombs in the Second World War and demolished in 1962, the new Szczecin Philharmonic Hall was designed by Estudio Barozzi Viega after winning a competition announced in 2007. The ambitious project combines a complex, highly technical theme such as music with the need to offer the city a compositional solution with a bold identity. Interior design and the architectural design come together surprisingly well in a building that has immediately become **a landmark, because its profile acts as the sounding board for a carefully planned interior layout and because it stands out as extremely unusual in the urban panorama of central Szczecin in Poland.**



The old "Konzerthaus" stood at the corner of Malopolska and Matejki streets, in a city centre characterised by Neo-Gothic cathedrals with tall spires and eclectic buildings with crowstep

gables. The streets' propensity for verticality is so fixed in the memory of the city of Szczecin that it is reflected in the new public building. This is how we may interpret the "towers" of Szczecin Philharmonic Hall, which emerge out of its square floor plan to rise as high as the buildings around it. **Like a modern fortress, the building appears impenetrable, monolithic, white and compact, though as we approach it we can see that it is actually transparent, composed and rarefied. It attracts attention from far away, standing out from the surrounding brick and stone buildings in eclectic style, but from close up we can see that it is actually a glass building, revealed as translucent when night falls and the lights come on inside the building.** Like a "giant lantern", the building attracts passers-by, inviting them to come in and find out what is hidden inside.



The impact of the interiors is also surprising, because people entering through the main entrance on Malopolska street find themselves in a foyer three storeys high, a big free space containing the ticket office, a coffee shop and a museum shop on one side. The interior lives up to the building's imposing exterior, with its foyer interpreted by the architects as a filter space separating the formal purity of the glass surfaces outside from the abundance of decoration in the concert hall. In addition to a 192 seat chamber music hall, Szczecin Philharmonic Hall contains a 951 seat auditorium for symphony performances, with wooden walls decorated with gold leaf. **A concession to ostentation worthy of Europe's best known historic philharmonic halls, such as the gilded Musikverein in Vienna or Teatro alla Scala in Milan.** On the top level is an exhibition gallery, while the two underground levels host parking lots and technical premises. All the technical installations are channelled into the double outer skin that provides the building with acoustic and thermal insulation.

On September 5, 2014 Szczecin Philharmonic Hall was inaugurated with a solemn concert attended by Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski.

Mara Corradi

Design: Barozzi Viega (Fabrizio Barozzi , Alberto Veiga )  
Project leaders: Pieter Janssens, Agnieszka Samsel

Project team: Marta Grządziel, Isak Mayor, Petra Jossen, Cristina Lucena, Cristina Porta, Ruben Sousa

Local architect: STUDIO A4, Jacek Lenart

Client: City of Szczecin

Location: Małopolska 48, Szczecin (Poland)

Structural design: BOMA S.L., FORT POLSKA

Acoustics: ARAU ACUSTICA

Total usable floor space: 13000 sqm

Lot size: 3800 sqm

Competition: 2007

Project start: 2009

Completion of work: 2014

Contractors: GLA Engineering, ELSECO, ANOCHE Iluminación Arquitectónica

Glass façades: FERRÉS ARQUITECTOS Y CONSULTORES

Steel roof

Concrete, steel and glass structure

Photos: © Simon Menges

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historic photo from <http://szczecin.fotopolska.eu/490051.foto.html>