

Renovating Teatro alla Scala Milano for the 21st century, Part I

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- **Abstract**
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Teatro alla Scala of Milan, known simply as La Scala throughout the world, is an old but venerable opera house that achieved legendary status in the world of music. A great number of singers of Olympian status have sung there; and major operas, among them Verdi's Falstaff and Otello and Puccini's Turandot, premiered there. The 227 - year - old theater is beloved with a passion by the Milanese and the Italians, but it has suffered the ravages of time. It needed to be renovated in order to reverse material decay, meet current fire codes and security requirements, incorporate a new HVAC system, and to accommodate badly needed modern stage machinery. This renovation project took 3 years during which the theater was closed, and it included the construction of an elliptical 17 - floor fly tower, designed by architect Mario Botta, for housing rehearsal rooms and serving as a scenery changing facility. The renovation proposal originally aroused a strong sense of melodrama among the extremely excitable Italian opera buffs who feared the desecration of their beloved edifice, but the acoustics and the beauty (carried out by Elisabetta Fabbri Architect) of the auditorium were preserved (and even enhanced). In this paper we explain how this project was achieved.