



For Immediate Release
Contact: Meredith Sladek
msladek@snug-harbor.org
(718) 425-3515

**Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden Breaks Ground on
Major Renovation of and New Addition to Historic Music Hall**

***Long-awaited project will make 1892 building more accessible
and more compatible with modern performance standards***

May 31, 2019, Staten Island, NY — Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden is excited to break ground on an important renovation and addition project for its historic Music Hall. The transformative \$20 million project will bring the landmark 19th century music hall – NYC’s second oldest after Carnegie Hall – into the 21st century by enabling greater access to the hall’s stage and orchestra pit for full ADA compliance. A new building designed by Studio Joseph Architects through DDC’s Design Excellence Program will also house new union-compliant dressing rooms and a new community room for public events and gatherings. Altogether, the upgrades will allow the Music Hall to accommodate larger-scale modern performances and events, bringing exciting new programming to this historic building for years to come.

The groundbreaking event takes place on May 31, 2019 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the east end of Chapel Road at Snug Harbor on 1000 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island, NY 10301.

The project was fully funded by \$19.5 million from the City of New York, including support from City Council by NYC Councilmember Debi Rose and the NYC Mayor’s Office through the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), and overseen by the NYC Department of Design & Construction (DDC). The architect for the project is Wendy Joseph of Studio Joseph Architects. The landscape design won an Award for Excellence in Design from the Public Design Commission in 2016.

The main scope of work entails a new annex to the Music Hall, to be located on the east side of the building next to the parking lot. Construction is expected to take 24 months. During this time, the theater will be closed to the public. The new annex brings a number of crucial improvements, such as:

Basement of annex:

- Dressing rooms designed to comply with ADA and Actors Equity specifications
- Two chorus dressing rooms with a capacity of ten people each
- One VIP dressing room with a capacity of two people
- One flex space that can be used as an additional dressing room, a warm up room, or a greenroom
- Access between the addition and the Music Hall at both the stage and basement levels
- Equipment storage room

Street level of annex:

- A new loading dock



- A new stage door
- Equipment storage room
- Two offices
- A restroom
- A sound and light lock between the stage and loading dock
- A community room for meetings and receptions
- A pantry
- Backstage restroom
- Extra wing-space stage right

In addition to the annex, the basement of the Music Hall will have ADA compliant access to the orchestra pit, leading from the annex through the existing basement. Additionally, the entire building's fire alarm and suppression system will be brought to modern day fire code compliance.

The project will bring incredible improvements to the quality and quantity of productions staged at Snug Harbor for the community. Snug Harbor's Music Hall will be fully compliant with Actors Equity standards, allowing the facility to host Equity showcases and productions for the first time in its history. The building will also be substantially more ADA accessible than ever before, with the entire new annex, main floor, stage, and orchestra pit all planned with ADA compliant amenities. This will make the Music Hall more viable and appealing to diverse artists and larger, more modern productions. The Snug Harbor community and visitors will have an improved experience attending and performing in the facility, with so many improved amenities under one roof.

The project was eligible for the DCLA "Percent for Art" program, which funded a floor-to-ceiling, two-dimensional piece created by Saul Becker entitled *Aship Aground Anew*, depicting an 18th century sailing ship washed ashore on a beach with mature trees growing out of its wrecked hull. The installation represents a community founded in a maritime tradition that is finding new ground and fostering growth. The massive 162" x 186" piece will be installed on the stairwell wall between the first and second floors of the new addition, and will be visible through the windows from the outside of the building. The piece [won an Award for Excellence in Design from the Public Design Commission](#) in spring 2018, which honors projects for remarkable designs that enliven neighborhoods, improve recreational and cultural spaces, and preserve New York City's historic gems.

"Snug Harbor's historic Music Hall is beloved in our community, and we're excited to partner with Studio Joseph Architects, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, and the NYC Department of Design and Construction on this incredible project," said **Aileen Fuchs, President & CEO of Snug Harbor**. "This renovation will help us serve our diverse visitors and community with dynamic programming in the arts for years to come."

"For so many years, I've been proud to share the Music Hall renovation project with community leaders and Snug Harbor supporters," said **Mark Lauria, the Chair of Snug Harbor's Board of Directors**. "How exciting that it is finally coming to fruition, with such excellent leadership and management in place to bring it across the finish line. This is truly a groundbreaking event, not only for this project, but for all the improvements that are launching on campus this year."



“The City is proud to invest in this major renovation and upgrade of the landmark Snug Harbor Music Hall,” said **NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. “As one of the oldest performance spaces in the city, the Music Hall embodies New Yorkers’ long tradition of engaging with the arts. With these improvements making it more accessible for people with disabilities and more accommodating of contemporary performing artists, this crucial investment will ensure that this facility welcomes audiences from Staten Island and beyond for generations to come.”

“Visitors and performers from around the world will have an enhanced theater experience with the expansion and upgrades to the existing building,” said **DDC Commissioner Lorraine Grillo**. “DDC and DCLA are in various phases of design and construction for a series of projects at Snug Harbor, and we are honored to contribute to the history of this historic location and valuable cultural resource.”

Snug Harbor’s historic Music Hall is a 686-seat theater built in 1892, making it the second oldest music hall in New York City after Carnegie Hall, and one of New York City’s first landmarks. Designed by Robert W. Gibson, its grand architecture serves as the perfect setting for concerts, theater, lectures and other events. Designed for musical performances, the acoustics are excellent. An electronic brochure with full technical specifications and seating chart is available upon request.

Remaining true to the Greek Revival tradition, the Music Hall is marked by its mighty ionic columns and harmonious architectural elements. However, due to its round-arched doorways and windows, second-story bands of windows, and the articulation of wall surfaces, the Music Hall design could also be accurately described as Beaux-Arts or Renaissance Revival.

The interior of the Music Hall encourages a marriage between an ancient Roman architectural tradition, the proscenium arch, and the Greek myth of Orpheus. The proscenium arch has a dual nature that is both functional and decorative. Functionally, the arch restricts viewers from seeing behind the scenes. Decoratively, the arch tells the story of Orpheus, the mythological Greek poet, musician, or “father of songs.”

ABOUT SNUG HARBOR CULTURAL CENTER & BOTANICAL GARDEN

Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden's historic 83-acre campus is one of the largest ongoing adaptive reuse projects in America, with 28 structures, 14 unique botanical gardens, 10 acres of wetlands, and a two-acre urban farm. Our mission is to provide a vibrant, regional cultural destination that offers dynamic programming in the arts, education, horticulture, agriculture, and recreation for diverse cultures and all ages while ensuring a well-managed campus for all residents of Staten Island and surrounding communities. Snug Harbor is a proud Smithsonian Affiliate. Learn more about Snug Harbor at snug-harbor.org.