

The Music Conservatory of Montpellier – Montpellier, France

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The Music Conservatory of Montpellier is a building conceived by Architecturestudio and MDR Architectes in 2021, acting as a cultural center in the heart of the city. It was built on the site of the Grasset Maternity Hospital, however only its entrance hall was preserved because of desired architectural style.¹ The fluidity and creativity of this building's design, technical and not, creates a sense of harmony that highlights the artistic nature of the building's purpose.

The "musical village" is unique in its use of voids and built volumes. Construction of the conservatory was fragmented into several buildings connected by greenspace to better fit in the residential, urban landscape. This broken-up structure allowed for each space to have unique natural lighting and façade design as well as interaction with vegetation. Patios, terraces, and suspended gardens are dotted throughout on each floor, connecting the building with the landscape as well as adjacent art buildings. Pieces of the structure are interconnected by corridors that open to the street. To further blend with the setting, the shape of the building before it was considered, the conservatory designed to closely match that of the former hospital.²

The building contains an auditorium, seven dance studios, two orchestral stages, two audition rooms, two chamber music rooms, and several practice rooms. Each space has its own style in accordance with its functionality. Concert spaces incorporated wood, percussion spaces metal, and practice rooms white clad.³ Acoustic floating slabs were installed in the music and dance practice rooms as well as stages, each differently calibrated based on the room, requiring extremely detailed modeling and complex slab lifting and installation.⁴ Attention to material, light, and acoustics throughout each space create an environment that encourages growth and learning. Different facades serve intentional purposes as well, with the less transparent slats cladding musical practice rooms for acoustical properties, large colored glass sunshades filtering natural light in main spaces from the East and West, and facades in white concrete to receive light more effectively from the South through open spaces.⁵

Separated building volumes shadow each other as a result of their orientation, allowing for daylight variation and providing sun protection simultaneously.⁶ The brokenness of the floor plan likely created a complex, unique MEP system, but its openness to the outdoors provides much natural ventilation, cutting down on that energy use. The photovoltaic panels lining the façade convert sunlight to energy to be used by the building, contributing to these sustainability goals.⁷

Sources for this paper:

¹ <https://www.archdaily.com/974839/conservatory-of-montpellier-architecturestudio-plus-mdr-architectes>

² <https://www.goood.cn/the-music-conservatory-of-montpellierfrance-by-architecturestudio.htm>

³ Ibid

⁴ <https://www.mecanocaucho.com/en/news/montpellier-en/>

⁵ <https://www.goood.cn/the-music-conservatory-of-montpellierfrance-by-architecturestudio.htm>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

