

**LINCOLN CENTER NAMES INNOVATIVE DESIGN FIRM, TOD WILLIAMS BILLIE TSIEN
ARCHITECTS, TO TRANSFORM HARMONY ATRIUM INTO
VITAL CIVIC AND ARTISTIC SPACE**

Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, a New York City-based team with a strong emphasis on innovative uses of materials, structural ingenuity and energy management has been selected to redesign the Harmony Atrium located between Broadway and Columbus Avenue, between West 62nd Street and West 63rd Street. Lincoln Center has reached an agreement with the owners of the Harmony Atrium, an underutilized, indoor privately owned public space (POPS), to transform it into a productive community and civic asset by offering free performances, civic events, information about Lincoln Center, and by supplying discount ticket services for all of Lincoln Center's resident performing arts organizations, as well as educational services, food service, restrooms and free Wi-Fi Access.

The announcement of the design team, which will include Michael Bierut of Pentagram, was made today by Reynold Levy, President, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Construction on the estimated \$10-\$15 million project is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2007 and completed by fall 2008, as a prelude to Lincoln Center's 50th anniversary in 2009.

Williams and Tsien are noted for work that bridges architecture and the fine arts. Included among their recent projects are the acclaimed American Folk Art Museum in New York City; the master plan for a 25-acre campus in Mumbai, India; an East Asian Library at the University of California at Berkeley; Asia Society Hong Kong; the Cranbrook Natatorium; Skirkanich Hall at the University of Pennsylvania and the new Phoenix Art Museum.

Commented Levy, "Tod and Billie's understanding of the essence of Lincoln Center, as well as our aspirations for the future, renders them an ideal partner. Their design leadership for the Harmony Atrium will ensure that neighbors, visitors, students and Lincoln Center patrons not only feel welcome, but also fully enjoy what will be one of the most exciting spaces in New York City."

Williams and Tsien's initial conceptual thoughts for the 6,900 square foot atrium reflect a respect for the materials used throughout Lincoln Center and will achieve an open, accessible, and inviting environment that is an essential goal of redevelopment for the 16-acre campus.

Noted Tod Williams and Billie Tsien in a joint statement, "We intend to make the new Harmony Atrium space a destination for New Yorkers coming to and living around Lincoln Center. We want it to be a place of comfort, anticipation, and delight."

Added Liz Diller, whose firm, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, is designing the inaugural two projects transforming Lincoln Center, "Tod and Billie are among the most principled and rigorous architects practicing today. Their resistance to architectural trends, their poetic approach to site and program, their rich use of materials, and their attention to detail are all part of their distinctive trademark. I enthusiastically look forward to their contributions."

The work of Tod Williams Billie Tsien and Associates links theory and practice. Williams had a seasoned foundation in the practice of architecture with over six years as an associate in the office of Richard Meier before starting his own practice in 1974. Tsien brings to architecture a background in the Fine Arts and a keen interest in crossing disciplinary boundaries.

Both architects maintain active teaching careers parallel to their practice, having taught at Harvard, Yale and UT Austin, among others. Billie Tsien is on the boards of the Architectural League, the Public Art Fund and the American Academy in Rome. Tod Williams is on the advisory board of the School of Architecture at Princeton.

They have won numerous awards including the President's Medal Architectural League of New York, Cooper Hewitt National Design Award, Thomas Jefferson Medal in Architecture and the World Architecture Award/Best Public Cultural Building in the World for their American Folk Art Museum.

Michael Bierut is a partner in the New York office of Pentagram, the international design consultancy. His recent projects include the development of a new identity and signage for the expanded Morgan Library and Museum; the development of environmental graphics for The New York Times Building and the creation of marketing strategies for the William Jefferson Clinton Foundation.

Commented Phil Milstein, a member of Lincoln Center's Board and Chairman of Lincoln Center's Harmony Atrium Task Force which made the selection, "Tod and Billie's early thoughts about the Harmony Atrium reflect an intriguing approach to integrating materials, aesthetics, function and location. We look forward to the dynamism and openness they will bring to this underutilized space as they develop these initial ideas into designs."

The Harmony Atrium is a privately owned and funded public space opened in 1979 beneath a cond-op, and was originally conceived as a lively gathering place for local residents as well as visitors, with city-mandated amenities that included a free one-hour musical performance each week, and food service. Today, the space is used sparingly and does not fulfill the original vision.

The approximately 530 POPS in New York City have been created under a longstanding city program that offers zoning concessions to office and residential developers in return for publicly accessible plazas, arcades, atria, and other public spaces. Although the spaces remain privately owned, they must be open and usable by members of the public.

Lincoln Center will be working with Advocates for Privately Owned Public Space in the planning and operation of the Harmony Atrium. The project will be going before the City Planning Commission for review in the near future.

The Altman Foundation and The Nathan Cummings Foundation provided Lincoln Center with generous grants in support of planning the Harmony Atrium project.

History of the Harmony Atrium Site

The Harmony Atrium site has long been associated with the performing arts, beginning in 1905 when the Colonial Music Hall opened at 62nd and Broadway. Designed in the style of a Victorian music hall, the Colonial first served as a venue for musicals and vaudeville acts, then evolving to feature only vaudeville acts including the reigning dance team of Fred and Adele Astaire. It was at the Colonial that Charlie Chaplin was first introduced to American audiences. Renamed the New Colonial, it was converted to a Broadway theater in the twenties where the 1923 show, *Runnin' Wild*, introduced America to the dance craze, The Charleston. Subsequently, the Colonial served as a movie house in the thirties and forties, and as a TV studio for both NBC and ABC from 1956-1971. In the early seventies, philanthropist Rebekah Harkness bought the Colonial, renamed it the Harkness Theater and devoted millions of dollars to renovate the space for use by her acclaimed ballet company and school. The school closed and the theater was torn down, replaced by condominiums and a public plaza.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of superb artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. As a presenter of over 400 events annually, LCPA complements the extraordinary offerings of the 11 other Lincoln Center resident organizations, bringing internationally acclaimed artists to hundreds of thousands of people each year through a variety of popular series. These programs include American Songbook, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Festival, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, and the Mostly Mozart Festival. The Emmy Award-winning Live From Lincoln Center, the only live performing arts series on television today, extends the reach of Lincoln Center's stages to millions of Americans across the country. As a leader in arts and education and community relations, LCPA takes a wide range of activities beyond its halls through its educational cornerstone, Lincoln Center Institute, as well as offering arts-related symposia; family programming; accessibility; and other community initiatives. And as manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA also provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and its resident organizations.