The Santa Fe Opera

by,

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• The Santa Fe Opera sits on 55-Acres of land 7 miles north of Santa Fe, New Mexico
• It was conceived of by John Crosby who wanted a place for American singers to rehearse and develop their singing roles.
• It opened as a 480 seat theatre on 7-3-57 with a production of *Madame Butterfly* conducted by Crosby.
• In 1967 it was burned down.
• Less than a year later the second theatre opened with 1889 seats.
• It faces west out over the ever changing horizon.
• That season had a production of *Madame Butterfly*. 
In 1989 the Santa Fe Opera began talks with Polshek Partnership Architects to revamp the theatre. Chief among their list of concerns were general amenities for audience and performers alike, handicap access, access to lighting positions for technicians, and greater protection against the elements while protecting the outdoor feel.
• The main feature of the Opera had been its roof, described as two roofs that float over the desert floor with an airy gap between them.
• This was to be the main part of the remodel as well.
• Taken into account in its design and concept were: Hidden Lighting Coves, Acoustics, and Sight Lines.
• Acoustically the ceiling has to carry the weight of the acoustical burden because there are no side walls.
• The ceiling is one large acoustical mirror that has as little delay time as possible from the singer to the audience.
The roof was engineered to be heavy enough to reflect low frequency sound waves and larger to prevent the audience from getting wet during a storm.

Its white skeletal structure is meant to reminisce of the Opera’s origins when it was playing still in a tent.

It also was designed to allow for 9’ walkways for the technicians.
One of the main features of the new roof is the clerestory connecting the two floating roofs. It's meant to allow a view of the scenery while at the same time protect from the elements.
• The theatrical lighting was completely redone with a Obsession II console, ETC Unison System, 690 ETC Sensor dimmers, 3 DMX512 Universes and ETCNet (ethernet) that runs to all their control locations and distro-racks.

• Over 275 ERS, MR-16 strip lights, 3 1.2kW HMI PARS and 6 2kW incandescent fresnels make up their inventory.
• Construction on the space began when the current fell in 1997 season.
• The theatre reopened 11 months later with John Crosby conducting *Madame Butterfly*.
• John Crosby passed on in 2002 and the theatre was renamed for him in 2003
Bibliography

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