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AIA Minnesota Announces 2011 25-Year Award



MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA – The Lake Harriet Band Shell, designed by Bentz/Thompson/Rietow, is the recipient of the prestigious 2011 AIA Minnesota 25-Year Award. Project team members include, Milo Thompson, FAIA, Frederick Bentz, AIA and Robert Rietow, AIA.

The band shell site was a very popular area to visit on the north shore of Lake Harriet in 1985. Prior to the existing band shell, the site was suffering from overuse and poor maintenance. Plans for the existing design began in 1985 with an open process involving a member advisory committee of 33 people representing a wide variety of interests relating to the construction of the new band shell. The committee advised that the orientation of the stage face north to direct sound away from the surrounding residential areas and to resemble park structures that had been on the site prior. Inspiration came from a structure originally designed by Harry Jones, which stands near the band shell today.

The design of the band shell was influenced by acoustic concerns with adjustable acoustic panels and a steeply pitched roof. The most iconic feature is the large window at the back of the stage, providing a visual connection between the audience, the lake and the sky. At night, the window becomes brightly lit during performances and is clearly visible from around the lake.

Other than the paint color, the Lake Harriet Band Shell remains largely unchanged from its opening in 1986. The facility now includes a refectory and boathouse which was planned for in the 1986 masterplan. This icon has clearly stood the test of time and has become one of the most recognizable buildings in Minneapolis.

Established by AIA Minnesota in 1981, the 25-Year Award recognizes exemplary architectural projects that have withstood the test of time. Jurors for this year's 25-Year Award were Charles Liddy, FAIA, Vice President at Miller Dunwiddie Architecture; Tim Bicknell, AIA, 2010 Young Architect recipient and project designer at AECOM; and Gregory Donofrio, Assistant Professor at the University of Minnesota College of Design.

The jurors commented, "The Lake Harriet Band Shell has a positive impact on its surrounding community and is beloved by the city. The design was well planned, taking the context of the site in mind and set the tone for other band shells to follow. It is an icon within the Minneapolis park system in which families and residents can enjoy and create memories. It provides an opportunity for the community to come together, celebrating festivals and events in a beautiful setting." Look for the band shell to be featured in the July/August 2011 issue of *Architecture Minnesota* magazine.

*The American Institute of Architects Minnesota, founded in 1892, is dedicated to strengthening our communities, improving our built environment and providing exceptional design. For more information on the organization and Minnesota architectural firms, reference our web site at www.aia-mn.org and pick up a copy of *Architecture Minnesota*, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.*