

The architectural expression for the new performing arts centre has been inspired by the uniquely beautiful monument of Petra. As an artificial oasis and sanctuary the ancient city of Petra is an appropriate source of analogy for a performing arts centre that aspires to be an oasis and sanctuary for contemporary culture.



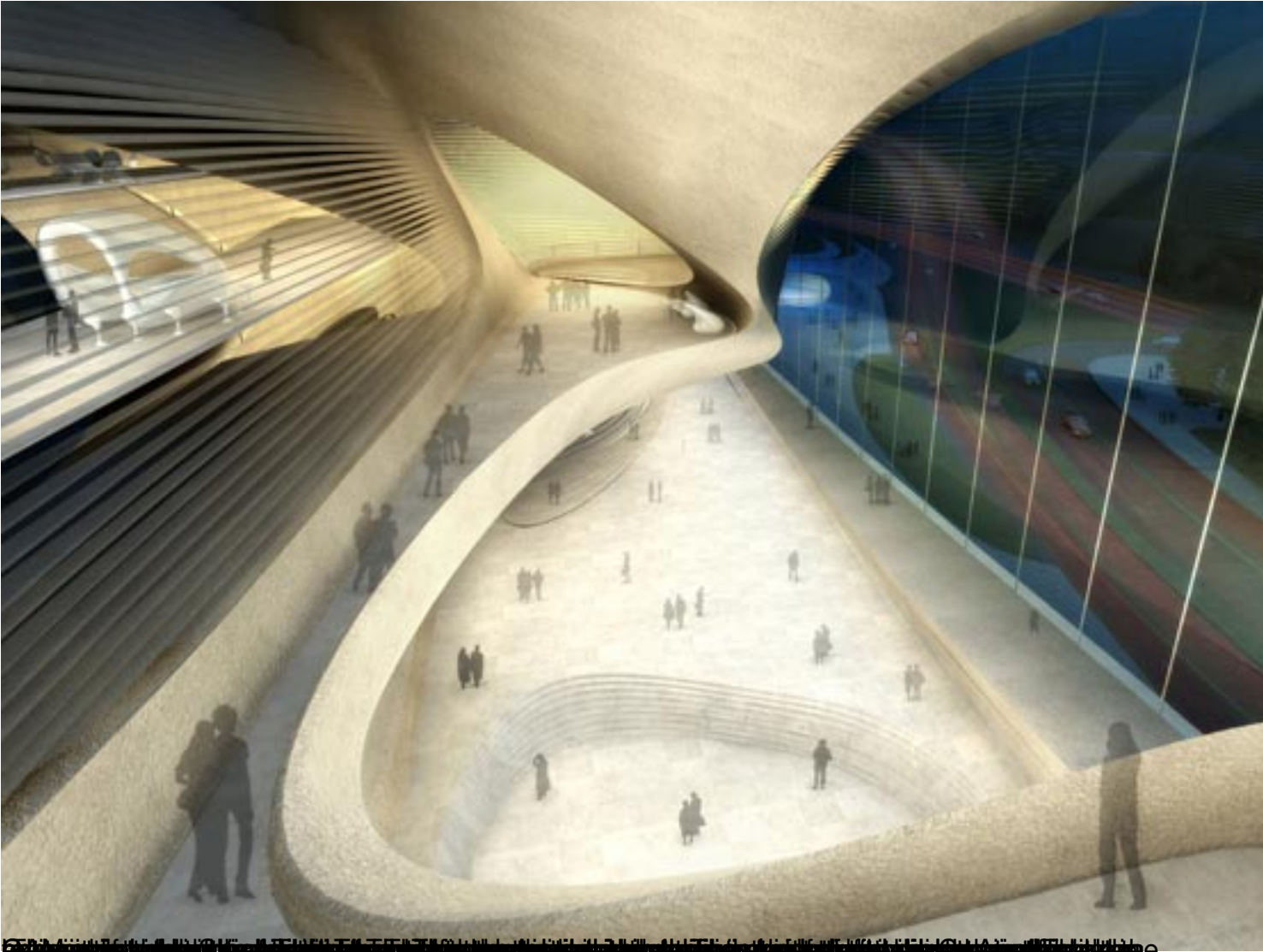
Petra is also a fantastic example of the wonderful interplay between architecture and nature. Contemporary architecture is striving to emulate nature and imbue architecture with the intricate complexity and elegance of natural forms. In Petra we admire the way the rose-colored mountain walls have been fissured, eroded, carved and polished to reveal the strata of sedimentation along the fluid lines of the fluvial erosions.

ZHA are applying the principle of fluid erosion and carving to the mass of the building for the performing arts centre. This principle of erosion is the sole means of articulating the public spaces in the building. Thus there is a very strong, legible relation between the exterior and interior public spaces. The interior public foyer space is a continuous, multi-level space that cuts

through the building and connects the north and south side of the valley. The fact that the erosion is cutting through the building implies that the beautiful interior surfaces will be light-flooded and thus very visible from without. The eroded interior surface extends deep into the public plaza as a welcoming gesture drawing the public into the building. There can be no doubt that this inviting design will wash away the threshold anxiety that sometimes is felt in front of monumental cultural buildings.

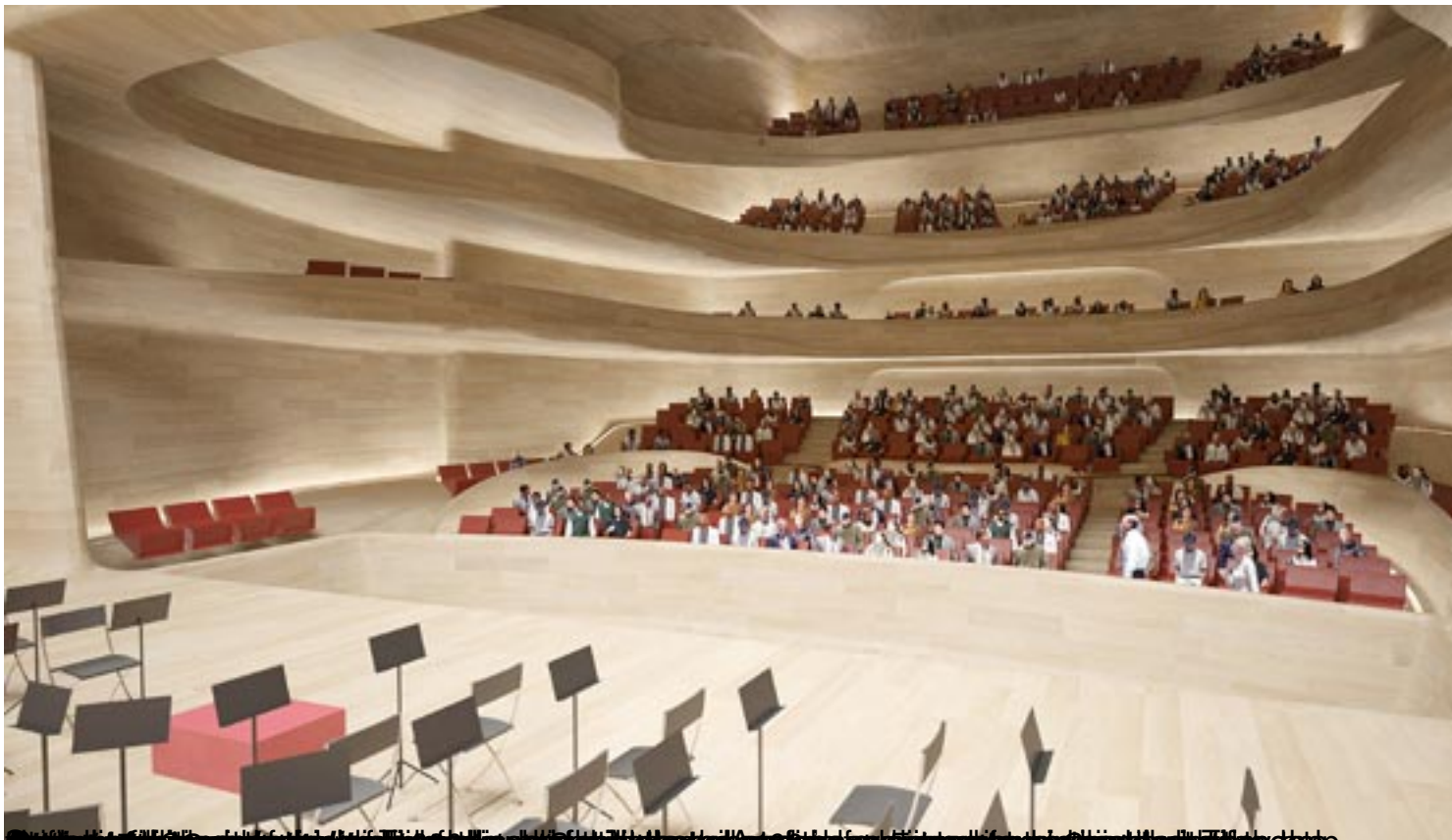


While the erosion creates the public foyer spaces the remaining mass represents the performance spaces. The shape of the eroded space reveals the two main performance spaces as the figurative parts of the eroded mass. The big Concert Theater is exposed at the end of the public void. The Small Theater is exposed overhead at the front of the building where the public foyer space fuses with the public plaza.



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King Abdullah II House of Culture & Art in Amman, Jordan. The image shows a large, modern auditorium with a curved, tiered seating arrangement. The stage area is visible in the foreground, featuring several music stands and a red rectangular block. The architecture is characterized by its organic, flowing lines and light-colored wood paneling.