

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic American Academy of Music; Academy of Music

and/or common Academy of Music

2. Location

street & number 232-46 South Broad Street at SW., corner Locust Street not for publication

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Philadelphia code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition.</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Philadelphia Orchestra Association

street & number 232-46 South Broad Street

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Philadelphia City Hall

street & number Broad and Market Streets

city, town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1957, 1963, 1965, 1967  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Washington, D C

city, town state

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered  
Interior

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

This free standing brick Renaissance Revival Style building exhibits a free use of classical forms. The principal facades, facing South Broad Street and Locust Streets, are brownstone on the lower floor and brick trimmed in brownstone above. The central section of the building's Broad Street elevation projects forward, with five large arched windows above the arched entrances below. The arches of the central section at both levels are echoed by similar single openings in the recessed flanking sections. The lower level of the facade is stone with rustication at the corners of the central section and at the corners of the flanking sections. The decorative emphasis at the corners is repeated above the first floor cornice with paired, panelled brick corner pilasters. A shallow stone balcony, carried by large stone brackets spans the central five bays, sheltering the entrances below. A heavily ornamented molded brick cornice caps the facade. A low parapet rises above the roofline of the central section.

The interior of the Academy, with its columned proscenium and tiers of boxes, should probably be regarded as a very early American example of the Neo-Baroque style which was just coming into vogue in the France of Louis Napoleon and to which Lebrun's French ancestry would naturally have inclined him. The plan is said to have been based upon that of Teatro della Scala of Milan, but the accoustical properties of the auditorium have seldom been equalled. The accoustical pits built under the floor of the building are particularly interesting. The one under the floor of the auditorium is built in the shape of an inverted elliptical dome. In architects' drawings that circular well is 20 feet in diameter, "20 feet below the N.E. curb." There is, in addition, a square space under the stage, described as 48 feet by 53 feet "dug down 25 feet below curb." Because so much of the Academy was constructed of wood and thereby more mellow tones were projected, the pits and the domed ceiling of the building were designed to provide resonance and accoustical excellence.

The huge Corinthian columns within the auditorium were designed in elliptical sections to provide as unobstructed a view of the stage as possible. The four steep balconies, the huge crystal chandelier (originally in the old Crystal Palace in New York), the painted ceiling, the use of Baroque ornamentation and the lavish use of gold, cream and red plush coloring all blend to create an intimate atmosphere. Extraordinary precautions have been taken to prevent the huge chandelier from falling; it hangs from a separate iron structure above the ceiling and is suspended by several cables so that if one should break, there would be no danger.

Olive gray walls with Ionic pilasters and columns, numerous mirrored doors and crystal chandeliers form the decorative scheme of the foyer.

Although a number of "academies" were built in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, probably none were as successful as the one which Philadelphians built on the corner of Broad and Locust Streets. In accordance with a resolution adopted at the meeting of September 22, 1854, the Building Committee of the Academy advertised in two daily papers for the design of a new opera house. The specifications required (in part) that the buildings "be of simple but imposing style of architecture, the material of brick, with single or double walls. The lower story on Broad Street and Locust Street and the dressings of the entire building to be of granite, brownstone or iron. The front and Locust Street flank of pressed brick; the south front and rear of good front stretchers.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1855–57 **Builder/Architect** Lebrun and Runge

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Since its opening on the evening of January 26, 1857, Philadelphia's Academy of Music has become a pre-eminent landmark in the story of American music. It is today the country's oldest musical auditorium still retaining its original form and serving its original purpose. And it remains, after more than a century, a foremost center of the Nation's cultural life.

The cornerstone of the building, built for the American Academy of Music, was laid on July 25, 1855, and the structure was completed in the following year. The architect for the Academy was Philadelphia-born Napoleon Lebrun, son of a French diplomat who had come to the United States during the presidency of Thomas Jefferson. Informed that the cost of the building could not exceed \$250,000, Lebrun promised a beautiful interior, with a simple brick exterior which could later be faced with marble should funds be available. This adornment has never been realized and the plain brick walls remain, distinguished principally by the series of shallow arches forming doors on the first floor and the windows above. However, Lebrun's assurance of a "thoroughly built interior" was more than fulfilled. In preparing his plans, Lebrun visited the great opera houses in Europe and was influenced most significantly by Milan's Teatro della Scala. In addition to the beauty of its interior, distinguished by the columned proscenium and tiers of boxes, lavish decoration and crimson, cream and gold decor, the auditorium is blessed with unsurpassed acoustical properties. From its beginning the Academy has attracted the foremost musical talent of the Nation and the world. On its stage have been presented the American premieres of the operas, symphonies, and ballets that make up the standard repertoire of today. The first opera to be performed at the Academy was Verdi's "IL Trovatore," only four years after its Rome premiere. Adeline Patti, Tchaikovsky, Strauss and Saint-Saens; Ole Bull, Anton Rubenstein, Damrosch, Caruso, Rachmaninoff and Elman are but a few of the great talents that have made memorable the long history of the "Grand Old Lady of Broad Street". Since the turn of the century the Academy has been the home of the world-famed Philadelphia Orchestra whose brilliant tradition is maintained today.

In 1956 the American Academy of Music, which had operated the building for a century, was liquidated, to be succeeded by the new Academy of Music of Philadelphia, Inc., a subsidiary of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association. Coincident with its centennial year, the Academy interior, seating approximately 3,000 persons, was refurbished and restored.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

### UTM References

A 

1	8	4	8	5	8	9	5	4	4	2	1	7	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the national historic landmark designation for the Academy of Music is coterminous with the exterior line of the foundation of the building.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Boundary Review Project (original inventory by C. E. Shedd, Jr., 1962)

organization National Register of Historic Places date December, 1979

street & number 440 G Street, N.W. telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Washington, state D.C.

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 9/15/81

Keeper of the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

Attest:

Chief of Registration \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

There being streets on front and flanks, public exits must be provided on all. The house to be arranged as to comfortably seat 4,000 persons in not more than three tiers of boxes, a balcony and parquet. To have proper saloons, wide passages and stairway, the latter to be of iron or stone. Particular attention must be given to the comfort of the audience—freedom of exit—perfection of ventilation, heating, lighting, decoration and acoustic properties; and for the prevention of fire provision must be made to heat the entire house by fires under the footways." Subject "to certain alterations and modifications," the committee recommended that the first premium go to Lebrun and Runge; in actuality, Napoleon Lebrun was the architect.

The seating capacity of the projected opera house was reduced to 3,000, and before finally deciding on a plan, Lebrun is said to have visited Europe to inspect the great opera houses there, especially La Scala in Milan. The cornerstone for the new Academy building was laid July 25, 1855, and the opening performance was given January 26, 1857.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

- Beranek, Leo L. Music, Acoustics, and Architecture (New York, 1962).  
Tatum, George B. Penn's Great Town (Philadelphia, 1961).  
Webster, Richard. Philadelphia preserved: Catalogue of the Historic  
American Buildings Survey (Philadelphia, 1976).  
Works Progress Administration, Federal Writer's Project. Philadelphia,  
A Guide to the Nation's Birthplace (Philadelphia, 1973).  
White, Theo P., Editor, Philadelphia Architecture in the 19th Century.  
(Philadelphia, 1953).  
McCabe, James. Encyclopedia of Business and Social Forms. (Philadelphia, 1888).

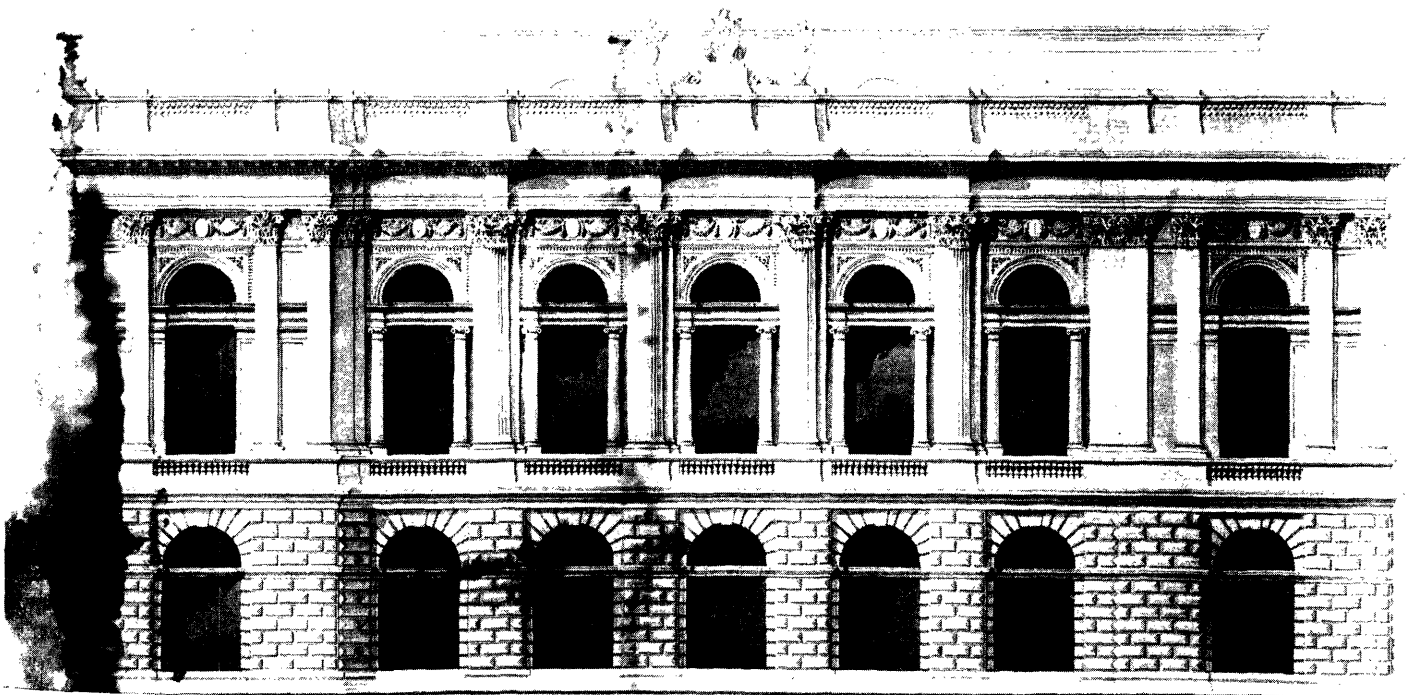


ETIQUETTE OF THE OPERA.—INTERIOR OF THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC, PHILADELPHIA,  
DURING AN OPERATIC PERFORMANCE.

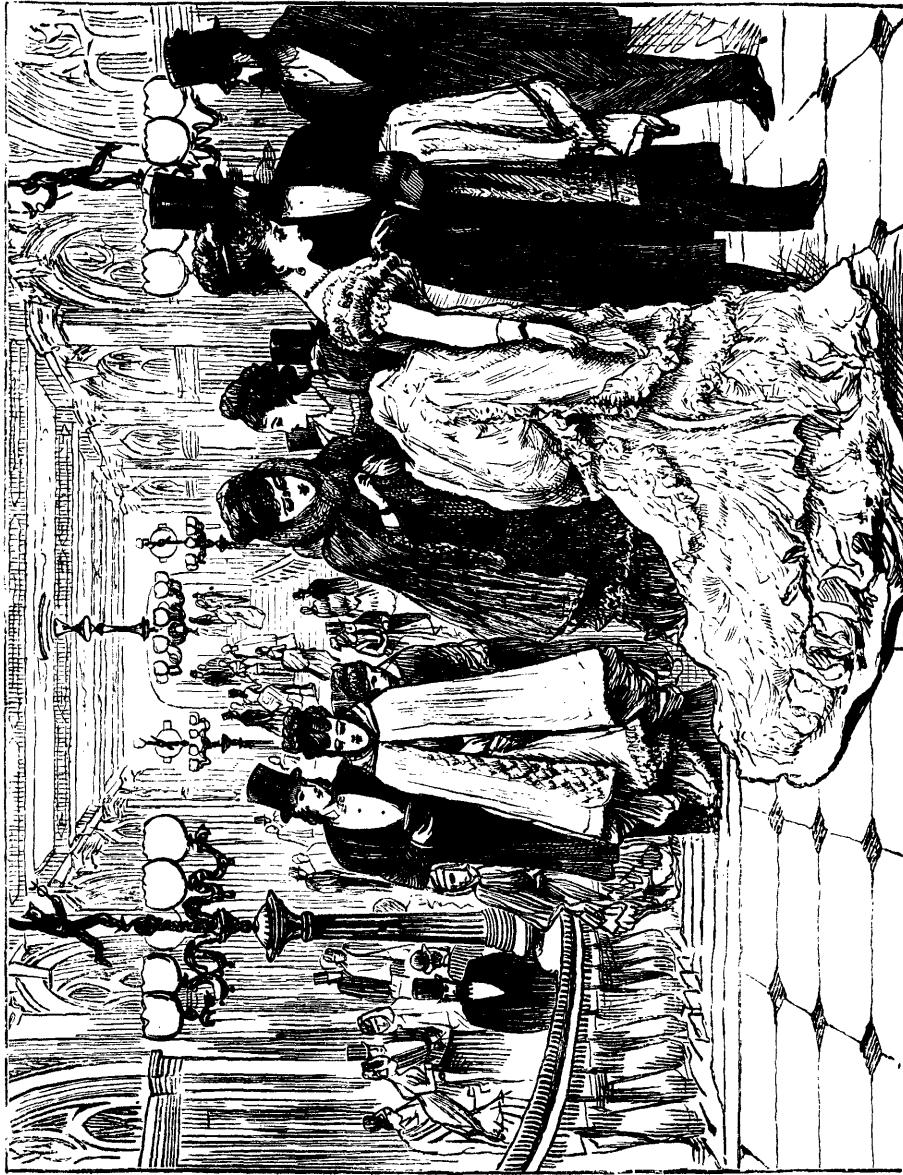


A FULL-DRESS PARTY.

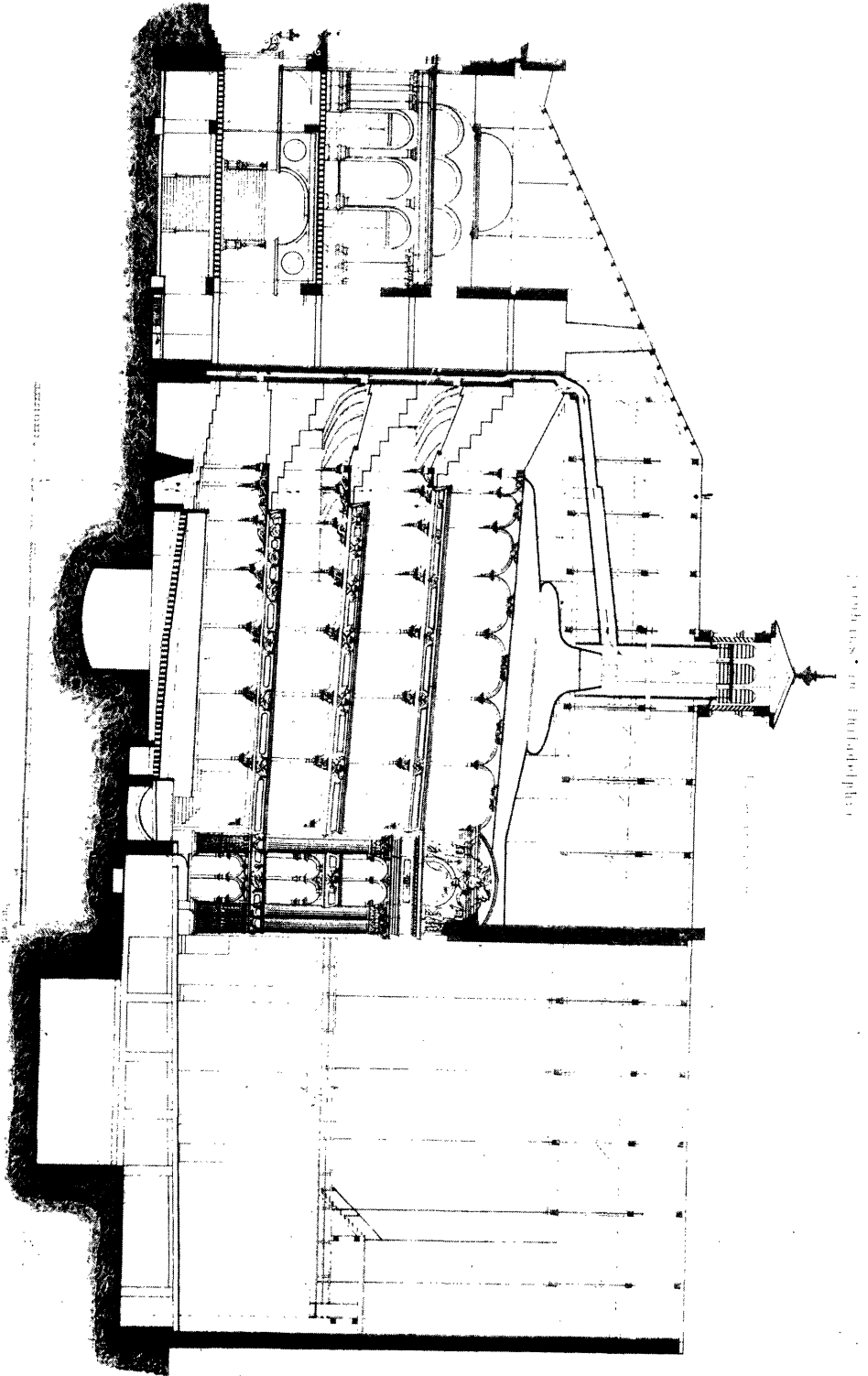




96. Proposed Façade for the Academy of Music, Napoleon LeBrun and Gustav Runge. 1855-57.



THE CORRIDOR OF A FASHIONABLE THEATRE DURING THE ARRIVAL OF THE AUDIENCE.



97. Longitudinal Section, Academy of Music, Napoleon LeBrun and Gustav Runge, 1855-57.



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE Pennsylvania	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. XX, The Arts and Sciences; Subtheme, Literature, Drama and Music
3. NAME(S) OF SITE The Academy of Music	4. APPROX. ACREAGE
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) Southwest corner of Broad and Locust Streets, Philadelphia	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) The Philadelphia Orchestra Association, Harold T. Mason, Manager	

7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)  
Since its opening on the evening of January 26, 1857, Philadelphia's Academy of Music has become a pre-eminent landmark in the story of American music. It is today the country's oldest musical auditorium still retaining its original form and serving its original purpose. And it remains, after more than a century, a foremost center of the nation's cultural life.

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8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)  
George B. Tatum, Penn's Great Town; Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Philadelphia Architecture Illustrated in Prints and Drawings (Philadelphia, 1961).

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)  
"The Centennial Jubilee Celebrating the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Academy of Music, 1857-1957," Souvenir Program published for the Academy of Music Centennial Concert, January 26, 1957.

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION Excellent	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Musical auditorium	13. DATE OF VISIT MARCH 1962
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) Charles E. Shedd, Jr.	15. TITLE Historic Sites Historian	16. DATE 12/14/62	

\* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
Pennsylvania	The Academy of Music

7. Importance and Description (cont'd.)

tradition is maintained today under Eugene Ormandy.

In 1956 the American Academy of Music, which had operated the building for a century, was liquidated, to be succeeded by the new Academy of Music of Philadelphia, Inc., a subsidiary of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association. Coincident with its centennial year, the Academy interior, seating approximately 3,000 persons, was refurbished and restored.



PHILADELPHIA

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC  
 Philadelphia Quad  
 1:24,000

18	485895	4421790
Zone	Easting	Northing