United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

city, town Philadelphia _______ vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Philadelphia code 101

3. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>private</td>
<td>X occupied</td>
<td>museum</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>site</td>
<td>both</td>
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<td>commercial</td>
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<td>object</td>
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<td>work in progress</td>
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<tr>
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<td>being considered</td>
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</table>

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


X federal state county local

depository for survey records Washington, D.C.

city, town state
7. Description

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 acoustical 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

<table>
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<tbody>
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<td>commerce</td>
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<td>1900-</td>
<td>communications</td>
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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

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<tr>
<td>Easting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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.

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.
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: Keeper of the National Register
date: 9/1/69

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

date: 9/1/69

Chief of Registration
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.
ETIQUETTE OF THE OPERA—INTERIOR OF THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC, PHILADELPHIA, DURING AN OPERATIC PERFORMANCE.
THE CORRIDOR OF A FASHIONABLE THEATRE DURING THE ARRIVAL OF THE AUDIENCE.
The Academy of Music

Southwest corner of Broad and Locust Streets, Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Orchestra Association, Harold T. Mason, Manager

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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STATE: Pennsylvania

NAME(S) OF SITE: 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.