Sitting on the edge of the immense stage, I only thought to myself: “I could stay here for hours.” A vast sea of 3,563 fireproof theater seats extended in front of me. And that’s only the main floor. There are the first and second balconies above it, which hold 1,622 and 842 seats respectively. Still, I had never heard of fireproof seats in a theater. If a fire were to go off at that moment, a 22.5 ton fire curtain would fall directly on me.

“That is not where you want to be in case of a fire,” suggested Carolanne Robinson, the Guest Relations Manager at Elliot. I’ll keep that in mind the next time I visit the theater.

Ever since the great voice of opera singer John Charles Thomas rang through this great hall of music as its first artistic performance on October 24, 1940, the theater has grown year after year to become one of Purdue University’s most important symbols. Its massive structure is a representation of the university’s strength and stability. Not only that, but it also shows Purdue’s spirit to be the one who takes the step forward into the future with hope in its eyes. Edward C. Elliot, president of Purdue from 1922 to 1945, showed that he had this spirit in him when, in the midst of the Great Depression, he thought of such a project. The Hall is not only a reminder of Purdue’s history, but also a vision for the future.

Back in 1940, the technological specs of the theater were close to none. Yet even today one can sit anywhere in the theater and hear someone speak on stage without the aid of a microphone. Any wave created by someone’s voice bounces off the walls and fills the hall in an echo. Still, Elliot Hall of Music has been advancing its auditory, lighting, and—in the last few years—video technology as well.

Today the voices and sounds of the artistic performances that go through Elliot are expanded through the hall through clusters of primary speakers located above the proscenium left and right, and subwoofers located on the center proscenium. Besides that, there are four systems consisting of fifty-two speakers that surround the hall. This kind of technology allows for even a whisper to be heard with outstanding clarity even in the back row of the third balcony.

The stage has about three hundred lights that produce all kinds of vivid effects in every show. What seems to be an endless pallet of colored lights adds even more life to the already energy-driven artistic performances. And as if that weren’t enough, two giant projection screens are placed high above the floor on each side of the stage. These are used to capture facial expressions and close-ups of the performers so that those who are far from the stage can enjoy the full impact of the act.

The exterior of the building is just as outstanding as the interior. Its curves, lines and edges, along with sculptures and carvings, combine to produce one of the most beautiful pieces of architecture in this state. It bares the same red brick color that most of the buildings on the Purdue University Campus have. The south wall is decorated by three statues representing theater, poetry, and forensics. Next to Rose-Ade Stadium and Mackey Arena, it is among the largest structures on campus.

Without a doubt, Elliot Hall of Music offers everything to quench our thirst for art. It is a place that has provided us with some of the greatest musical artists of our time, such as Bruce Springsteen, R.E.M., Dave Matthews, Tina Turner, and many of the greatest symphonic orchestras of the 20th and 21st century. It has enlightened us with delightful plays such as Evita, Cats, and The Music Man. Elliot has rumbled with laughter again and again, as the most memorable comedians such as Eddie Murphy, Robin Williams, and Bob Hope performed. And who could forget the Purdue Musical Organizations Christmas Show, who’s five performances are sold out each and every year.

Truly this is a building to admire and to be envied by other universities. Elliot Hall of Music has a history of endless laughter, cries, joy, and inspiration. Every year, when I see new students or tourists visiting campus, there is rarely someone who will go by the theater without stopping to stare at its amazing structure and grandeur. Elliot is also the future. Its technology will be constantly updated as the years go by, and even though the building itself will not change, it will always be setting new standards when it comes to theaters. Elliot already has great acts such as world renowned magician David Copperfield, The Moscow Radio Symphony, and the always unforgettable musical Grease lined up for the next school year. Me, I’m getting my tickets and saying “Let the Show continue!”