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Colburn School to Break Ground on Frank Gehry-Designed Campus Expansion

**Colburn's Expansion Will Create the Largest Concentration of
Gehry-Designed Buildings in the World**

Groundbreaking Ceremony Scheduled for April 5

Building Our Future Campaign Reaches \$315 Million of \$400 Million Goal



Digital Press Kit and Images Available [HERE](#).

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (February 20, 2024) – The Colburn School, an internationally acclaimed institute for music and dance education and performance, today announced plans to break ground on a transformational 100,000-square-foot expansion designed by Frank Gehry, one of the world's most distinguished architects. The new building, known as the Colburn Center, will be located adjacent to Colburn's Grand Avenue campus in Downtown Los Angeles, and will dramatically increase the school's world-class training and performance facilities for music and dance. It will also provide much-needed performance space in a mid-sized hall for the region's established and emerging performing arts organizations. Site work is scheduled to begin in the coming weeks and a groundbreaking ceremony will take place on April 5, 2024. The Colburn Center is expected to reach substantial completion in Q1 of 2027.

The expansion will create the largest concentration of Gehry-designed buildings in the world. It will be located next to two other buildings by the renowned architect: Walt Disney Concert Hall, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2023, and The Grand by Gehry, a \$1 billion mixed-use retail and residential development that opened in 2022.

“This is an exciting contribution to the cultural and civic life of Downtown Los Angeles. Colburn has shown a commitment to making education accessible to youth of all ages at their school,” said LA Mayor Karen Bass. “With projects like this and Colburn’s commitment, Grand Avenue will continue to grow into an energetic cultural district while also creating more opportunities to collaborate with renowned local and touring artists.”

“Frank Gehry is a Los Angeles icon and a dear friend, and I am delighted that Colburn is moving forward with their Gehry-designed expansion,” said LA County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, representing the First District which includes Downtown Los Angeles. “This is another initiative that complements LA County’s significant investment to uplift cultural institutions along Grand Avenue – and with the opening of the Metro Regional Connector, we are truly creating a world-class hub for cultural, art, innovation, and entertainment. I look forward to a new Colburn Center that is inclusive for all Angelenos.”

The expansion will include a 1,000-seat concert hall named for Terri and Jerry Kohl, which features an in-the-round design to create intimacy between the performers and the audience. The hall includes an orchestra pit and a stage large enough to accommodate the grandest works, making it suitable for orchestra, opera, and dance. With this addition, Downtown LA will now have a mid-sized concert hall for the first time. The Colburn Center will also more than double the facilities for the School’s Trudl Zipper Dance Institute, creating one of the most comprehensive dance education complexes in Southern California. The dance facilities include a 100-seat theater for dance and four professional-sized studios for dance instruction and rehearsal.

The Colburn Center will also add a rooftop garden that will be large enough to host receptions and outdoor performances, as well as a ground-level garden with a dedicated performance space that will be open to the public.

“This has been a long time in the making. The Colburn School expansion is a much-needed project for the community,” said Frank Gehry. “I hope that it will be well-used and well-loved by the students of the Colburn School and the other cultural institutions of Los Angeles. Our goal for this hall is that it will help strengthen the already robust classical music community here, solidifying Los Angeles’ leadership in this arena.”

“The Colburn Center will be a game changer, stepping up everything we do for the school’s own community, for our peer organizations that make the LA artistic ecosystem so vibrant, and for the public that we look forward to welcoming,” said Sel Kardan, President of the Colburn School. “At Colburn, making performances accessible to LA audiences is as much a part of our core mission as making first-rate music and dance education available to everyone. These are the same values we see in the wonderful design by Frank Gehry: artistic excellence at the highest level, combined with a deep love for the dynamism and diversity that animate life in a great city.”

A pioneer in the cultural development of Downtown LA, The Colburn School has been an anchor of the Grand Avenue Arts corridor since 1998, when the school opened its Grand Avenue building. Since then, the school has been joined by the neighboring Walt Disney Concert Hall and The Broad, and expanded its

campus with a building on the neighboring Olive Street in 2007. Today, Colburn hosts over 500 performances by students, faculty, visiting artists, and guest presenters annually on campus, and that number will grow dramatically with the opening of the Colburn Center.

The expansion comes at a critical time for Downtown Los Angeles, which, like many downtowns across the country, is reimagining and redefining its future with the rise in remote work and other lifestyle changes. Recently, educational institutions have been making significant investments in Downtown Los Angeles. UCLA announced in June 2023 that it acquired the historic Trust Building—renamed UCLA Downtown—to widen access through satellite classes. Arizona State University recently finished its renovations of the Herald Examiner Building to accommodate additional academic and public programs, including classes in film, journalism, and global management. Several years ago, USC expanded its footprint in Downtown Los Angeles when it began leasing the former AT&T Center—now called the USC Tower—for several of its schools, as well as its classical radio station KUSC.

This project has been made possible through the early generosity of remarkable philanthropists from Los Angeles and around the world. Gifts made to date total \$315 million towards the Colburn School's \$400 million *Building Our Future* campaign. The campaign will cover an estimated \$335 million in construction costs as well as \$65 million in endowment and operating costs to support the activities of the Colburn Center and the Colburn School.

The campaign is spearheaded by Carol Colburn Grigor, Life Chairman Emeritus of the Board of Trustees. A leadership gift from Terri and Jerry Kohl will name the 1,000-seat concert hall, and many generous philanthropists have made gifts that will name other spaces and programs, including the Mullin Family Garden of Thoughts and Dreams, the Fiock Family Fund for Excellence, Eva and Marc Stern's underwriting of the Colburn Orchestra, the Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen Stage, the Maestro Ernst H. Katz Chair of Conducting Studies by the T. Robert Greene Foundation, the Choi Family Garden, the Denise Scheerer Tap Studio, the Kobrin Fund for Dance Excellence, the Diener Barre, the Warner Henry Artist Lounge, the Charles Hamlen Artist Dressing Room, and Alice Steere Coulombe's underwriting of Colburn's beloved weekly Performance Forum of the Conservatory of Music. Additional early leadership support has been provided by the Ahmanson Foundation and the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation. The Colburn School is grateful for the support of many additional donors who have made remarkable gifts towards this transformational project.

The *Building Our Future* campaign includes funds to underwrite access to the Colburn Center for Los Angeles-based performing arts organizations, artists, and ensembles. Seeded by an initial \$5 million gift from Terri and Jerry Kohl, this endowment fund will help support access for multiple, diverse groups to perform in this beautiful performance space. Inspired by Colburn's "Access to Excellence" philosophy, the Colburn Center will present the highest quality professional programming at accessible prices for performers and audience members to ensure that the entire community is able to experience the performing arts.

"On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I wish to express our excitement and enthusiasm at the launch of our project to build the Colburn Center, where education, performance, and community will all come together," said Andrew Millstein, Chairman of the Colburn Board of Directors. "The Colburn Center will enable us to expand the world-class training and performance opportunities we offer our students and further our mission of democratizing access to the arts. As we reach this milestone, I give my thanks to the far-sighted and profoundly generous donors who have enabled us to move forward with this project of such importance for so many of the people of Los Angeles."

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IMAGE: Rendering of the Colburn Center at the Colburn School. View from Hill Street West towards dance school entrance, dance studios, and public garden. Courtesy of Frank O. Gehry & Gehry Partners, LLP.

About the Colburn School

Founded on the principle of “access to excellence,” the Colburn School provides the highest quality music and dance education at all levels of development, from children as young as 7 months old to adults. A busy downtown campus welcomes an estimated 10,000 people each week, including students attending classes, lessons, and rehearsals; community partners who rent the current performance and lecture spaces; and audience members who enjoy the offerings of over 500 performances a year in two different existing small venues. Robust scholarship support and active community engagement programs ensure that the Colburn experience is accessible to all. In a typical year, students receive over \$11 million in scholarship support, and community programming serves 15 Title I LA Unified Public Schools within a six-mile radius of campus.

Each year, more than 2,000 students from around the world study at Colburn to benefit from the renowned faculty, exceptional facilities, and focus on excellence that unites the community.

Learn more at www.colburnschool.edu.