

Cross Strait Culture and Art Centre



Fuzhou, the capital of south-eastern China's Fujian province, is a sprawling industrial and transportation hub. It has a population of nearly 8 million people. Parts of the city include preserved Ming and Qing dynasty buildings. The mountaintop Yushan Scenic Area features the restored 10th-century White Pagoda. West Lake Park, dating to 282 A.D., is an urban green area with bridges and pavilions.

Fuzhou lies on the north (left) bank of the estuary of Fujian's largest river, the Min River. In 2015, Fuzhou was ranked as the 10th fastest growing metropolitan area in the world by Brookings Institution. Fuzhou is listed as No. 20 in China Integrated City Index 2016's total ranking, a study conducted by National Development and Reform Commission.

The two traditional mainstream religions practiced in Fuzhou are Mahayana Buddhism and Taoism. Traditionally,

many people practice both religions simultaneously. The city is also home to many Buddhist monasteries, Taoist temples and Buddhist monks. A large



Roman Catholic Cathedral, St. Dominic's, is a feature of the city. The Flower Lane Church is one of a growing number of mega-churches in China, with a weekly congregation in excess of 20,000 members. Apart from mainstream religions, a number of religious worship sites of various local religions are situated in the streets and lanes of Fuzhou.

Fuzhou cuisine is most notably one of the four traditional cooking styles of Fujian cuisine, which in turn is one of the eight Chinese regional cuisines. Dishes are light but flavourful, with particular emphasis on umami taste, known in Chinese cooking as xianwei, as well as retaining the original flavour of the main ingredients instead of masking them. In Fuzhou cuisine, the taste is light compared to that of some other Chinese cooking styles, and often have a mixed sweet and sour taste. Soup, served as an indispensable dish in meals, is cooked in various ways with local seasonal fresh



vegetables and seafood and often added with local cooking wine.

Fuzhou is a major railway hub in northern Fujian. The Wenzhou–Fuzhou and Fuzhou–Xiamen Railways form part of the Southeast Coast High-Speed Rail Corridor and can accommodate high-speed trains at speeds of up to 250 km/h. The Hefei–Fuzhou High-Speed Railway links the city to Beijing through its nearby inner land province Jiangxi at speeds up to 350 km/h. The Nanping–Fuzhou Railway and Xiangtang–Putian Railway provide rail access inland. The latter line can carry trains at speeds of 200 km/h. The regional Fuzhou-Mawei Cargo Railway runs from the Fuzhou Railway Station eastward to the port in Mawei District.



The greater Fuzhou area is 11,968 square kilometres, of which the urban area is 1,786 square kilometres. The urbanization rate is 64.8%. The city has a coastline of 1,137 km, accounting for one third of the coast

of Fujian Province. Fuzhou is the West Coast Economic Zone—centre of political, economic, cultural, scientific research centres and modern financial services centres. It is one of the first 14 open coastal port cities and gateway to the Maritime Silk Road (Fujian) Free Trade Area.



Fuzhou was in need of a dramatic new centre for the performing arts and chose an international architectural design firm in Finland, PES-Architects, to design and build the centre. Professor, Architect Pekka Salminen, founded the company in 1968, giving the firm over 50 years of continuous success, based on creative talent, hard work and commitment to finding outstanding solutions to complex projects.

They had a reputation of planning and building significant projects, which include complex public buildings such as theatres, airports and railway terminals, as well as university buildings, schools, sport facilities, retail developments, office buildings, housing developments and demanding refurbishment projects.

PES Architects used custom-developed

ceramic tiles and louvres to create the curving lines of the Strait Culture and Art Centre in Fuzhou, China.

The Helsinki- and Shanghai-based studio arranged the five swooping buildings that make up the centre to unfurl like the overlapping petals of a jasmine flower – the symbol of Fuzhou.

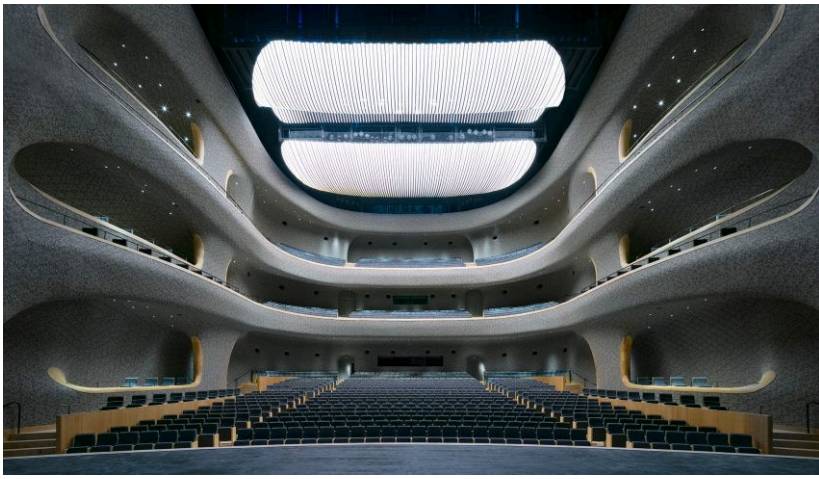
Opened on 10 October 2018, the 153,000-square-metre arts complex contains a 1,600-seat opera house, 1,000-seat concert hall, a theatre that seats 700, an art exhibition hall and a cinema.

Each of these functions is housed in a separate "petal", which fan out from a connecting concourse and roof terrace, accessed via public gardens and a plaza on the waterfront of the Minjiang River.

An underground promenade connects the centre to a metro station.

PES Architects' primary materials for the project were steel, concrete, bamboo and a custom-developed ceramic, the latter of which was chosen for its historic connections to Fuzhou.





yu Shi and acoustic specialists to create topographical ceramic panels.

Two types of ceramic tile, developed for optimum acoustics, were created to clad the concert and opera halls. In the concert auditorium, tessellating panels engraved with a floral pattern

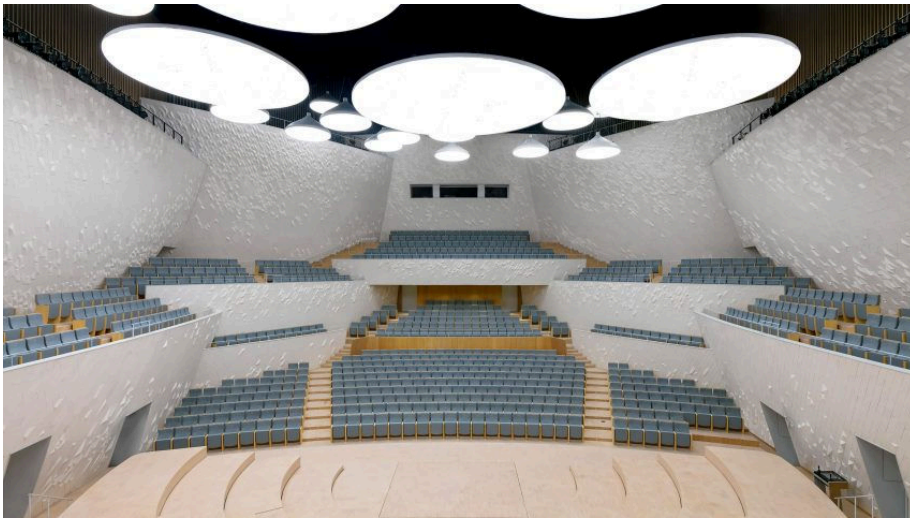
cover the angled walls that interlock to

During the Ming Dynasty the city flourished as the overland Silk Road trading route waned in popularity next to the safer and more profitable maritime version. Located on China's south-eastern coast, Fuzhou became a gateway to the Maritime Silk Road and its trade in prized porcelain.

Chinese white-coloured ceramic tiles and louvres were used to clad the exterior of all of the buildings, underlining the jasmine blossom aesthetic. The louvres' angles and cascading gaps left in the facade give the buildings a delicate, translucent quality.

For the interiors of the two main auditoriums PES Architects worked with Taiwanese ceramic artist Samuel Hsuan-





using a computer-controlled cutting machine to create the ideal acoustics. A flexible cable net ceiling in the roof can accommodate different lighting rigs.

Each of the arts buildings has a core area formed of a public gallery that curves to match the shape of the

create different level stalls.

In the sinuous opera hall mosaic tiles in the shape of tiny flowers clad the curving, organic lines of the two levels of balconies and boxes, with smooth wood panelling lining the internal edges nearest to where the audience is seated.

Bamboo was used to clad the theatre hall, with solid blocks of bamboo made

facade.

In the concourse lobby entrance the lifts and ventilation shafts are housed in "mushroom columns" that curve to meet the ceiling like the gills on a fungi. Blossom-shaped skylights in the roof allow daylight to filter through.

Canadian organ builder Casavant Frères,



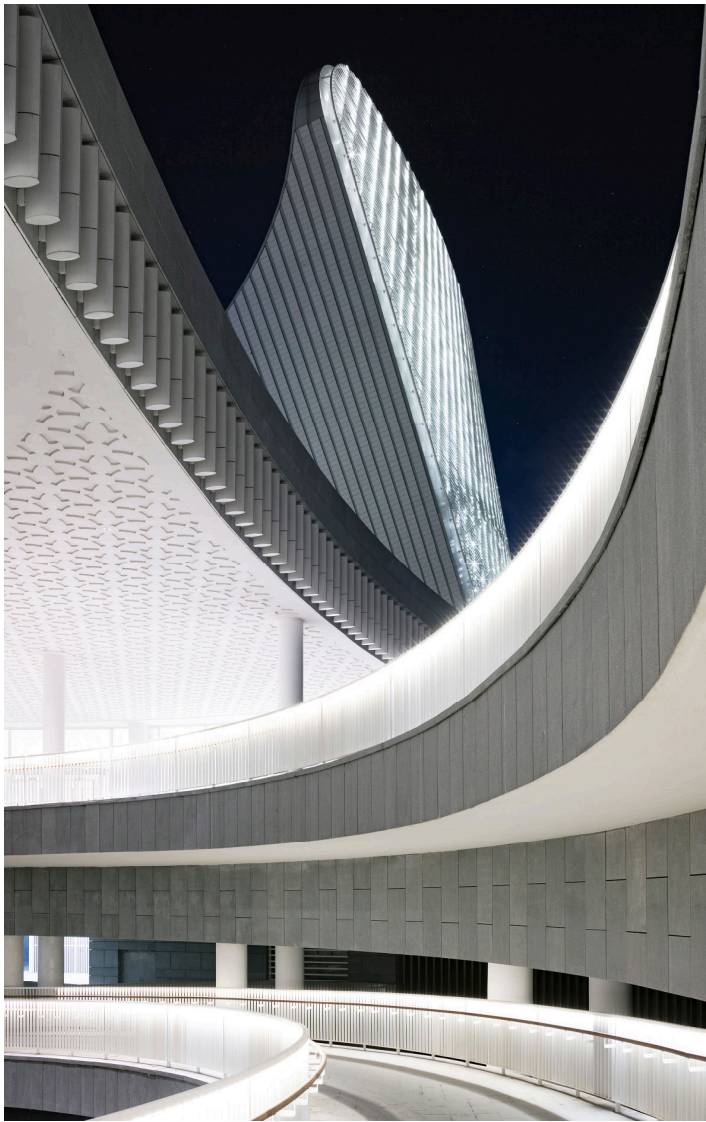
Limitée, Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, was commissioned to build a new mechanical-action organ for the Strait Cultural Arts Center. The firm’s third installation in a Chinese concert hall, the four-manual organ was announced as comprising 52 ranks of pipes available to 60 stops but the specifications were revised in construction.

The inaugural recital was played on 16 December 2018 by Pierre-Paul Ruiz.

Bruce Duncan

Information for this article has been compiled from may internet sources, including:
<http://organcn.org/organ/fcw2018/>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuzhou>
<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/10/11/pes-architects-strait-culture-art-centre-fuzhou-china-architecture/>
<https://www.pesark.com/office.html>
<https://thediapason.com/news/casavant-organ-china>
<https://casavantfreres.com/>

Most of the photography is by Marc Goodwin.



Stoplist of the Strait Cultural Art Centre Organ									
Great		Swell		Positiv		Resonance		Pedal	
Principal	16	Bourdon	16	Principal	8	Geigen-Principal	16	Subbass	32
Principal	8	Bourdon	8	Bourdon	8	Subbass	16	Double Open	
Chimney Flute	8	Salicional	8	Prestant	4	Diapason	8	Diapason	16
Octave	4	Vox Celestis	8	Spindle Flute	4	Stopped Flute	8	Contrabass	16
Quint	2 2/3	Octave	4	Nazard	2 2/3	Harmonic Flute	8	Principal	16
Super Octave	2	Flute	4	Super Octave	2	Octave	4	Subbass	16
Mixture IV	1 1/3	Gemshorn	2	Tierce	1 3/5	Open Flute	4	Bourdon	16
Double Trumpet	16	Mixture III-V	2	Quint	1 1/3	Gross Tierce	3 1/5	Gross Quint	10 2/3
Trumpet	8	Bassoon	16	Cymbal IV	2/3	Nazard	2 2/3	Octavebass	8
Clarion	4	Trumpet	8	Cromorne	8	Quarte de Nazard	2	Stopped Flute	8
		Oboe	8	Tremulant		Tierce	1 1/3	Gross Tierce	6 2/5
		Tremulant				Bombarde	16	Octave	4
						Trompette	8	Flute	4
								Contra Bombarde	32
								Bombarde	16
								Trompette	8
								Clairon	4
IV - 60 stops / 52 ranks									
Opus 3920, 2017									
Mechanical action with second electric action									
Design: Casavant & PES-Architect									
Specification from https://casavantfreres.com									