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### Orlando's 'classic-looking' performing-arts center draws early raves

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A giant orange-and-white flag bearing the numerals 2012 -- unfurled for the first time Friday morning on an empty lot across from City Hall -- gives only the barest hint of what is to rise on that lot.

A better clue could be had inside the round office building next door, where more than 300 people crowded in Friday to look at the first public designs for the Dr. P. Phillips Orlando Performing Arts Center, scheduled to open on the site in 2012.

Many of them seemed to like what they saw of architect Barton Myers' designs, which feature a giant roof jutting out over Magnolia Avenue and a glass lobby intended to glow at night.

"It's an important-looking building," said Bob Snow, developer of Church Street Station. "It's classic-looking."

Many of the onlookers jostling for a view work in the arts, some of them for groups that will make their home in the center. Frank McClain, resident stage director for the Orlando Opera, said he liked the exterior architecture, but he was more concerned with peering inside a big model of the building to see how the theaters will fit.

"Looking at the specifics of the theater where the opera will perform, I can't help but be excited," he said.

McClain and Nina Streich, executive director of the Global Peace Film Festival, noticed the design's connection to that of New York's Lincoln Center, which also has overhanging roofs and an extensive outdoor plaza.

But Jeff Revels, artistic director of Orlando Repertory Theatre, was equally interested in what the center will offer Central Florida audiences.

"The building itself is stunning," Revels said. "To me the roof line feels like it reaches out and

pulls you in.

"And what I love is we're not going to have to drive to West Palm Beach or Melbourne to see the people we want to see," he said.

See Orlando's new performing-arts center at [OrlandoSentinel.com](http://OrlandoSentinel.com)

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