

NEWS

# Mercer Island Center for the Arts selects design team

by [REPORTER STAFF](#), Mercer Island Reporter Staff  
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The Mercer Island Center for the Arts (MICA) has recently released conceptual drawings of its proposed performance venue in the Town Center.

The drawings focus on integrating the center "with the surrounding green and open space and supplementing city activities such as the farmers market, Summer Celebration! and the Mostly Music in the Park," according to a press release sent Jan. 5 by MICA Executive Director Louise Kincaid.

MICA announced that Framework Cultural Placemaking and Owen Richards Architects (ORA) will design its new building, which will be located at the old recycling site at Mercedale Park, and will include the city's Bicentennial Park. The Framework/ORA collaboration was selected from over 20 firms invited to submit qualifications and preliminary proposals.

MICA will be a multi-theater venue for plays, dance, concerts, recitals, lectures, films and all forms of performing art that includes a 350-seat main stage concert hall, 150-seat recital hall, 100-seat theater lab, art gallery, classrooms, studios, meeting rooms, offices and reception spaces.

MICA, incorporated last December, recently gained its 501-C3 status as a non profit. Youth Theatre Northwest is expected to be a major tenant and user of the new facility. Over the next year or so, MICA is hoping to collect at least \$12 million in donations from private sources. Its goal is have the funding in place by 2016 to begin construction by mid-year, but the group says will need \$20 million in total to develop the site and its programs.

Lesley Bain, founder of Framework Cultural Placemaking and Mercer Island resident, has long been involved with the project, offering design assistance from the beginning. She has done design and planning work for the Seattle Center, Cornish College of the Arts, City of Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, and the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Owen Richards, founder of ORA, has worked on Chihuly Garden and Glass at Seattle Center, the

Evergreen State College Recital Hall, SIFF Film Center, and art installation design at the Olympic Sculpture Park. Before founding ORA, Richards was a principal at LMN Architects, serving as lead project architect on McCaw Hall, Mercer Arts Arena, Wenatchee Performing Arts Center and many other major cultural facilities.

"MICA will transform the Mercerdale Park into a year-round community asset, bring new vibrancy to its surroundings and the life of the Island," the release states. "The integration of the park and the welcoming interior spaces is critical to the project success, creating places where people will share community celebrations, all kinds of cultural activities and quiet conversations."

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