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Top 5: Contemporary Theatres

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Striking designs and façades, clever layouts, modern technology and modular facilities – these theatres can stage any production. Curtain up on our top 5.

5. Taipei Performing Arts Center Taiwan

On 2 July 2022, the *Taipei Performing Arts Center* was officially opened after a total of ten years of construction. It was designed by David Gianotten and Rem Koolhaas of the *Office for Metropolitan Architecture*. Covering a total area of 50,000 m², it has seating for 1,500 people, with a further 800 seats in the spherical section. The so-called *Blue Box*, designed for experimental performances, has a capacity of 500 seats. The theatre building's striking composition of rectangular blocks and spherical forms makes the *Taipei Performing Arts Center* a landmark in Taiwan's capital. Its sophisticated technology and optimised acoustics are appreciated by art lovers and artists alike.

4. Harbin Grand Theatre China

The *Harbin Grand Theatre* was built between 2011 and 2015. It was designed by the Chinese architect Ma Yansong. The futuristic building comprises a number of performance spaces – including a large theatre with 1,538 seats and a smaller one with 414 seats. Public walkways lead along the snow-white façade

to a viewing platform on the roof. The *Harbin Grand Theatre* is situated in the 'City of Music' – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – in Harbin, where, it is said, China's first orchestra was founded. Thanks to its modern design, the theatre has won numerous architectural awards.

3. Munich Volkstheater Germany

Since autumn 2021, the historic *Munich Volkstheater* has been housed in a new brick-red building with seating for around 600 audience members. Covering a total area of almost 18,000 m², the Stuttgart-based architectural agency *Lederer Ragnarsdóttir Oei* has created a multifunctional performance space at Tumblingerstraße 29. This allows the stage sets to be lowered – as if by a lift –

into an underground storage area. The 27-metre-high tower directly above the stage also facilitates quick set changes. Naturally, the administrative offices, the props department, the costume workshop and joinery, as well as the sound department with its recording studio, have also found a new home in this contemporary theatre building with its distinctive character.

2. Perelman Performing Arts Center USA

The *Perelman Performing Arts Center* was built as part of the redevelopment of the *World Trade Center* site in New York City, with construction beginning in 2017 and the centre opening in 2023. The plans were drawn up by architects Joshua Ramus of *REX* and *Davis Brody Bond*. The result is a rectangular building with a total of 12,000 m² of floor space spread over three storeys. The façade consists of 5,000 slabs of Portuguese marble. There are no windows, in order to keep "theatregoers at a respectful distance" from "those paying their respects at the memorial, and vice versa", say the architects. After all, the memorial to the 11 September attacks is located in the immediate vicinity. The *Perelman Performing Arts Center* houses three modular theatre spaces, which together can accommodate up to 1,200 people.

1. Glasshouse Theatre Australia

The *Glasshouse Theatre* in Brisbane, Australia, was designed by *Blight Rayner Architecture* in collaboration with *Snøhetta*. Its most distinctive feature is the 173-metre-long, curtain-wall, undulating glass façade, consisting of 7-metre-high panels. Inspired by the river opposite, the façade is, according to the

architects, also an 'abstraction of a theatre curtain'. The modern theatre has a capacity of 1,500 people. The greatest distance between the audience and the stage is just 28 metres at the furthest seat. The building was completed in early 2026.