

# CHESAPEAKE SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

**Chesapeake Shakespeare Co.**  
Baltimore, Maryland  
Commercial

## **HISTORIC BANK BECOMES A CONTEMPORARY GLOBE THEATRE**

“What makes Shakespeare so great?” That is the question this small theater company is devoted to exploring. The historic Mercantile Trust and Deposit Co. Building in downtown Baltimore is transformed into a modern Globe-style Shakespearean theater to bring accessibility of the great bard’s work to the public.

The new design incorporates many of the building’s existing historic architectural elements including the intricately carved coffered ceiling and Corinthian columns while carefully integrating in a fully modern theater.





MEZZANINE



VIEW OF HISTORIC CEILING



GROUND FLOOR VAULT



BASEMENT



EXTERIOR CIRCA 1958



### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The highly ornamented Mercantile Trust & Deposit Co. building is on the National Register of Historic Places. A decade worth of sticky residue on the floors from nightclub revellers was what Chesapeake Shakespeare Co. inherited. However, the rich architectural details were still prominent.

## HISTORY

Constructed in 1885 in Romanesque Revival architecture, the highly ornamented Mercantile Trust & Deposit Co. building is a major architectural landmark of Baltimore. Conveying a sense of impenetrability, the hardened building survived the 1904 Baltimore Fire and reaffirmed what the bank had been saying all along in its ads.

Mercantile occupied the building for almost 100 years before leaving in 1983. The interior was renovated and occupied by a number of nightclubs before being purchased by the theatre company in 2012.

Minimal work was done to the exterior to maintain the building's rich architectural features and a century of the City's patina. One key asset is the new marquee and relocated entrance, now visible from the Inner Harbor.



1904 BALTIMORE FIRE



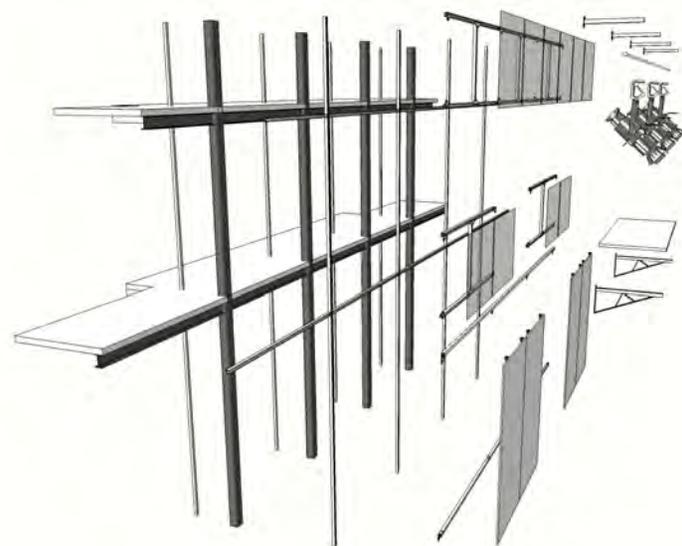
NEW THEATER ENTRANCE AND MARQUEE

## A MODERN INTERPRETATION OF THE GLOBE THEATRE

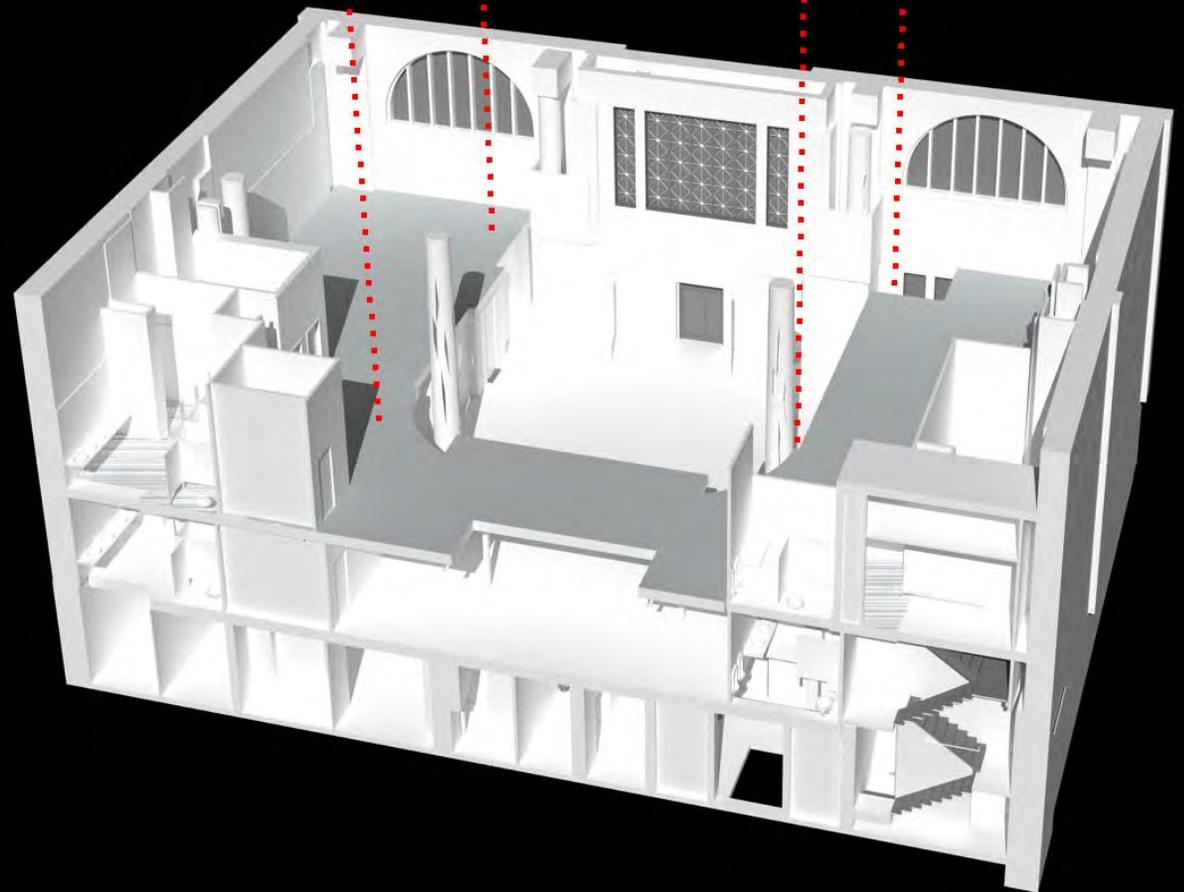
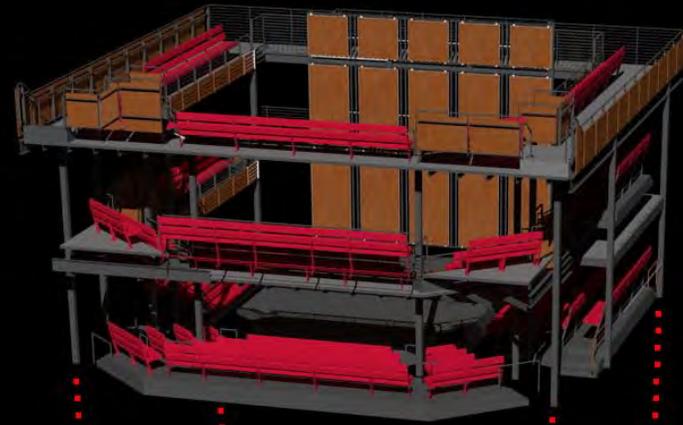
To take advantage of the former bank interior's height, a three level steel structure was delicately threaded through the historic architectural fabric. With the addition of the third level balcony, the core space of the building has been transformed into a place with a strong sense of verticality. No seat is further than 40 feet or four rows from the stage, making the entire space very intimate.

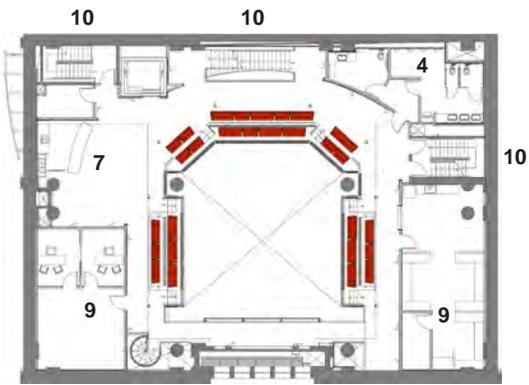
### THE "CHAMELEON WALL"

The upstage wall was envisioned as an erector set of parts that allows the stage designer to easily modify, clamp on to, and remove parts as needed for each play. The wall transforms yet can visually blend in with the stage set.

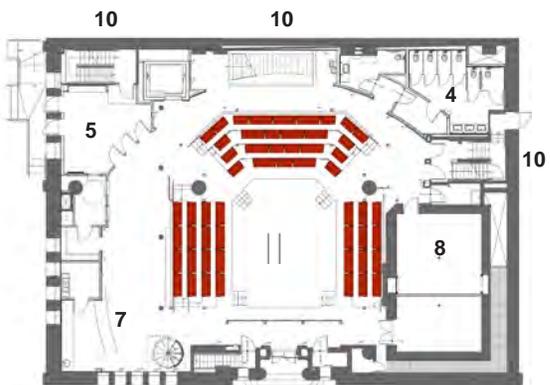


"CHAMELEON WALL"

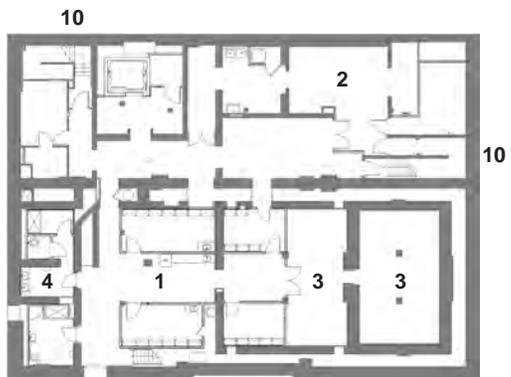




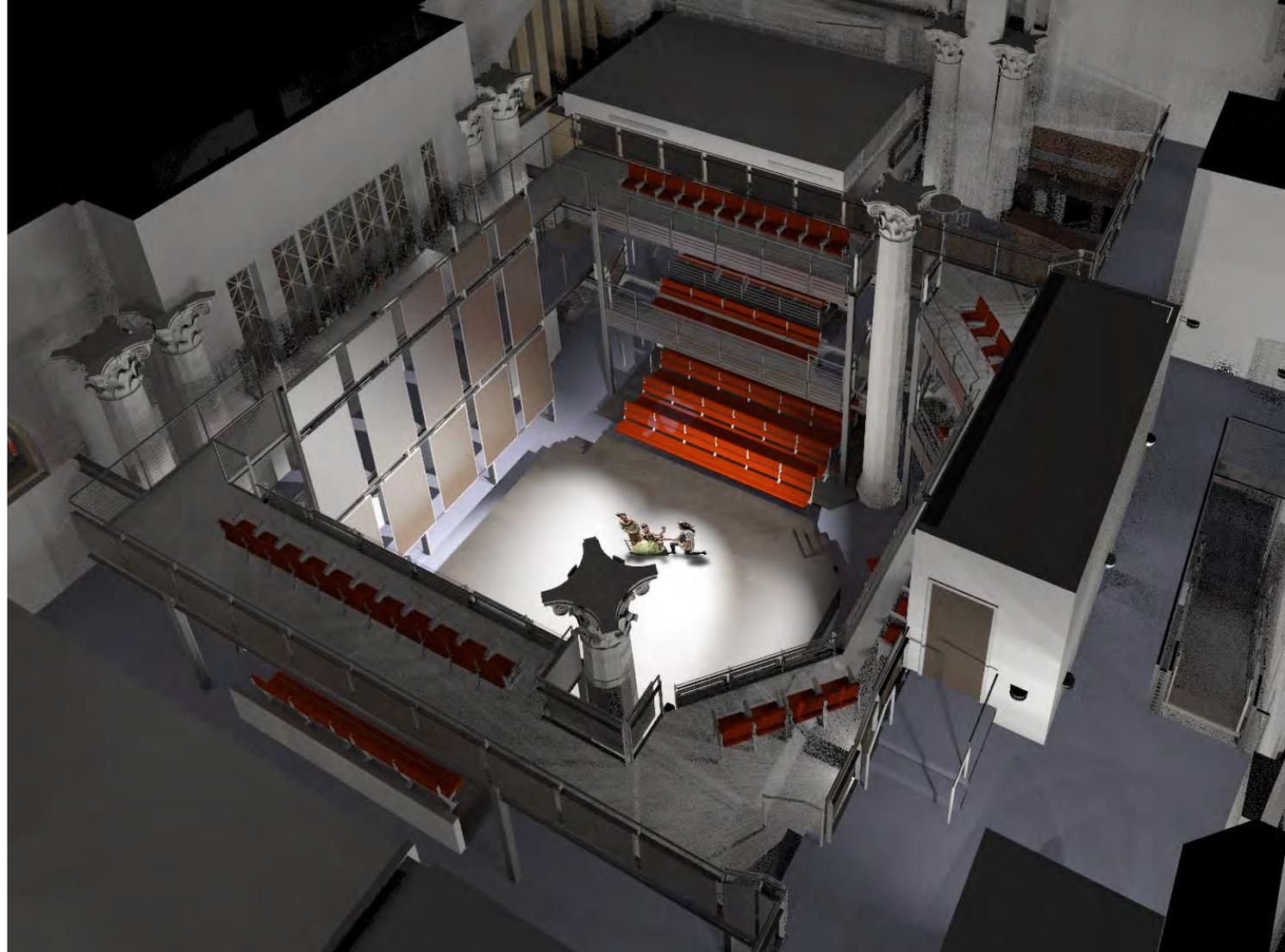
MEZZANINE/BALCONY



GROUND FLOOR



BASEMENT



### LEGEND

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. DRESSING ROOMS | 6. STAGE       |
| 2. PROPS          | 7. CONCESSIONS |
| 3. COSTUMES       | 8. FAMILY ROOM |
| 4. TOILETS        | 9. OFFICES     |
| 5. ENTRY          | 10. STAIRS     |





"There's 400 years of architecture in one building - an Elizabethan Playhouse, a Victorian Bank, and a 21st century theatre."

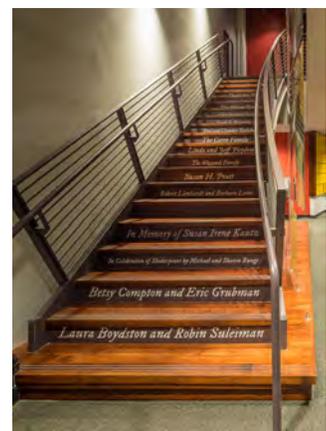
- Ian Gallanar, Artistic Director, Chesapeake Shakespeare Co.



BALCONY LEVEL OFFICES

## SUPPORT SPACES

Offices are tucked into the balcony level and behind the audience to maintain the space's visual volume. There are two levels of concessions and patrons are encouraged to visit them at any time enhancing the festive and open atmosphere of the theater.





“ALL THE WORLD’S A STAGE”