

ARENA STAGE'S SECOND DEBUT

Cast-in-place concrete and value engineering take center stage in renovation of venerable D.C. theater

BY KELLY DAVIDSON

ONCE AGAIN, ARENA STAGE in southwest Washington, D.C., is collecting honors, but this time it's for the theater company's most ambitious production to date—the \$103.5-million, 200,000-sq-ft renovation and expansion of its own historic home.

The reinvented theater campus, now known as the Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, after Jaylee Mead and the late Gilbert Mead, who pledged \$35 million toward the project, has hosted more than a dozen productions and picked up multiple honors since its debut in October.

The big winner has been Bethesda, Md.-based Clark Construction Group, a member of several AGC chapters, which served as the project's construction manager-at-risk. The company garnered four craftsmanship awards from the Washington Building Congress and a 2011 Build America Award from AGC of America.

For its role, the construction management firm KCM Inc., Paeonian Springs, Va., also earned an achievement award from the Construction Management Association of America National Capital Chapter.

"The biggest prize of all is that we get to work in this glorious building," says Edgar Dobbie, Arena's managing director.

Retaining History

The theater company has hosted more than a dozen productions in the new building, which has twice the square footage of the original structure and vastly improved production capabilities.

The project transformed the original exposed concrete-and-brick Arena Stage building, a historical landmark designed by Harry Weese