Royce Hall and its major 1,800-seat auditorium was one of the three original buildings of UCLA, erected in 1929. The auditorium began as a large lecture hall with one balcony and an “after-thought” stagehouse. As UCLA and West Los Angeles grew, a Center for Performing Arts presenting world-class performers evolved and Royce was inadequate for the task. A major renovation to serve classical music and dance was ordered and completed in 1984. Acoustics, appearance, sightlines and theatrical function were improved greatly and Royce became a celebrated venue with symphonic acoustics among the best in the world. While Andre Previn was conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, it was the only venue in which he would record the orchestra. 1994 brought a near disastrous earthquake and we were given the rare chance of making the hall even better for symphony and more hospitable for speech via variable acoustics, within a Romanesque interior similar to the building’s exterior. Royce reopened in May 1998 with all design goals accomplished. MCH designed all acoustics and AV systems. The hall is now able to serve increasingly eclectic fare.

Reference: Michael Blachly, (Fmr. Director, U. Florida Performing Arts 352.392.1900); Current Director, David Sefton 310.208.8678; Barton Phelps, FAIA 323.934.8615

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