

# More Than Music

## Project Description

*More Than Music* transforms the ruins of the former Caledonia Church in Glasgow's Southside into a collaborative space where musicians of different genres and skill levels can connect, rehearse, and experiment with sound.

Drawn from my own experience as a violinist in an informal music group, the project celebrates the process of making music together and the friendships and emotional connections that emerge from it.

As a Mauritian designer of Chinese descent, my work explores hybridity: the merging of cultures, people, practices, and mediums. In this project, music becomes more than a theme; it becomes a design method that shapes every decision of the design process.

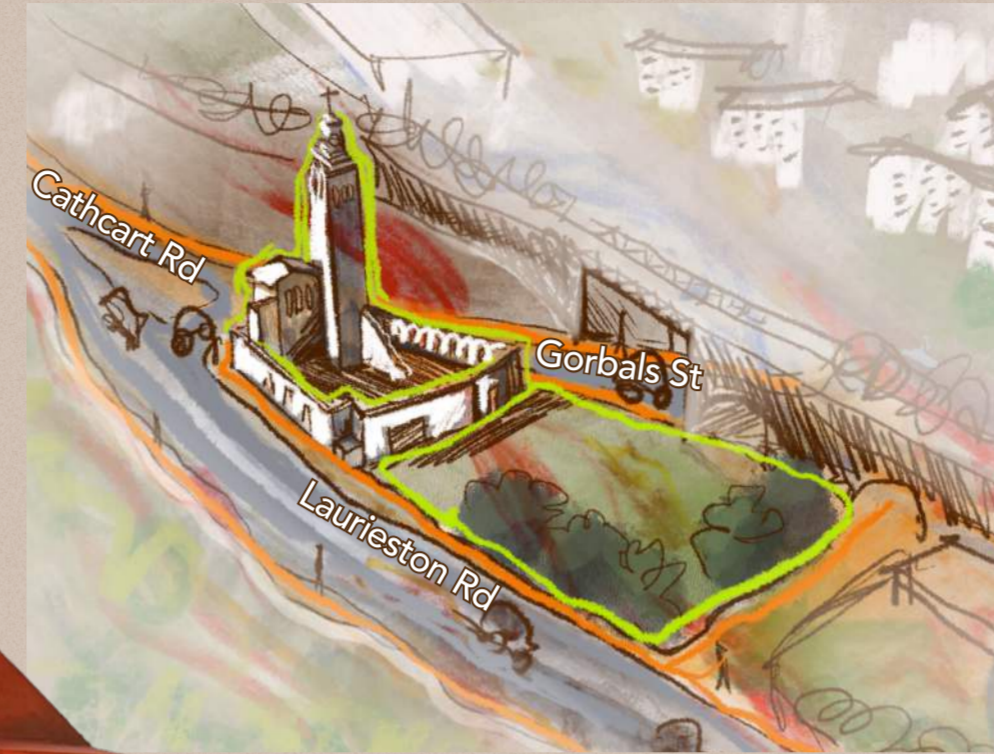
## Design Intent

A series of music spaces with varied scales and acoustic qualities, supporting both rehearsal and informal performance

A social space functioning as a café by day and a bar for music sessions in the evening

A workspace and score archive for group work, and technical preparation

An instrument drop-off and rental area to support accessibility and convenience



## The Site



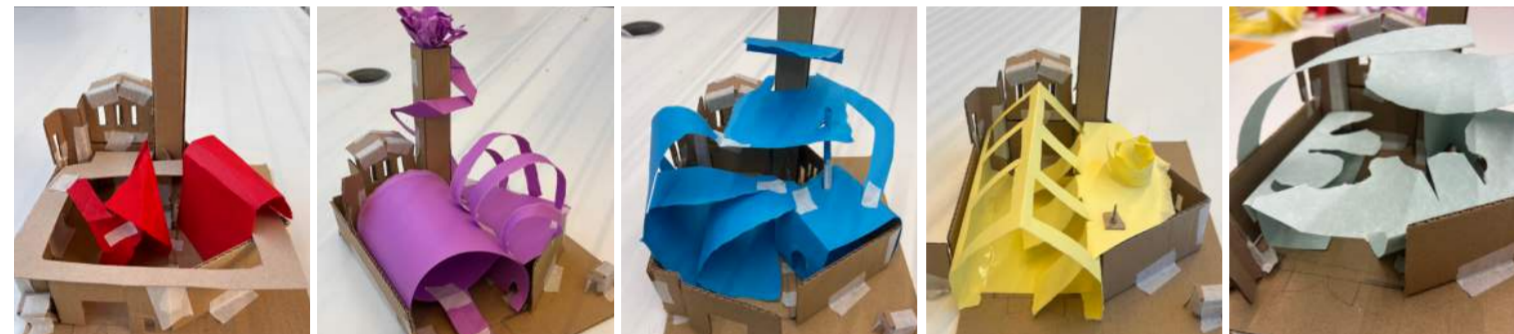
### Former Caledonia Church

Architect: Alexander Greek Thomson  
Address: 1 Caledonia Road, Gorbals, Glasgow  
Construction date: 1856–1857  
Status: Category A listed building after being badly damaged by fire

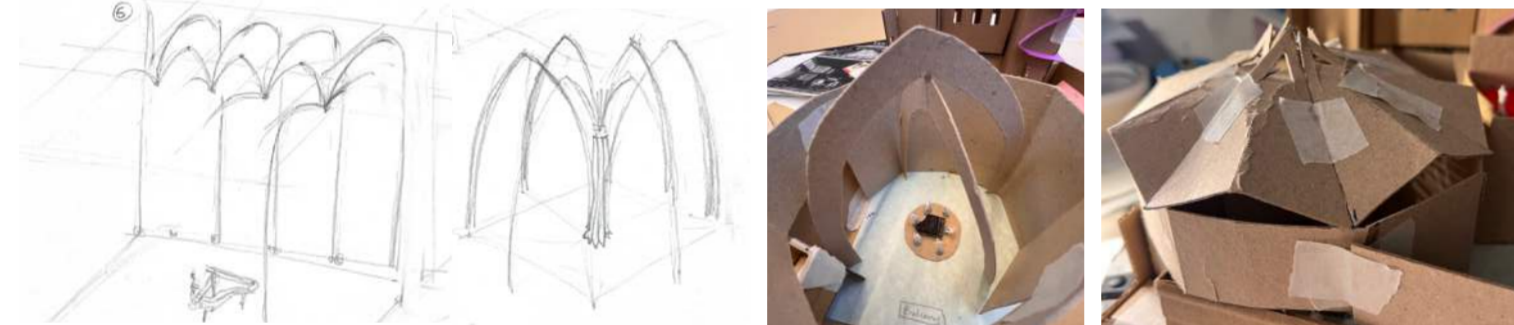
Left: Site Plan Study

Top: Existing Plan  
Not to Scale

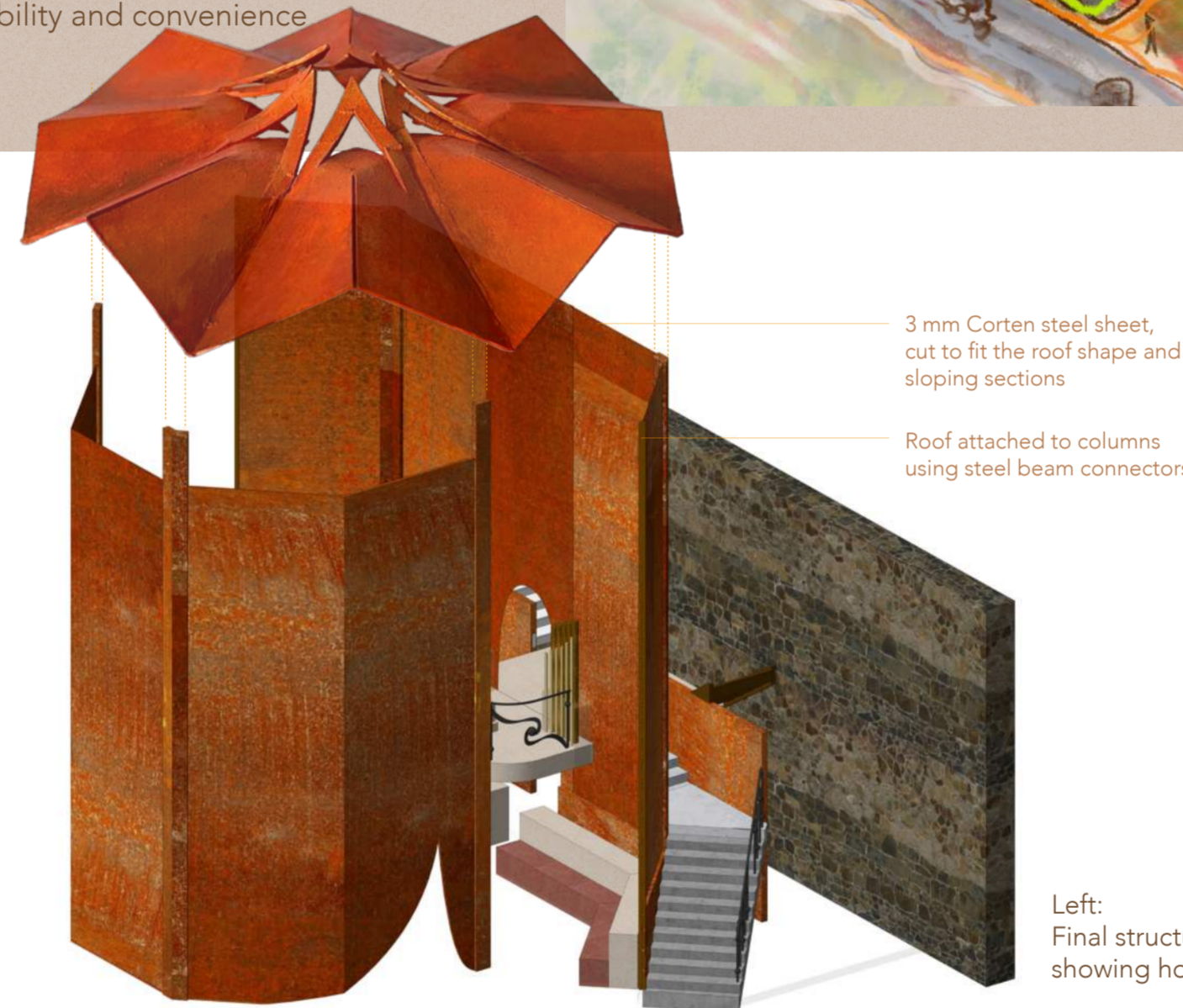
## Exploring Structures: The Development of *Maestoso*



Testing various forms using sketch models



Roof development inspired by the sound of vaulted cathedrals



3 mm Corten steel sheet, cut to fit the roof shape and sloping sections

Roof attached to columns using steel beam connectors

Left: Final structure of *Maestoso*, showing how roof is attached

## More Than Music: The Film

### Investigating How Friendships Form Beyond the Music



Click on the image or scan QR code for the film

*More Than Music: The Film* is a hybrid documentary film essay combining rehearsal footage, interviews with various music groups, and personal narration grounded in my experience playing in a band. Through reflections and questions, it invites viewers to consider what creates connection beyond the music itself.

The film introduces the themes and motivations behind my design proposal, documenting my first-hand research and direct engagement with users. Glasgow's street musician culture informed the idea of an open interior where music can be heard, shared, and observed. This is reflected in the long walkway overlooking *Maestoso*, allowing people to watch, listen, and build familiarity and connection.

The intention is to recreate the idea of strangers becoming friends over time through music, but within one building, breaking boundaries between musicians of different genres and skill levels.



Exploring roof structures and using natural light as a spiritual element



Exploring the deconstruction of the walls



Final concept for *Maestoso* through sketch model (View from open corridor on first floor)

The site being an empty shell offered an opportunity to create interior forms that shape the acoustic experience. Through sketch models, the intention was to create one large space with long reverberations, resembling a cathedral-like sound, for casual playing and performances.

This led to the development of *Maestoso*, the main structure with a star-shaped roof. Through testing and iterations, the design became partially open, allowing sound to resonate throughout the building while creating views around it, enhancing the idea of music as a form of connection within the interior.

# Maestoso

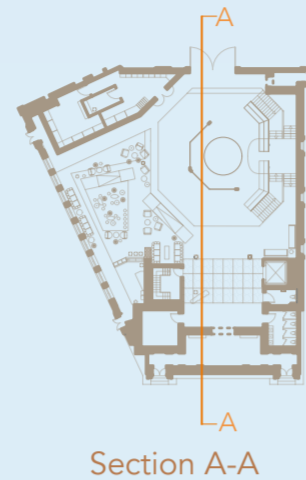
Performed with grandeur, weight, and a commanding, majestic presence.

At the heart of the building stands *Maestoso*: a 10.5 m tall corten steel structure. Its partially open form creates views from multiple angles, inviting passers-by to engage with those playing, through nods, smiles, and gestures that gradually form human connections.

While musicians are sheltered for casual playing, the open design allows sound to reverberate through

the surrounding sandstone, carrying throughout the building. The building's design draws from this central form, much like sound radiating outward from its source.

The journeys surrounding the structure are designed to provoke spontaneous interactions, encouraging collaboration between musicians of different styles and skill levels, thus breaking down traditional boundaries.



Final Spatial Presentation Model



## Ceiling Painting

The star-shaped ceiling draws inspiration from the work of the building's original architect, Alexander Greek Thomson. The original church ceiling featured stencilled wooden panels with ornamental motifs, including star symbolism. Research into Thomson's work suggests a rich use of colour and gilded finishes, informing the palette of the proposed design.



Bespoke Ceiling Painting  
Triangular panels with painted pattern, applied using stencilling, supported by corten steel beams (varying sizes)  
Panel dimensions: 700 x 650 x 320 mm

Given the building's former role as a church, the placement of the painting at the highest architectural point, and the universal symbolism of the star, the original design likely held spiritual significance. The proposed ceiling does not replicate Thomson's work, but reinterprets it, honouring the original while maintaining a sense of spirituality through abstraction.

While the building no longer serves a religious function, a new form of spirituality is found in music. Like music, which cannot be seen or touched, abstract art is immaterial, existing beyond direct representation. The ceiling painting therefore becomes an expression of music as an intangible, immersive experience.



Photograph of Building's Original Ceiling

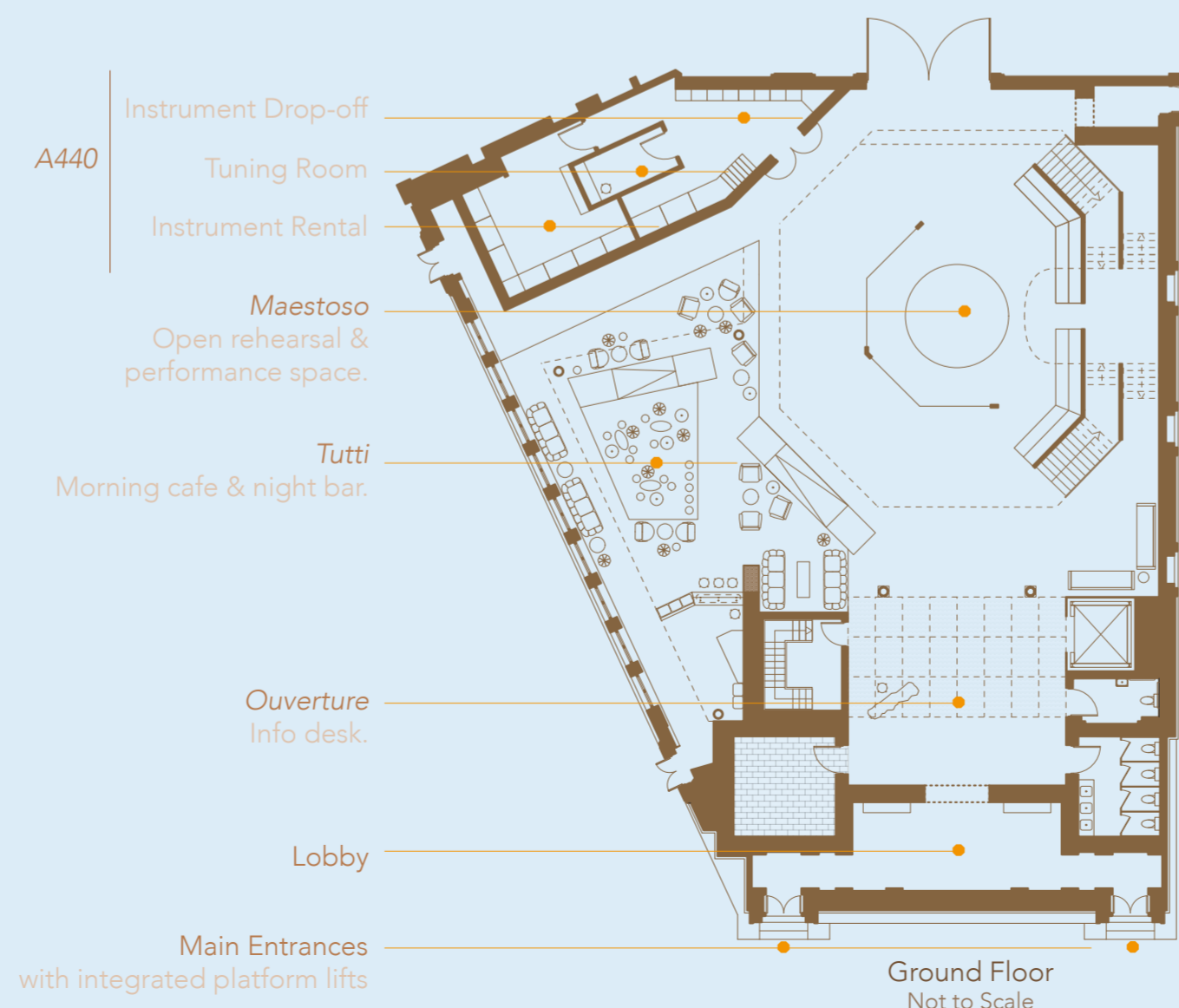


## Ouverture

View from the lobby

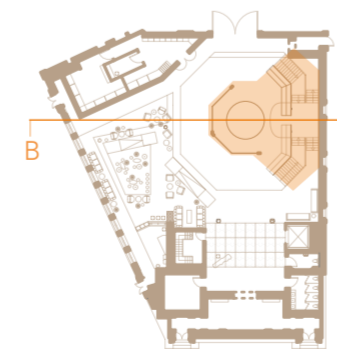
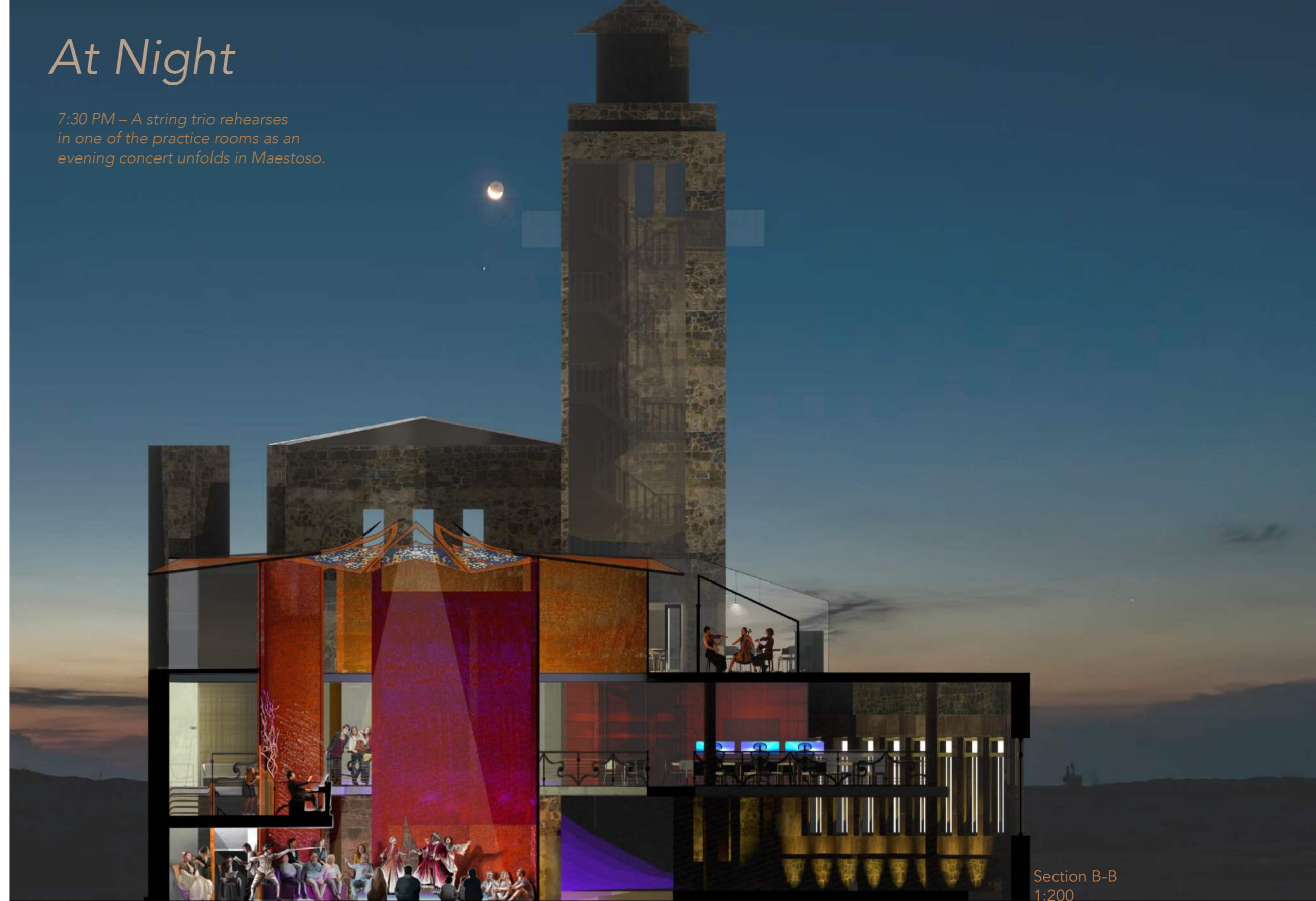
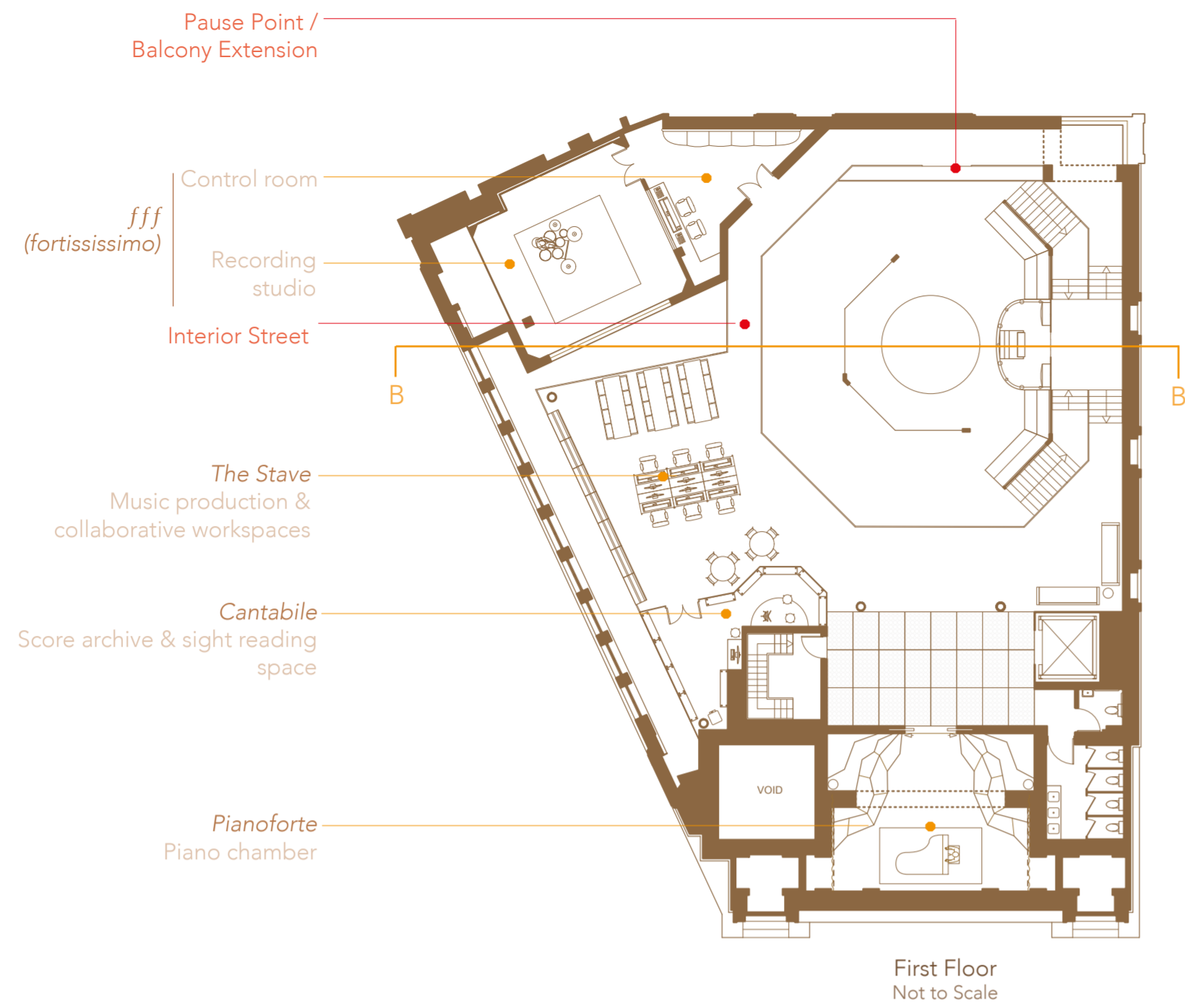
A threshold between city and sound. As one enters, the resonance of strings lingers in the air. A deliberate opening in the existing sandstone

frames the view, resembling a proscenium arch - but here, it is crossed, breaking the boundary between audience, rehearsal, and performance.



# At Night

7:30 PM – A string trio rehearses in one of the practice rooms as an evening concert unfolds in Maestoso.



Section B-B (close-up)

7:30 PM - A small-scale, independent opera production collaborates with an organist to create a dramatic yet intimate performance.



Tutti  
(Social Space adjacent to Maestoso)

10:00 AM - Conversations Between Rehearsals with Music Lingering in the Background



Tutti  
(Social Space adjacent to Maestoso)

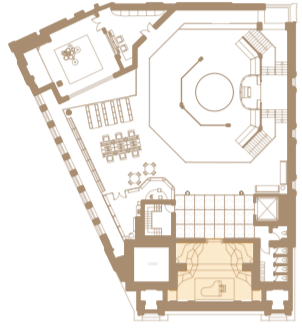
11:00 PM - Traditional Folk Session, Audience Gathered Around Central Musicians

# Pianoforte

The original name of the piano, reflecting its ability to shift between softness and strength.

This chamber is private, creating a safe and intimate environment where musicians can feel at ease, essential for letting go, particularly during improvisation. The design draws on the fluidity of music, expressed through colour, texture, and form to create an immersive spatial experience.

Acoustically, the room is warm and controlled, achieved through soft materials and bespoke elements with irregular angles that help diffuse sound.



Transitional Space Marking a Shift in Atmosphere, Acoustics, and Experience.



4:00 PM - Pre-Performance Jam Session

## Process: Music as a Design Method

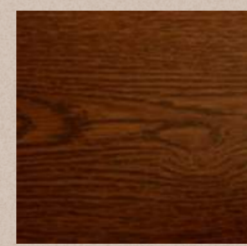


1. 'Painting music' experimentation

An abstract experiment emerged from listening to jazz music, with the intention of painting intuitively and allowing the music to guide the process without overthinking. In order to develop it spatially, I began imagining architectural spaces within the composition. This led to a series of drawings that inspired the piano chamber.



Bespoke Soundproof Door  
PLEXIGLAS® Sound-stop, Ø5500 mm x 25 mm thick



Bespoke Seating Mahogany  
Custom Dimensions



Bespoke Seating Hand-Carved Mahogany  
Custom Dimensions



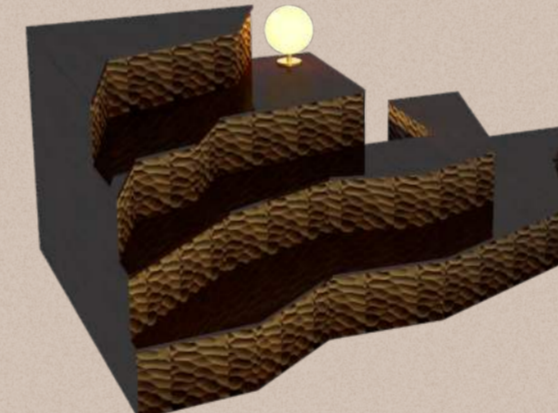
Westend Velvet Westex, Berry Finish  
2500 x 1500 mm



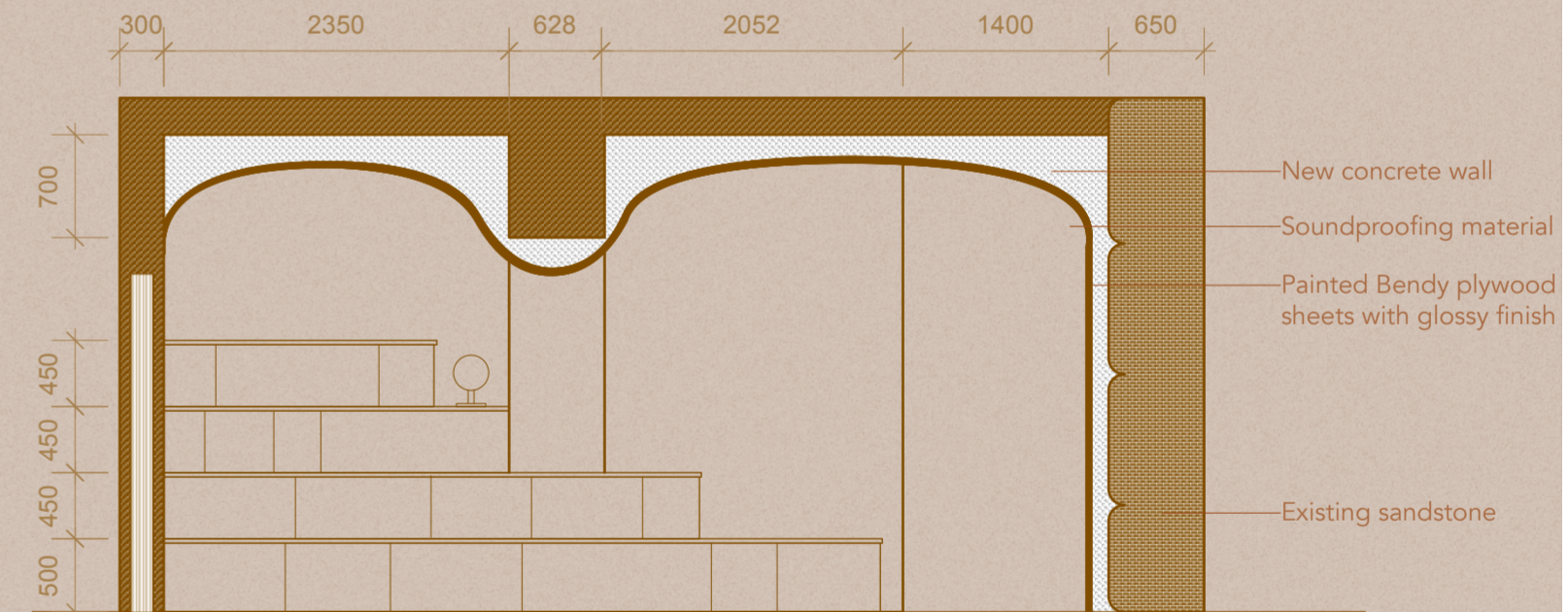
Posent Wall Light PINCH, Bronze Finish  
Ø 180 x 260 mm (D)



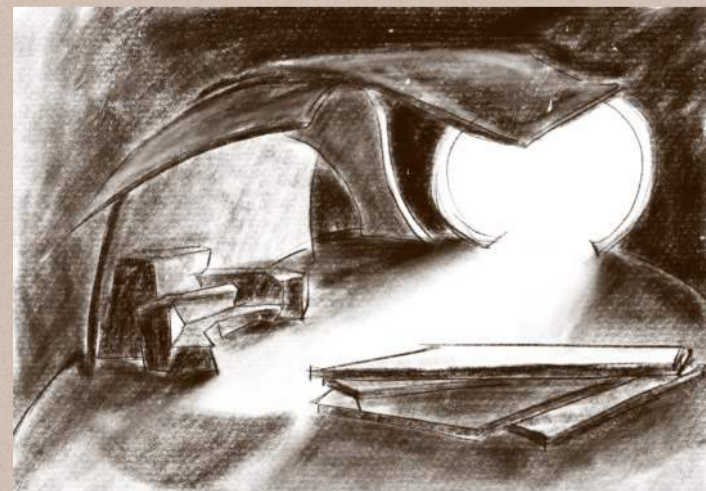
Bespoke Curved Ceiling  
Bendy plywood sheets on curved timber framing  
Custom Dimensions



Bespoke Seating with Storage



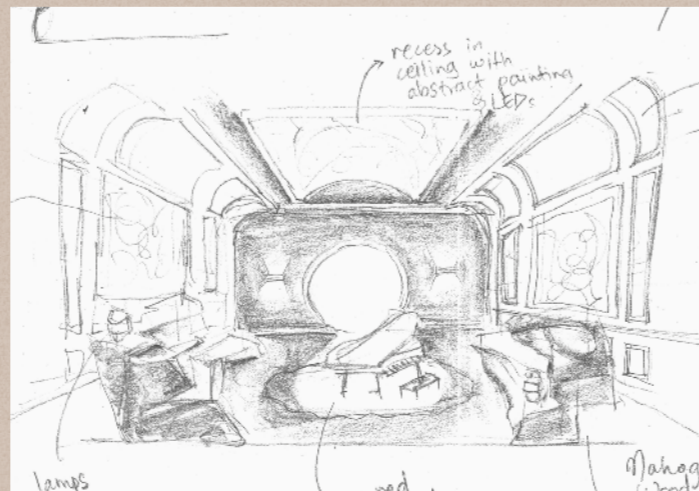
PianoForte Section  
1:50



2. Deriving interiors using light and shadow



3. Atmosphere concept overlay



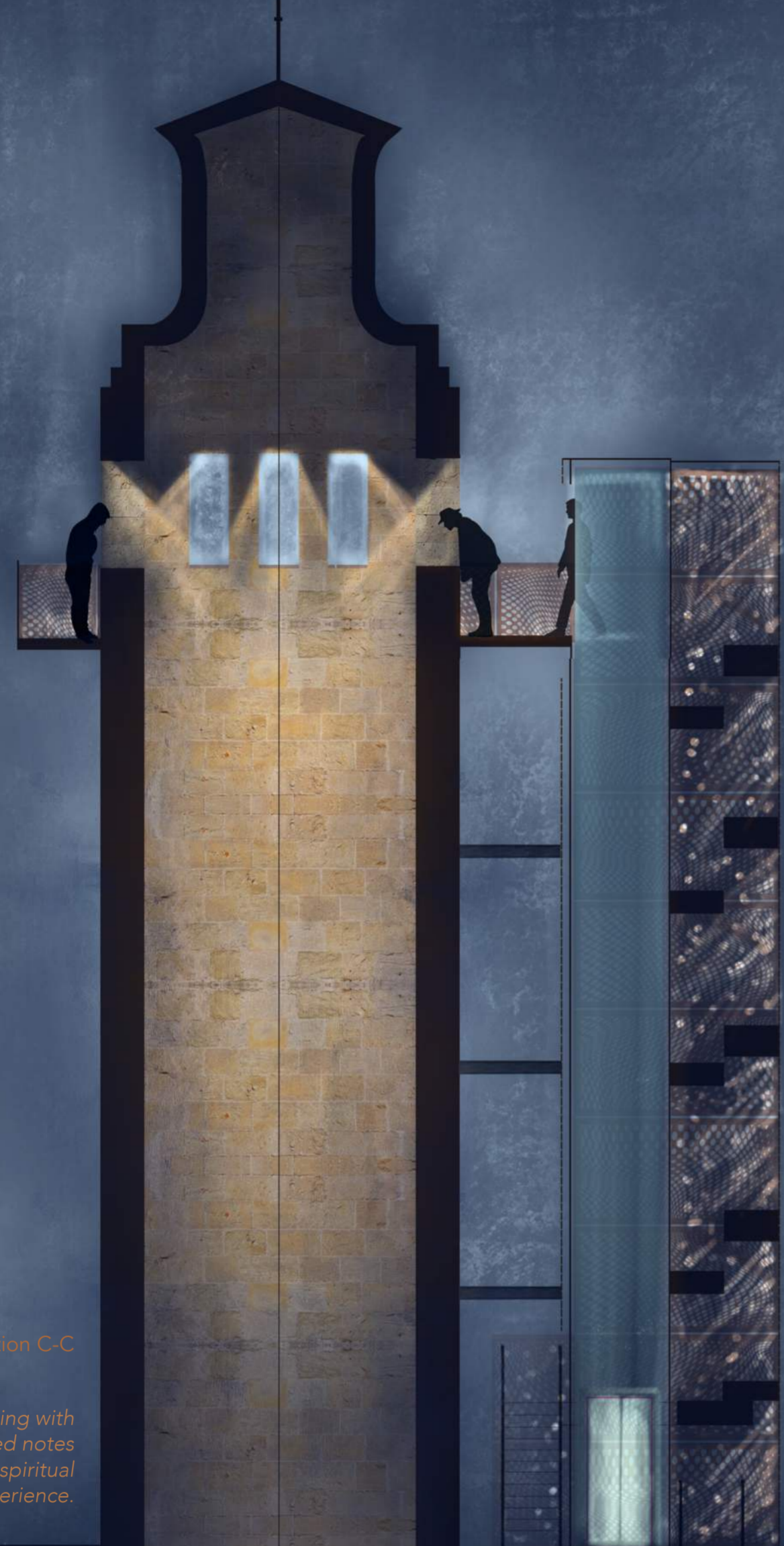
4. Sketch showing materiality



5. Experimenting with renderings



6. Idea of fluidity in the abstract translated spatially through the use of painted bendy plywood, creating a visual musical experience.



Section C-C

9:00 PM – Harpist experimenting with the echoes of delicate, plucked notes in the quiet of twilight, in a spiritual experience.

# Cantabile

To be played in a smooth and expressive style, like singing.

A small yet precious archive, *Cantabile* houses an extensive collection of musical scores and books. Equipped with online search, scanning, and printing facilities, it allows users to quickly access and get hold of music sheets.

Unlike a conventional silent library, musicians are encouraged to bring their instruments. A dedicated area for sight-reading (playing a piece at first glance) encourages exploration of new repertoire and the development of technical skill.

Its compact scale and full-height bookshelves create a dry acoustic, where every sound is perceptible, the presence of others is immediate, and the instrument is heard with clarity and definition.



# The Stave

A five-line framework that organises musical notation and sequence.

Designed as a collaborative zone, the space accommodates music production desks and encourages interaction, composition, and creative exchange.

# fff (Fortississimo)

An extreme intensity of sound, expressing maximum energy and impact.

Although visually connected through a glass panel, this space is fully isolated and soundproof, making it ideal for use as a recording studio. It also includes its own control room.

