



 AMERICAN SEATING

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY: FAIRCHILD AUDITORIUM

“...if you build a strong enough relationship and prove to them that we have the very best product...pretty soon you are a team member instead of a sales person...” – Mark Wretschko, American Seating Sales Rep

- **Product:** Hybrid product using a **Spirit®** back and **Stellar®** seat, matched with a **Bodiform®** end standard, and Model 1610 middle standard
- **Quantity:** 4,281 Chairs
- **Location:** East Lansing, Michigan, Michigan State University

Project Overview

Standing on Fairchild’s stage at Michigan State University presents a unique view from many other auditoriums. The auditorium is a distinctive venue where two auditoriums share one stage; only two other auditoriums in the United States resemble this layout. In 1941, Eleanor Roosevelt spoke at the Dedication Ceremony to an audience seated in American Seating chairs. As the original seating supplier, American Seating shared in Fairchild’s history, and now shares in the future of the auditorium after completing a 4,000-plus seat installation.

“We went back to American Seating because of our previous satisfaction, and it is a local company; we like to keep business within the state if we can,” explains Diane Baribeau, the General Manager at Michigan State. In 2006, the original chairs were retired and pulled from the venues to be replaced by new and custom-designed American Seating products.

Challenge:

“Our goal was to renovate the

facility, but keep the aesthetics similar to the original installation,” states Diane Baribeau, the General Manager at Michigan State. But keeping with the historical presence of the building presented a unique challenge when the university also needed to increase space yet incorporate flexible seating. The school requested that every chair in the larger auditorium have the ability to be moved off the floor when needed.

Amidst the larger goals of maintaining the original character of the auditoriums and increasing space, the university was ambitious and informed the manufacturer that they had three months to pull out the old seats and install the 4,000 new chairs.

Solution:

“The key to this solution was developing the right set of components that replicated the period of the building structure and what had always been there,” explains Mark Wretschko, one of the sales representatives from American Seating. “We studied what had been installed before and how it performed,” Ron Wager, another sales representative, adds.

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401 American Seating Center
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
PHONE: 800-748-0268
FAX: 616-732-6600
www.americanseating.com



American Seating combined the rounded back of the **Spirit®** chair with the formed steel seat pan with serpentine springs of the **Stellar®** to provide the desired performance and aesthetic. In order to create the 'era' appearance, American Seating added a tribute "throw back" middle standard that no other manufacturer offers, and enhanced the product with the **Bodiform®** end standard, an aisle end solution almost identical to the original standard.



In order for Michigan State to increase their seating capacity, they had to make the most of their high ceilings; they turned to Stage Right, another Michigan-based company, to work with American Seating. The two companies joined forces and designed a floor plan incorporating risers and American Seating's removable chairs. The combination of the risers and chairs allows the univer-

sity to clear the floor of the larger auditorium when needed.

After the product was decided upon, and the layout was determined, American Seating employed their most experienced installers, and 4,000 seats were installed in September 2006.

Results:

Since the installation wrapped up, Baribeau has received only praise from the students and faculty.

"The students and public have all been very pleased," she notes. "People have been complimenting the way everything blends in, and how comfortable the seats are," she adds. "You guys are just great to work with—a pleasure to work with."

