CYRIL M. HARRIS, PH.D. CONSULTANT IN ACOUSTICS

45 Sutton Place South
New York, NY 10022
March 1, 2006

Michael E. Downs, AIA
Principal Project Manager/Architect
Facilities Design and Construction
University of California, San Diego
6500 Gillman Drive #92093-0916
La Jolla, CA 0916

Dear Michael:

With the completion of the design phase of the new Recital Hall for the UCSD Music Building, I can report that in close collaboration with Mark Reddington of LMN Architects, we have arrived at a design that we are both very pleased with.

Our objective was to achieve the same acoustical qualities that distinguish Nordstrom Hall in Seattle, particularly with respect to its reverberation and diffusion characteristics. Toward that end, we considered several possible designs. All had the same volume as Nordstrom Hall and somewhat similar shapes, but their irregularly-shaped boundaries. were different. These irregularly-shaped boundaries affect the diffusion of sound within the enclosure. Diffusion is the "mixing"—the scattering—of sound within an enclosed space so as to promote the uniformity of the reflected sound within the space. For music, the greater the diffusion, the better the sound.

Since no recital hall has more diffusion than Nordstrom, it seemed reasonable to replicate its design for the new hall at UCSD. However, we realized we could achieve even better diffusion if we provided this new hall with surface irregularities on the walls and ceiling that differ from those in Nordstrom in terms of their sizes and shapes and we randomized their placement. While this has taken considerably more time to design, the result is a hall that will have not only increased diffusion but also a much more complex visual pattern—one that is unique and striking. I am very pleased with the results of our collaboration.

Sincerely yours,

Cyril M. Harris