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architectmagazine.com
The Journal of The American
Institute of Architects

The Residential Architect Design Awards

Spring 2007 • Volume 14 Number 2



VICTORIAN MUSIC BOX

ASPEN, COLO.
CCY ARCHITECTS

H A Architects are often handed out-of-the box
O R design challenges, but incorporating Chopin's
N C "Nocturne in E-Flat Major, Op.9, No.2"—the
O H client's favorite piece of music—into the façade
R I of a free-standing guesthouse may be a first.
A T Yet it was this conceit that drove the team at
B E Basalt, Colo.-based CCY Architects to develop
L C an elaborate, Chopin-inspired perforated scrim
E T that wraps three faces of the structure, which
U sits next to an 1880s Victorian home in Aspen,
M R Colo. Dubbed the Music Box, the new building
E A houses the family's baby grand piano and is used
N L for music recitals when not occupied by guests.

T The scrim is made out of Galvalume
I D siding: 4-inch-wide sheathing was perforated
O E with a pattern inspired by the roll that drives
N S a player piano. The architects broke down the
I Chopin piece into distinct notes and chords
G and assigned each a variable that corresponded
N to the hole size and number of holes in each
D group. The hole size indicates the pitch and
E the number of holes correlate to the duration of the
T note. Together, these holes form the perforation
A pattern that renders the music into graphic form.

I The cladding is utilized as a rainscreen, and
L runs continuously over the façade, regardless of
whether what's behind is solid wall or window. When the scrim fronts glazing, it provides solar shading for the interior during the day; at night, the light coming from inside the glazing renders the scrim pattern visible, generating an ethereal glow. Music Box seems to be what Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had in mind when he called architecture "frozen music": If only the 19th-century German philosopher could visit Aspen with a large enough player piano, the Music Box's metaphor could become reality.



"I like the effect of the light and shadow. It's a simple detail but it is really effective."
—Jenny Wu