



CURVY MUSIC STAND is carved walnut with a design that echoes the spirals of the base. Inspired by the art of Gustav Klimt, it has a naturalist reference. Materials: Black walnut, copper, hand-rubbed oil finish.

Wood into Music

Designing music stands as works of art



Design, craft and inspiration. These essential elements for creating a successful work of art inform the designs of Cindy Vargas and Jochen Scherr, two master craftspersons and co-owners of Three Elements Studios, a studio furniture company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Vargas and Scherr design music stands for both professionals and nonprofessionals, as well as for those who appreciate fine art, craft and design. Says Vargas, “Our music stands represent the muse in every musician.”

Photography by **PORNCHAI MITTONGTARE**

Photographed at Zipper Concert Hall at The Colburn School in Los Angeles

No less an artistic auteur than the Los Angeles Philharmonic concurred. In 2004, the Philharmonic commissioned a music pedestal for Disney Concert Hall to hold a custom-made leather book that holds the signatures of the guest pianists who perform at the concert hall. The only stipulation was that the piece fit with the distinctive curved style of the Frank Gehry–designed building.

“I was inspired by the forms of the Disney Hall with its curving interior walls,” says Vargas. “I wanted the pedestal to have musicality and express movement in its form, which is why I designed a spiral that circles around and up until it cantilevers into a wing which holds the book.”

The materials for the pedestal included padauk (an African hardwood), which is very bright orange when first cut and eventually develops a very lovely red/brown patina. Its lustrous oil finish provides an elegant complement to Disney’s rich Douglas fir interior.

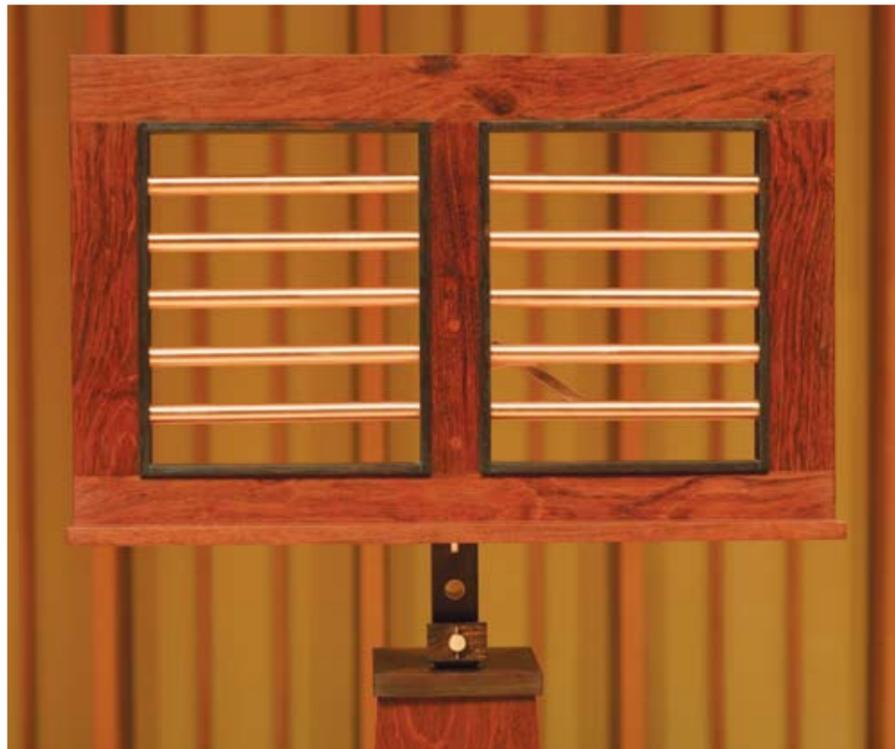
Vargas has a natural affinity for movement and music, having studied dance for many years. Her interest in the fluid forms of movement expressed by the human body informs her signature curved designs, which reflect the rhythm, musicality and flowing forms of the body and nature. A native Minnesotan, Vargas recently relocated from Los Angeles to Minneapolis, in large part for its thriving arts scene.



**JATOBA/ROSEWOOD/
COPPER MUSIC STAND**

The jatoba, rosewood and copper stand was inspired by the metronome. A pyramidal shape, it is solid, strong and powerful, rising from the floor with a commanding presence. The board that holds the music is composed of five precision-made copper pipes that reference sheet music stanzas.

Materials: Jatoba is an African hardwood, very dense reddish brown with dark grain pattern. The rosewood was harvested over 70 years ago and passed from a mandolin maker to a carousel maker to the designers. The copper is all custom made by a metalsmith.





“Our music stands represent the muse in every musician.”
— Cindy Vargas

Scherr, who studied classical music extensively, had his own woodworking shop. Prior to moving to the United States, he owned a flute store in Essen, Germany, where he sold and repaired flutes for professional musicians. As a craftsman, Scherr has combined his interest in music with an in-depth understanding of the materials and structures that go into creating superbly crafted music stands.



Unlike the ubiquitous lightweight stainless steel stands that are seen everywhere from the middle school band room to the Hollywood Bowl, Vargas and Scherr’s designs incorporate unique elements such as fused glass, sophisticated mechanics and bold details. Says Vargas, “Each commissioned music stand is a statement about the musician — the spirit that he or she shares with all that is musical.”

The design process, which takes several months, begins with sketches that typically go through many iterations. Often, scale models are built to explore the proportions and relationships, and to see the form in three dimensions before the actual construction is initiated. For the stand pictured on page 48, for example, the carving on the board was drawn in several iterations, samples were made and a final layout was prepared before the wood was hand-carved with a gouge.

It is a painstaking process, requiring patience and skill. The results provide ample evidence that in a world of shortcuts and haste, beauty and craftsmanship still have a valued place.

For more information on custom music stands by Three Elements Studios, visit www.threeelementstudios.com.

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BLACK WALNUT MUSIC STAND

This simple, elegant music stand is made of solid black walnut, with a bee’s wing figure and rosewood and copper accents.

