



HGA

MARLBORO MUSIC REICH HALL

Post-Occupancy Evaluation Results

HGA Design Insight Group

October 2023

"The design is inspiring. The facilities are inspiring. Many thanks to those who helped bring this building to the campus!"

- Musician participant



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new Reich Hall building is a vast improvement for the Marlboro Music campus, a chamber music study center and location of their summer festival. Musicians and staff are delighted with the beauty and functionality of the building and are regularly impressed by the inspirational atmosphere and opportunities for community the building has to offer. As a whole, Reich Hall is much loved and appreciated by all of its occupants. It has achieved the goal of supporting music in a functional and environmentally responsible way and will continue to be a valuable resource for the Marlboro community for many years to come.

Based on the results of a post-occupancy evaluation in September 2023 with Marlboro Music staff, volunteers, and festival musicians, the building responded to the key project goals in the following ways.



Project Goal:

Create acoustically functional rehearsal spaces

When it comes to supporting music, the quality of acoustics plays a crucial role. Rehearsal rooms were intentionally designed to have dry acoustics, and Marlboro leadership has expressed that they are functioning as expected and support preparation for performances. According to musicians, string instruments benefit from the dry acoustics in rehearsal rooms, but managing reverberation and accommodating other instruments and larger ensembles can present challenges.



Project Goal:

Provide an archive library to preserve and secure music collection and a space for people to gather & study

The library supports access to and preservation of music collections and is a great improvement over the previous space. Most respondents said they regularly use the library resources or the space for focus work. The library was mentioned most often as a favorite aspect of the building due to its views of nature, access to natural light, and beautiful aesthetic.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Project Goal:

Design a high performance building that conserves energy and prioritizes occupant wellbeing

Most respondents said they were aware of the energy conservation efforts within the building and that it supports sustainable behaviors. Reich Hall is seen as much more sustainable than other buildings on campus by a majority of participants. All also agreed that the building is clean and well-maintained.



Project Goal:

Fit in with the rural 19th-century farm buildings and natural environment of the campus

Reich Hall's aesthetic incorporates an exterior design that seamlessly blends with the historic farmhouse buildings throughout the campus and an interior filled with natural wood on many surfaces, including floors, walls, and ceilings, that connects with the surrounding natural elements of forest and mountains. This design provides an inviting atmosphere, and views of nature create inspiring rehearsal spaces for the Marlboro Music Festival musicians.



Project Goal:

Serve as a place for people to come together as a community

All musicians who responded said they have used Reich Hall for rehearsals, and many musicians and staff have attended social events or gatherings in or around the building. Multiple outdoors areas were especially appreciated as ideal spaces for connecting, and interior rooms provided much needed additional space on campus for larger groups to meet.

"It is rare that a space feels dazzling yet entirely comfortable to inhabit. From the stunning library to the inviting exterior spaces, Reich Hall accomplishes this to a remarkable degree. It is already hard to imagine the campus without it, so well does the building blend into and honor the surrounding landscape."

- Staff / volunteer participant



EVALUATION METHODS

A post-occupancy evaluation of the Reich Hall on Potash Hill in Marlboro, Vermont was conducted in September 2023, and consisted of an online questionnaire.

The questionnaire invitation was emailed to 146 regular building users, including Marlboro Music employees, volunteers, and summer festival musicians from 2022 and 2023. The questionnaire asked participants to reflect on their use of the Reich Hall, satisfaction with physical aspects of the building, and to respond to statements about their experience based on key goals of the design strategy. The survey covered the following topics, which are reflected in the evaluation results section of this report:

1. Building Improvement
2. Physical Attributes
3. Access & Connection
4. Support for Music & Interaction
5. Flexibility of Space
6. Building Resources

Evaluation constructs and topics were developed by HGA's Design Insight Group with input and guidance from the Marlboro Reich Hall project leaders at HGA, and the evaluation was conducted with the support of the Marlboro manager and communications director. Descriptive results of quantitative data and thematic analysis of qualitative responses were summarized and compiled in this report, along with select comparisons between occupant groups and other buildings on the Marlboro campus.

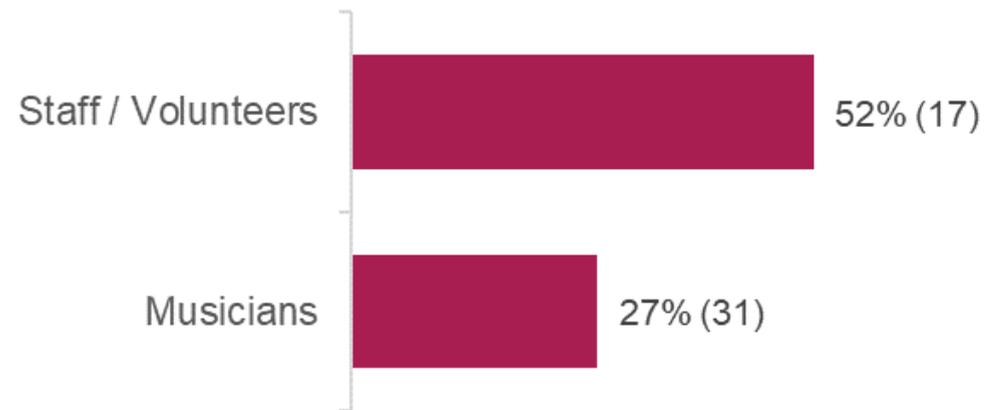
PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANTS

33% Survey Response Rate

With **48 usable responses** out of 146 occupants invited to participate, just more than half of staff and volunteers and one quarter of musicians completed the survey.

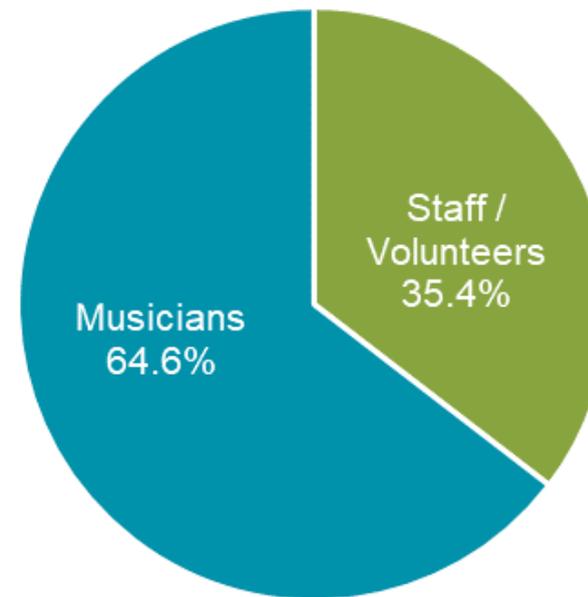
Response Rate (Total Responses) by Group



Primary Connection to Marlboro

Of the 48 respondents, 65% were festival musicians and 35% were Marlboro staff members or volunteers.

Connection to Marlboro



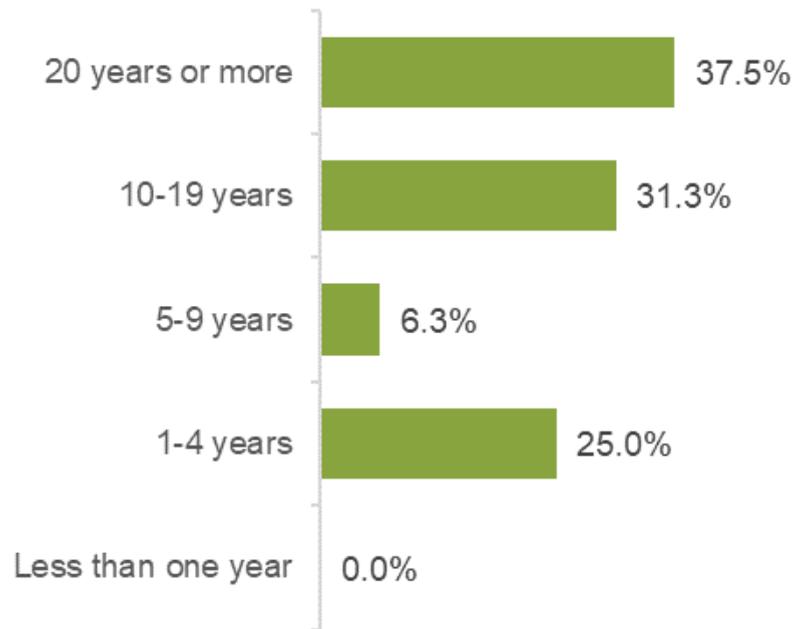
PARTICIPANTS

Years of Experience

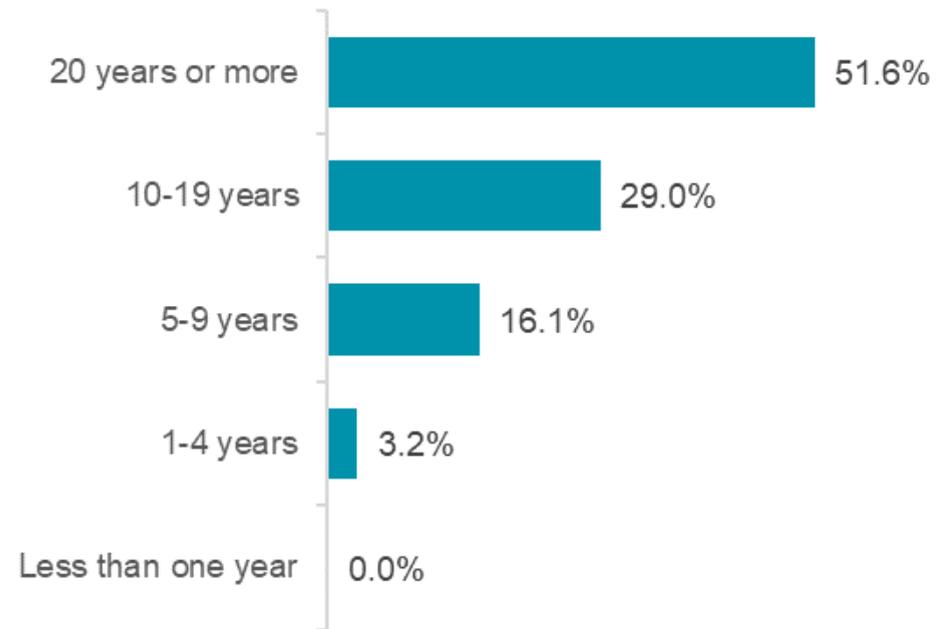
Staff and volunteers had been in their positions at Marlboro for various lengths of time, 25% for less than 5 years, and 38% for 20 years or more.

81% of the musicians had more than 10 years of professional experience, and 52% had 20 years or more of experience as a professional musician.

Years worked or volunteered at Marlboro



Years as a professional musician

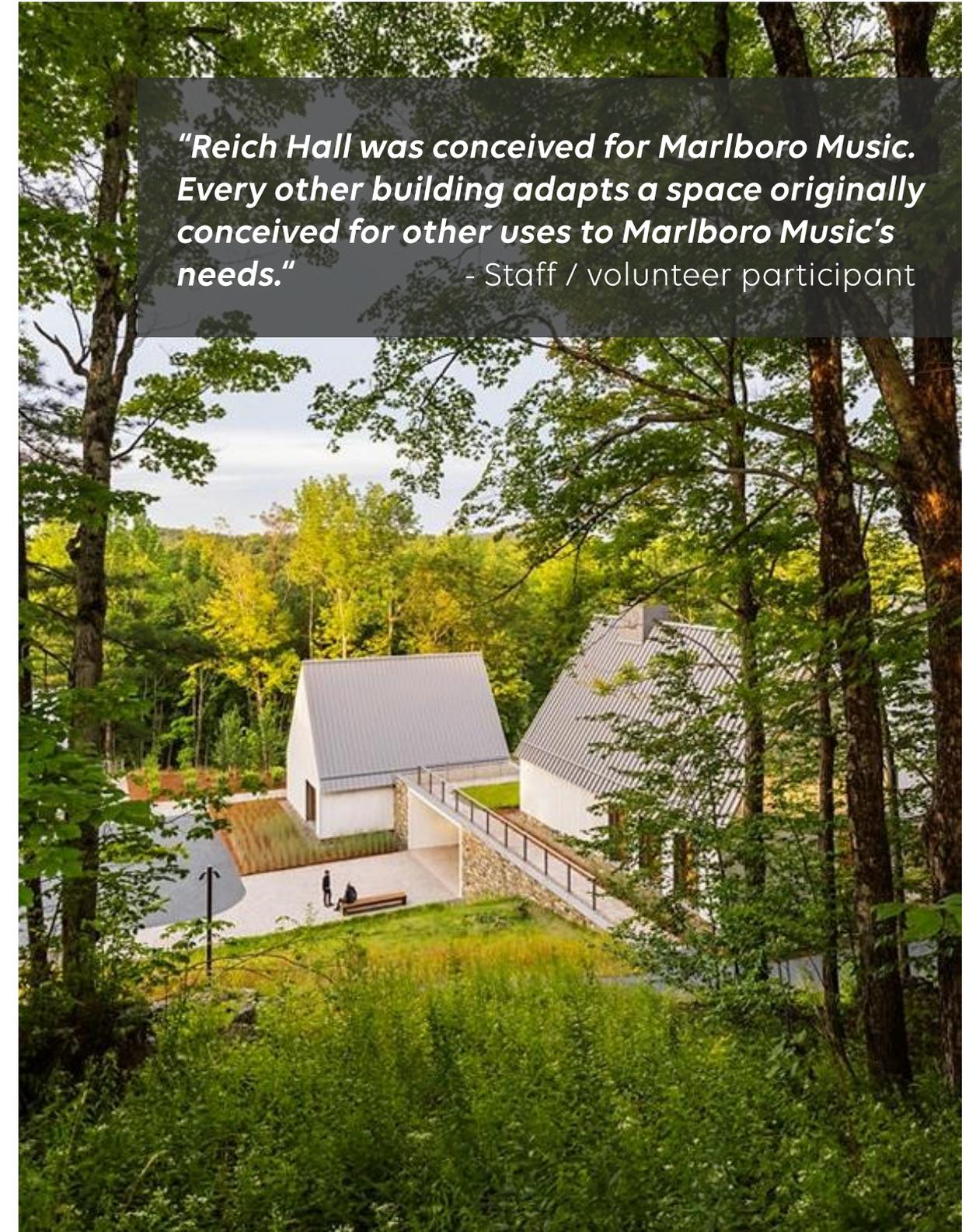
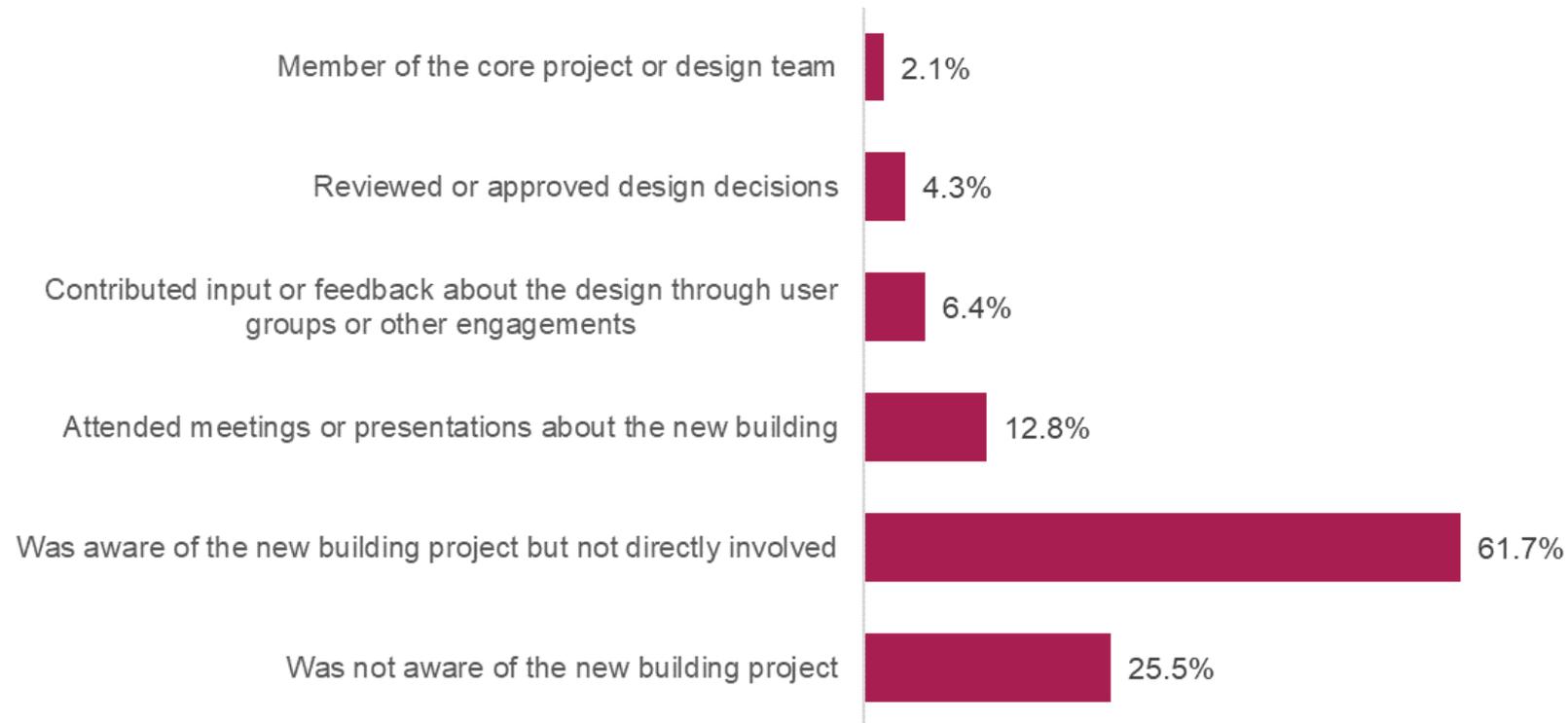


PARTICIPANTS

Involvement in the Design

Most of the respondents were either aware of the Reich Hall project but not directly involved or not aware of the building project. All of the respondents who had some involvement in the design were staff or volunteers.

Involvement in the Design Process



PARTICIPANTS

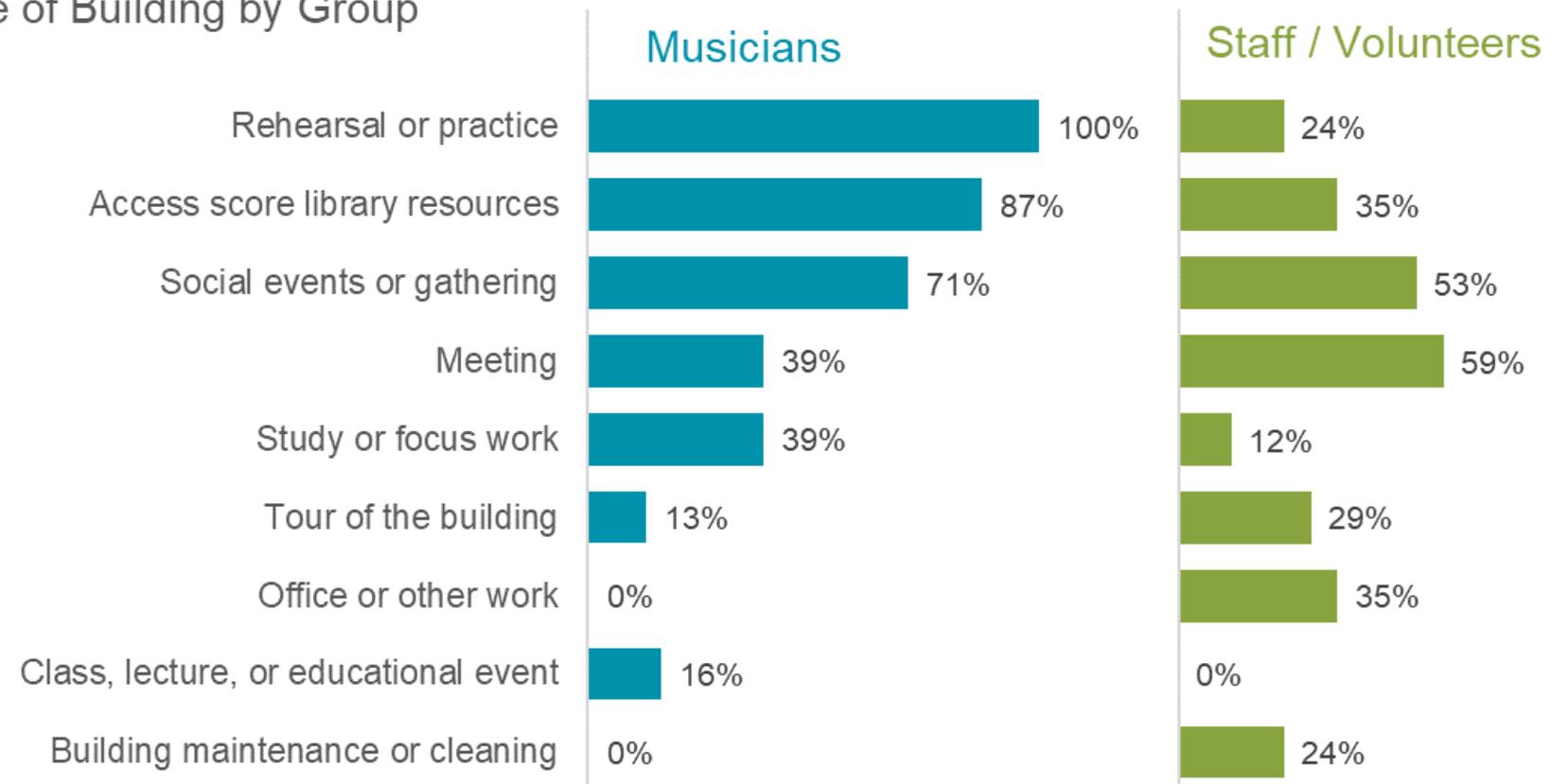
Use of Reich Hall

90% of those involved in the music festival in 2022 and 83% of those in 2023 visited Reich Hall more than 12 times during the respective summers.

Musicians used the building most frequently for rehearsal or practice, to access library resources, and for social events.

Staff and volunteers used the building most for meetings, social events, office work, or library access.

Use of Building by Group

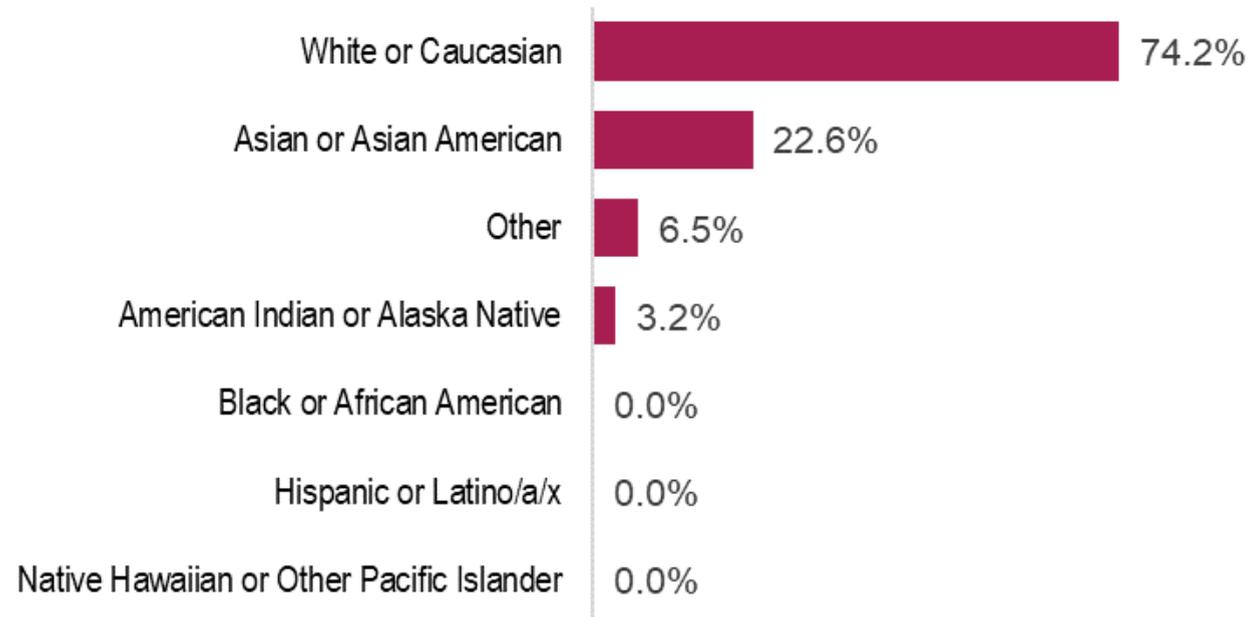


PARTICIPANTS

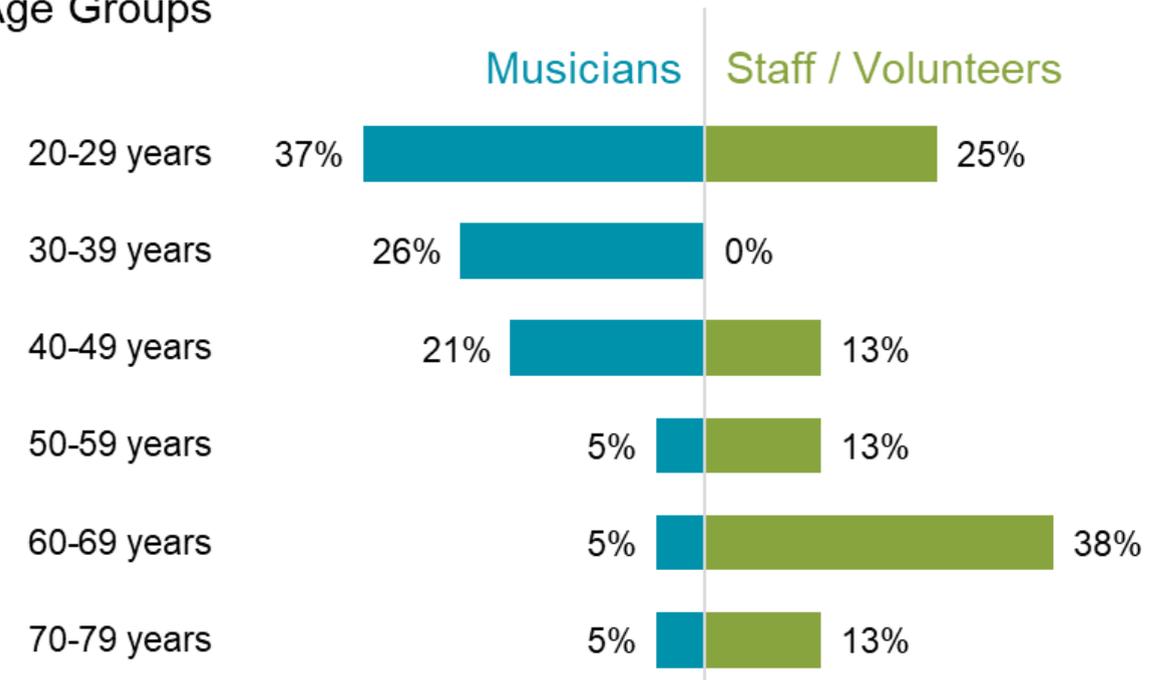
Demographics

Of the participants who chose to respond, 41% identified as women, and 59% identified as men.

Respondent Race/Ethnicity



Age Groups



A majority of respondents identified as white or Caucasian. Many others identified as Asian or Asian American, and a few as American Indian or Alaska Native or a race or ethnicity not listed.

Musician respondents were 38 years old, on average, and 84% were between 24 and 46 years old. Staff/volunteer respondents had an average age of 53 years old, and 77% were 45 years or older.

EVALUATION RESULTS

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

The new building was rated as a significant improvement over the former building.

"Each building on campus has its own function, so it's kind of like comparing apples to oranges. It's way more functional than the building it replaced!"
- Staff / Volunteer participant

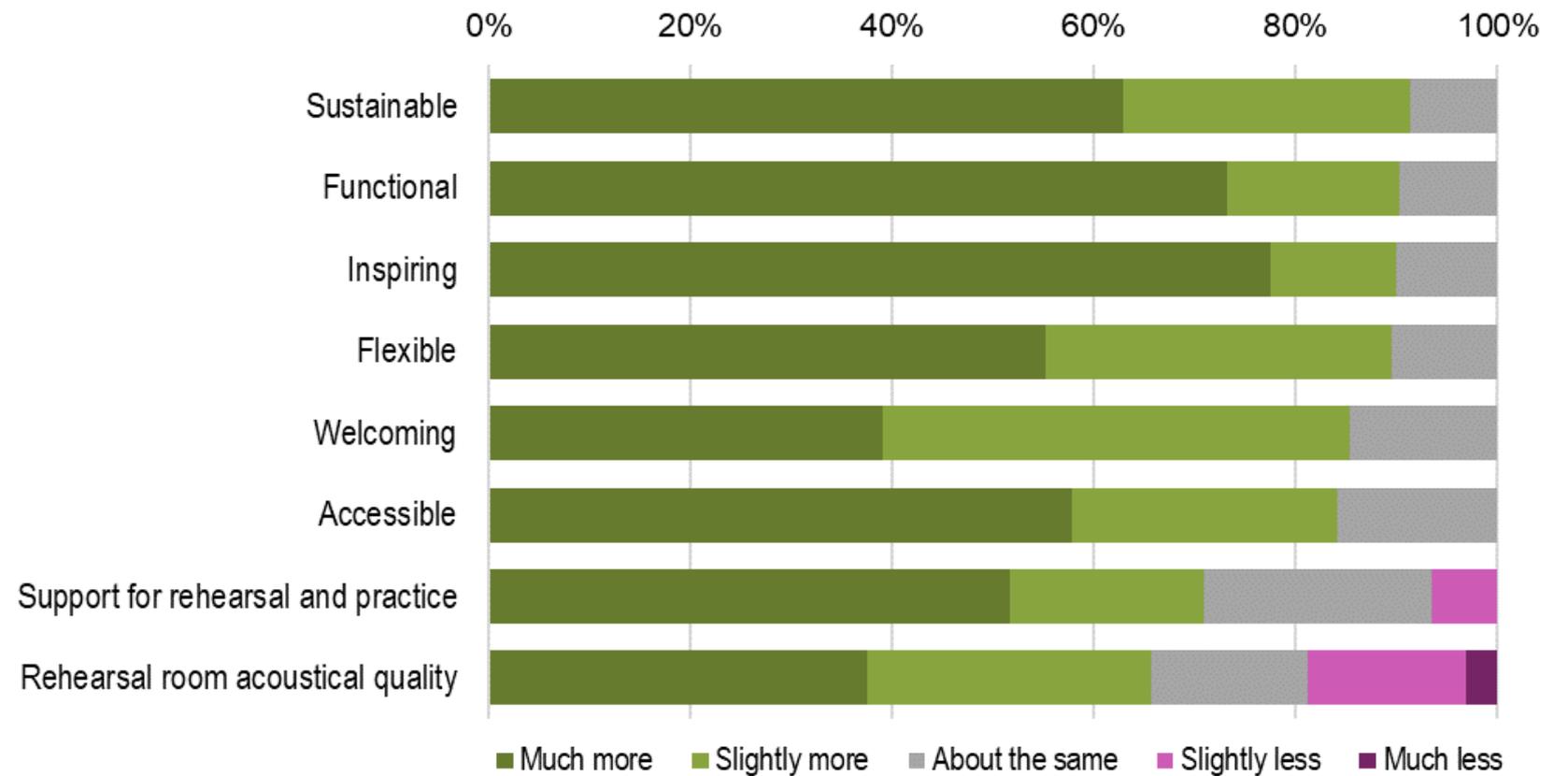
90% of respondents said Reich Hall is "slightly" to "much more" inspiring than other buildings on campus.

Musicians with 20 years or more of professional experience were more likely to say Reich Hall is "much more functional" than other buildings on campus (92%) than other musicians (53%).

A small percentage found Reich Hall less supportive for rehearsals than other buildings, especially in terms of the acoustical quality.

Those who were highly satisfied with rehearsal room acoustics were more likely to say the building is "much more flexible" than other buildings.

Comparison to Other Campus Buildings

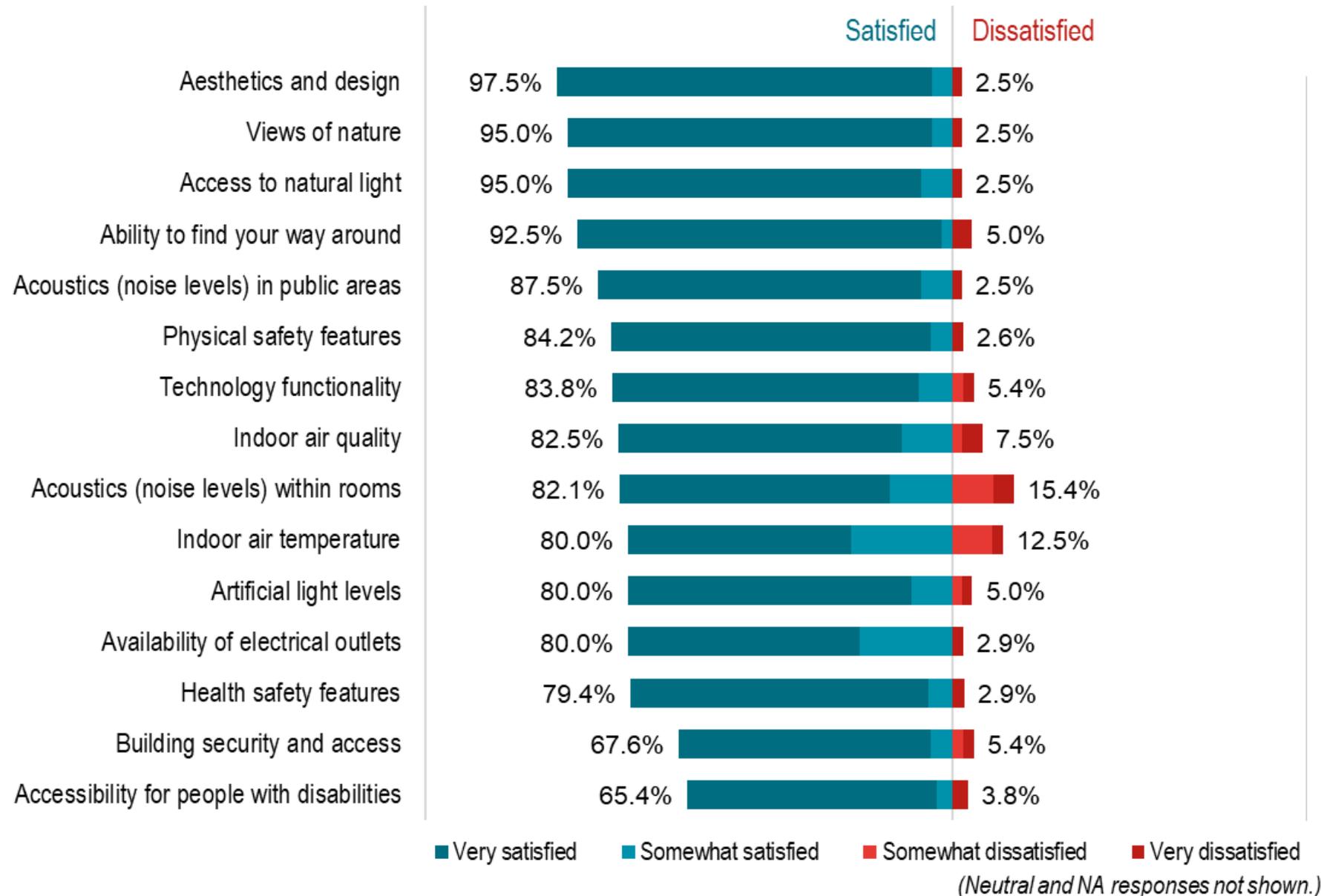


"There are no better places on campus for social gatherings and formal rehearsals than those in Reich."

- Musician participant

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

Satisfaction was very high across all physical attributes of the building.



Overall, 82% of the respondents said they are “very satisfied” with the design of Reich Hall. Satisfaction was overwhelmingly positive across all physical attributes of the building, especially related to the aesthetics, views of nature, and access to natural light.

***“Incredible design and architecture.
Peaceful tranquility with incredible utility.”***

- Musician participant

A small percentage of respondents were dissatisfied with the noise levels within rooms and indoor air temperature. Some respondents also provided feedback regarding artificial lighting and building security.

See the following pages for specific feedback about these attributes.

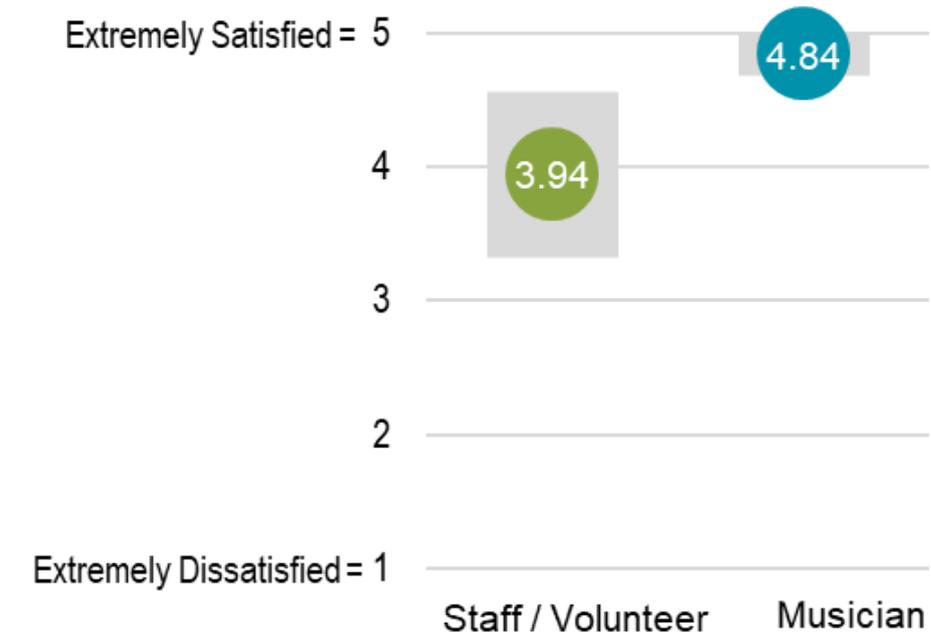
PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

Artificial Lighting

On average, musicians were significantly more satisfied with the artificial lighting in Reich Hall than staff and volunteers.

Dissatisfied staff expressed that lighting in their offices is sometimes inadequate, especially after dark.

Satisfaction with Artificial Light Levels



Dots represent mean satisfaction score.
Gray bars represent 95% confidence intervals.



PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

Thermal Comfort

Some respondents would prefer building temperatures to be warmer. One of the respondents also suggest a humidity control option.

Temperatures are intentionally kept cooler during the summer to maintain proper humidity levels for pianos in the rehearsal rooms.

Security & Access

Staff expressed that the doors at the main entrance can be difficult to secure, and it is difficult to see people entering or exiting the building.



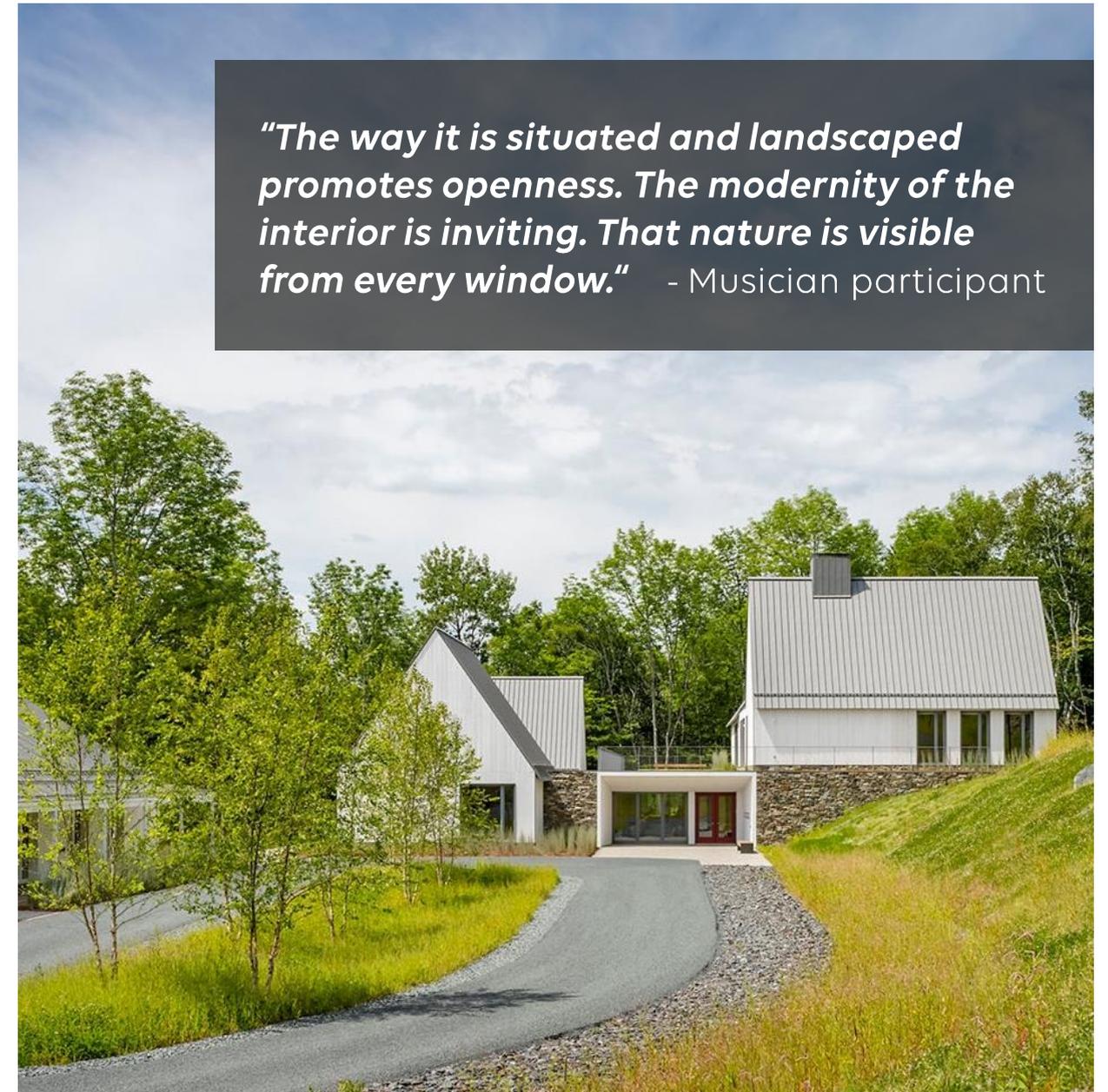
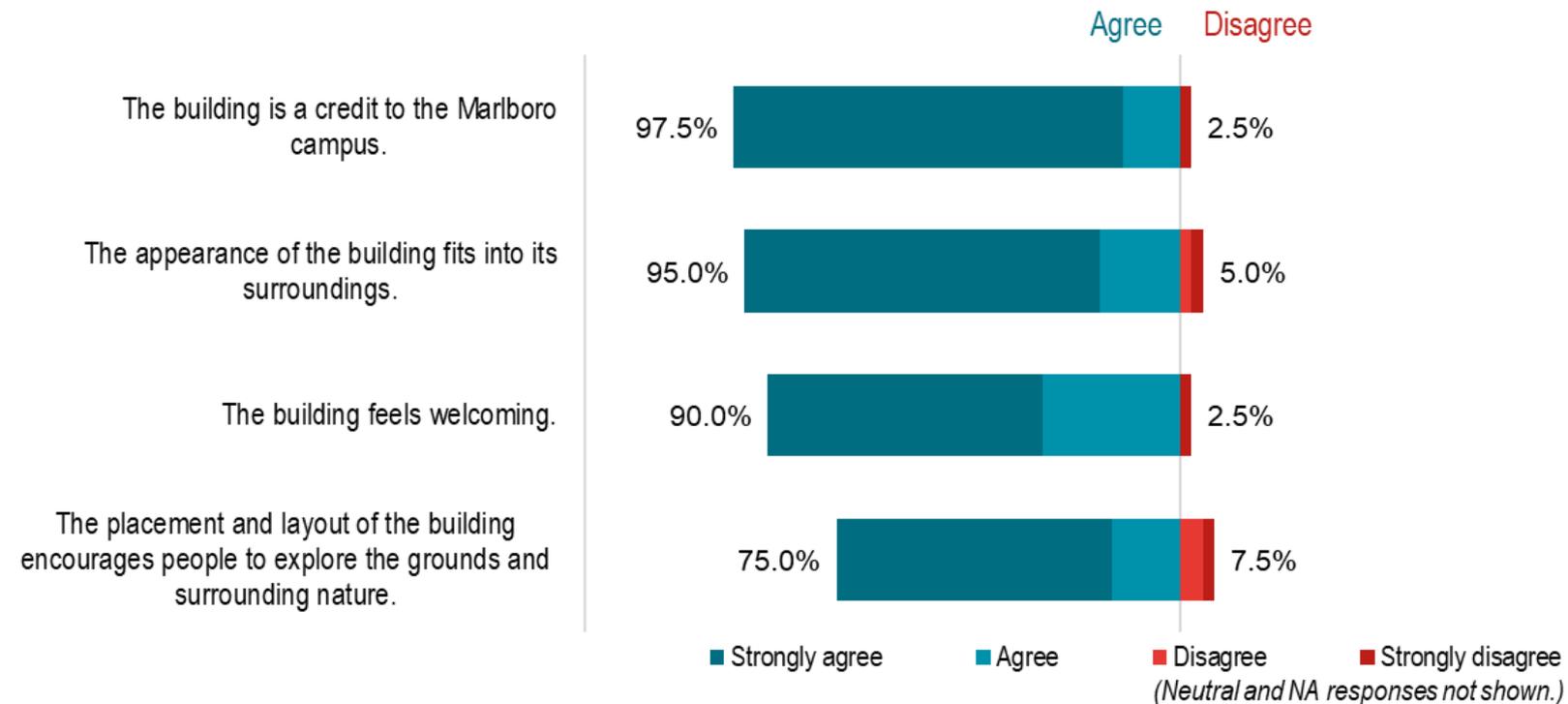
"The upstairs door facing north sometimes doesn't close cleanly, and people may have accessed the building that way (who should not have)." - Staff/volunteer participant

ACCESS & CONNECTION

Nearly all respondents agreed that the building is welcoming and fits into its surroundings.

The natural wood design materials and aesthetics gently nestle the building into the surroundings to fit the rural 19th-century farm style. People love the natural light and woodwork, which compliments the surrounding forest area.

The blend between building and landscape promotes openness and provides a welcoming environment for music collaboration.

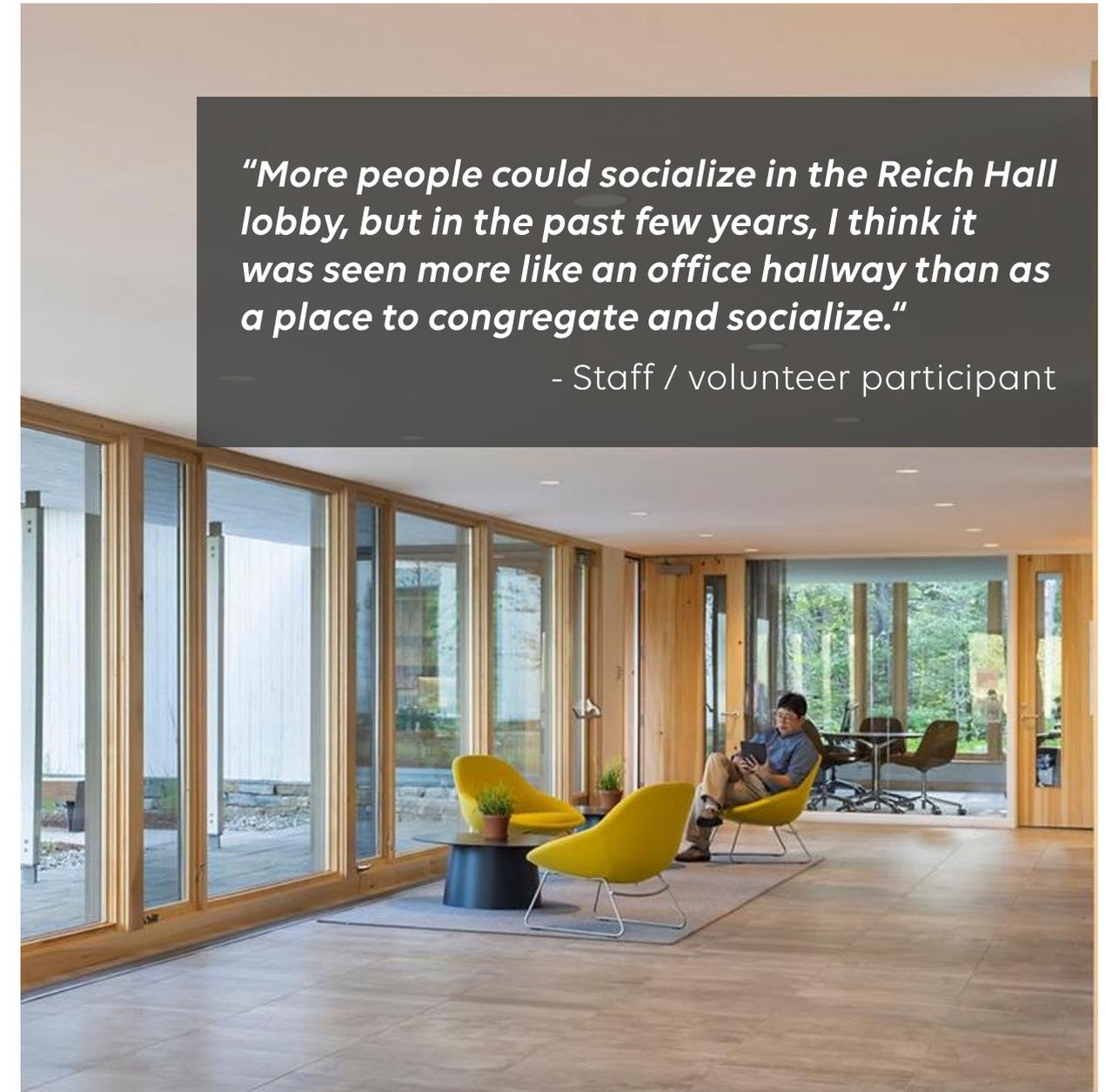
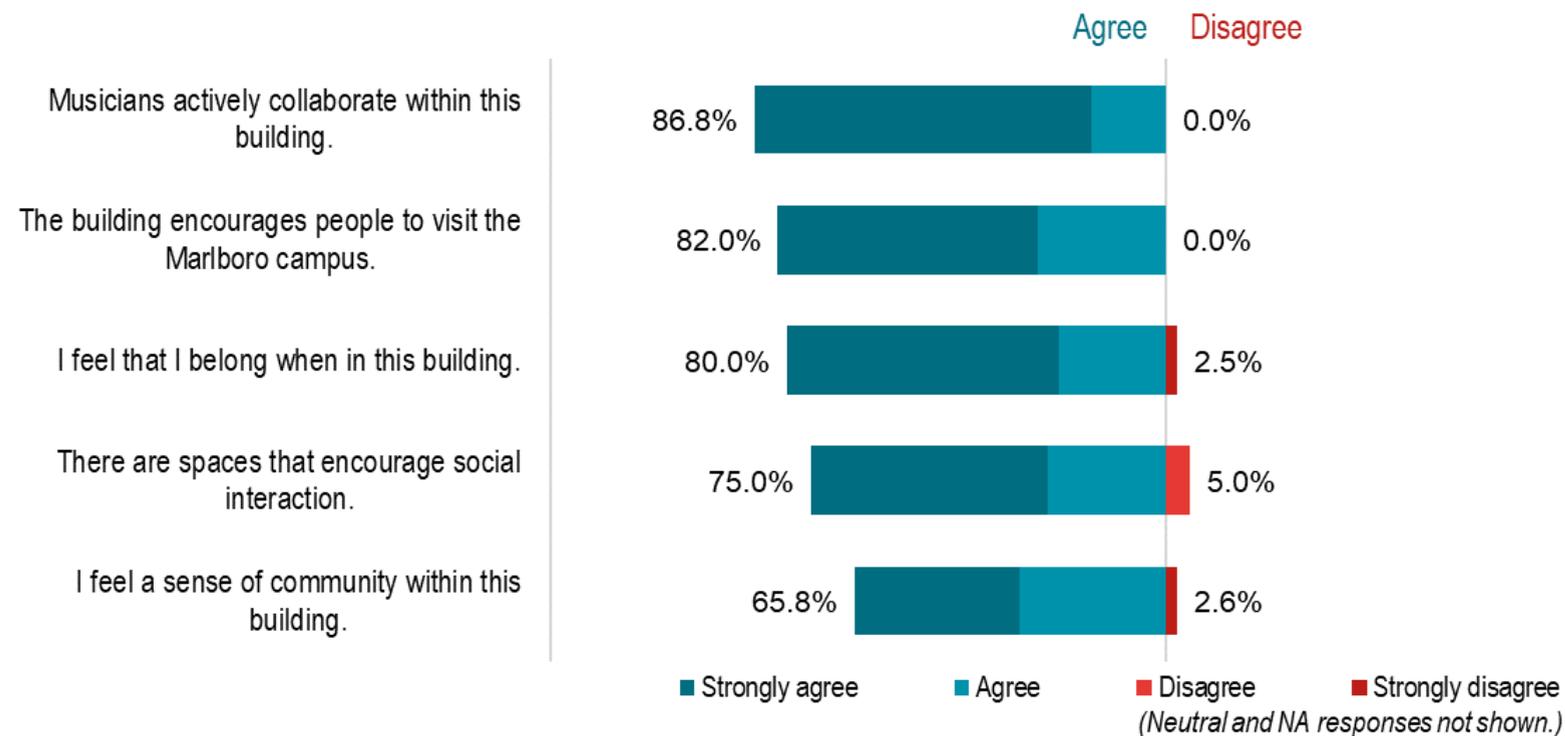


ACCESS & CONNECTION

Reich Hall is frequently used for both collaboration and socialization.

All musicians said they have used Reich Hall for rehearsals, and 71% said they have attended social events or gatherings there. More than half of staff said they use the building for meetings or social gatherings.

Multiple outdoor spaces are appreciated and used for gathering as a campus community. Some people mentioned opportunities to create a more inviting atmosphere for casual socialization in the lobby.



*"There are no better places on campus for social gatherings
and formal rehearsals than those in Reich."*

- Musician participant



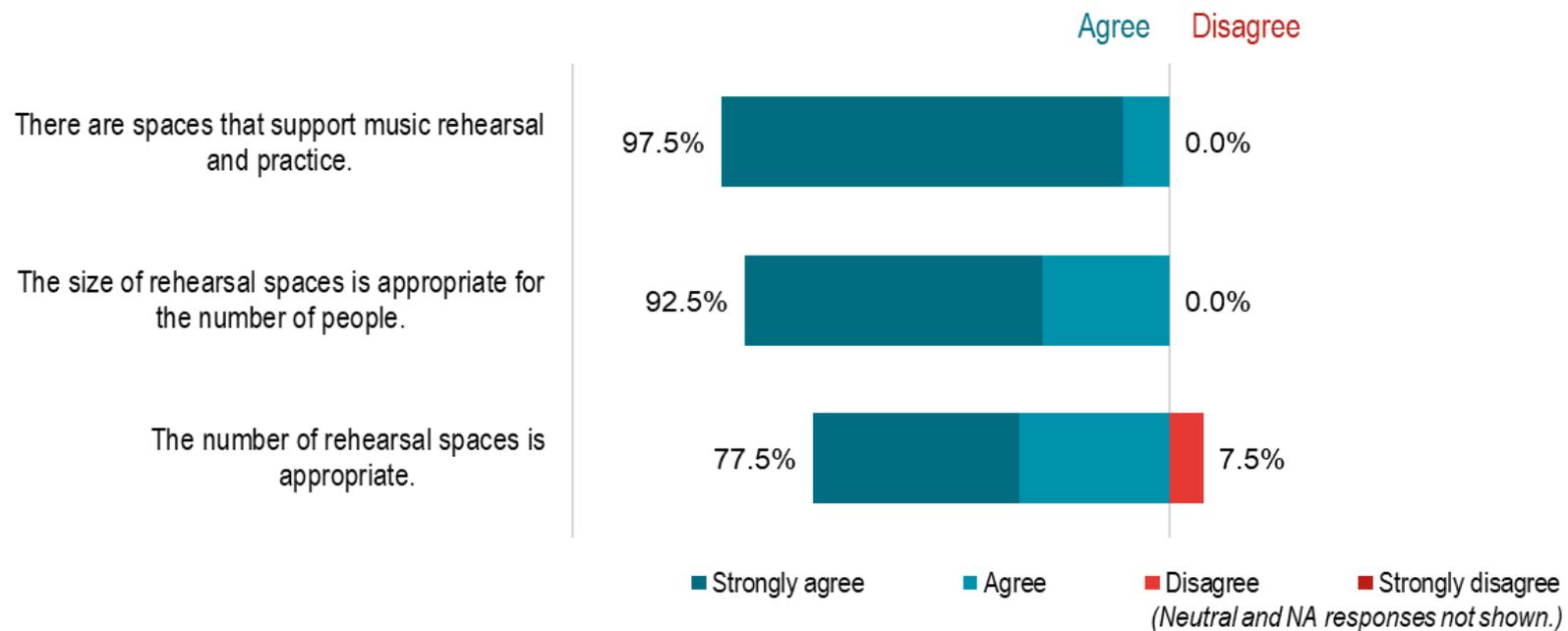
SUPPORT FOR MUSIC

Rehearsal rooms are an improvement for the campus.

A large majority of respondents found the rehearsal rooms to be functional in terms of size, number, and general support for music rehearsal and practice.

71% said rehearsal and practice are “slightly more” to “much more” supported in Reich Hall than in other buildings on campus. 23% found them about the same.

Improved soundproofing was generally appreciated by musicians; although, sounds of rehearsals were missed by a few staff.

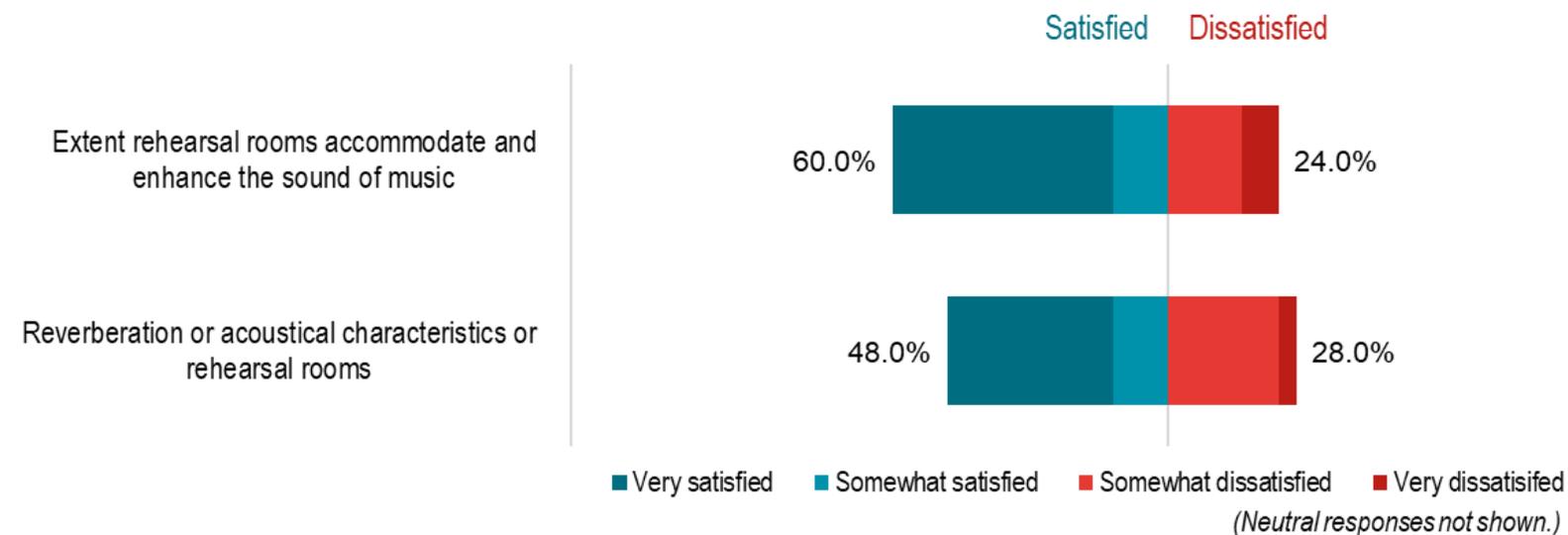


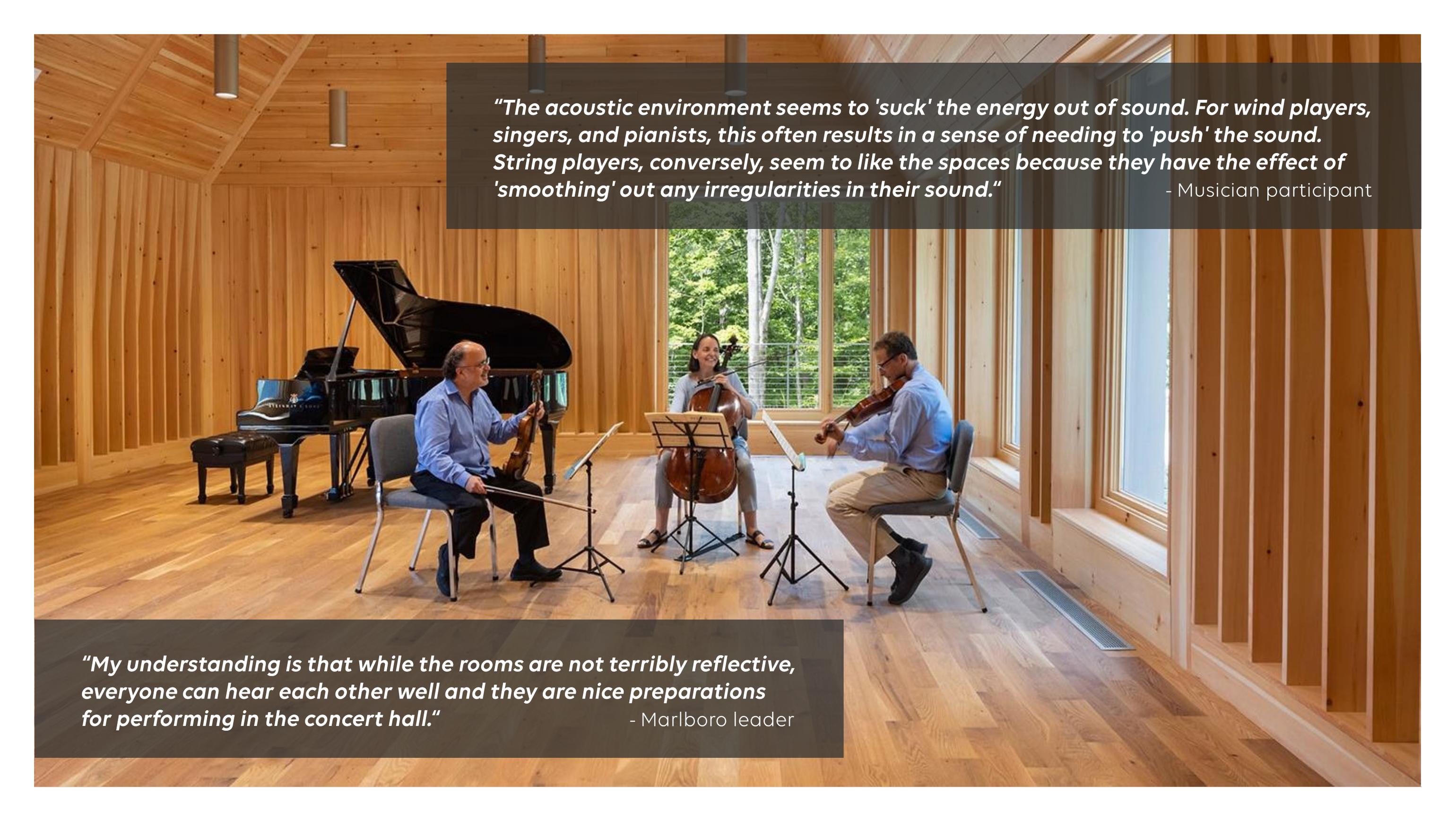
SUPPORT FOR MUSIC

Rehearsal room acoustics meet project goals but not all musician preferences.

Rehearsal room acoustics were intended to be dry. Marlboro leadership were happy with the acoustical characteristics of the rehearsal rooms and felt they support concert preparation.

While 60% of musicians were satisfied with the extent rehearsal rooms accommodate and enhance sound, 24% were not. 28% of musicians were at least “somewhat dissatisfied” with the reverberation or other acoustical characteristics of rehearsal rooms. One-third of musicians made comments about the rehearsal room acoustics, most expressing that they are a little to very dry, especially for larger ensembles or particular instruments, such as winds, piano, and vocal.





"The acoustic environment seems to 'suck' the energy out of sound. For wind players, singers, and pianists, this often results in a sense of needing to 'push' the sound. String players, conversely, seem to like the spaces because they have the effect of 'smoothing' out any irregularities in their sound."

- Musician participant

"My understanding is that while the rooms are not terribly reflective, everyone can hear each other well and they are nice preparations for performing in the concert hall."

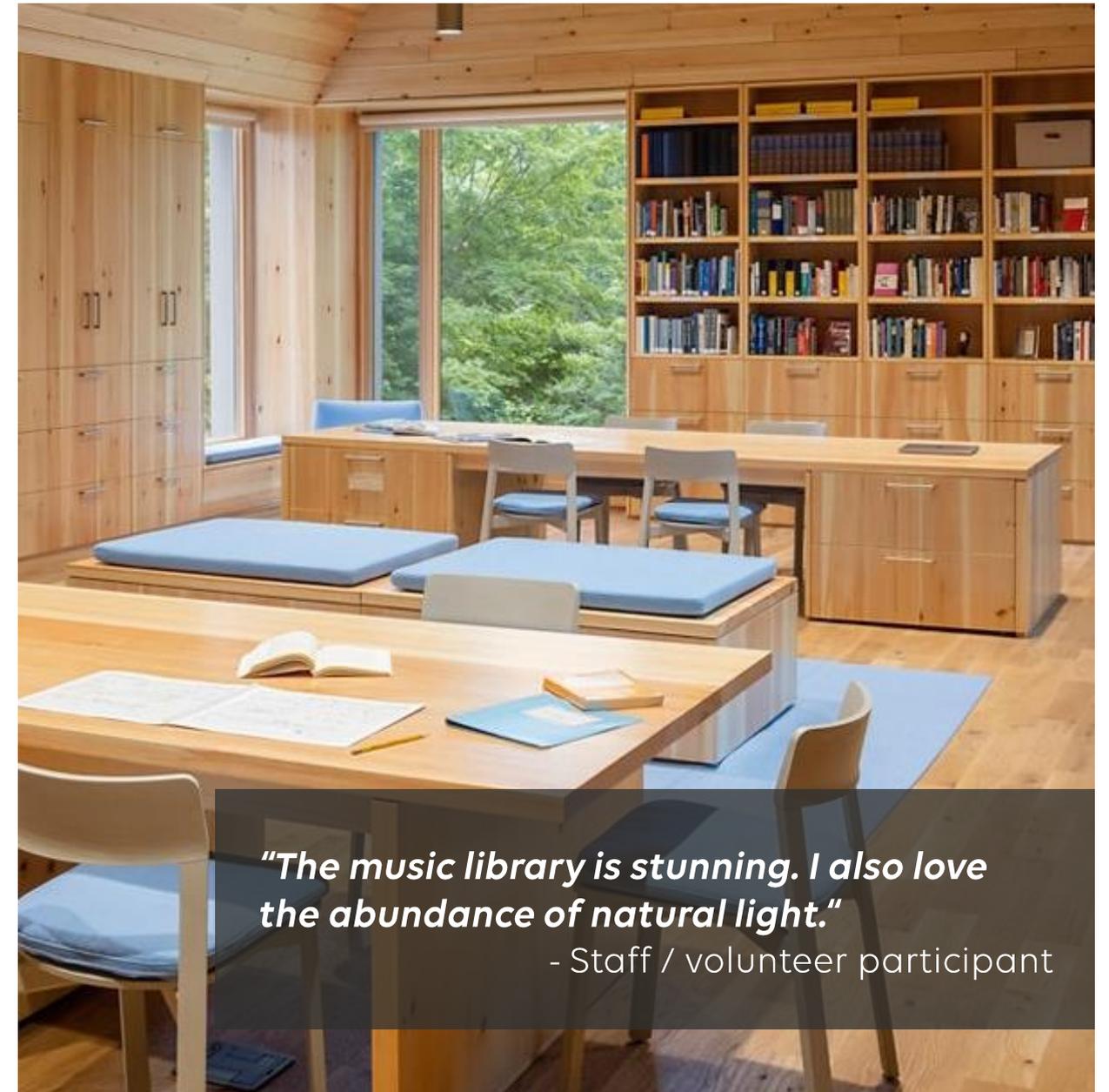
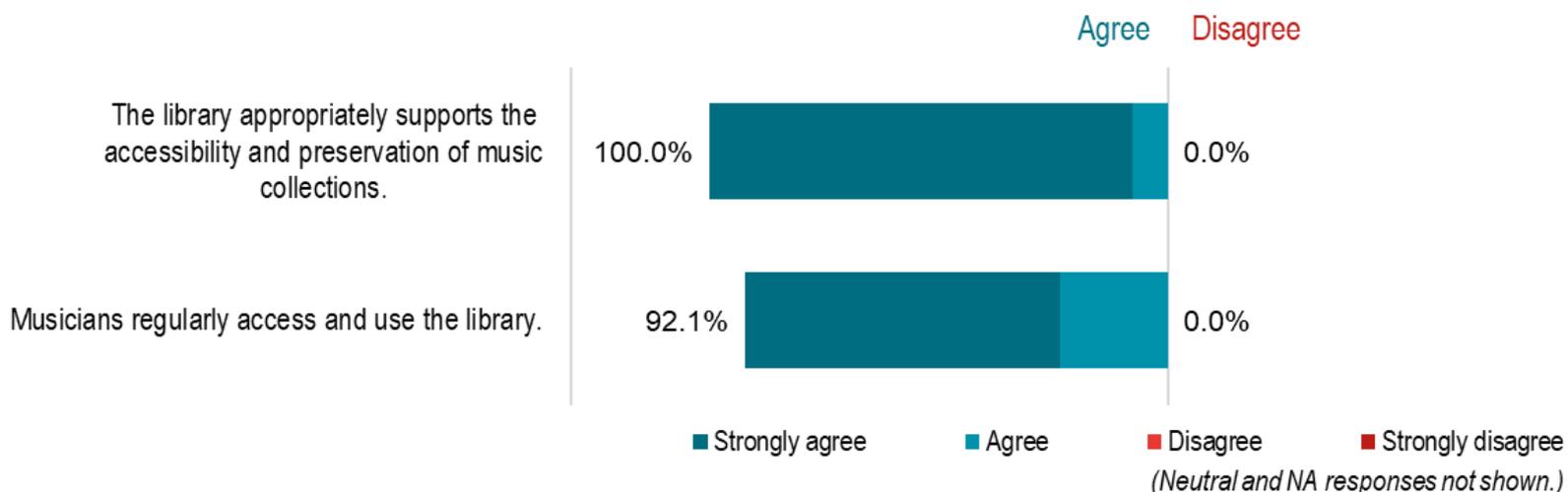
- Marlboro leader

MUSIC STORAGE & STUDY SPACE

The library is convenient and beautiful resource that is used and appreciated by many.

87% of the musician respondents said they have accessed score library resources in Reich Hall. 39% also said they use the building for study or focus work. All respondents agreed that the library supports access to and preservation of music collections. Most also agreed that they regularly use the library.

The library was mentioned as a favorite aspect of the building more often than any other room or type of space. Comments about the library praised the connections to nature through views, natural light, and wood surfaces. People also appreciated the proximity to the rehearsal rooms.

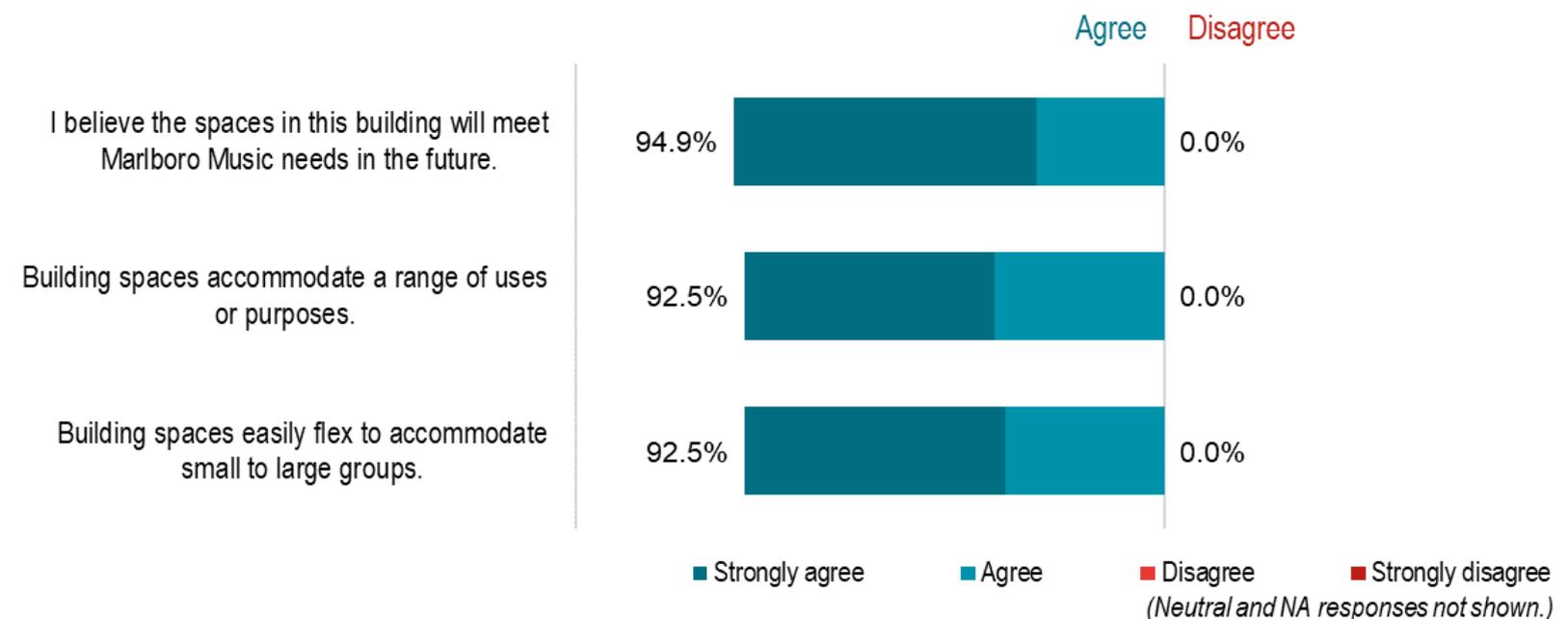


FLEXIBILITY OF SPACES

Nearly all respondents agreed that building spaces are flexible to meet current and future needs.

Staff members said the number and size of rehearsal rooms in Reich Hall allow for flexibility in scheduling rehearsals. Large spaces can also accommodate gatherings or other functions.

Musicians were pleased that they could often find an open room to practice, often even without scheduling in advance. They appreciated that the soundproofing supported practice at all times of day or night without disturbing others.



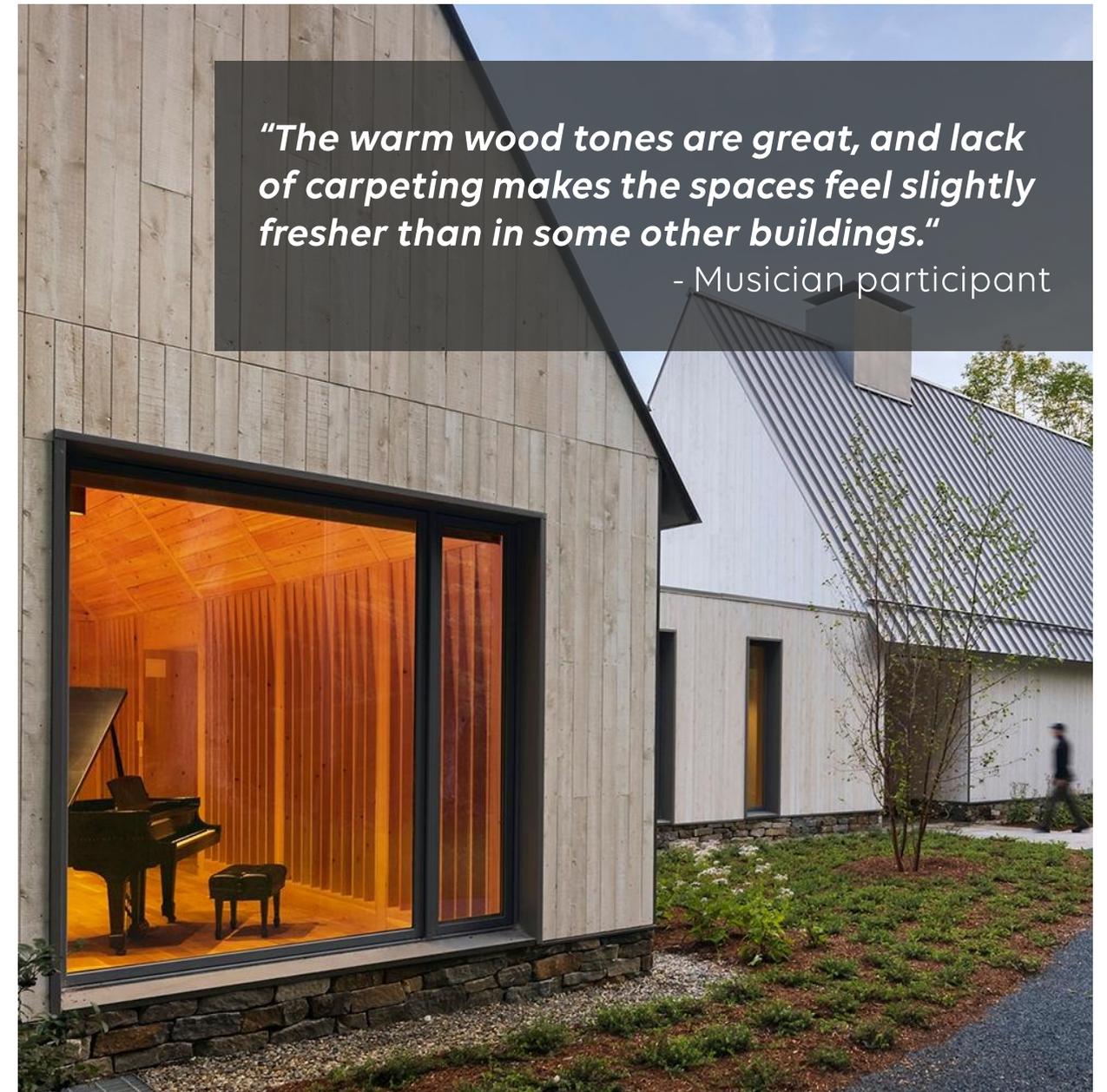
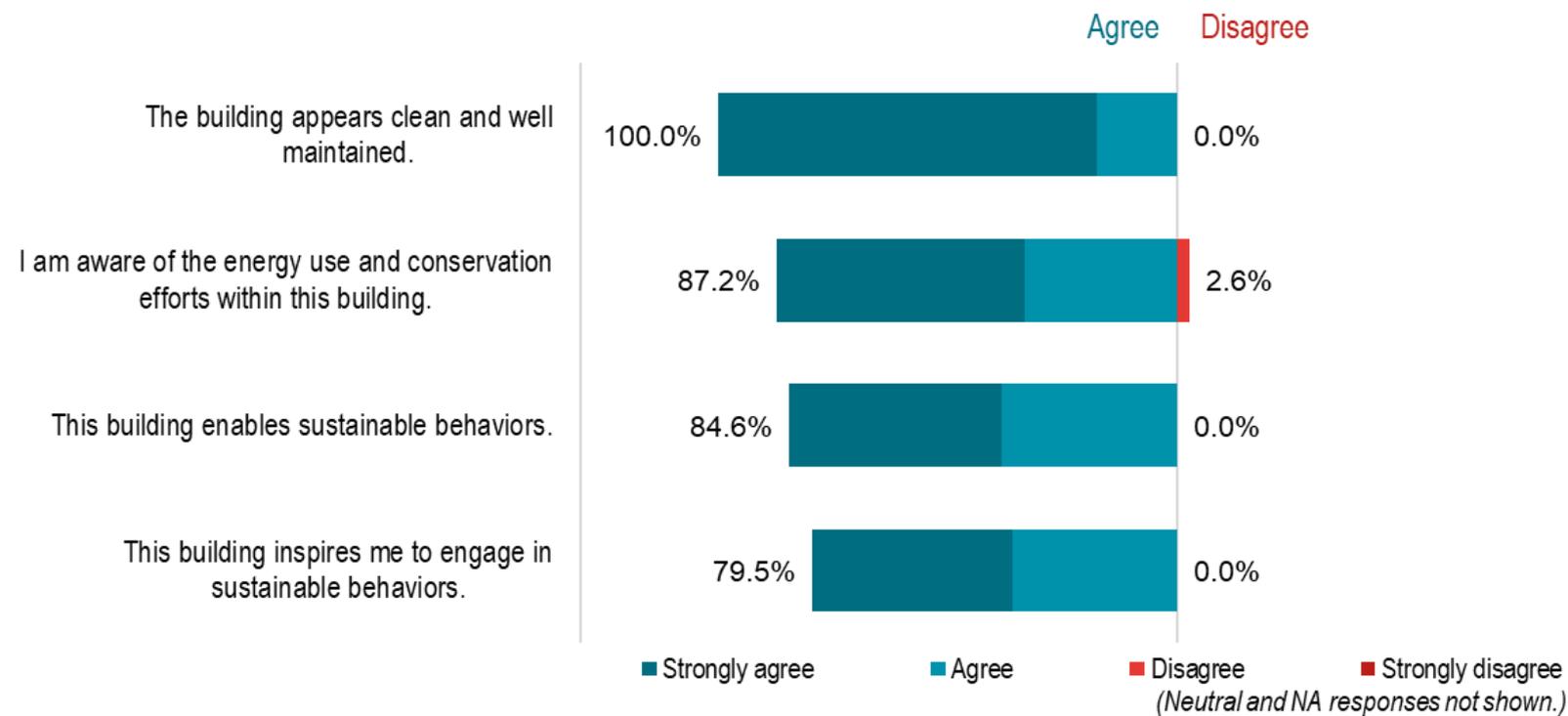
SUSTAINABILITY & BUILDING RESOURCES

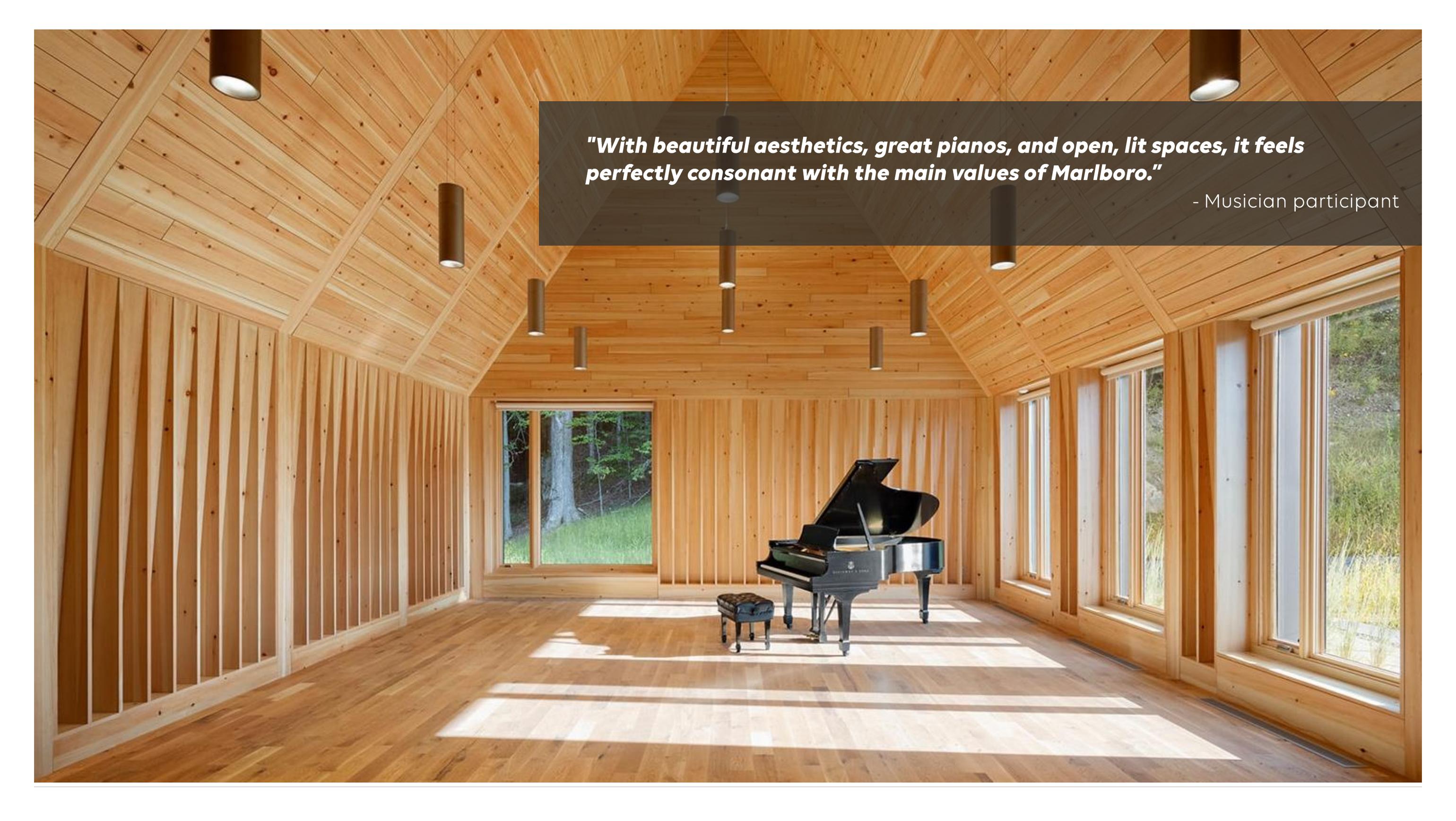
Respondents thought that the building supports sustainable and efficient use of resources.

All respondents agreed that the building is clean and well-maintained.

63% thought Reich Hall is “much more” and 29% thought it is “slightly more” sustainable than other buildings on campus.

A few suggestions to improve conservation of resources were for sensors to turn off lights sooner or limit the number of trash cans in the building.





"With beautiful aesthetics, great pianos, and open, lit spaces, it feels perfectly consonant with the main values of Marlboro."

- Musician participant



HGA

Contributors

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