In 2002, in keeping with the vision and endowment of the museum's founder, Isabella Gardner, the museum embarked on a project to add a new wing to relieve the contemporary pressure on the original museum building, which was modeled after a 15th-century Venetian palazzo. The new wing includes space for contemporary art as well as a performance hall and other expanded amenities. The new performance hall has 296 seats and is designed primarily for the performance of classical music. It has a square stage, surrounded on all four sides by audience seating. The new performance hall's architectural design includes a skylight in its ceiling to bring natural light into the performance hall. At stage level, only two rows of seating surround the stage, with the performers and audience at the same level, so that the audience sits and listens to performances in extreme proximity to the performers. The single row of balcony seats in the three balcony tiers effectively turns these seats into box seats where patrons can freely lean forward on the handrail or otherwise position themselves at ease without impacting the experience of other patrons.
Clockwise from Left:
- Performance Hall Stage View
- Expansion Exterior
- Balcony Seats
- Skylight