

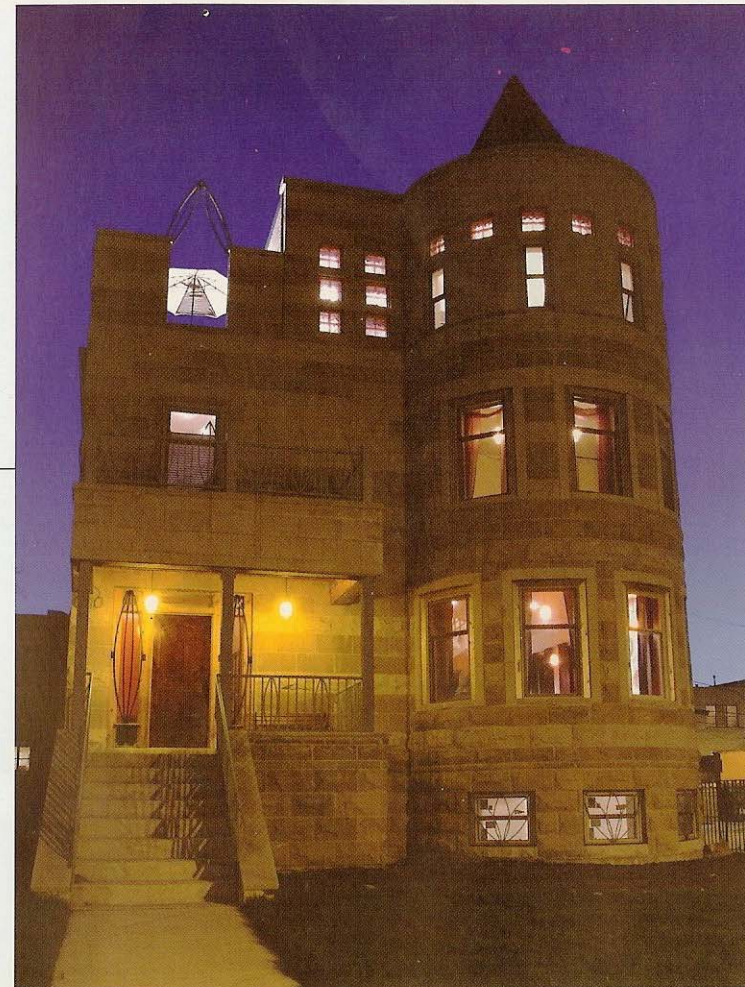


John M. Gay

JAQ CORP, INT'L.

One evening in September of 1990, John Gay was developing the fenestration of a home while listening to Miles Davis; he found himself moving his finger along a path he had drawn and then suddenly hit "rewind" on the cassette—this was the moment he began to develop his innovative philosophies on the inherent connection between architecture and music. He delved into the history of jazz alongside his graduate architectural studies and put his theory to the test by gathering inspiration from Thelonious Monk's "Criss-Cross" for a mixed-use commercial project. Two degrees and numerous honors—bestowed by The Museum of Science and Industry, Royal Institute of British Architects and The World's Fair in Seville, Spain, among other organizations—later, John is well-established in his profession as the founder and principal of JAQ: "Jazz and Architecture on cue to redefine the status Quo."

John sees the universal language of music as a vehicle for creating dynamic rhythmic compositions that not only speak to people's souls but tell their personal stories and convey their ethnic aesthetic. Though jazz is his personal favorite—a result of his childhood baritone and trumpet days, interest in the genre's history as an original African American art form, grandfather's mentoring and father's enthusiasm for DJ Daddy-O-Daley—John can work with any type of music, from rhythm and blues to rock and roll or even a waltz; therefore, he can also work with anyone. Had his brother not been such a source



ABOVE:
Welcome to Migration's "Introduction." Visible from four blocks away, night or day, the rhythmic brown and natural stone façade, capped with a violet crown, commands this North Kenwood corner.
Photograph by Peter Thurin



"Time to Change," by gospel jazz artist Yolanda Adams, served as the guiding light for John's personal residence, "Migration," the design of which symbolizes how a rather contemporary plan can coexist in the historic district of Chicago. The four-stanza song proved more and more appropriate as the creative process unfolded, with each verse, interlude and even the coda relating to a physical attribute. An equally reflective color scheme graces the interior: public areas in a celebratory burnt orange hue, soothing greens on the bedrooms' walls and the royal color of purple covering the entire third level, where ballrooms were historically situated. The music's timbre suggested to him a sense of harvest, particularly appropriate because his 4,500-square-foot home—with an additional 1,800-square-foot lower-level studio space—draws family, friends and clients near.



Though residential undertakings comprise a fair percentage of JAQ's expansive portfolio, the principal has designed everything from airports to churches. Perhaps the most noteworthy of his ecclesiastical ventures has been Quinn Chapel, home of the oldest African American congregation in

TOP LEFT:

The kitchen, "Solo," is a metaphorical octave above and below the structure's rhythm. The breakfast nook banquette is the focal point that promotes cozy family meals and conversations.

Photograph by William Kildow

BOTTOM LEFT:

"Interlude," the grand stair, allows for transition from public space, past private space, up to semi-private space.

Photograph by Peter Thurin

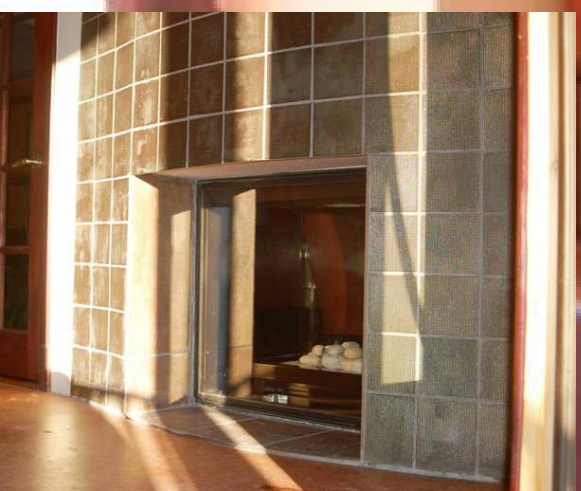
FACING PAGE TOP:

This space, like jazz, is ever changing: At night, the ornate iron balustrade creates shadow art on the atrium's walls.

Photograph by Peter Thurin

FACING PAGE BOTTOM:

This space, like jazz, is ever changing: At night, the ornate iron balustrade creates shadow art on the atrium's walls.



Chicago, which began in 1844 as a seven-member prayer group and took on even greater significance as a station on the Underground Railroad during the Abolition Movement. The opportunity to restore this historical landmark to the beat of Wynton Marsalis's "Quinn Anthem" was a humbling experience for John, whose restoration and adaptive-reuse design plan preserves the original historic features and character while adding universal design elements, an Underground Museum and Geotechnical HVAC systems.

John's highly introspective work has led to a number of teaching opportunities, through Archiworks, Columbia College Chicago and the University of Illinois, where standing ovations were regular occurrences at his lectures. Because John cherishes the time he spent with his first mentor, John Moutoussamy—a renowned Chicago architect who paved the way for African American professionals in the community—he has made it his mission to prepare architecture students for the real world through his summer internship program, WeHab. John's studio environment echoes his forward-thinking design philosophies.

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