

Keeping Orchestra Hall A Classic

Chicago is known for many things: great restaurants, Sears Tower, and the White Sox. It's also home to one of the most famous symphonies in the world, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO).

Orchestra Hall has been home to CSO since 1904. And like many buildings this age, it has undergone several renovations and upgrades. But, unlike some facilities, the managers have always tried to maintain the same elegant look and appearance the hall had on opening night.



Even with this care, though, one area was becoming an ongoing problem. New restrooms were installed in the hall about 10 years ago. The restrooms' white and black tiled floors, similar to the original, were no longer white. They had turned a dark gray, and many patrons even thought that gray was the original color.

However, Ricco Hicks, the hall's facility manager, knew better. "I've been here more than five years, and I remember when the floor tiles were still white," he says.

Hicks says the maintenance crew tried a variety of tools and chemicals to restore the tile, including scrubbing it with machines so large that they could barely maneuver inside the restroom.

"Nothing worked until we tried the KaiVac machine," he says.

With the Kaivac No-Touch Cleaning™ system, chemicals are applied to the floor, walls, partitions, and restroom fixtures. The same areas are then rinsed clean using pressure of as much as 500 psi. “This blasts the dirt and grime loose,” says Hicks. “Then we vacuum it all up with the machine’s built-in wet/vac.”

Today, the tiles are back to their original colors, white with black trim. “With the KaiVac machine, we’ve restored an old classic,” says Hicks. “And now we know how to keep the floors looking great for another 100 years.”