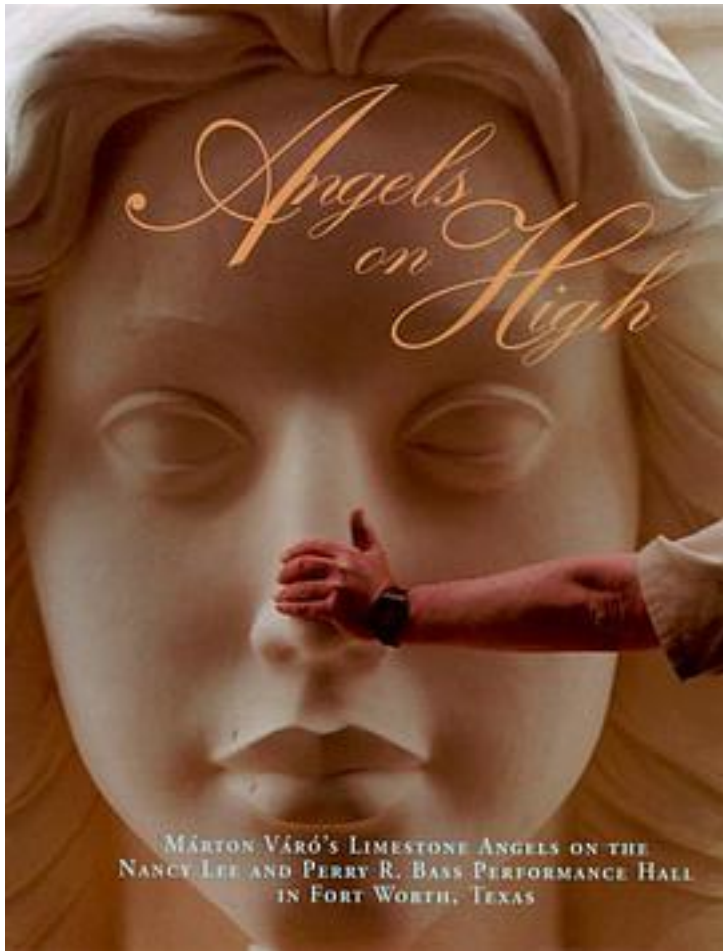


Angels on High



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Marton Varo's imposing twin angels emerge dramatically from the facade of the Bass Performance Hall to herald the performing arts. Approximately forty-eight feet tall, the angels are several times larger than life. Of the same limestone as the building, they are

inseparable from it. These glorious beings are depicted just at the moment they are touching Earth, gliding on the last little bit of lift from their extended wings. Each angel hovers above the street, weightless and serene in flowing garments. Each one leans her torso, arms, and head slightly away from the background wall to play a golden trumpet high above the street. With a gesture that reinforces the trumpeting, each angel raises an arm toward the sky. The angels have quickly become symbols of Fort Worth as valid and commanding as the city's "cowtown" heritage. The carving and installation of such large high-relief sculptures was a daunting artistic and technical challenge. Varo carved three sets of smaller angels in preparation for work on the actual sculptures. Limestone for the works was quarried near Austin, Texas, and transported to Irvine, California, where Varo carved the works in large numbered blocks. The delicate carving of the wings was done in Fort Worth. Engineers from Curtain Wall Design calculated the exact dimensions needed for each block and designed lifting devices for each. A crew of ironworkers and stonemasons installed the angels under Varo's supervision. Steel plates were embedded in the concrete walls to support the angels, and each carved block is permanently attached to a corresponding plate so that no block rests on the one below. This design transfers the weight of the sculpture to the building. Informal photographs by Varo and others record the creation of the angels from quarrying of the limestone through the initial carving of the blocks. Rodger Mallison recorded the installation process almost daily. The result is a superb photographic chronicle of a major artistic project.

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