

# CHARLES ROSE ARCHITECTS INC

PROJECT data

## JOSHUA BELL PENTHOUSE

New York, New York USA

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**Commissioned by:** Violinist Joshua Bell

**Scope:** 4,000 square feet; two floors and roof; formal entry and living space on top floor; bedrooms, office and media room below; planted roof terrace with spa, fireplace, pergola, outdoor shower and dining area.

It was a straightforward request, and unlike any we'd heard: Look to a 300-year-old Gibson Stradivarius as a touchstone for a contemporary penthouse design. That was the starting point of our collaboration with Joshua Bell, who wanted to turn two floors and a roof of an old manufacturing plant into his New York home and salon in the Flatiron District. Bell was interested in replicating the richness and warmth of the violin's woods, plus its graceful details—the shape of the f-holes, for example, and curves of the waist. Also important to him was creating a salon space for the performances he likes to host for friends on occasion and putting fireplaces on all three floors.

We organized the spaces on the upper floor around a dramatic oxidized steel-and-glass stair situated along the east wall and leading to a rooftop atrium. Light pours through the atrium into the centrally located living room, which is defined by a change in the floor level and further separated from the adjacent dining and kitchen area by a limestone hearth. Two steps up, on the northern end, is the study, which Bell can convert to performance space; a proscenium curtain is there for dramatic effect.

Bell's ideas dictated the choice of reclaimed bubinga wood for the wide plank floors and the reclaimed wenge, a dark wood, used for millwork and the dining room table we designed. Subtle details draw from Bell's Stradivarius, too: The stair handrail, also wenge, has a subtle curve that echoes the waist; stainless steel grilles are an abstracted f-hole shape. Running the length of the west wall is a line of wenge wood that starts as a banquette in the dining room, continues as a window seat; and ultimately joins the fireplace in the study; Bell told Architectural Digest it reminds him of a fingerboard of a violin.

**Materials:** Bubinga; wenge; glass; alabaster; limestone; blackened steel; glass planks; stainless steel; granite; limestone pavers; cedar; copper; leather.

**Completed:** 2010

**Cost:** Withheld

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“Rose’s work is sculptural and lyrical. ‘In a lot of the forms here, the movement was inspired by Josh’s music,’ he recounts. ‘I often would draw in one room and he’d be practicing in the next.’ The top-floor ceiling does have a kind of undulation not unlike a melodic line—in fact, an incantation.”

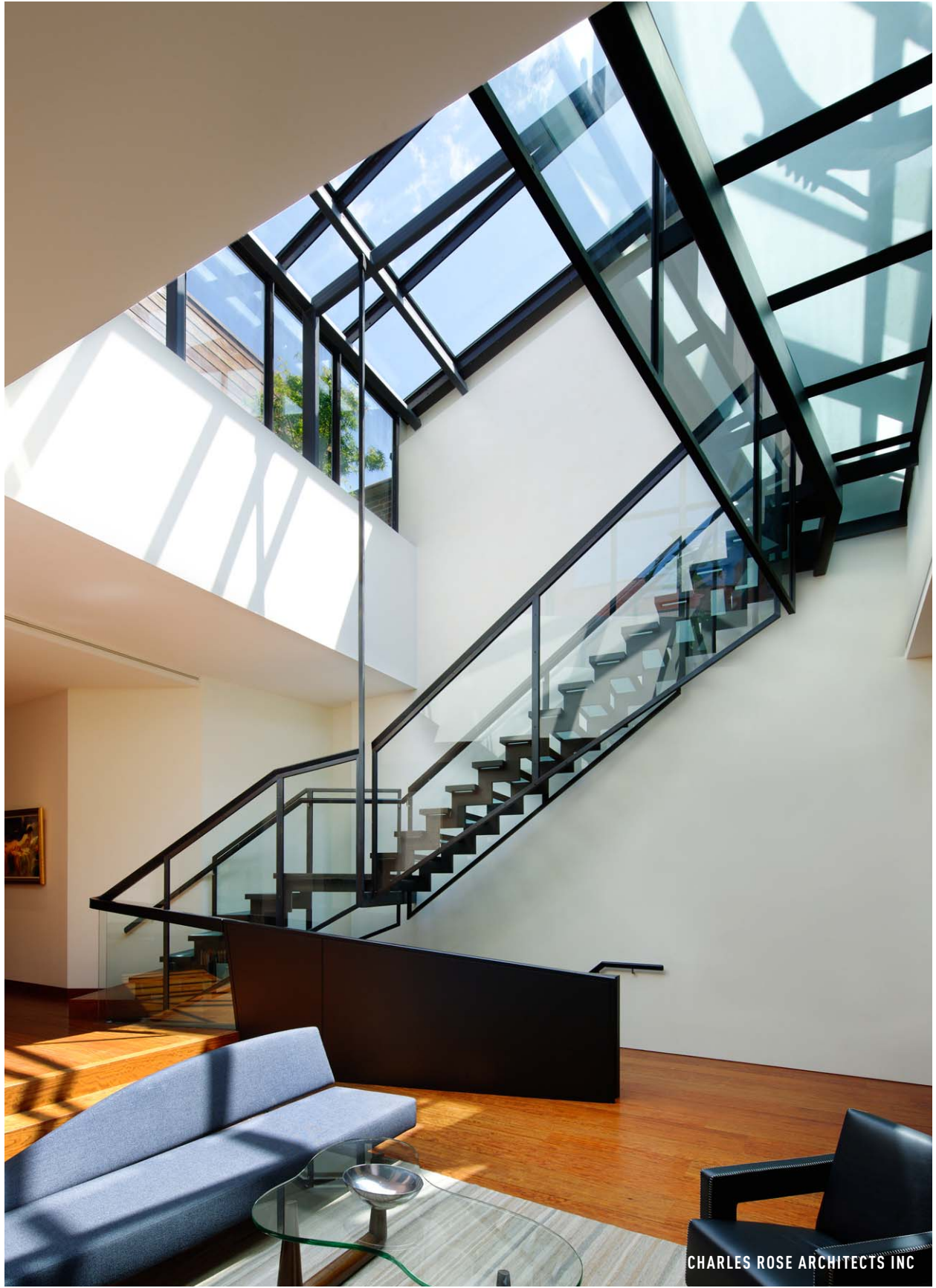
Steven M. L. Aronson, “Joshua Bell: Orchestrating a Penthouse in New York for the Virtuoso Violinist,” *Architectural Digest*, May 2010

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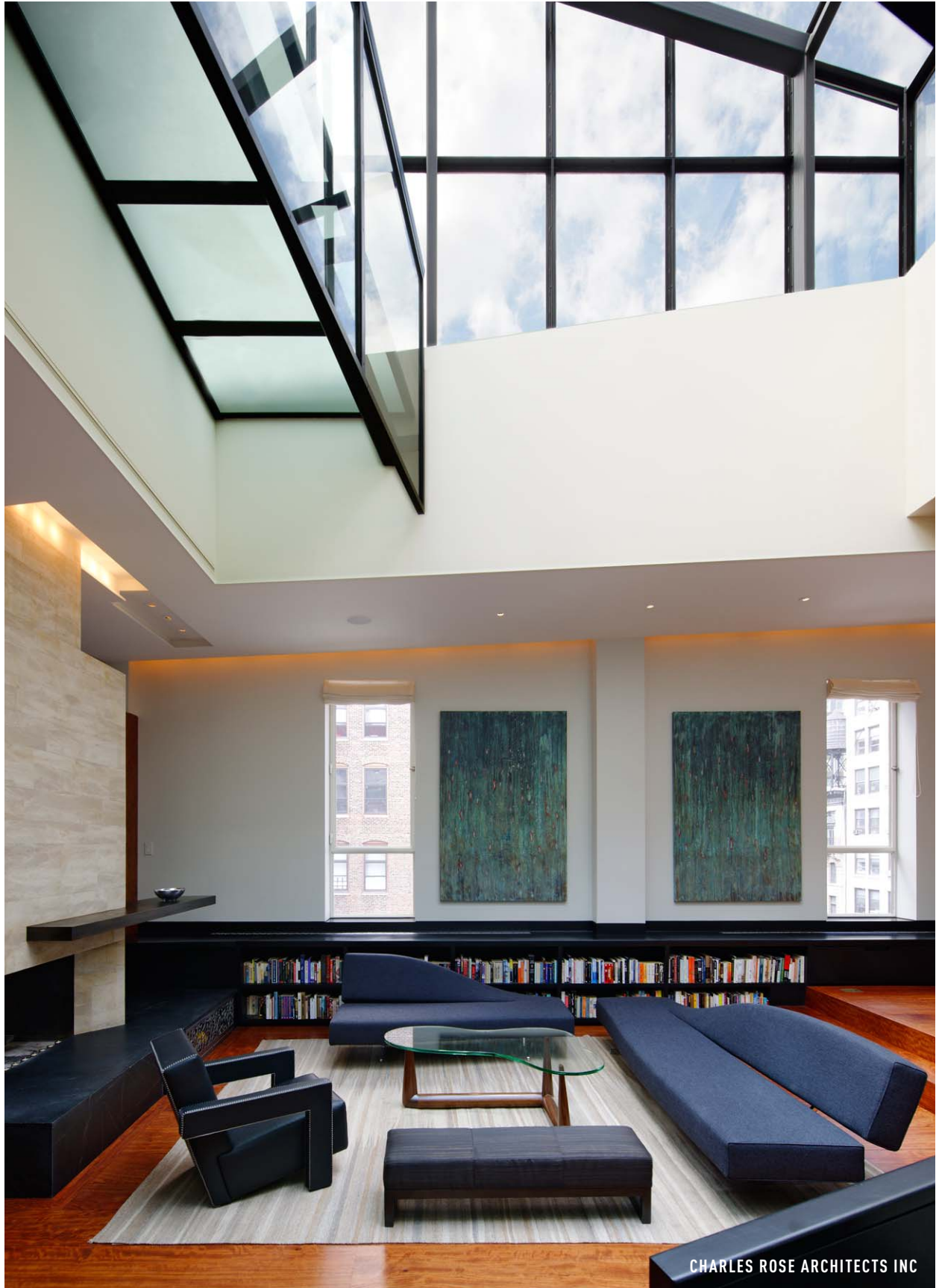
**Select Publications:**

Browne, Beth, editor. 21st Century Architecture: Apartment Living, The Images Publishing Group Pty Ltd., Australia, 2011.

Aronson, Steven A. L. “Joshua Bell: Orchestrating a Penthouse in New York for the Virtuoso Violinist,” *Architectural Digest*, May 2010.



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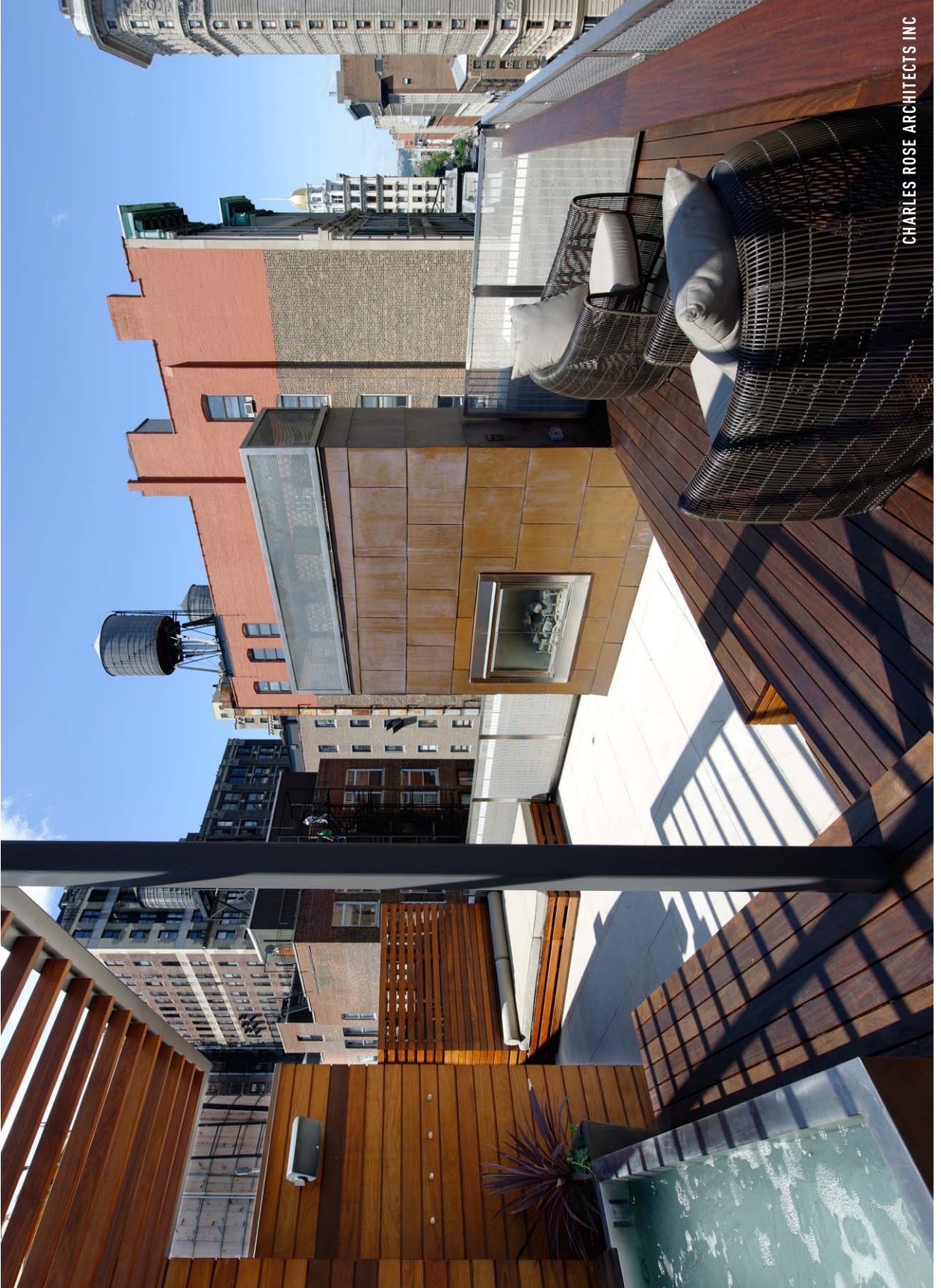


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