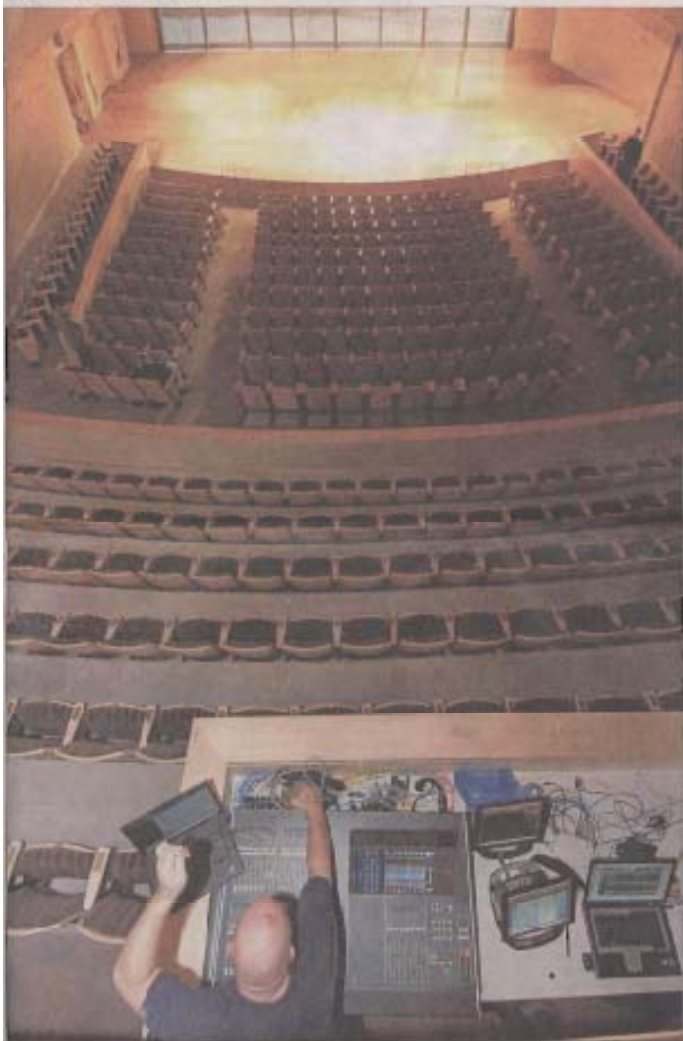




## The music begins



A technician performs a sound check inside the Zankel Music Center auditorium on Wednesday. BRUCE SQUIERS/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

## Skidmore music center debuts

Two-year, \$32.5M project showcases concert tonight

BY LEE COLEMAN  
Gazette Reporter

The first public performance in the new, \$32.5 million Arthur Zankel Music Center at Skidmore College will be held tonight, celebrating a large new teaching and performing space for students and an exciting new arts venue for the public.

### SARATOGA SPRINGS

"The students are quite excited," said Tom Denny, a Skidmore music professor and chairman of the college's music department. "The excitement grows the more they explore and realize the possibilities." Denny said. "It's very well thought out."

Members of Saratoga Springs arts and cultural community are also thrilled with the new performance center; it replaces Skidmore's former recital hall, the nearby Filene Music Building, that

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BRUCE SQUIERS/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

The exterior of the Zankel building is seen Thursday.

### Concert information

**WHAT:** Opening night concert at the Arthur Zankel Music Center.

**WHERE:** Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs.

**WHEN:** Ensemble ACJW performs 8 p.m. tonight.

**ADVISORY:** Be there by 7 p.m. for pre-concert discussion to get seats.

**COST:** Free.

**SEATS:** 600 in Helen Filene Ladd concert hall.



BRUCE SQUIERS/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

Skidmore's Gordon Thompson, left, and musicians check the acoustics onstage at the Arthur Zankel Music Center on Wednesday. The musicians will open the center with a concert tonight. In the background, the sun sets through glass panels overlooking the stage.

## Zankel

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was limited to audiences of 225.

"It's super to have a brand new, state-of-the-art facility for 600 people," said Joel Reed, executive director of Saratoga Arts, the former Saratoga Arts Council with headquarters on Broadway.

"It provides just that much more of an opportunity for the arts," Reed said. "Skidmore always has been great about opening performances by visiting musicians, dancers and composers to the community."

Reed said an important aspect of the new center is that it provides a large, year-round venue for the arts in the Saratoga County region.

The building's 600-seat main concert hall, called the Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall to honor a longtime college benefactor, has a three-story glass wall behind the expansive 2,400-square-foot stage. The glass wall looks out into a wooded area and nearby Haupt Pond but can be covered by computer-controlled curtains and screens.

Ensemble ACJW — made up of postgraduate professional musicians from an Academy program that includes Carnegie Hall, the Juilliard School and the Weill Music Institute — will perform a "Carnegie Hall Premieres" program of classical music at 8 tonight.

A pre-concert talk will be held at 7 p.m. College officials are recommending that those who want to have a seat for the free concert should plan on attending the talk led by Denny, who will discuss



BRUCE SQUIERS/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

Tom Denny conducts a Wednesday afternoon class in the Zankel building.

Skidmore's partnership with Ensemble ACJW.

Michael West, Skidmore's treasurer and vice president for finance, said this week it was "cool" to hear the tinkle of pianos in the new music center rather than the pounding of hammers. West and his staff have monitored the two-year project from start to finish.

Students just started to use the 14 practice rooms, the 90-seat lecture and recital Elizabeth Luce Moore

Hall and four large classrooms on Jan. 25 when the new semester started.

West said the college received great cooperation from the building's general contractor, MLB Construction of Malta, the dozens of subcontractors. The 54,000-square-foot building was started in early 2008 and completed substantially by the end of 2009.

The building was designed by the architectural firm IwingCole of

Philadelphia and BelsonDesignArchitects of Cleveland with outside expertise from acoustic experts, theater designers and landscape architects.

A key element of its green design is a geothermal heating and cooling system, the third Skidmore project to use the environmentally sensitive system. West said it reduces energy costs by about 40 percent and also reduces carbon emissions.

The long, narrow building plan

provides day-light to most inside spaces. Denny said the Skidmore music students were pleased to find that the 14 music practice rooms in the Zankel each have a window. He said in most music buildings, practice rooms are located in a basement or inner part of the building and have no natural light.

The new music center was needed by Skidmore because its music program has grown so much since the Filene Music Building opened in 1967, when the college had just over 1,000 students. The college now enrolls 2,400 students. With nearly 40 full- and part-time faculty, the music department offers more than 50 courses, according to a college statement.

The core money for the Zankel Music Center came from the estate of the late Arthur Zankel, a longtime Skidmore trustee and benefactor. His estate left the college \$46 million in 2006, the largest gift in the college's history.

A total of \$15 million of this money was earmarked for a music center and provided the seed money for the college's fundraising campaign.

Zankel was a very successful New York City businessman who was a senior partner at First Manhattan Co. before founding his own management firm, High Rise Capital Management Co. in 2000. Two of his four sons graduated from Skidmore over the past two decades.

A formal dedication ceremony for the building, including members of the Zankel family, will be held in October.

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