

**Backgrounder:  
THE ARTHUR ZANKEL MUSIC CENTER  
AT SKIDMORE COLLEGE**

*February 2010*

**Music Program Outgrows Its Space**

Skidmore College's Music Department has grown dramatically since 1967, when the Therese W. Filene Music Building opened its doors on what was then Skidmore's "new" campus. The College was in the midst of relocating from its charming but antiquated downtown campus to a 650-acre wooded area on North Broadway, about one mile from downtown Saratoga Springs, a move that would be substantially completed in the mid-1970s.

The Filene Music Building was built to support a faculty of five and a student body of some 1,000. As enrollment grew, so did the music offerings, broadening and deepening to meet the needs of a student body that now stands at 2,400. With nearly 40 full- and part-time faculty, the Music Department now offers more than 50 courses in such diverse areas as the Western classical tradition; electronic- and computer-based musical composition; non-Western musical forms and traditions; jazz, pop and rock; and West African drumming, as well as individual instruction in a wide variety of instruments and vocal genres. Students may pursue their musical passions at a level typically seen at a music conservatory, engaging in close interaction with faculty who are accomplished performers, scholars, and composers.

This steady growth strained the capacity of the Filene Music Building on all fronts, from practice rooms, to office space, to storage space. The capacity of the Filene Recital Hall was a particular challenge—with seating for only 235, it often overflowed, forcing the College to turn away potential audience members.

**A New Home—The Arthur Zankel Music Center**

With approximately 54,000-square feet of teaching, practice, performance, and administrative space (more than double the size of the Filene Building), Skidmore's new Arthur Zankel Music Center will become the new hub of musical activity on campus. Designed by the Philadelphia architectural firms of EwingCole and BelsonDesignArchitects and drawing upon the expertise of acousticians, theater designers, and landscape architects, the Center reflects Skidmore's commitment to the arts and to creative thinking. Construction of the project has been handled by MLB Construction Services.

Aligned along a north-south axis, the building is divided into two separate spheres of activity, with a wide, brightly lit glass atrium in the center, serving as a crossroads and a gathering space. To the south is the performance sphere, featuring the 600-seat **Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall**, an acoustically tuned space that can be scaled up or down in size for smaller and larger audiences. Designed to accommodate both a full orchestra and chorus, its stage is backed by a dramatic three-story-high glass wall overlooking nearby Haupt Pond.

To the north is the instructional sphere, which includes faculty offices, 14 practice rooms,

the 90-seat Elisabeth Luce Moore Hall for lectures and recitals, electronic music laboratory, piano lab, and several classrooms. The expectation is that this wing will be used virtually around the clock to accommodate the practice schedule and creative needs of students during evening and night hours, and teaching needs during the day.

Located on the main drive near the front entrance of the College, the Zankel Center serves as a gateway building for the campus. Its traditional brick, copper, and glass facade harkens back to the style of the initial campus buildings, while its bold structure works in tandem with the similarly powerful shape of the nearby Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery. Together with the Janet Kinghorn Bernhard Theater, the Marjorie Saisselin Art Building, and the original Therese W. Filene Music Building, it creates a true arts quadrangle.

The total cost of the building, including construction, equipment, and architectural fees, is \$32.5 million.

### **A Cultural Resource for the Region**

As the Zankel Music Center helps to transform Skidmore's music program, it is also expected to become a cultural resource for the upstate region by enabling the College to refine and expand its world-class programming. The Center, for example, will provide a new home for residency programs such as Skidmore's Carnegie Hall Premieres series, a collaboration with The Academy (a program of Carnegie Hall, the Juilliard School, and the Weill Music Institute). Each semester, this program brings to campus Ensemble ACJW, featuring some of the finest postgraduate musicians in the country.

Skidmore's highly respected and longstanding Filene Concert Series and Sterne Virtuoso Series will also benefit from the new facility, as will the College's McCormack Endowed Visiting Artist-Scholar Residency, which brings noted artists to campus for short-term stays that include public events and performances. The venue will provide new space for all of the concerts presented by the Music Department, including faculty and student performances.

Each summer, the Skidmore campus is abuzz with a broad range of cultural activities, including the New York State Summer Writers Institute, Skidmore Jazz Institute, New York State School of Orchestral Studies, the Saratoga International Theater Institute, Skidmore Flute Institute, and many more. These programs draw thousands of visitors to Saratoga and to Skidmore and add immensely to the cultural richness of the region. All such programs will benefit from the performance venues and other spaces provided by the new facility.

The Zankel Center will serve as a complement to the other cultural presenters in the region, including the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, the summer home of the New York City Ballet and the Philadelphia Orchestra; SaratogaArtsFest; and Lake George Opera of Saratoga. It is Skidmore's expectation that the Center will provide the impetus for stronger collaborations with these and other arts groups in the area.

### **The Building Site and Special Features**

The building has been sited and to take full advantage of the landscape and to embrace

the principles of sustainable architecture. Several large glass-walled classrooms enable viewers outside to see the hum of activity within. The effect will be particularly striking during the evening when these lighted spaces will serve as a welcoming beacon to students and visitors alike, drawing them into the life of the campus. The narrow building plan provides daylight in virtually all spaces, including the concert hall, which will be used daily for rehearsals and teaching as well as for performances.

The design incorporates wherever possible new advances in environmentally sensitive architecture drawn from the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards of the U.S. Green Building Council.

Renewable materials such as bamboo have been used in the interior of the concert hall and lobby, and local and recycled materials have been utilized throughout.

The most important of these environmentally sensitive features is the geothermal heating and cooling. The Zankel Music Center is the third Skidmore project in as many years to use closed-loop geothermal wells for the building's heating and cooling needs. In addition to reducing energy costs approximately 40 percent, this technique substantially reduces carbon emissions. Skidmore continues to work with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to identify additional ways to lower the facility's energy usage.

### **EwingCole and BelsonDesignArchitects**

EwingCole and BelsonDesignArchitects, working together, developed the plans for the facility and provided design, architecture, engineering, interior design, and planning services for the project. The firms' portfolios include a diverse collection of projects in research and development, health care, corporate interiors, sports and entertainment, academic, cultural, government spaces, and senior living. For more information on the architects visit [www.belsondesign.com](http://www.belsondesign.com). In 2003, the Cleveland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects gave the Zankel Center's design an honorable mention award in the "unbuilt work" category.

### **Funding**

The core funding for the Zankel Music Center came from the estate of Arthur Zankel, a longtime Skidmore trustee, friend, and benefactor, who bequeathed \$46 million—the largest gift in the College's history—in 2006.

Of the bequest, \$15 million went to the Zankel Center. Other uses of the gift include the establishment of a Zankel scholarship program based on need for New York City-area students and the creation of a program of study in arts administration.

The rest of the construction funding was provided by alumni, parents, friends, a State of New York Economic Development Grant, and foundations. Many spaces in the new center will bear the names of these donors. The College has recently launched a seat-naming campaign to raise money for annual operating costs. Named seats in the Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall range in price from \$3,000 to \$15,000.

### **Background on Arthur Zankel**

A lifelong resident of the New York City area, Arthur Zankel was co-managing partner of High Rise Capital Management, which he founded in 2000. Prior to that he was with First Manhattan Co., an investment management firm, for 35 years, becoming co-managing partner and then senior partner. He is credited with playing a key role in the 1998 merger of Citibank and Travelers Group insurance company.

Zankel served on the board of directors of Citigroup, Travelers Property-Casualty, and other corporations, and was a trustee of the UJA Federation, the New York Foundation, Carnegie Hall, and Skidmore College. He and his wife, Judy, made a major donation to Carnegie Hall, which led to the construction of a new Carnegie concert space named in their honor.

Zankel's connections to Skidmore were many. Two of his four sons graduated from Skidmore, Kenneth in 1982 and James in 1992, as did a nephew, Harun Zankel, Class of 2001, and a daughter-in-law, Pia Scala Zankel, Class of 1992. As a Skidmore trustee during 1989-99, he was known for his astute leadership of the board's investment committee—particularly for his role in shepherding the College's endowment—and for his incisive contributions to discussions, frequently enhanced by his sense of humor.

A generous Skidmore donor, he endowed a professorship in management and the liberal arts and the related Zankel Lecture Series, which fosters discussion of business issues from a societal and ethical perspective. Zankel also provided support for student scholarships and for the College's Office of Special Programs.

### **Quotes on the Impact of the Zankel Music Center**

“Arthur was deeply committed to sharing his good fortune with others. He also profoundly believed in the transformative power of the arts. The Arthur Zankel Music Center unites these two passions in a powerful way, allowing the College to share in the joy of world-class musical performance, teaching, and learning, not only for the College but for the entire upstate region.”

*Martin Zankel*

*(Brother of Arthur Zankel)*

“The new Zankel Music Center is a stunning, state-of-the-art facility that will enhance Skidmore's acclaimed music program and richly complement the cultural environment of Saratoga and the entire Capital Region. It's truly an achievement we should all celebrate.”

*Marcia J. White,*

*President and Executive Director, Saratoga Performing Arts Center*

“The Zankel Music Center will be the latest of many additions by Skidmore to the diversity and vitality of the Saratoga arts scene. The continued success of Saratoga as an arts destination is again enhanced through our ongoing cooperative efforts to mutually benefit our city and Skidmore.”

*Scott T. Johnson*

*Mayor, Saratoga Springs*

“The Zankel will further develop Saratoga Springs as a year-round destination for

cultural tourists. That's good for the whole town, and especially for those of us who have a direct stake in drawing music lovers to Saratoga Springs."

*Sarah Craig*

*Director, Caffè Lena*

"The Arthur Zankel Music Center will provide a first-rate showcase for the world's great artists. The stunning facility will provide a gateway not for just the campus, but also for a new era in the College's already rich musical tradition. The Center opens up wonderful possibilities for a college that is poised to take a gigantic step into a bold and promising future."

*Thomas A. Denny, Professor of Music and Chair of the Music Department*

*Skidmore College*

"In the context of a liberal arts college, the Skidmore music program offers so many opportunities to learn, practice, and perform. The Arthur Zankel Music Center will provide more space, more events, more concerts, and more opportunities to learn and perform, not just for music majors, but for anyone who wants to take advantage of the Skidmore music program."

*Mugi Ayurzana '09, Business-Economics Major, Davis United World College Scholar and Filene Music Scholarship Recipient*