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## SUNDAY

ST. PAUL

MARCH 1, 2015

## AN ACOUSTIC WONDERLAND

SPCO's new home, the Concert Hall at Ordway, promises beautiful sound

By Chris Hewitt  
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The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's official move into the \$42 million Ordway Center for the Performing Arts' new Concert Hall today isn't just a matter of shifting things within the Ordway. In many ways, it's a redefinition of the SPCO — for audiences, as

well as for the chamber orchestra's musicians and staff.

The move from the Music Theater to the Concert Hall may be only a couple of dozen steps across the foyer at the 30-year-old Ordway, but many things are going to change, which will be evident starting today at an open house from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Here's a look at the impact:

**1. You won't need to be an expert to notice how different the Concert Hall sounds from the SPCO's previous Ordway home.** "We had an open rehearsal in the Concert Hall on a Wednesday and then played (the same piece) at a concert in the Music Theater later on, and the difference

CONCERT HALL AT ORDWAY, 6A >

## Ordway's Concert Hall: A guide



PIONEER PRESS: BEN GARVIN

Where to sit? Where to eat before or after the show? What if you start coughing and can't stop? Answers to these and more in **Sunday Life, Pages 7-10E.**

## MINNESOTA STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT

# A CALL TO ARMS



PIONEER PRESS: SHERRI LAROSE-CHIGLO

Pine Island sophomore Noah Bauer leaps into the arms of one of his coaches after defeating Sibley East sophomore Tanner Pasvogel 8-6 in overtime in the Class A 113-pound championship match Saturday at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul. **More coverage in Sports, Page 1C, and more photos at photos.TwinCities.com.**

## Little-known tax trial may lead to big state payout

If it loses tax calculation dispute, Minnesota could owe \$700M in refunds

By Doug Belden  
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Minnesota could be on the hook for \$700 million in refunds should it lose a case pending in state tax court.

The case, involving how multistate corporations calculate tax liability in Minnesota, is scheduled to be heard later this month.

The \$700 million figure — which would be more than half the state's annual corporate franchise tax collections and about 2 percent of its biennial general fund budget — was given in court papers in November by state Solicitor General Alan Gilbert, who is representing the state Revenue Department in an appeal brought by Dallas-based Kimberly-Clark Corp.

Even if Gilbert's estimate is on the high side, the state's potential liability is "a big deal," said Richard Pomp, a professor at the University of Connecticut School of Law and a former consultant to the Multistate Tax Commission. "Whatever the actual dollars are, it's a lot of money."

Kimberly-Clark itself is asking for only \$1.2 million plus interest, claiming in its 2013 appeal that it should have been able to use a different formula for calculating tax liability in 2007-09 that would have saved it money.

But Kimberly-Clark is a test case for seven other appeals from multistate corporate taxpayers that raise the same issue. The total sought in those eight cases is more than \$27 million.

And Gilbert, in the November filing, told the court that the stakes could be higher.

Taxpayers had filed roughly \$155 million in refund claims as of October,

TAX TRIAL, 4A >

## Teacher, teacher ... teacher?

Minnesota has a shortage in key areas and no clear path to a fix

By Christopher Magan  
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Minnesota faces a growing shortage of teachers in key specialties, and educators and policymakers are divided over how to attract and retain qualified teachers.

Administrators argue that Min-

nesota's strict licensing requirements and union rules make it difficult to attract and retain highly effective and diverse teachers. Teachers union leaders say that state law already gives schools flexibility and that the rules Minnesota has now ensure students get the best teachers possible.

As lawmakers debate ways to address the state's teacher shortage, some worry the proposed changes could lead to risky unintended consequences. Complicating the debate is state data on Minnesota's teaching force that sometimes paints a conflicting

TEACHER SUPPLY, 4A >

### THE BASICS

**58,211** Licensed teachers in Minnesota

**548** Number of teacher layoffs since 2008

**32.2%** Percentage of teachers who leave within their first five years

**3,504** Special and limited licenses issued in 2014

SOURCE: MINNESOTA EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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**TODAY'S TELEVISION INTERVIEW SHOWS**

- "State of the Union" (8 a.m., CNN) — Guests: Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif.; former Gov. Rick Perry, R-Texas; Michael Oren, former Israeli ambassador to the United States.
- "Fox News Sunday" (8 a.m., Fox) — Guests: Gov. Scott Walker, R-Wis.; Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La.
- "This Week" (9 a.m., ABC) — Guest: Secretary of State John Kerry.
- "Meet the Press" (9 a.m., NBC) — Guests: Reps. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., and Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill.; retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, a potential Republican presidential candidate in 2016.
- "Face the Nation" (9:30 a.m., CBS) — Guests: House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio; former Gov. Mike Huckabee, R-Ark.; Feinstein.

— Associated Press

**HOW THEY VOTED**

WASHINGTON — Here's how area members of Congress voted on major issues in the week ending Feb. 27.

**HOUSE**

**ONE-WEEK BUDGET FOR HOMELAND SECURITY:** Voting 357 for and 60 against, the House on Feb. 27 passed a bipartisan bill (HR 33) to extend funding for the Department of Homeland Security by one week through March 6. The Senate already had passed the bill on a non-record vote. This vote was completed two hours and one minute before the department was set to partially shut down at midnight for lack of funding. It followed House defeat hours earlier of a Republican bill to fund DHS for three more weeks in order to give the party more time to continue challenging presidential actions on immigration.

A yes vote was to send the bill to President Obama, who signed it into law.

Minnesota > Voting yes: Tim Walz, D-1, John Kline, R-2, Erik Paulsen, R-3, Betty McCollum, D-4, Keith Ellison, D-5, Tom Emmer, R-6, Collin Peterson, D-7, Rick Nolan, D-8

Voting no: None

Wisconsin > Voting yes: Paul Ryan, R-1, Mark Pocan, D-2, Ronald Kind, D-3, Gwen Moore, D-4, Glenn Grothman, R-6, Reid Ribble, R-8

Voting no: James Sensenbrenner, R-5, Sean Duffy, R-7

**HIGHER-EDUCATION SAVINGS PLANS:**

Voting 401 for and 20 against, the House on Feb. 25 passed a bill (HR 529) to expand the types of tax-free expenditures that can be made from earnings in so-called "Section 529" higher-education savings plans. The bill is projected to increase annual deficits by \$51 million through fiscal 2025. Today, earnings in these plans can be used to pay for tuition, room and board. This bill adds computer and software purchases as qualified expenses. In addition, in cases where students withdraw from college, the bill allows tuition refunds to be added back to their education accounts.

A yes vote was to send the bill to the Senate.

Minnesota > Voting yes: Walz, Kline, Paulsen, Emmer, Peterson, Nolan

Voting no: McCollum, Ellison

Wisconsin > Voting yes: Ryan, Kind, Moore, Sensenbrenner, Grothman, Duffy, Ribble

Voting no: Pocan

**DISCLOSURE OF BROKERAGE FEES:** By a vote of 176 for and 243 against, the House on Feb. 25 defeated a Democratic motion to HR 529 (above) that sought to require financial firms managing "Sec-

tion 529" savings plans to disclose to customers the types and amounts of their brokerage fees and illustrate the cumulative cost of these fees over 10 and 20 years.

A yes vote was to adopt the motion, which, had it prevailed, would have immediately amended the bill.

Minnesota > Voting yes: Walz, McCollum, Ellison, Peterson, Nolan

Voting no: Kline, Paulsen, Emmer

Wisconsin > Voting yes: Pocan, Moore

Voting no: Ryan, Kind, Sensenbrenner, Grothman, Duffy, Ribble

**SENATE**

**REGULAR BUDGET FOR HOMELAND SECURITY:** Voting 68 for and 31 against, the Senate on Feb. 27 passed a bipartisan appropriations bill (HR 240) that would fund the Department of Homeland Security at an annual rate of \$39.7 billion in the remaining seven months fiscal 2015. The bill would fully fund the 231,000-employee, 16-agency department and keep it from partially shutting down at the end of the day. This "clean" bill was free of provisions advocated by Republicans in both chambers to block President Barack Obama's executive orders on immigration (next issue).

A yes vote was to pass a bill to fund homeland-security operations through

Sept. 30.

Minnesota > Voting yes: Al Franken, D, Amy Klobuchar, D

Voting no: None

Wisconsin > Voting yes: Tammy Baldwin, D, Ron Johnson, R

Voting no: None

**DEFUNDING OF IMMIGRATION ORDERS:** Voting 57 for and 42 against, the Senate on Feb. 27 failed to reach 60 votes needed to end Democratic blockage of a GOP-drafted bill (S 534) that would defund two executive orders by Obama on immigration. Now temporarily in effect, those orders provide work authority and waivers from potential deportation to hundreds of thousands of young people known as "dreamers" as well as to four million-plus parents of U.S. citizens or legal residents born before Nov. 20, 2014.

A yes vote was to advance the measure opposing presidential immigration orders.

Minnesota > Voting yes: None

Voting no: Franken, Klobuchar

Wisconsin > Voting yes: Johnson

Voting no: Baldwin

Compiled by Voterama in Congress

CONTINUED FROM 1A

**> Concert Hall at Ordway**

was pretty dramatic. It's the sound equivalent of what happens when curators at museums do that very careful cleaning process of old masters' paintings and the colors become more vibrant and you can see all sorts of detail," said Bruce Coppock, the orchestra's president and

managing director.

**2. The move to the Concert Hall could subtly alter the repertoire the SPCO performs.** "There are some pieces that will benefit a lot from a resonant environment, pieces we would maybe choose to program now but that we shied away from in the past," said Coppock, citing smaller-ensemble works or Tchaikovsky's "Serenade for Strings" as possible examples. "String orchestra pieces that might have sounded a little emaciated in the Music Theater could sound really rich and full in

the Concert Hall."

**3. Small is hot.** Up until the 1970s, the trend in music halls was to go bigger (think of the 1973 Sydney Opera House, which seats 2,700) but the roughly 1,100-seat Concert Hall fits with a movement toward smaller houses. The problem with big halls was that trying to fill those huge spaces lessened the impact — especially the softer details — of the music. "It took a long time for acousticians and clients to recognize that seating capacities that stretched that high involved undesirable compromises in the acoustics. But, beginning in the late '80s, we saw a trend back toward smaller halls," said Paul Scarborough, the project's acoustician.

**4. Don't worry, you'll still be able to get tickets.** Most SPCO events in the Music Theater sold a maximum of 1,600 tickets (they often elected not to use the top balcony seats of the 1,800 capacity venue). Even so, it means there will be 500 or so fewer

**SEE THE CONCERT HALL**

**What:** Ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house

**When:** 11 a.m. - 4p.m. today

**Where:** Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, 345 Washington St., St. Paul

**Tickets:** Free

seats per concert in the new venue. To compensate, the SPCO has access to 50 percent more weeks in the Concert Hall than they did in the Music Theater (24, instead of 16). Kyu-Young Kim, the SPCO's principal second violin as well as its senior director of artistic planning, said they're currently re-jiggering the subscription series and concert schedule to make sure the SPCO can meet demand.

**5. It can get LOUD up in there.** The SPCO has been testing sound capabilities of the new space, using

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, with its famously stirring "Ode to Joy," among other pieces. "The chorus, which was about 50 people in the choir loft, sounded just about right in the Music Theater but it was overwhelming in the Concert Hall. So the acousticians were saying, 'You don't need to use that big of a chorus in the Concert Hall.' I think we pushed right up against the tolerance of the room in terms of reverberation, which would never happen in the Music Theater. We found there's a point where there's more sound than the room can take," Coppock said.

**6. Not only will audiences hear the SPCO better than ever, but the musicians can hear themselves better.** "It's something musicians call 'getting something back from the hall,'" Coppock said. "They are getting an acoustical response from the hall, so it doesn't sound like the sound is just drifting off into Neverland."

**7. As with any construction project, there were things being fixed, even up to the last minute.** Some doors on the stage had to be switched out, exit signs weren't hanging quite right, and the cello players had to be asked to use different stops on the bottoms of their instruments because the regular ones scratched the stage floor. "It was a big learning process," said Andy Luft, director of production and the construction project manager. "But nothing has happened that couldn't be fixed."

All of that, of course, didn't come cheap. Total funds raised were \$83 million, with \$42 million going to the Concert Hall, \$32 million to an endowment fund and \$9 million to a maintenance-transition fund. Of that, \$20 million was raised from a state bonding bill and \$3 million from the City of St. Paul.

Chris Hewitt can be reached at 651-228-5552. Follow him on twitter.com/ChrisHMov.



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