

# MIZZOU

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## Around the Columns

### MU signs lease on Missouri Theatre

Jesse Auditorium hosts about 230 events a year, from Broadway musicals to commencements to student and faculty recitals. No longer able to accommodate demand for the 1,732-seat hall, MU officials reached an agreement in August 2011 to lease and manage the Missouri Theatre in downtown Columbia, with an option to buy the historic venue after three years.

The university is leasing the theater, which is owned and operated by the Missouri Symphony Society (MOSS), for \$12,000. Mizzou will have the option to purchase the facility for \$3.7 million in 2014.

MU will use the theater for School of Music performances, University Concert Series events, graduation ceremonies and student-related programs. Michael J. O'Brien, dean of MU's College of Arts and Science, calls the landmark "a magnificent facility that has been nurtured with great care.

"The Missouri Theatre offers a venue that is very attractive and versatile, while enabling MU to avoid duplication of performance facilities already in existence right down the street," O'Brien says.

Built in 1928, the 1,216-seat Missouri Theatre was renovated in 2008. MOSS has struggled to pay off loans related to the renovation, which forced the organization to shut down the theater






MU leases, and has an option to buy, the 1,216-seat Missouri Theatre built in 1928 at 203 S. Ninth St. in downtown Columbia. The venue will host events including student performances, Concert Series shows and graduation ceremonies. Photo by Rob Hill

for a time and lay off staff.

Carole Sue DeLaite, co-president of MOSS, says the theater will remain the home of the Missouri Symphony Orchestra, the Missouri Symphony Conservatory, the Plowman Chamber Music Competition and the Piano Showcase. The agreement with MU will allow the society to continue to focus on its mission of increasing awareness of classical music in the community.

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