

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Shawn Farley or Carolyn Kilmer at 545-3671



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 10, 2006

WHAT: Center Series presents: Helikon Opera in *Die Fledermaus*

WHEN: Wednesday, February 15 at 7:30pm

**WHERE: Fine Arts Center Concert Hall
University of Massachusetts Amherst**

**Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or
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“The Helikon Opera will blow you away.” – *Le Parisien Liberer*

(Renowned Helikon Opera performs the “Waltz King’s” Operetta *Die Fledermaus*)

Considered by many to be the greatest of all Austrian operettas, *Die Fledermaus* (The Flying Bat) will delight audiences with its waltzes, arias, and bubbling exuberance. Mistaken identities, flirtations at a masked ball, elegant frivolities and confusions of all kinds provide a hilarious vehicle for some of the most captivating music ever written. Moscow’s renowned Helikon Opera performs Johann Strauss’ operetta at the Fine Arts center Concert Hall on Wednesday, February 15th at 7:30pm. This is a traditional production sung in German with English supertitles.

Winners of numerous Golden Mask Awards, Helikon recently won four of the five opera awards given in the opera division for their production of Shostakovich’s *Lady Macbeth of Mtsenk*: Best Opera, Best Director of an Opera (Dmitri Bertman), Best Conductor of an Opera (Vladimir Ponkin) and Best Female Performer in an Opera (Anna Kazakova).

Founded in 1990 by director/producer, Dmitry Bertman, and conductor, Kiril Tikhonov, the Helikon Opera Theater takes its name from the mountain home of Apollo and his Muses. Helikon performs classic and avant garde operas in the former residence of Princess

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Shakhovskaya, an 18th century palace in the center of Moscow. Bertman, despite his young age (he is only 38), has already staged more than 60 performances both in Russia and abroad, including Spain, France, Germany, Ireland, Canada, Austria, Estonia, Sweden and New Zealand. Invariably, his productions are noted for their exciting energy.

The Theater comprises a creative and staging group that includes artists; a ballet master and stage movement coach; an ensemble of soloists, many of whom are international contest prizewinners; and a symphony orchestra and choir which, in addition to their Helikon repertoire performances, give their own concerts on some of Moscow's most prominent stages. Helikon's core repertoire includes several dozen operas - performed in their original languages - that range from rarely heard Baroque works and twentieth century masterpieces by Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and Hindemith - to the standard repertoire. The Theater's active repertoire comprises some twenty works, and some - Prokofiev's "Maddalena," Mozart's "Apollo et Hyacinthus," and Hindemith's "Hin und Zuruck" - have been national and world premieres.

Members of this tour also performed "*Die Fledermaus*" in the famous Evian Music Festival in France (2000) conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich, to the delight of the music world. The production of Verdi's "*Aida*" garnered much attention in Strasbourg at the festival devoted to the 100th anniversary of the composer's death, and a gala concert, featuring the chorus and orchestra with legendary tenor Roberto Alagna was a huge success. In 2004 the theatre opened the summer festival in Santander in Spain with Bellini's "*Norma*" in which the world famous soprano Maria Guleghina shone. A concert of the "Helikon-Opera" choir with Angela Georgiu also took place in Santander that summer. Helikon strives not merely to entertain audiences, but also to surprise them with conceptually original stagings.

The Helikon Opera captivates Fine Arts Center audiences on Wednesday, February 15 at 7:30 pm in the Fine Arts Center Concert Hall. Tickets are \$40, \$30, and \$15, youth 17 and under are \$10, and Five College students are \$15, \$10, and \$7. This event is sponsored by Yale Genton, Hart Schaffner Marx and WGBY TV 57.

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