FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  November 5, 2004

WHAT: The St. Petersburg State Ballet on Ice in “The Nutcracker”
WHEN: Friday and Saturday, December 3 and 4 at 7:30pm
WHERE: Fine Arts Center Concert Hall
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or go online to www.fineartscenter.com/tickets
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"The production recalled the grand tradition of Russian ballet with lush production values, lavish costuming and exquisite choreography. The performance was at once intimate and larger than life."

- American Skating World

(The Magic of The Nutcracker comes to the FAC Concert Hall – on Ice!)

Amherst -- The St. Petersburg State Ice Ballet from Russia will return to the UMass Fine Arts Center Concert Hall to present two evenings of The Nutcracker on Ice, December 3 and 4 at 7:30pm. Choreographed by Konstantin Rassadin of the famed Kirov Ballet and performed by a company of 35 champion ice skaters who are also trained ballet dancers, the St. Petersburg Ice Ballet's production features magnificent costumes, lavish sets and Tchaikovsky’s beautiful score. The company performed here several years ago in the production of Cinderella. On Saturday, December 4 there will be a free family reception at 6:30pm where cookies, milk and cider will be offered and the staff of FamilyFun Magazine will be providing an interactive craft for the kids.

Preparing the ice rink on the Concert Hall stage and then removing it when the troupe is finished is a complex job. After the troupe arrives, 5 tons of crushed ice is poured into a specially designed, self-refrigerated rink. The ice is sprayed with mist.
every 20 minutes for over 12 hours to create a smooth skating surface. After the final performance, the ice is broken up with sledgehammers and carted outside to slowly melt.

"The Nutcracker" opens with children celebrating the Christmas holiday. A doll maker, Drosselmeier, tries to give one of the children his favorite toy, a nutcracker in the shape of a doll, but because it is ugly, the child nor any of the other children want it. Clara, however, feels sorry for Drosselmeier and accepts the doll as a gift. After midnight, Clara is transformed into a princess and travels through the Kingdom of Sweets with her prince, the nutcracker.

With the company’s debut in 1967, Constantine Boyarski established ice ballet in Russia. By combining classical dance with the sport of figure skating, a new genre was born. Since its first performance, the St. Petersburg State Ballet on Ice has presented over 5,000 performances to audiences worldwide. The company of 100 medal-winning skaters has toured such classics as Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake, Romeo & Juliet, and Cinderella.

The St Petersburg State Ice Ballet performs at UMass Fine Arts Center Concert Hall, Friday, December 3 and Saturday, December 4 at 7:30pm. Tickets are $40, $30, and $15; 17 and under are $15 and Five College student tickets are $15, $10 and $7. For tickets and information, call the Fine Arts Center Box office at 413-545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS, or go online to www.fineartscenter.com/centerseries. This event is sponsored Easthampton Savings Bank, Coca Cola, the Daily Hampshire Gazette, FamilyFun Magazine and WRSI 93.9FM The River.

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