

# SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA OPERA THEATRE ANNOUNCES ITS 2010/2011 SEASON FEATURING ROBERT ALDRIDGE'S *ELMER GANTRY* AND JOHANN STRAUSS'S *DIE FLEDERMAUS*

Minneapolis, MN (9/22/2010)—The University of Minnesota School of Music's University Opera Theatre 2010/2011 season will feature the Minnesota premiere of Robert Aldridge's *Elmer Gantry* (November 18-21, 2010) and Johann Strauss Jr.'s *Die Fledermaus* (April 7-10, 2011) at Ted Mann Concert Hall (2128 4<sup>th</sup> St. S., Minneapolis, MN 55455). Tickets: \$20 general admission; \$10 for U of M students; group rates. Call 612/624-2345 or visit [www.opera.umn.edu](http://www.opera.umn.edu). Two for one tickets for University students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Robert Aldridge's *Elmer Gantry* is closely based on Pulitzer prize-winning author Sinclair Lewis' controversial 1927 satire of evangelical religion and revivalism. In *Elmer Gantry*, composer Robert Aldridge and librettist Herschel Garfein have created a powerful new opera, which resonates strongly in our own times. **Aldridge and Garfein will visit the Twin Cities for *Elmer Gantry*'s Minnesota premiere and will be available for interviews, schedule TBA.** Even more striking is that its success, since the premiere in Nashville, TN in 2007, has come about without the advantages of a consortium arrangement with national opera companies but rather on its own merits and to impressive national acclaim. The eponymous title character is a charismatic and galvanizing figure, in many ways iconically American, and his rise to power, as well as his relationship with the spiritual revival preacher, Sharon Falconer, is both fascinating and deeply disturbing. Filled with glorious choral scenes and stunning musical ensembles, *Elmer Gantry* is a compelling piece of music drama and University Opera Theatre is thrilled to be only the fourth producer of what is destined to be one of the great American operas! *Performances will begin at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, November 18 through Saturday, November 20 and at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, November 21.*

*Die Fledermaus*, showcases Johann Strauss Jr.'s special talent to be able to satirize the lives of the upstart middle classes in his beloved city in the glorious twilight of Imperial Vienna and get away with it! For these were the very people who paid to see his operettas year after year and laughed uproariously to witness their own

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pretensions and follies depicted on the stages of the Viennese opera houses. However, the reason is simple to grasp once you have submitted to the elegant charm, insouciant wit and sparkling ‘joie de vivre’ of Strauss’s music. University Opera Theatre has chosen an American cultural metaphor for Strauss’s Vienna in the equally glamorous and illusory world of Hollywood, where anyone can aspire to stardom and where love is exchanged flippantly and frequently. But no matter, as long as music is playing and champagne is flowing, romance will be in the air and life will be good! *Die Fledermaus* is a delightfully extravagant musical entree from an extravagant time! Join the party this spring! Libretto by Karl Haffner and Richard Genée. *Performances will begin at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 7 through Saturday, April 9 and at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 10.*

David Walsh, University Opera Theatre Director and School of Music professor, will direct and Mark Russell Smith, School of Music professor and Artistic Director of Orchestral Studies, will conduct.

A pre-performance discussion with Walsh begins 45 minutes before each staging in the lobby of the concert hall. Parking is available in the 21st Ave. ramp, one block southwest of the concert hall. Photographs available upon request. Email requests for photographs to [marsh396@umn.edu](mailto:marsh396@umn.edu). For more information on University Opera Theatre, visit [opera.umn.edu](http://opera.umn.edu).

Established in 1902, the University of Minnesota School of Music offers a dynamic, comprehensive program to more than 550 music students in undergraduate and graduate programs, led by a world-class faculty of more than 50 artists, scholars and teachers. The School of Music presents more than 400 free concerts per year. For a complete schedule of events, visit [www.music.umn.edu](http://www.music.umn.edu) or call (612) 626-1094 for a brochure.