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Media Contact:
Gina Hyams, PR Consultant
413.464.2851
ginahyams@gmail.com

High-resolution photographs are available for download at
<http://www.mahaiwe.org/press.html>

Mahaiwe presents Ladysmith Black Mambazo

Great Barrington, Mass.— Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center will present Ladysmith Black Mambazo on Friday, February 6 at 8:00pm. “We are thrilled to welcome Ladysmith Black Mambazo back to the Mahaiwe for a second time,” said Mahaiwe Executive Director Beryl Jolly. “Their uplifting energy was truly exuberant five years ago and we are especially looking forward to seeing the group perform selections from their album, *Live: Singing for Peace Around the World*, which won last year’s Grammy Award for Best World Music Album.”

In conjunction with the performance, the Mahaiwe will host a pre-show 7:00pm panel discussion at the theater with members of the Berkshire community from Africa, including Pauline Dongala and Eileen and Roy Tau. The speakers will talk about some distinctive aspects of South African culture and the impact of Ladysmith Black Mambazo on their countries. Admission to the panel is free to concert ticketholders. In addition, Castle Street Café Chef Michael Ballon will honor Ladysmith Black Mambazo by creating a South African cuisine menu option that evening.

In 2015, Ladysmith Black Mambazo – led by founder and leader Joseph Shabalala – celebrates over fifty years of joyous and uplifting music. Within this music are the intricate rhythms and harmonies of their native South African musical traditions. In those years, the a cappella vocal group has created a musical and spiritual spirit that has touched a worldwide audience. Their musical efforts over the past five decades have garnered praise and accolades from a wide body of people, organizations, and countries.

Assembled in the early 1960s in South Africa by Shabalala, then a young farm boy turned factory worker, the group took the name Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Ladysmith is the name of Shabalala's hometown, about three hours west of Durban and three hours east of Johannesburg; Black being a reference to the oxen, the strongest of all farm animals; and Mambazo being the Zulu word for chopping axe, a symbol of the group's ability to "chop down" any singing rival who might challenge them. Their collective voices were so tight and their harmonies so polished that by the end of the 1960s, they were banned from competitions, although they were welcome to participate as entertainers.

A radio broadcast in 1970 opened the door to their first record contract – the beginning of an ambitious discography that currently includes more than fifty recordings. Their philosophy in the studio was – and continues to be – just as much about preservation of musical heritage as it is about entertainment. The group borrows heavily from a traditional music called isicathamiya (is-cot-a-ME-Ya), which developed in the mines of South Africa, where black workers were taken by rail to work far away from their homes and their families. Poorly housed and paid worse, the mine workers would entertain themselves after a six-day week by singing songs into the wee hours on Sunday morning. When the miners returned to the homelands, this musical tradition returned with them.

During the 1970s and early 1980s Ladysmith Black Mambazo established themselves as the most successful singing group in South Africa. In the mid-1980s, Paul Simon visited South Africa and incorporated the group's rich tenor/alto/bass harmonies into his famous "Graceland" album – a landmark recording that was considered seminal in introducing world music to mainstream audiences. A year later, Paul Simon produced Ladysmith Black Mambazo's first worldwide release, "Shaka Zulu," which won a Grammy Award in 1988 for Best Folk Recording. Since then, the group has been awarded three more Grammy Awards and has been nominated a total of sixteen times.

In addition to their work with Paul Simon, Ladysmith Black Mambazo has recorded

with numerous artists from around the world, including Stevie Wonder, Dolly Parton, Sarah McLachlan, Josh Groban, Emmylou Harris, Melissa Etheridge, and many others.

The group remains active as ever today. As Joseph Shabalala says, “We are teachers. We travel the world spreading our message of peace, love, and harmony. What could be better or more important than that.”

Tickets

Tickets are \$35 to \$45. A limited number of \$15 tickets are available for audience members ages 30 and younger through the Mahaiwe ArtSmart Tix program, sponsored by Greylock Federal Credit Union. The Mahaiwe is located at 14 Castle Street in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Box office hours are Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 6:00pm and three hours before show times. For tickets and information, see www.mahaiwe.org or call 413.528.0100.

About the Mahaiwe

Located in downtown Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center is the year-round presenter of world-class music, dance, theater, classic films, Live in HD broadcasts, and arts education programs for the southern Berkshires and neighboring regions. The intimate jewel box of a theater opened in 1905. Since 2005, the performing arts center has hosted over 1,000 events and welcomed almost half a million people through its doors. Its education program has served over 10,000 students from 35 different schools with school-time performances and residencies. The Mahaiwe generates in excess of \$1,000,000 in ticket revenue from 150 events each year, while contributing over \$4,000,000 in regional economic impact from the theater’s direct spending and audience’s restaurant, lodging, and shopping activities.