



Guitar concerto world premiere

By EMILY LEINFUSS
Correspondent

North Port Symphony has orchestrated a flourishing finish for the final concert of its 28th year. Called "Grand Finale," the event features the world premiere of Concerto for Guitar.

Three Southwest Florida-based musical artists, who are longtime professional associates, collaborated to bring this exciting effort to fruition.

It all started with the symphony's Maestro Sasha von Dassow, who commissioned Rex Willis — an international composer/guitarist and faculty member of the State College of Florida — to write the piece.

"Sasha and I have performed and worked on projects together for 15 years. At least 10 years ago he mentioned he wanted to commission a piece written specifically for guitar for the North Port Symphony to perform," said Willis. "A year ago he said he was ready — he had the finances to begin."

Then, when presented with the option to be the soloist in his own piece, the guitarist Willis declined. "I wanted to be in the rehearsals and listen and make changes as the composer. The concerto — being so new — is a living entity that requires fine-tuning," he explained.

See WILLIS on 3E

CONCERT PREVIEW

GRAND FINALE. North Port Symphony, Sasha von Dassow, conductor. 3 p.m. today, North Port Performing Arts Center, North Port High School, 6400 W. Price Blvd. Tickets range from \$5-\$11. 426-8479; northportorchestra.com.

A journey to explore a genius

By WALKER MEADE
Correspondent

Dmitri Shostakovich was a romantic — he was not, as many imagine, one of the passionless, hard-to-listen-to composers so annoying to most of us. In fact, he was an admirer of Tchaikovsky, perhaps the greatest romantic of them all, and his family had a photograph of the great man had given to Shostakovich's father on display in his home.

His music has endured because it speaks to audiences' deepest emotions. He composed — in spite of the totalitarian Russia that crippled expression — because his nature compelled him. He once wrote to his friend Isaac Glickman that nobody could stop him "even if they cut off both my hands and I have to hold the pen in my teeth, I shall still go on writing music."

He loved music and he loved women. He married three times, and dedicated a string quartet to each of his wives after the divorce. (Perhaps that's why the

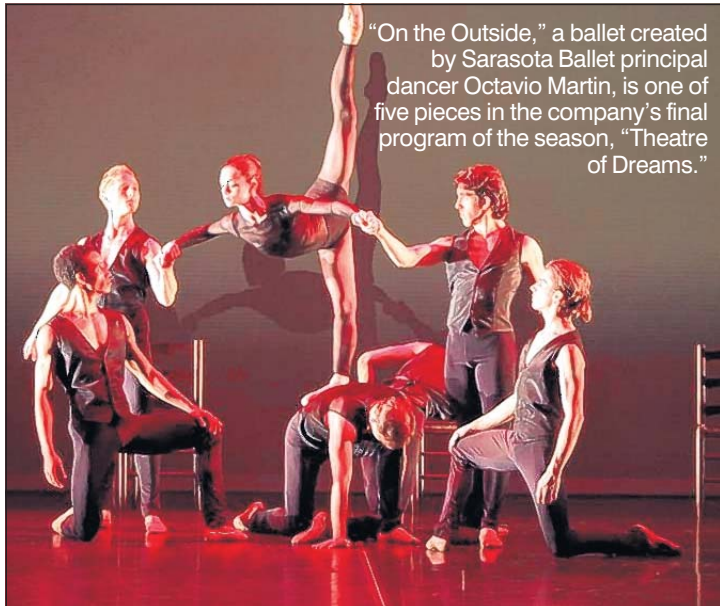
See SHOSTAKOVICH on 8E



Dmitri Shostakovich

CONCERT PREVIEW

SHOSTAKOVICH: TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES. Journeys to Genius, Sarasota Orchestra. 4 and 8 p.m. April 28, Sarasota Opera House, 61 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets \$29-\$45. 953-3434; www.SarasotaOrchestra.org.



"On the Outside," a ballet created by Sarasota Ballet principal dancer Octavio Martin, is one of five pieces in the company's final program of the season, "Theatre of Dreams."

Dancers become dance makers

By CARRIE SEIDMAN
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Two years ago, the Sarasota Ballet's Artistic Director Iain Webb started an unusual tradition for the final program of the season: allowing select company dancers to choreograph works of their own, set them on their peers and work with the staff to create costume and lighting designs.

It is an opportunity that would be unheard of in most regional compa-

See BALLET on 4E

DANCE PREVIEW

THEATRE OF DREAMS, Sarasota Ballet. Choreography by Ricki Bertoni, Jamie Carter, Ricardo Graziano, Kate Honea and Octavio Martin. Mertz Theater, FSU Center for the Performing Arts, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. 8 p.m. April 27; 2 and 8 p.m. April 28, 2 and 7 p.m. April 29. Tickets \$25-\$85. 359-0099, Ext. 101; www.sarasotaballet.org.

An unassuming actor

Asolo Repertory Theatre's **James Clarke** bellows his way to prominence on stage but maintains a low profile



Jimmy Clarke, seen in the Mertz Theatre, is in his 16th season as a member of the resident acting company at Asolo Repertory Theatre. **STAFF**

PHOTO / JAY HANDELMAN



Clockwise from above, James Clarke laughs during a costume fitting for the 2009 Asolo Repertory production of "The Imaginary Invalid," with Douglas Jones in "Hearts" in 2010; and cradling David S. Howard in the 2000 production of "The Count of Monte Cristo."

HERALD-TRIBUNE ARCHIVES



By JAY HANDELMAN,
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Playing the charming Dr. Pat Ryan on the daytime soap opera "Ryan's Hope" in 1982, Jimmy Clarke got his first taste of being "a star."

He didn't like it. Sitting in a bar after a taping in Manhattan, he could feel the attention from the women in the bar, some of them nurses from a nearby hospital who recognized him as the handsome doctor at the fictional Riverside Hospital.

"I felt like a prosciutto in the window of an Italian deli and somebody wanted to eat me. I couldn't believe that television has that power over people," he says.

His reaction explains why, after 16 years as a resident actor at the Asolo Repertory Theatre, he is among the most recognizable and least well-known actors in the company. He appreciates the recognition while he shuns the spotlight. "It's great that people were so interested,

ARTS SARASOTA

See a photo gallery of images from Clarke's career at Asolo Rep Online at www.artssarasota.com

but they weren't interested in me. It was the character I was playing," he says.

"That happens to a lot of people who become really famous. For me, personally, it would be terrible."

Perhaps he's an even better actor than audiences think, because he really is nothing like the often loud, grating bad guys that he finds most interesting to play.

"I've played so many bad people, people are afraid of me, which is just ridiculous," said Clarke. One of his directors once told an interviewer that he was intimidated before actually meeting Clarke, who he then described as "much nicer than most people think he is."

At 58, Clarke enjoys his work

See CLARKE on 6E

Making do with two

By CARRIE SEIDMAN
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How do you create a dance performance when budget, rehearsal time and theater availability are all extremely tight?

Pare down. That was the solution for Moving Ethos Dance Company's upcoming program, "Two," which will feature just the company's two co-founders, Leah Verier-Dunn and Courtney Inzalaco Smith.

DANCE PREVIEW

TWO. Moving Ethos Dance Company. 8 p.m. April 27-28, Cook Theatre, FSU Center for the Performing Arts, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Tickets \$15-\$20. 359-0099, Ext. 101; www.movingethos.com.

"It's been a very eventful last year or two," says Verier-Dunn. "That's not had a lot of time."

Within the last two years both women got married; Inzalaco Smith returned to school for a teaching degree; Verier-Dunn's husband opened a physical therapy practice; and a couple of the other company dancers are

See ETHOS on 4E



Courtney Inzalaco Smith, left, and Leah Verier-Dunn, co-founders of Moving Ethos Dance Company and the dancers in "Two," the company's 2012 spring concert.