



Westerly

Fancy Footwork

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By **Arline A. Fleming**

Journal Staff Writer



Gleb Lyamenkoff, in his seventh season, has danced in Russia and France.

Thomas Nola-Rion

WESTERLY The Sugar Plum Fairy is coming to Westerly.

And she's bringing her Cavalier, and their own dance floor, to participate in Musica Dolce's Seasonal Classics Orchestra Concert on Saturday.

This being The Nutcracker, or at least a portion of it, a snow date has been set for Sunday.

Joseph Ceo, of Richmond, Musica Dolce's director and founder, said he has hoped for years to increase the number of dance performances that come to southern Rhode Island. So he invited members of Festival Ballet of Providence to travel south for a day, and agreed to arrange for the local chamber music group to provide the music. While the entire ballet company won't be making the trip, soloists will, in this case, perhaps the most beloved of soloists: The Sugar Plum Fairy.

Ceo, whose musical arrangements have been used by Festival Ballet, says this might be the first time that any portion of the company has performed in Westerly. He doesn't want it to be the last.

"I think part of the problem is that there needs to be a large hall that lends itself to ballet and opera," he said.

WHEN THE DANCERS come to Westerly, they'll bring their own floor, in effect, he said. Lisa LaDew, the ballet's managing director, said the dancers will roll out what is called a marley floor, a rubberized product "that protects against slipping."

Dancing the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy will be Vilia Putrius, in her second season with Festival Ballet. Born in Lithuania, she was a soloist with the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet for six years, touring to Holland, Denmark, Greece, France, Egypt, Japan and the U.S. She was a principal dancer with the Ballet Arlington, in Texas, in 2001 and joined the Boston Ballet in 2004.

Her Cavalier will be Gleb Lyamenkoff, a native of Orsha, Belarus, who received his training at the Dance Academy of Belarus and studied and danced in Russia, France and the United States. This is his seventh season with Festival Ballet.

They will dance to music provided by the 30 Musica Dolce musicians under Ceo's direction. Ceo, an adjunct professor of music at Salve Regina University in Newport, retired from the University of Rhode Island Music Department in 1993, after 17 years there.

THE PERFORMANCE also will include the premiere of "A Christmas Rhapsody" by Bradford resident Paul Rosenbloom, Musica Dolce's composer-in-residence. Ann Samuelson, the orchestra's concertmaster, will be soloist. Other works to be featured are Respighi's "Ancient Airs and Dances" and the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah.

Meanwhile, works by more than 25 artists from the Artists' Cooperative Gallery of Westerly will be shown and sold on the hall's lower floor, beginning at 6 p.m.

Rosenbloom is a Harvard graduate and received his master's degree and doctorate in composition from Cornell. In addition to his many musical affiliations, including the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, he works at EVAS, a Westerly firm specializing in adaptive computer technology for people who have visual disabilities.

He is one of the five original members of Musica Dolce. Musica Dolce — which means sweet music — draws its membership from throughout the state.

The group makes a point of presenting several performances each year, designed especially for young audiences, as it recently did at Westerly Middle School. It is part of the group's mission to introduce students to classical chamber music and its instruments through concerts in the schools, and through a youth orchestra.

Said Ceo: "You hope you're building audiences."

Musica Dolce and Festival Ballet perform at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at Westerly's George Kent Performance Hall, 119 High St. Tickets are \$25, \$30, and \$15 for students and seniors. Children under 12 are free. For information, call (401) 315-0373.

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