

Ron Davis is back in town with fine-tuned SymphRonica

BY TED SHAW, THE WINDSOR STAR JANUARY 28, 2012



An orchestral work by Toronto jazz artist Ron Davis, seen here performing with the WSO in 2009, has Windsor's fingerprints all over it. SymphRonica, which Davis and his trio perform tonight and Sunday with Windsor Symphony Orchestra, will also be recorded as a CD on Sunday at the Chrysler Theatre.

Photograph by: Windsor Star, files

An orchestral work by Toronto jazz artist Ron Davis has Windsor's fingerprints all over it.

SymphRonica, which Davis and his trio perform tonight and Sunday with Windsor Symphony Orchestra, then record as a CD on Sunday at the Chrysler Theatre, came out of talks Davis had with WSO's John Morris Russell in February 2009.

The work had its world première at the time, but Davis and Russell have fine-tuned it in preparation for this weekend's concerts and the recording session.

When Davis was last in Windsor, everyone was stoked at the WSO's having been nominated for a Juno Award for its first recording under Russell, Peter & The Wolf.

Almost exactly three years later, that enthusiasm is overflowing.

Davis, 54, said the idea for SymphRonica actually goes back to 2007 when former WSO executive director Jay Katz asked him if he had an orchestral work.

"Ironically, I'd just started thinking about it," said Davis. "I was trained as a classical musician and turned to jazz as I got older. But I was always interested in linking the two in one work."

Davis had employed classical effects on his 2005 CD, Shimmering Rhythm, where his jazz trio was

backed by a cello, viola, and two clarinets.

SymphRonica is more than just an exercise in stirring the musical pot, said Davis.

"It was inspired by the whole community of Windsor," he said. "It's good news rather than another report about layoffs and plant closures."

Concert times for Davis and WSO are tonight at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2: 30 p.m. at Chrysler Theatre, St. Clair Centre for the Arts. Tickets \$11 to \$58 available at mywso.ca or by calling 519-973-1238.

WSO to county - you count: Windsor Symphony has no plans to do away with its Essex County concerts.

In a news story this week, there was a suggestion WSO might move its entire concert schedule to the Capitol Theatre.

But executive director Jeth Mill was replying to a reporter's question about how much might be saved if everything went to the Capitol.

"We have absolutely no plans to pull our performances out of Tecumseh, Leamington and Amherstburg," said WSO spokeswoman Shelley Sharpe.

The annual county excursions are a major promotional boost, not to mention a source of revenue for the community groups which host the events.

Dog days at WLMT: Talk about barking up the wrong tree. Windsor Light Music Theatre may get more than it bargains for when it opens up auditions Feb. 4 to a pack of size-challenged mutts.

The group is looking for a talented chihuahua, or a similar-sized canine, to play Bruiser in its May production of Legally Blonde. Auditions will be held at WLMT's rehearsal studios, 2491 Jos. St. Louis Ave.

"Bruiser is as much a part of the cast as any of our other actors," said director David Burrows, "so it was important for us to hold auditions to find just the right chihuahua to fill those shoes."

The dog must be able to bark on visual command and stay put in a carrying case for several minutes at a time.

According to a WLMT spokesman, chihuahuas will be given priority but the group may opt for a different breed if one can't be found.

So here's your chance to manage a temperamental star. Call WLMT at 519-974-6593 for an audition.

Mark Bragg returns: Newfoundland singer-songwriter Mark Bragg opens a brief Ontario-Quebec tour Feb. 17 at Windsor's Phog Lounge, 157 University Ave. W.

Bragg is coming around again in support of his 2011 release, Your Kiss, which has been nominated

for the Atlantis Music Prize at the East Coast Music Awards in March.

For a sample of Bragg's work, go to southernsouls.ca/mark-bragg. His website is markbragg.com.

Art show continues: Three of Windsor's prominent artists are showcased in an single exhibit at SB Contemporary Art, 1017 Church St.

The exhibit, titled Are You In The Room? features recent work by Matthew Hawtin, Dean Carson and Jim Mroczkowski. It continues through March 3.

Carson is a member of the board at Artcite Inc., while Hawtin and Mroczkowski have recently relocated in Windsor after living in Great Britain and northern Ontario, respectively.

SB Contemporary Art is a commercial gallery operated by Sarah Beveridge. She can be reached at 519-819-0536.

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