Music festival brings week of performances

KATHY PAZ  Staff Writer

The New Music Miami International Society of Contemporary Music Festival Series hopes to mirror the diversity found at FIU through its variety of collaborations and performances in a week-long celebration.

Since its inception, the festival has developed and expanded significantly each year. The FIU New Music Ensemble, FIU Laptop and Electronic Arts Ensemble, the NODUS Ensemble, founded by Program Director and Professor Orlando Garcia, is the contemporary professional chamber music ensemble currently residing at the University. The group’s dynamic varies from concert to concert, depending on the material being presented.

The New Music Miami ISCM Festival, a rather significant part of the school’s program, began almost two decades ago under the direction of FSU alumna competing for Miss Nicaragua title

PRISCILLA FERRUFINO  Photo Editor

With the date of the Miss Nicaragua 2011 pageant looming, 26-year-old FIU alumna Priscilla Suzetie Ferrufino is closer than ever to her hope of wearing the crown.

The native-born Nicaraguan has only competed once before in the Miss Hispahanid pageant in Miami in 2004 where she made it to the top five.

Unhappy with the pageant system in the United States, Ferrufino moved back to her native country last December in the hopes of entering the Miss Nicaragua pageant in 2011.

Her decision to move back to the Central American country came from her belief that U.S. pageants were based more on popularity and less on talent.

Ferrufino graduated from FIU in 2007 with degrees in anthropology and sociology. It took several years for her to work and raise the money she needed to leave her family in Miami to enter the Nicaragua pageant.

“It has always been her dream,” said Ferrufino’s sister Melissa Del Toro, who is currently majoring in business administration and entrepreneurship at FIU.

Included in the final 14 girls chosen, Ferrufino has made it past the initial elimination for the televised pageant on Feb. 26. If she makes it to the final five, Ferrufino will be asked questions about her goals as the potential Miss Nicaragua.

She has expressed that her greatest goal as the potential winner of Miss Nicaragua would be to act on her platform to responsibly develop tourism in her home country.

“A lot of my platform is based on my final paper that I had to write in order to graduate, which was to find a business to eliminate poverty in my country, I based all of my anthropological research based on that question,” said Ferrufino.

The current problems that Nicaragua faces truly concern Ferrufino.

Most of the Nicaraguan population live on less than a dollar a day, and one of the ways to bring income to the lower classes would be to increase tourism.

Ferrufino credits Quinta Esperanza Verde, a coffee farm that has been recognized internationally for its achievements, as a source of inspiration.

Quinta Esperanza Verde, which is located in San Ramon, Matagalpa in Nicaragua is an organic coffee farm that offers eco-tours and gives back 20 percent of their profits to the community.

When looking for ways to develop tourism, Ferrufino believes this farm is a healthy model for the rest of the nation.

“It’s really amazing and it’s something the nation can benefit from. One of the best things we have is our environment; volcanoes, mountains and beaches.”

If she wins the crown, the title would grant Ferrufino the access to politicians and businesses that could further her goal.

“What I love is being able to do something that I love for my country and my people. I want to make a difference and set a good example for younger generations,” said Ferrufino.

The winner of Miss Nicaragua will be eligible to go on and compete in the Miss Universe pageant.

“We’ve never had a Miss Nicaragua be crowned Miss Universe. The furthest was in 2007 when the girl made it to the top ten. We don’t know what it is to be Miss Universe.
Borders Files For Bankruptcy, To Close Stores

Borders Group Inc., the second-largest U.S. book-store chain, filed for bankruptcy protection, after sharp sales declines that made it impossible to manage its crushing debt load, and it plans to close nearly one-third of its stores.

Its inability to garner significant online business and its absence from the growing digital books market have made it difficult for Borders to compete with larger rivals Barnes & Noble Inc. and Amazon.com Inc. Borders Group President Mike Edwards said in a statement that the chain “doesn’t have the capital resources it needs to be a viable competitor.”

IBM Challenge continues as Watson takes a huge lead

Round two of the Jeopardy! IBM Challenge continued Tuesday night as past champions Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter returned to face off against the supercomputing superpower, Watson.

The first round ended with Rutter and Watson tied at $5,000 and Jennings trailing at $2,000. Tuesday night’s showdown played out very differently as the night’s showdown played out very differently as the IBM creation pulled far ahead of its meagre competitors over the course of the episode.

Despite making a few flubs on key questions, a high bidder Daily Double and the Final Jeopardy question in the last round, Watson took a huge lead.

FERRUFINO, page 1

because we’ve never been exposed, just participated. [If I won Miss Universe] I could attract the attention of a bigger market, which could attract more tourists to Nicaragua and leave [the nation] in a good position,” said Ferrufino.

Currently staying with family in Nicaragua’s capital, Managua, Ferrufino has support around the globe from her family members.

Her mother, father and sister, Del Toro, live in Miami, while other family members live in California and Canada.

“Everyone is very supporting and everyone wants her to win. We may not be there with her, but we’re supporting her. The only hard part is missing her,” said Del Toro.

Ferrufino has also begun to attract the support of the Nicaraguan public.

The local Nicaraguan press in Managua has predicted that she will make it to the top five.

GPE, page 1

to make all purchases available via PantherCard.

After signing a new contract with banking giant Wells Fargo, the University plans to make the purchase of any goods on campus, potentially off-campus as well, much easier.

“Instead of having to carry around cash and scrambling for loose change, students merely have to swipe their PantherCard,” Hamilton said.

To which Parking and Transportation hopes to have a PantherCard system up and running in their buses by summer.

This way, students will no longer have to worry about carrying around tickets.

So far this new policy will only affect GC as the info desk in the Wolfe University Center, on the Biscayne Bay Campus, will still be accepting cash for GPE tickets, as will the Parking and Transportation offices on both campuses.

Policy only affects Graham Center

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Hostile atmosphere Athletics' creation

As I walked into the press conference, the tension in the room was evident. There was a single thought on just about everyone’s mind: How was Wittels handling the pressure? The basketball student-athlete who was answer questions about baseball, head coach Turtle Thomas was optimistic about the season-opening series Friday against Southeastern Louisiana.

We’ve got a very veteran ball club coming back. Thomas replied, with twenty returning players, nine hitters, and 11 pitchers. Our hitters lead the Sun Belt Conference with a .337 batting average.

The Sun Belt championship isn’t the only thing on the line this season for the Golden Panthers. Wittels currently holds a 56-game hitting streak, which is two shy of the hit streak record set by Robin Ventura.

If things go according to plan, Wittels will be able to break the record on Feb. 20 during the series finale against visiting Southeastern Louisiana.

I’m ready to go this season,” Wittels said. “I’m here for whatever my team needs me to do.”

When asked about his hit streak and the Sun Belt presson Player of the Year award given to him last week, the sophomore did not give much thought to the hype.

“I’m ready to go,” Wittels repeated. “Pression awards don’t matter to me. I’m here, I’ve been waiting a long time for Friday to come.”

Wittels addresses the media for fi rst time since allegations

Wittels handled the press conference well. He said the most important thing is that he continues to focus on baseball, and not allow anything else to distract him from that goal. He also said that he will take a step back in his personal life and make sure that he is not letting anything get in the way of his performance on the fi eld.

Andrew Leon Staff Writer

Strictly Baseball ahead of Super Saturday.

The Golden Panthers were hoping to keep the conversation focused on opening weekend during a midweek press conference on Feb. 16.

Athletic Director Pete Garcia cleared Wittels to play on Fri. in an opening statement to the media.

“Here you’re innocent till proven guilty,” Garcia said. “Therefore, Garret Wittels will be playing on Friday and this weekend.”

He continued, asking the media to keep questions focused on what will be happening on the diamond this season.

“As far as questions, you can ask whatever questions you want,” Garcia continued. “And we can answer what ever questions we want. We are here to answer questions about baseball and baseball only.”

Regardless, many questions during the session were geared towards the allegations Wittels is facing rather than what will be happening on the field.

Questions came early and often towards the FIU infielder, who mostly dodged questions aimed at his legal matters as Athletics personnel asked repeatedly for questions to remain focused on baseball.

STAYING OPTIMISTIC

When questions did turn to baseball, head coach Tartle Thomas was optimistic about the season-opening series this Fri., against Southeastern Louisiana.

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As I walked into the press conference, the tension in the room was evident. There was a single thought on just about everyone’s mind: How was Wittels handling the pressure? The university chose to answer the questions is a different case. The entire athletics department took on an ugly fi restorm that had been created.

It became evident that they needed the media, as FIU opened the questions to anything. Whether the players chose to answer the questions is a different case. The entire press conference turned into a media circus. Did the athletic department really think they could stop media outlets from asking questions about the allegations?

When the questions were fi red, it became relentless. The athletic department instigated the media circus. Telling media members they can’t ask a certain question, and then threatening their coverage, would only spark a controversy.

I looked like Pete Garcia, athletic director at the university, may have quickly regretted giving free reign on the questions as the barrage of queries about the allegations ensued. At one point, Garcia appeared to be uncomfortable. He motioned to a media relations staff member in a way that would appear that he was trying to have the conference stopped due to the fi restorm that had been created.

As journalists, our job is to be consistent. We antagonize so we can get information. It is not our fault that we are trying to cover a news story.

I didn’t want to know about how Wittels trained in the off-season. I didn’t want to know about what Wittels’ superstitions are. Most of the media didn’t want to know either. We wanted to know how Wittels was dealing with the pressure of juggling the accusations along with the streak.

Wittels handled the press conference well. He said the right things and probably handled the questions like any 21-year old would.

Given the situation, it would have become a circus anyway.

The athletic department put themselves into a situation where they could not turn back. They went down a path that did not help them save face. The athletic department tried to protect one of their own, along with their image, and they failed.

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HURRY! OFFER EXPIRES APRIL 26, 2011

$8.99
PETITE SIRLOIN OR HALF RACK OF RIBS

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KATHY PAZ  
Staff Writer

Celebrating its 48th anniversary, the Coconut Grove Arts Festivals will hit South Bayshore Drive for a weekend of color.

Taking place throughout Presidents’ Day weekend, this year’s fair has a lot to live up to. In 2010, Sunshine Artist Magazine ranked it among the top three fine arts festivals in the nation.

During past years, attendance has soared to over 100,000 and millions of dollars of art have been sold.

Having received over 1,200 applicants, the Festival will feature and showcase the work of over 300 artists from across the nation including some of hometown status.

In addition to more traditional media such as painting, photography and sculptures, artists in the 2011 line-up expands to include the contemporary canvases including fiber, glass, metalwork and wood.

“Our arts festival brings the most talented and creative artists from all over the world to Coconut Grove,” said Monty Trainer, president of the Arts Festival.

“South Floridians have a great appreciation of the arts, and every year we are proud to welcome artists who exhibit for the first time.”

The CGAF officially kicks off on Feb. 19 with an exclusive Palette Breakfast event at the Ritz-Carlton Coconut Grove.

Though it carries a $100 price tag to attend, a reservation includes VIP credentials for admission and access to the Hospitality area throughout the entire fair.

A guest of honor at the Breakfast is Guy Harvey, the famous marine wildlife artist and the man behind this year’s poster.

Known for his depictions of sea creatures in their natural setting, Harvey is as much a painter as he is a conservation advocate.

“With Biscayne Bay serving as its backdrop, it would seem only natural that the Festival select an artist who represents the true South Floridian spirit and champions the inspirational beauty of the place we call home,” said Trainer.

As if the task of adding color to transform the streets of the Grove into an artistic playground wasn’t enough, the Coconut Grove Arts Festival further expands its itinerary by including culinary, music and performance art components.

The Culinary Pavilion Showcase will provide fair-goers with the opportunity to view demonstrations aimed at highlighting certain foods and providing nutritional and preparation tips.

As far as performing and musical arts go, expect to see a lot of local talent present.

The Coconut Grove Arts and Historical Association, a nonprofit organization, make the Coconut Grove Arts Festival possible.

Since its creation, it has awarded over $100,000 to local, art students.

Other proceeds are put towards a building fund that the Association hopes will one day serve as a permanent home to the CGAF.

The Festival runs for three days starting Saturday along the streets of McFarlane Road, South Bayshore Drive and Pan American Drive.

Special events and entertainment vary from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily with admission at $10 per person.

Residents in the 33133 zip code will receive a special discount on presentation of residency proof.

The Grove Arts Festival offers activities for people of all ages. Entrance to the festival is $10 and is open from Friday to Sunday.
Fistfuls of Tech

Major mobile carriers hit or miss on 4G coverage

COLUMNEST

JORGE MILLER

Having observed the mobile carrier industry for some time now, the idea of “4G” service has been the most notable and amusing kerfuffle to befoul this industry.

The 4G wave sweeping over the nation comes in many flavors but all share the same goal, to make your phone’s Internet connection faster, or as fast as your home’s connection.

As far as the larger trend goes this is definitely the right direction; there aren’t too many people that will argue why you shouldn’t have faster speeds on your mobile device. As mobile computing takes the mainsteam we have to keep in mind that the connection, specifically the networks behind them, have to keep up.

Honestly, Verizon Wireless and Sprint really have it together when it comes to keeping up. Sprint was the first out of the gate with their WiMAX service that they deployed in 2010. Coupled with competitive pricing and a slow and steady roll out have yielded them a pretty sturdy yet still growing network.

Verizon Wireless also rolled out its new 4G Long-Term Evolution network early this year across all major cities. According to a spokesman for the company, LTE service is available from the Keys to Jacksonville and expects to finish deployment in the state by 2013.

The big, red carrier provided a solid and reliable 4G network right from the beginning, which I have to say I was pretty impressed with. Shadowing ever Sprint, it’s clear that Verizon will be the carrier for the next decade. But I think it was part preparation and part luck. The reason I describe 4G as a kerfuffle, the word that popped up on my “word of the day” app this morning, is because it not only has it had a positive impact on mobile computing but it acts as a magnifying glass, shining a focused beam of sunlight on the weaker carriers, like AT&T.

AT&T and T-Mobile have taken an interesting approach when it comes to 4G services. Instead of investing in and deploying reliable LTE networks, they just went ahead and rebranded their existing networks as 4G.

I expect this sort of behavior from T-Mobile, who is the small fish in the big pond and needs to compete however they can. But AT&T? Come on.

The Wall Street Journal reported on this very move where they quoted AT&T Mobility CEO Ralph de la Vega as equating “4G” as an increase in speed, not a change of networks.

It’s clear that AT&T is just deceiving customers at this point. HSPA plus, the network upgrade AT&T utilizes and LTE are very different infrastructures. LTE blows away HSPA plus any day of the week.

In a recent review of the AT&T’s Motorola Atrix, Engadget noted that the 4G-branded device was pulling in speeds of about 1.5 mbps, with the occasional spike to 2.2 mbps. They compared the device with an iPhone 4, which is not HSPA plus, and it pulled in 2 to 3 mbps in the same spots.

Another question this raises is what happens when AT&T begins deployment of its own LTE network towards the end of the year? Will it be a 4.5G/5G?

AT&T is not T-Mobile. They have money and need to start spending some in order to catch up on the already lengthy lead that Verizon has on it.

Fistfuls of Tech is a weekly column on all things technology.
Professor tardiness insulting to students

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Contributing Writer

An important part of any work ethic is punctuality. One place where I think professionals should be punctual is at colleges and universities. Here at the University, I have seen many professors that walk into their class rooms about 10 to 15 minutes late and then complain when some of their students occasionally walk in late.

Tardiness is not only annoying, but disrespectful. Professors find it wrong for a student to walk in during their lecture, but I find it disrespectful for a professor to keep their students waiting. I believe that they think they have all the power, so they do not care if they have us waiting.

Having lack of respect and being tardy shows me that they think students have no interest in what they do. If there is one thing I cannot stand, is when I am sitting in a room ready to learn, and then I only get 45 minutes of lecture time instead of the full hour and 15 minutes. I pay for my courses and I expect to get my money’s worth.

I have a professor this semester that usually arrives late, and that annoys me. I always show up to class early, sometimes up to 15 minutes before class begins, and not once have I seen my teacher before. Last time I checked, according to her syllabus, one thing she does not tolerate is tardiness.

I have kept track of how late she comes in each time. The latest she has walked in was 12 minutes after class is supposed to begin. After coming in late, she has put up her Power Point and figure out why the projector is not working correctly.

Several students experience this dilemma themselves. Matthew Wittryngham, junior, journalism, said, “Multiple professors in the school of journalism have accused us of not caring for our classes by showing up late. However, they respond the following class session by showing up 10 minutes late and lecturing for only 30. It is an odd phenomenon that occurs for the sheer fact that it is hypocritical of them to do so.”

If a teacher shows up late to class, then he or she should not complain about students occasionally being tardy. I have had teachers who are punctual, and if they did show up late a couple times, they were generous with tardiness.

I think that professors should always arrive on time. They should be there a few minutes before to prepare for their lecture. If a student is late, then it is their responsibility to push themselves to arrive at the proper time next class.

“I am not saying that we should not do something to be done to keep us safe, but there is a need for level-headedness and a need for treading lightly. It is always tempting to go for the most comprehensive plan, the thing that will definitely work, but these kinds of policies can quickly escalate out of control and leave the very people you are trying to protect powerless.”

In lieu of reactionary policy that could very easily compromise our basic freedoms, the government should be looking to legislate gun sales or some sort of system to catch potential murderers before they happen. We cannot lose our rights and freedoms until we give them away. These policies, with their emphasis on a subjective assessment of what is “threatening,” is moving in that way.

I am not saying we should not do something. I am suggesting we make sure what we do now is not going to hurt us down the line by setting up policies that could potentially attempt to legislate how we think or what we say.
Sister Hazel really captures their fans, or "hazelnuts" as some followers call themselves, in an upbeat spirit switching from electric to acoustic within their songs. The band brings that added country flavor to their independent record label, which produces a variety of music elements from folk rock to country. The ability to bring that diversity of various songwriters really gets us, the listeners, to hear about different hardships, loves, and faith.

The alternativeBreaks website describes, "Cost shouldn’t prevent any student from participating." alternativeBreaks offers programs at a fee of $150 for domestic trips and a fee mixed at $350 for international projects. This commitment to low costs however, has put some alternativeBreaks projects at risk due to its dependence on donations. AlternativeBreaks regularly checks in with groups as a means of monitoring their fundraising progress. If groups are off track, alternatives are presented, such as switching project sites, shortening the length of the project, or looking at ways to reduce project expenses.

However, if a group does not meet their fundraising goals, the trip is cancelled. “This year so far, university wide, we’ve had one trip canceled and two teams merged to one team/trip to combine their efforts," said Ana Perez, director of Alternative Spring Break at BBC. With a target of raising $2,000, and nearly $500 raised in the past two weeks, this group of nine participants has their hands full in the upcoming month. The alternativeBreaks Jamaica group will host their carwashes on Tuesdays for the remainder of February from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. in front of Academic Two. For more information, or to make a donation to alternativeBreaks, visit www2.fiu.edu/~abreak/.

Hazelnuts rejoice: Sister Hazel will rock Revolution Live

Gainesville based rock alternative band, Sister Hazel performs at Revolution Live this Friday, Feb.18. Combining elements of folk rock and rock ‘n’ roll, the band strays away from the grunge and dark feel to focus on more optimistic music. Just from the name of the band, you can tell the story of their music. Sister Hazel Williams was a nun in a Gainesville church that accepted children during the 1970s and 80s to stay warm in her shelter. The idea of unconditional concern is what drove the members to take on the name for their group.

In 1994 the group released their self-titled album with their independent record label, Croakin' Poets. Upon releasing their second album, "...Somewhere more familiar" and selling 30,000 copies, the band signed with Universal Records in 1997. The label re-released their album later in the year and their hit single "All For You" reached number 11 on the Billboard 100 charts. Universal gave the band the opportunity to work with producers who worked with top chart bands like Cheap Trick, Guns N’ Roses, and 3 Doors Down. But in 2003, the band split from Universal and continued with their own independent label releasing five more albums. Fame came to the band not just through their intelligent way of expressing themselves through music, but even Ford Motor Company used the band as the face of the company’s new Sync Technology. Singer Hazel also appeared in movies like “The Wedding Planner,” “American Wedding,” and “10 Things I Hate About You.” Sister Hazel really captures their fans, or "hazelnuts" as some followers call themselves, in an upbeat spirit switching from electric to acoustic within their songs. The band brings that added country flavor to their independent record label, which produces a variety of music elements from folk rock to country. The ability to bring that diversity of various songwriters really gets us, the listeners, to hear about different hardships, loves, and faith.

“The songwriter is the person who decides what road we’re going to go down,” said guitarist Ryan Newell.

Recently releasing their 12-song album “Heartland Highway” in October 2010, the band tours about 100 times a year and still actively participates in charitable work. So to involve yourself in something different from Swing music or Hip Hop be sure to check them out this weekend.

Impromptu is a bi-weekly column on local musicians performing locally, the columnist pays her own way and receives no special treatment.

SISTER HAZEL

- Time: 8 p.m.
- When: Feb. 18
- How much: $30