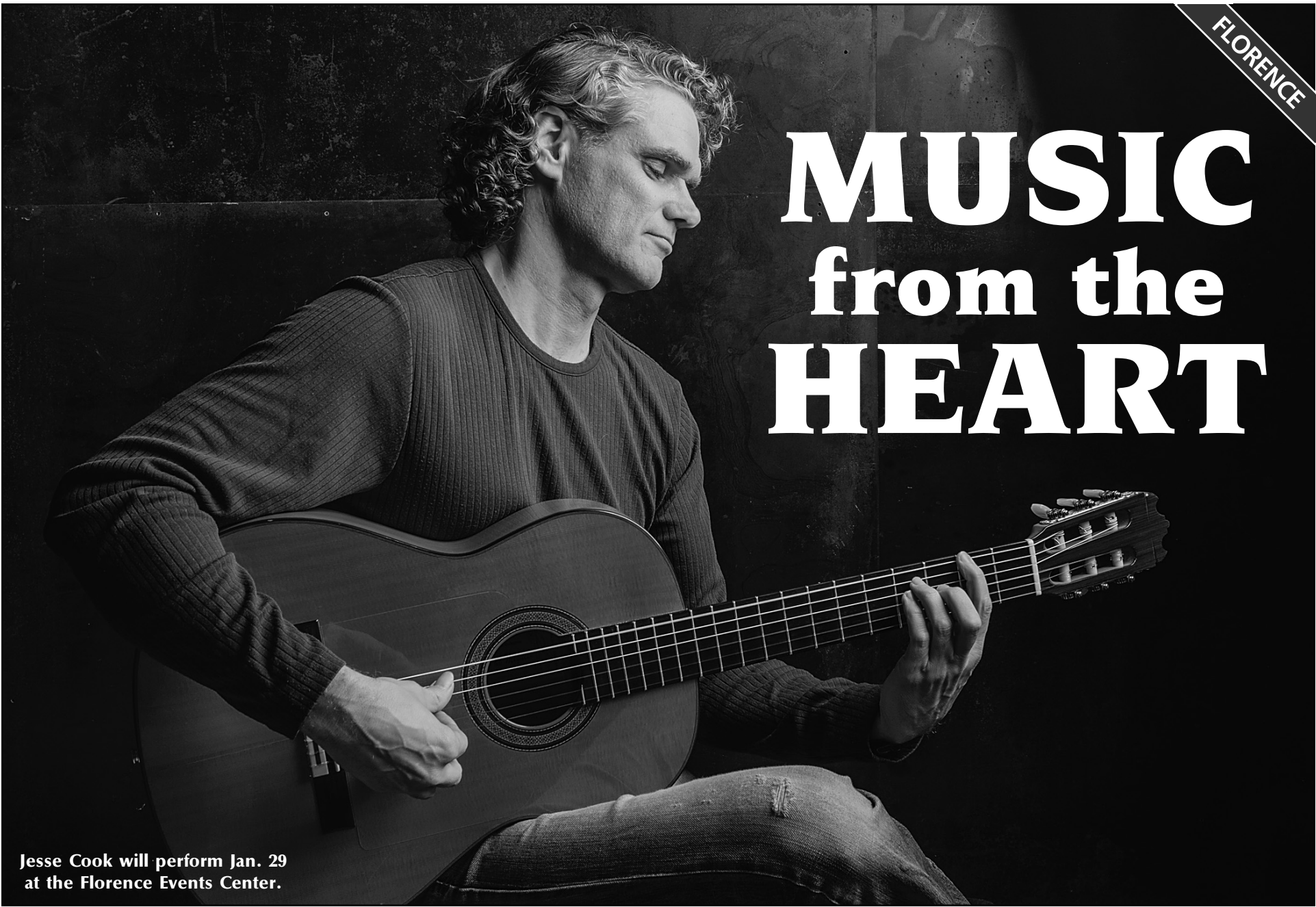


FLORENCE

MUSIC from the HEART



Jesse Cook will perform Jan. 29
at the Florence Events Center.

COURTESY PHOTO

Virtuoso guitarist and international favorite, Jesse Cook comes to Florence

While most don't get the chance to dine in the cafés of Seville or dance in the clubs in Havana, you will experience a sense of that passionate cultural vibe through the music of guitarist Jesse Cook and his band.

Jesse and his group of multitalented musicians perform at 7 p.m., Jan. 29, at the Florence Events Center. Only about 100 tickets remain available. He will also give a pre-concert talk, free to the public, at 6:15 p.m.

Cook's music has been featured on episodes of "Sex and the City," "The Chris Isaak Show" and during several Olympic Games. Though not a jazz artist, per se, he is firmly entrenched as a jazz fest favorite, and his comfortable Spanish guitar-meets-world music formula thrills concertgoers worldwide. His laid-back style draws the audience in while his varied musical styles entertain on many levels.

Born in Paris to photographer John Cook and TV producer Heather Cook, young Jesse constantly moved between Paris, the Arles region of France, and Barcelona where he picked up an interest in flamenco music.

Cook proved to be a child protégé, enrolling in the prestigious Eli Kassner Guitar Academy in Toronto after his parents divorced and his mother moved him to

Canada. From there it was on to the Royal Conservatory of Music, York University, and Berklee College in Boston. During visits to his father's, Cook became acquainted with next-door neighbor Nicholas Reyes, lead vocalist for the renowned Gypsy Kings flamenco band.

"When I started as a kid, it was as a classical guitarist with some flamenco training," said Cook in an interview for Canada's The Music Express. "I went to jazz school and learned jazz improvisation and later turned back to flamenco. Now what I do now is none of the above. I have an esoteric taste in music. My musical style is more of a fusion... I make music I like to hear, (and audiences seem to) love it."

Online reviews for Cook, his music, and his band are effusive: "His was just

the most amazing concert. Jesse and his musicians are so talented; they feel their music and actually brought me to tears twice!" "Jesse Cook and his band put on an intimate and amazing performance. He takes his audience to another level in his artistry." "Jesse Cook and his small band filled (venue) with amazing music. They had us clapping along to their infectious rhythm. I had a great time. Go and see Jesse Cook in concert!"

Following Cook's concert, Ballet Fantastique brings the premiere of Dragon and the Night Queen: Celtic Stories, on Feb. 20.

Tickets are \$30, or \$10 for those under 18, and can be purchased at the Florence Events Center box office, 715 Quince St.; or by phone at 541-997-1994 or online at eventscenter.org and SEAcoastEA.org.