Concert is a final note on Davis collection's 30-year history with FAU

Gillian Davis is a native of England and a longtime Boynton Beach resident since 1956, when the city was mostly farmland and pineapple groves. She has lived and taught dance in the city until the late 1980s.

She was married for 26 years to Richard Beattie Davis, a British musicologist and collector of first-edition books, musical scores and manuscripts, until his death in 2008. She was involved with her husband's collections and worked closely with him.

The couple divided their time between Boynton Beach and Kent, England.

Davis' collection, comprising more than 700 items dating from the 1790s to the first two decades of the 20th century, have been housed at FAU's Wimberly Library since 1983 and will be transferred to the Bodleian Library at Oxford University in England.

Highlights from the collection will be performed in a Beattie Davis tribute concert, "From Vikings to Fabergé - Enjoy the Spirit of Russia!", performed by the FAU Chamber Soloists on Sunday.

"This concert, the final in a series of five, is the end of 30 years involvement with the special collections department at the library. It is special that so many fine musicians will perform to honor Richard and his memory," she said.

"My husband's collection of rare music scores has been available for research since 1983 (the year that we were married) when then-president, Dr. Helen Popovitch, welcomed the chance to bring this special resource to South Florida."

Beattie Davis' passion for Russian music led him around the world amassing a vast anthology of first and early editions of Western and Russian music.

The FAU collection includes many first editions of Beethoven, Hummel, Russian chamber works and many other rare scores.

Highlights of the collection, which has been called a "treasure trove of 19th and early 20th century music," include a numbered copy of the first edition of the full score (a limited edition No. 12) of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Tale of Tsar Saltan," a Russian opera written in 1889, first editions of Rimsky-Korsakov's three penultimate operas, and operas by A.N. Serov, A. Rubinstein and N. Tscherepnin.

The collected works also feature full scores of first German editions of the nine Beethoven symphonies and several other of his orchestral works, a miscellaneous collection of 19th century editions of choral, orchestral and piano music, and more than 60 editions of piano works by J.N. Hummel.

Davis worked alongside her husband to co-author his magnum opus, a 368-page book titled, "The Beauty of Belaieff," the definitive reference work on Russian music publisher M.P. Belaieff.

The book, which took eight years to write and another 12 to publish, is now in its second printing, and is a definitive "who's who" of 19th century Russian composers and is fully annotated with...