

# Bach's Birthday Performances at National Music Museum

By Christine Feltes  
For the Plain Talk

Johann Sebastian Bach's music filled the halls of the National Music Museum last Saturday as performers and an appreciative audience gathered to celebrate the composer's 330th birthday.

This musical happening in Vermillion is part of an international effort called Bach in the Subways, which aims to increase appreciation of classical music in today's world.

Patricia Bornhofen, manager of communications for the museum as well as the event's coordinator in Vermillion, emphasized the importance of introducing Bach to larger audience.

"Bach in the Subways is supposed to be random, with people erupting into Bach, to celebrate Bach's birthday," she said. "And

more than to celebrate Bach, to encourage people to pay attention to classical music."

The musical offerings began with Darin Wadley, a professor of music at the university, and his son performing a few of Bach's works on a vibraphone and a tuba.

"We've never done this before," Wadley said. "These instruments didn't exist in Bach's time."

They were joined by Holly Haddad on the clarinet to play a short chorale piece by Bach.

Bornhofen reiterated that one of the ideas behind the event is to allow people to hear classical music played on many different instruments.

"Stereotypically, it's strings and keyboards, but actually there are arrangements for everything," she said, noting the assumption that classical music can only be

performed on some instruments. One of the goals of the movement is, according to Bornhofen, "to show people that classical music can be played on a variety of different instruments."

Of course, more traditional instruments than the vibraphone had their moments at the event. Lorrie Thomas and the University of South Dakota bassoon group played several pieces that Bach specifically wrote for bassoon.

Then Arian Sheets, curator of stringed instruments, played several of Bach's works on an 18th century viola which had received some modifications in the 19th century. The instrument was very similar to instruments that would have been played while the composer was alive.

"That's part of the spirit of this, people play what they play,

and that shows how Bach can be re-contextualized," Bornhofen stated.

In the afternoon, three pianists exploring the museum gave an impromptu performance of several Bach pieces on a Clavinova piano with permission of the museum staff.

The day's performances concluded in the afternoon with a rendition of Bach's Prelude in C on an electric piano by Rhye Leonard.

Bach in the Subways was founded in 2011 by a New York cellist, Dale Henderson, who saw a need to introduce Bach's music into ordinary situations. As the name implies, Henderson began by performing Bach's works in the subways of New York. The movement has since expanded across the globe, with performances this year in 129 different

cities as diverse as New York, Tokyo, Chihuahua, and Vermillion, according to its website: [bachinthesubways.com](http://bachinthesubways.com).

"Every year they do it, it grows. There are major concerts being done in some place, as well as people playing in subways, people on street corners, people doing marathons," Bornhofen told the audience.

It is due in large part to the National Music Museum that the event could take place in Vermillion. And, it looked like the event held last Saturday at the museum was helping, as stated on [bachinthesubways.com](http://bachinthesubways.com), "to sow the seeds for future generations of classical music lovers by generating public interest and excitement for the art form."

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one in Vermillion," Dudley said. "If I don't mention anyone by name, it's because there's too many to thank."

Dudley will be traveling to Washington D.C. to represent South Dakota in the National Spelling Bee to take place May 24-May 29.

According to the Scripps Spelling Bee website, no South Dakotan has ever won the National Spelling Bee.

According to Dudley, that's not going to be the case for long.

"I want to win the National Spelling Bee but the reason for that actually has nothing to do with spelling at all," Dudley said. "The real reason I want to win is so that I can meet President Barack Obama. If I don't win I'll probably

just come up with another really big feat to meet him. I'll invent a longer-lasting light bulb or a shrink ray or something."

Dudley said he already knows exactly what he'll say when he meets the President.

"When I do meet Obama I'm going to explain to him how grateful I am that he made this nation what it is," he said.

During the bee Saturday Dudley correctly spelled spectrum, crescent, hassock, falsetto, biblical, geononics, animosity, amnesia, chary, vulcanize, benevolent, umlaut, regime, mariachi, wanton, bowery, marzipan, staccato, amicable, yamen, amphibious, alchemy, garibaldi, to-peng, corpuscle, paradigm, sagem, novillero, blase, woodruff and nondescript.

Dudley's mother, Judy Zwolak, was very pleased with her son's achievement.

"He studied really hard and worked really hard,"

she said. "He's got a great memory for words. This is the last time he had the option of going so I'm glad he won."

Though Zwolak said it takes a lot of work and stress, Dudley handles it very well.

Dudley said he has been studying about two hours per day and only plans to step it up from there for the National Bee.

Dudley made sure to give a shout-out to everyone in his life who has helped and encouraged him, including his teachers at school.

"Another person I owe my thanks to is my history teacher Aaron Fader," Dudley said. "I was in history class when it was announced on the microphone that I had won the spelling bee and Mr. Fader said, 'Yay! Owen's going to Nationals!' Obviously he was happy for me."

Dudley said his father also helped push him to keep going.

"I wanted to call in and say I didn't want to do it but my dad said, 'Yes you could do that but I think you would regret it. You should give it a try and you might just get lucky.'"

According to Dudley he did indeed get lucky.

"The word I won on was 'nondescript,'" he said. "I thought the championship word would be hard."

Kadarkaraisamy who earned second place in state both last year as a fourth grader and this year as a fifth-grader stated after the bee that he felt good about his performance.

"I thought I was going to win but I misspelled my championship word," he said. "I got second place last year and then second place in regionals and second in state again this year."

Kadarkaraisamy said he plans to enter the bee again next year and study a lot with the aid of a big dictionary gifted to him by Dudley. Dudley received



State Spelling Bee winner Owen Dudley (center) poses with the second and third runner-ups Hari Kadarkaraisamy and Helen Zhang. Dudley and Kadarkaraisamy both hail from Vermillion and Dudley will go on to represent South Dakota in the National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C. on May 24-29.

THOMAS HATZENBUHLER / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

the dictionary as part of the first place award but already has one.

Kadarkaraisamy correctly spelled muumu, embargo, gorgeous, canasta, credible, tamale, cantata, trajectory, omnipotent, homberg, kasha,

flamenco, perfidy, epiphany, poinsettia, metaphor, pneumatic, eureka, poltergeist, kuruma, lederhosen, coffle, zephyr, symbiosis, ersatz, waterzooi, bolshevik, fraulein, facetious and mediate.

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