

National Music Museum Heats Up With Zorongo Flamenco Dance

Flamenco dancer Deborah Elias will be testing out the floorboards at the National Music Museum this Friday, November 20, as she goes through her delicate but determined flamenco movements. “The body, of course, is a musical instrument,” says National Music Museum Director Cleveland Johnson. “And with an art form like flamenco, you see how the studied stomping of heels and clapping of hands are integral, precise percussion instruments, not only in keeping rhythm but in creating a melodic sound.”

The Museum will experiment with a different configuration of its Arne B. Larson Concert Hall too — usually more of a chamber-music oriented space — to allow the dancer to move around more, especially in her bata de cola, traditional long-train skirt.

When dancer Deborah Elias saw Carlos Saura’s flamenco film masterpiece Carmen in 1992, the classical-musician-turned-economist knew she had unveiled her future. However, it wasn’t until 1994, with a Master’s Degree and nine months in South America behind her, that the native Minnesotan discovered flamenco in her own city. She immediately began intensive study with Susana di Palma, a mentorship that evolved into a strong and lasting artistic partnership. Since 1996 she has appeared in over 22 productions of di Palma’s company, Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre, most recently Flamenco on Fire at the Cowles Center in 2015.



COURTESY PHOTO: NMM

In 2010, Deborah began creating and presenting her own work as Deborah Elias Danza Española. She has received many arts grants, teaches ongoing adult classes in St. Paul, and teaches regularly at Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre and School, the Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts, and the University of Minnesota.

Elias will be accompanied by flamenco-guitarist and singer Trevor May. The traditional flamenco guitar is usually paired with ‘cante jondo,’ (literally, ‘deep song’) a profound vocalizing that may be as aptly described as a beautifully emotional or passionate melodic wail.

NMM To Present ‘Muscle Shoals’

The beloved music that came out

of Detroit in the 1960’s and ‘70’s is known, of course, as the ‘Motown Sound.’ And that city is very much a part of our cultural awareness through those songs. There is not yet broad name recognition for Muscle Shoals, Alabama — though it may deserve similar respect.

The documentary that the National Music Museum is showing this Saturday at 10:00 a.m. at the Coyote Twin Theatre, Muscle Shoals, explores the history of that much less known town and particularly the two recording studios that were a hotbed of song creation there. Classics like Percy Sledge’s “When a Man Loves a Woman,” The Rolling Stones’ “Wild Horses,” and Lynyrd Skynyrd’s “Freebird” were produced in those studios. Many more musicians (Aretha Franklin, Paul Simon, Bob Seger, Wilson Pickett, Elton John, the Allman Brothers, and on) journeyed to Muscle Shoals to hone their sound — far from the urban spotlights.

“You could watch Muscle Shoals just to hum along with the hit-filled soundtrack — but you’ll also hear good stories, fill in your American-songbook history,” says National Music Museum spokesperson Patricia Bornhofen. The film includes interviews with Aretha Franklin, Bono, Alicia Keys, Mick Jagger, and Keith Richards.

General-public admission to the movie is \$5.00. Admission for USD students and NMM members-with-benefits is free — compliments of the National Music Museum (“— another great reason to be an NMM member,” says Bornhofen).

Lawsuit

From Page 1A

“We’ll have more of an opportunity once the litigation is over and the matter is resolved.”

However, Jelen said she could provide an update on the legal process that is public record and has been reported in the media.

The VCDC sought a summary judgment, which would have immediately decided the lawsuit, Jelen said.

“The court denied our motion and said we need to do more discovery,” she said. “The court said there are more issues that need pursuit.”

In another development, the VCDC has added the Eagle Creek shareholders to the lawsuit, Jelen said. The motion seeks to hold those individuals, as well as the business itself, responsible for any damages.

VCDC is also seeking to remove the lawsuit from the federal courts and return it to the circuit court, Jelen said. The legal proceedings would then likely be heard in Vermillion.

“There is no active litigation until we hear from the judge (on the motion for change of venue),” Jelen said.

Once the court rules on the location, the VCDC will

seek a quick resolution to the lawsuit, Jelen said.

“We’ll be running, and we’ll be running fast,” she said. “We want to resolve this just as fast as we can and still go places at the VCDC.”

With Eagle Creek indicating it wouldn’t occupy the building, VCDC executive director Nate Welch said his organization sought other uses for the facility.

At the present time, the VCDC uses the building as the Vermillion Technical Center (VTC), Welch said. The organization continues seeking tenants or a buyer, he added.

“It’s a beautiful building and a great asset,” he said, adding the VCDC would like to see the site added to the local tax rolls.

The VCDC has sought to make the best of an unexpected situation, Welch said.

“This hasn’t turned out to be the way we wanted it, but you just have to adjust and pivot,” he said. “You just need to be flexible, innovative and stay the course.”

In the meantime, Welch sees new possibilities for the building and the future.

“We’re very pleased and very excited with the opportunities it’s brought us,” he said. “We have a lot of good things going for us in Vermillion.”

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Now

From Page 1A

success for us,” Welch said. “We have 11 sold or pending sales of lots (valued at \$348,000),” he said. “Six lots are bought or being bought of have a hole dug. And a number of lots have options on them.”

“We’re continuing growth out there (at Bliss Pointe),” he added.

- \$300,000 for targeting industries using the talent pool currently found in Clay County and surrounding areas, and those graduating from the University of South Dakota. The program also establishes the Entrepreneurial Development Program and creating a joint economic development strategy with USD.

“We’re looking at a great effort at the (Vermillion) high school level with their teachers and with our current relationship with USD,” Welch said.

He likened the current iTanager entrepreneur program at VHS to the kind of out-of-the-box thinking shown on the television series “Shark Tank.”

“Once they’re done at the high school level, they can advance to the USD level and work with the professors there.”

In addition, the VCDC is working with programs such as Wire Me Awake, the Market Street incubator site, the USD residency program and efforts to become an entrepreneurial community with the Dakota Rising program.

- \$350,000 to provide the necessary support for existing businesses to expand their renovation projects. The initiative also develops a workforce pipeline to attract and train the necessary workers to support the businesses of today and tomorrow.

The VCDC is using the Vermillion Technical Center (VTC) as a potential incubator or permanent site for new ventures, Welch said. The VTC is housed in the building originally intended for the Eagle Creek business, which has decided not to use the facility.

“It’s not the road we planned to go down (for the facility),” Welch said. “But that road has led us to success, and we’re excited with that success.”

Welch provided examples of new businesses that have started up or relocated in Vermillion as well as current Vermillion businesses that have expanded or upgraded their operations.

The VCDC has worked with using the USD Beacom School of Business as an incubator site. Vermillion offers plenty of room for those businesses to start their own location.

“Once (those businesses) move off campus, we don’t want them to move anywhere else but Vermillion,” he said.

- \$250,000 for a Community Enhancement Program in partnership

with local governments and community groups. The effort promotes the arts and culture as well as the Missouri National Recreational River (MNR).

Welch pointed to the effort of keeping alive the Vermillion movie theaters.

“We’re not only helping businesses stay alive, we’re also helping with the arts and culture,” he said.

The initiative also works with the Vermillion Next, building a young professionals network for emerging leaders.

USD brings a tremendous influx of young adults 18-22 years old, Welch said. However, Vermillion and Clay County suffer in retaining those students after graduation or attracting other young professionals, he said.

“Vermillion has a zero to negative net growth among residents 25-45 years old,” he said. “We’re losing people in that demographic. How can we make the community more attractive to keep them?”

In response, Vermillion has launched a Young Professionals Network (YPN) similar to Sioux Falls, which has one of the most successful YPN chapters in the nation, Welch said.

He compared Sioux Falls’ 165,000 residents to Vermillion’s 10,000 residents to illustrate the local effort is following the same growth curve.

“Sioux Falls had 300 members in their first year (of YPN), and they grew to 700 for years 2 and 3,” Welch said. “Vermillion had 32 members its first year,

so we’re right on target. We got through that first year, which is a tough year. If we can continue, we’ll show that we can sustain those numbers.”

The initiative has also worked with “Up Next,” the weekly coffee hour to stimulate discussion similar to the national One Million Cups program. Other programs include the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival and the VHS welcome sign.

- \$200,000 for marketing Vermillion and Clay County as a destination for new business development as well as for workers and their families. Welch spoke of Vermillion’s potential and its visibility gained from USD and other assets.

“We want to position ourselves as a place to live, work, play and learn,” he

said. “We want to invest (resources) to tell the story that we all see (on a daily basis).”

- \$200,000 to continue providing economic development leadership through “out of the box” thinking by the VCDC board and staff.

Welch shared the anecdote of a CEO telling Vermillion officials — in front of the governor — that his business intended to locate in the community.

“To have our governor hear that (statement) — it rings a bell that we have a lot of good things happening,” Welch said.

At the end of the program, the VCDC audience heard a progress report from Venky Venkatachalam, dean of the USD Beacom School of Business.

USD encourages innovation among its students, he said. “You choose any sector of the economy, and they are screaming for more and more analytical skills,” he said.

USD offers five new entrepreneurs in residence and an innovation lab benefiting the entire university and even area high school students, he said.

“How quickly can you bring ideas to the marketplace? That’s the big part of success,” he added.

Welch concluded by thanking the audience for its support.

“You’re investors in Vermillion NOW!” he told them. “At the VCDC, we take a real genuine responsibility in bringing that stewardship to the community.”

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