

Music Museum Showcases Flamenco

BY SARAH WETZEL
For The Plain Talk

The National Music Museum had guest instrumentalists last week though some playing an instrument never displayed in a museum: the human body.

Long-time Flamenco dancer and teacher Deborah Elias, her son Marius Elias Morse (8) and guitarist Trevor May gave two performances last Friday which both entertained and educated anyone who had braved the blizzard to attend.

"We were thinking beyond the idea of musical instruments having to be objects," said Patricia Bornhofen, Manager of Communications at the museum. "Flamenco is about percussion, the body is about percussion, clapping and stopping. Then of course there's the Flamenco guitar. We wanted to go beyond what we've had before and I don't think we've had anything like this before. We try, to the extent that we can within our budget, bring different genres of music in each time, or at least a different kind of instrument."

The Flamenco showcase also was designed to mesh with International week at the University of South Dakota according to Bornhofen.

The performers, based in Minnesota, seemed a good fit.

The dance style also proved to be a good fit for the museum as well as the performers proved that the human body is quite a capable percussion instrument.

Elias and May worked together in seamless verses where it was hard at times to tell which was providing the accompaniment for which.

"What drew me to it was I was first a musician," Elias said afterwards. "You are also a musician when you're a dancer in Flamenco, you're making music with your feet and because what you're doing has to reflect so much what's happening with the singing and the guitar and it's different every time. It's just very music-centered dance which sounds strange because most dance is based on music but in this case the dance and the music can't really be separated. It's also just very strong and it's so soul-bearing. Not just for the performers but the audience also because there's something quite ancient about it because of all the different influences it really draws people to it."

Elias who has been dancing for 20 years and teaching for at least 10 wore a traditional Flamenco dress.

"It's traditional to wear a long, full skirt that has the ruffles and the polka dots are called lunares or 'little moons' and that's super traditional for Flamenco," she said. "People say that it's because Flamenco being really most about gypsies and they were really poor and were patching their clothes with these little patches of fabric making it look like polka dots. For the spring fair, this is how all the women dress. It's amazing. When you go to Seville and you're walking the streets and the streets are all filled with shops and there are just tons of shops that have dresses and flowers and shawls in the windows. It's hard not to spend all your money when you go there."

According to Elias, Flamenco was not originally a performance art form.

"It was just something you would do with your family or friends," she said. "So then people weren't wearing costumes at all. They were just wearing what they were wearing during their normal daily activities."

Elias, her son and May's skill was obvious but impressive also was the



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK
Flamenco dancer Deborah Elias along with guitarist Trevor May and dancer Marius Elias Morse gave two performances last Friday at the National Music Museum.

fact that much of the performance was improvised.

"We haven't rehearsed together for a very long time," Elias said. "You know the structure and you know there are certain verses and styles so you say you want this style and I'm listening to him and doing my thing but then I'm changing it depending on what he's doing and he's really following me in what I'm doing to support the footwork."

Elias and May have known each other for 15 years through the Twin Cities Flamenco community which is not incredibly large according to Elias.

"Everybody knows everybody," she said. "It's not like there are Flamenco guitarists you don't know about. We both have just been around for a long time and done a lot of performing together. We're also used to reading each other too. What happens usually over time is you develop these relationships just like with friendships. You communicate with some people better than others and those are the people you like to work with and then you communicate more and so a lot of dancers will only work with one guitarist and one singer and a lot of singers will only work with one guitarist."

The dancer, guitarist and singer if there is one are an inseparable team according to Elias.

"It's not like the dancer just goes up there in front of everyone and dances and the musicians are back there just keeping up," she said. "It's totally a communication, an energy flow. The more you can get that going, the better the Flamenco will be. People will often ask if you can come and perform just as one person and just use recorded music. Not really. It's totally different. Then it doesn't feel like Flamenco so much anymore."

The only aspect of Flamenco that is absolutely cement according to Elias is the rhythm.

Other than that there are few stylistic elements that never change.

"You can tell if it's Flamenco if

you've got a guitarist," she said. "If you've got a guitarist and a dancer that's one sign. Of course there's the costume but there's also a very strong body posture, a lift in the body, the percussive footwork, the hand movements. Everything in your body is in rhythm. Your head, your shoulders. I used to joke that when you go to Spain it's like even people's eyelashes are making rhythm. The rhythm is so in them. Every part of your body is being used as a rhythmic element."

Elias enjoys spreading the culture and spirit of the art form in a country that seems at times foreign to its message.

"The thing about it is that it is so much about connecting and it's so lively sometimes," she said. "I feel like, at least in Minnesota, people are really reserved. This is a really good infusion of energy and connecting with people. They always say that Americans kind of go on their own paths and Flamenco is so opposite of that so I think it's a great thing to do here because we can all benefit."

Bornhofen hopes that performances like these will help the National Music Museum become more appreciated in Vermillion and the surrounding area.

"We are far more known as an entity internationally than we are locally or regionally," she said. "It's the craziest thing. You'll have people on the other side of the world who know the National Music Museum because they're music aficionados or fans and they know about us through our collection but we'll have someone here in Vermillion who has never been in here. It's probably one of the top two collections in the world. There's really only one museum that can come close and that would be Paris. We have a better collection than the Smithsonian. We don't want it to be a secret."

For more information on the museum visit their web page at <http://orgs.usd.edu/nmm/> or call (605) 677-5306.

Shop

From Page 1

her goal is to provide and experience for her customers.

"We are here to suggest and find out about the person they are buying for and maybe steer them in the direction that we feel their gift recipient may want," she said. "The other thing is we complementary gift wrap everything. If you go out to buy gift wrap and bows and everything that goes along with it, you are going to spend another \$10-\$12 dollars. We save everybody that on every gift that they go to give. So, that is a huge savings when you start adding that up. Some people will come in and hand us a gift list and say help us. And we do. It is called service and that is what we are all about."

She said while today (Friday) is a big shopping day; she is more focused on Saturday.

"We have focused on doing a big deal on shop local Saturday vs. the Friday," Christopherson said. "We have found that people are trying to get the first of the first 25 at 6 a.m. on Friday. We don't sell televisions or gadgets; we don't have that kind of product. The things we have, I don't buy a lot to begin with. That is part of the specialness of this store. You are just not going to see it anywhere else. I might only buy six of an item. Well those six things will go to Sioux Falls, Sioux City, Yankton, Vermillion - people don't want to see the same thing they have fallen in love with in their neighbor's house. We don't fit in that emergency theme."

"So, our specials are for Saturday," she added. "We will give gifts to people on Saturday for shopping with us. We have instore specials, but that is our black Friday thing. We are here having a good time and will have the foods to

sample, but on Saturday we will have several different things to sample."

Christopherson said that sometimes people need to be reminded what is in their backyard.

"I think that people who live in a community and care about a community just need to be jarred a little bit occasionally about why they need to keep us open," she said. "What would you do if these stores were not here? A lot of people probably don't give it a thought. They will say they were in there all the time, but then you start asking questions and they realize they were only there two or three times."

She went further saying supporting her store and others like it in town only helps Vermillion.

"Probably the main reason is because their dollars are used to support the things they are involved in, whether it is education, athletic activities, theatre, across the board - it's the big circle what goes around comes around," she said. "If you are taking your dollars and giving them to someone in another community it is going to help their program but it is doing nothing for your children or something that you are involved in."

"We have a beautiful library and everything that goes with it, that doesn't just happen. It is my sales tax that goes back to the city, as well as

everybody else's that helps buy those things."

Christopherson said that she is excited when people come and explore downtown Vermillion and discover what a destination it really is.

"Vermillion downtown has got exclusive kinds of things," she said. "We have a great hardware store; if you are living downtown it is really nice to have that hardware store as well stocked as it is. We obviously have phenomenal places to eat. Everyone from the surrounding communities all come here and do that and then they stay and shop with us. It is becoming a real destination and that is something that we have been working at for so many years. We have Sharing The Dream. Where are you going to find anything like that? They have beautiful things. Those things all have such an impact on our community. It is going to be given back to so many organizations; the dollars you spend are staying here."

"We have places to make you more beautiful, cut your hair, give you massages ... we have Blue Monarch who is now carrying shoes. We have all of these boutiques and all of the people running the stores downtown are here because they want to be here. It is a cohesive comfortable. It is a community."

FIND IT FOR LESS

in the Classifieds

Need some extra cash?
Sell your merchandise!
605-624-4429

SHOP LAPTOPS, Desktops, Stereos, MP3 Players,
Speakers & Other Electronics for a
Fraction of the Retail Cost!

The Plain Talk Classifieds

CARNIVAL SUCCESS



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK
The organizers of the 'Moving Martilee Mae Carnival Fundraiser' event have expressed their gratitude at all those who attended and donated to the cause. The event proved to be very successful with everyone obviously having a good time in the spirit of giving.
"I am humbled and honored to let everyone know that we have raised \$10,157,351!" Jessica McKenzie, event organizer, said. "This will provide a tremendous boost to the Covington's as they work toward purchasing a wheelchair van for Martilee. THANK YOU! Once again, we will continue to collect donations via check (sent to and made out to Grace Baptist Church) or through the GoFundMe page until the Covington's purchase their van!"

USD School Of Education Writing Contest Honors Veterans

University of South Dakota students honored military veterans through a writing contest and oral presentations that were judged by Vermillion members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and USD's ROTC unit

USD's School of Education and the Vermillion VFW collaborated on the effort intended to promote student awareness of veterans' sacrifices and contributions to society.

The winners, chosen Friday: First place (\$150), Destiny Leftwich, a senior elementary education major from Pine Ridge, South Dakota, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation; second place (\$100), Catheryn Kunz, a senior elementary education major from North Sioux City, South Dakota; and third place (\$50), Megan Ohlendorf, a graduate student studying clinical mental health counseling from Sioux City, Iowa. Each also will receive a certificate from the Vermillion VFW.

Vermillion to Host East Region Pacesetter Playoffs

Vermillion will host the East Region Pacesetter Playoffs for the South Dakota Youth Basketball State Championships on Saturday-Sunday, March 5-6, at the USD DakotaDome.

The South Dakota West Region will be held at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, and the state championships will be held in Huron.

The Pacesetter Playoffs are held in four states (Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota) for all boys' and girls' teams in grades 4-9 with the Pacesetter Great Four-State Championships culminating at the Target Center in Minneapolis in the summer. All teams play 3-4 games in the regional tournaments.

EAST REGION SCHEDULE

Saturday, March 5: 4th grade girls, 6th grade girls, 8th grade girls, 5th grade boys, 7th grade boys, and 9th grade boys

Sunday, March 6: 5th grade girls, 7th grade girls, 9th grade girls, 4th grade boys, 6th grade boys and 8th grade boys

The WNBA champion Minnesota Lynx and Minnesota Timberwolves are sponsoring this "hometown team" youth development system that will feature over 1,000 teams from the same school, community, or area.

Minnesota will hold eight regional playoffs at various sites. North Dakota will hold region playoffs at Grafton and Bismarck, and Iowa will hold playoffs at Pella and Cedar Falls. The top two teams from each state advance to the 8-team Great Four-State Championships at the Target Center in Minneapolis.

Further information and registration are available at www.pacesetternet.com.

Harp Concert To Feature Weightman

Start your holiday season with the heavenly sounds of harps in concert! Sunday, November 29, 2015, at 7:00 PM the Jubal Chapter of the American Harp Society will present a concert featuring music from Broadway musicals and music of the Christmas season. The performance will take place at First Lutheran Church, 327 South Dakota in Sioux Falls.

Imagine more than thirty harps from small lap harps and Celtic harps to concert harps that would be at home in a symphony all joining their strings in lovely harmony. The harpists will present selections from musicals including Les Miserables, The Sound of Music, Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat and Mame as well as favorite Christmas carols. The performers range in age from early elementary school to senior citizens. Experiences range from newer harpists to well accomplished musicians. The effect is magical!

Erin Weightman, who is a Junior at Elk Point-Jefferson school, will be participating in this year's concert. Erin is the daughter of Rob Weightman of Elk Point and Esther Weightman of Vermillion.

Tickets for the concert will be available at the door. All proceeds go to support the 501(c)3 organization which educates harpists and the public about the harp and its repertoire.

Hosts Needed For Exchange Students

Global Student Housing (GSH) is currently seeking host families who have a spare room to rent to international students.

Our new online platform is open to individuals and families throughout the United States who have an interest in hosting students or interns. Hosts not only gain additional income, but the chance to expose their family to new cultures and make lasting friendships. Hosts have the freedom to set their own price for their room and even to decide which services, including meals and transportation, they want to offer.

Getting started hosting is totally free and as easy as visiting our website at www.globalstudenthousing.com and signing up! The opportunity is nation-wide, so please share with your friends and family."