



Bob Dunne playing didgeridoo, and Phyllis Dunne playing dulcimer at Howells Public Library's 20th anniversary.

Musical program featured at library's anniversary

In celebration of its 20th anniversary, the Howells Public Library, in cooperation with the Nebraska Humanities Council, presented "Didgeridoo and Dulcimer Too" by Robert and Phyllis Dunne.

Librarian Lorraine Gall welcomed the visitors to the library and to the program. She gave a history of the Howells library.

Howells Public Library Board member Cathy Groene thanked the audience for coming to help celebrate the library's 20th anniversary. She then introduced the day's entertainment, Robert and Phyllis Dunne, sponsored by the Nebraska Humanities Council. The Dunes are from Omaha. They have won several awards and have appeared throughout Nebraska.

Phyllis explained how the dulcimer works, by changing the length of the strings. A dulcimer is mentioned in the Bible, but that is a hammer dulcimer. We consider the dulcimer to be American and was used in the 1800s. Now, a pick is used to pick the strings, but then a feather was used. Now, the strings are made out of wire, then they were cat gut. Now, the tuners are metal, then they were wood.

"It's so easy to play," she said as she invited Adam Vogel to demonstrate. He plucked the strings while she played the strings. "Most people can play easily. If you can count to 10, then you could probably play it. There are no notes. Numbers are used."

Phyllis played "Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star" with Adam Vogel. She said when she was growing up, her mother liked to sing and so did her sisters. They would sing while doing dishes. Her next song was "Shortnin' Bread," which she said came about because people would not waste anything. They would use extra dough by putting sugar and cinnamon on it and dropping it in hot fat.

Her next selection was "Shenandoah," a folk song. She chose "My Grandfather's Clock" for the next song and asked Luke Hegemann to come forward and use two sticks to imitate the ticking of the clock. She asked the audience to join in singing. She explained that in the olden days, clocks were shipped from Europe and then by train or wagon to their destination. The clock was passed from generation to generation, and it really meant a lot to the

one who inherited it.

Clint Fiala donned a railman's cap and used a wooden whistle to accompany Phyllis as she played "I've Been Working on the Railroad." She continued, "The train was really important to our history."

Her next song went back to the Revolutionary War, during which the soldiers were men who couldn't get any other work. They had their own song, "Soldier, Soldier, Will You Marry Me?" Elizabeth Sindelar, Carly Hegemann, Sidney Blum, Randy Baumert and Lorene Fiala participated in the actions.

Phyllis introduced her husband, Bob, who comes from Australia. He showed several didgeridoos, long hollowed out tubes, which termites had chewed out. The eucalyptus tree has oil on the outer bark, which keep the termites from eating through. There is no mouth-piece. The aborigines made totems, designs, on them. When they had access to different paints, more designs appeared. A very large one was a ceremonial one. It had a deeper sound. "One would have to practice several weeks to months for the ceremonial ones," Bob said.

Didgeridoos range in price from \$350 to \$400. "You can learn to play on a cheap one. Take a piece of PVC pipe and use that. The longer the instrument, the deeper the sound. You imitate a ventriloquist. You use your vocal cords to make sounds," Bob informed.

He then displayed several boomerangs, which you throw with a snap of the wrist. You have to learn to throw it, so it comes back to you. There are 45 different styles of boomerangs.

Phyllis read a story while Bob played the didgeridoo as background sound. She then informed that the dulcimer has the equivalent of white keys on the piano. There was no radio or TV so people entertained themselves with simple instruments.

Bob had several paddle-like boards and animals, which you held with your hand to make them dance. Carly Hegemann, Sidney Blum, Clint Fiala, Luke Hegemann, Elizabeth Sindelar, Adam Vogel, and Emily Ritzdorf played these instruments as Bob and Phyllis accompanied them.

The program ended with a question and answer period and an invitation to visit the library and have refreshments.