

Bach With Verse is supported in part by a grant from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts & the National Endowment for the Arts.



# Bach With Verse

## 2011-2012 Season In Review

REACHING OUT TO NEW PLACES

112 Concerts & Masterclasses

### NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA OF IRAQ September

During two great weeks with the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq, I helped the amazing Chia Sultan with his bass playing career and prepared him for the orchestra's upcoming tour to the Bonn Beethovenfest in Germany. I am his only teacher and he is making unbelievable progress. I also gave some solo performances for the Consulate and students that paved the way for my return later in the season.



National Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad

### IRAQ CONCERT TOUR April 23 – May 10

**IN THIS EDITION:**

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Supporters

I finally returned to Iraq to play Bach and stories all over the country including the cities of Baghdad, Erbil, Ranya and Sulaimaniya. Sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, I was the first American cultural visitor to stay outside of the International Zone walled compound and one night a woman I met said, "Well I guess peace has finally come to Iraq because I see an American walking around Baghdad by himself." (Read my article *Words from Iraq*, published in the Keene Sentinel on our website.) Members of the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq, including bassist Samir Basim, violinist Hellgurd Sultan, cellist Bashdar Ahmad Sdiq and cellist Sabat Hamid, arranged concerts for me in their music schools, local elementary schools, special education schools and community centers. They were so excited about my concerts, many times the staff would bring me to a school down the street that we had not planned on visiting. I was a guest on a live public children's TV show with Nunu the Clown that reached millions.



Elementary School in Baghdad



Botte High School in Ranya



Elementary School in Erbil



State School for the Blind in Sulaimaniya

*Bringing hope, inspiration and laughter through music and stories to underserved audiences.*

## 2011-2012 Season In Review

476 Apple Hill Road  
Nelson, NH 03457

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double bass



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## UGANDA CONCERT TOUR February 27 – March 14



Dwelling Places Home

I went to Uganda to play music and tell stories to street children and rescued street children and children who were once on the streets but are now living successful lives. I knew very little about the country before I came but I learned about Uganda and the Ugandan culture through watching children listen and

react and laugh. I learned a lot. I learned of the politeness and respect and resilience that these children have (even the ones who are still leading very difficult lives). I also learned of the love of children that all Ugandans have. Everywhere I went I saw it: in the schools, in the drop-in centers and especially in Dwelling Places who hosted my tour. The problem of children living on the streets is of course enormous (10,000 on the streets of Kampala alone). Nevertheless, what I saw filled me not with despair but with hope because of the energy and love and success that I saw. Dwelling Places is clearly a leader; showing the way, sharing strategies, gathering other organizations, building networks and doing it all with incredible love and devotion.

What did I have to offer? During the wonderful two weeks I spent there playing 26 concerts, I saw music bring healing to children. The music of Bach itself is restorative but the thing that makes the experience life long is the process of getting the children to look inside and report back about how they felt listening. At every concert, I heard wonderful comments like



Retrak boys

“peaceful”, “I remembered my village”, “when my grandmother died”, “it made me happy” or “sad”. The words were unimportant. It was the shining eyes of the children as they realized that music could bring feelings and emotions and could make them feel peaceful and happy and thoughtful. The second part of the concert, when I told the story of Billy and Brenda in their own language of Luganda, allowed them to express the feelings that they got from the Bach through joyful and carefree laughter. The highlight was playing for the Retrak boys drop-in center. After the Suite and the story they were so excited they got up and danced to my bass plucking and then sat back down and listened to the lullaby.



Incarcerated Street Children

I want to thank Dwelling Places and Kristen Fry for giving me the chance to bring the gift of music to these boys and girls and thank the contributors of Bach With Verse and my former classmates of the Northfield Mount Hermon Class of '61 for having the vision to see that this is a worthwhile thing to give to people around the world.



Mothercare School

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We are so thankful for the numerous donors that allow us to bring music to so many around the world. Thank you all for your generous support!

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## PRISON CONCERT PROJECT

### NEW YORK TOUR

October 28 – November 4

I saw some familiar faces and also played in two new facilities during 12 concerts in 11 prisons and 2 youth facilities. The inmates' reception was wonderful, highlighted by one performance in a gym with 250 men sitting on bleachers. I had no sound system and you could have heard the proverbial pin drop during the Bach Suite.



### CALIFORNIA TOUR

June 10 – 16

I spent one week giving 9 concerts in New Folsom and Old Folsom prisons in California arranged by our board member Jim Carlson. The highlight for me was playing in the old hanging room in Old Folsom where a high school equivalency class takes place. In the 19th century, the old cells on two floors were used in a rotating manner until the condemned man reached the cell opposite the noose. Grusome. Afterwards the inmates told me that I had exorcised the bad spirits.

### NEW HAMPSHIRE TOUR May-September

Our New Hampshire program continues to expand. I gave 12 concerts visiting county jails including one new facility, the men's state prison, the Phoenix House academy and drug rehab center and the Shea Farm Transitional Housing Unit, a half-way house assisting those preparing to return to life on the outside. I continue to be amazed at how healing music is for people in all different kinds of incarceration. An adolescent boy in a drug rehab program yelled out “That was awesome!” after I finished the Bach Suite.

*I thank all those who make sharing music with inmates, children, rehab patients, students and orphans possible to bring more laughter, more joy and more peace into this world.*

\*Northfield Mount Hermon Class of '61

### IN-KIND

- Samir Basim  
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 National Youth Orchestra of Iraq  
 Hellgurd Sultan  
 Chia Sultan  
 Bashdar Ahmad Sdiq

## 2012-2013 SEASON EVENTS

- Iraq Concert Tour
- California Prison Tour
- Bolivia Concert Tour
- Denmark Concert Tour
- New York Prison Tour
- New Hampshire Concert Tour

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