

# School of Music Insider

Fall 2013



By Glen Ryan Tadych

## Marching band instructors comment on music athletes

Among a diverse collection of athletic activities spread across the country, musical marching ensembles remain under-recognized for their physical efforts.

“(Marching band is) most certainly an extremely physical activity,” said Kyle Glaser, associate director of bands at Texas State University and director of the Bobcat Marching Band. “There’s a great deal of physical conditioning that needs to happen for it to be successful.”

Glaser recognized the physical intensity involved in marching bands after his experience as a saxophonist in the Penn State Blue Band from 1994 to 1997. He said it is important to maintain peak athletic physical condition and strong mental focus while putting on a performance.

“Marching bands have to mesh the physical aspects and artistic ability, which equates to a very entertaining experience,” Glaser said.

In comparison to marching bands, which operate in the fall to coincide with football season, drum and bugle corps is a summer-only activity and strictly competition-based.

Groups throughout the United States and Canada compete every summer through Drum Corps International, a non-profit organization. Participating groups feature brass, color guard and percussion sections.

Alex Ortega, Texas State graduate, marched snare drum for two seasons with Boston Crusaders Drum and Bugle Corps. He finished his drum corps career with Santa Clara Vanguard.

“(Drum corps is) definitely comparable to college and professional sports,” Ortega said. “A lot of the work [that goes] into basketball or track is the same with band and drum corps. We would stretch for 30 minutes, run miles, do push-ups and squats, plus the normal rehearsal periods.”

Ortega said the critical difference between marching bands and drum corps is the level of intensity and flawlessness demanded from members, because each group is competing to be the best. Ortega described the day-to-day grind as one of the toughest parts of drum corps rehearsals, operating from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. with three, one-hour meal breaks every four hours.

During the tour period, groups travel to competitions around the country by bus while maintaining regular rehearsal schedules. The competition concludes in August.

Ortega said the injury component is another aspect often overlooked with drum corps.

“I know people who had dislocated shoulders, sprained ankles and torn ACLs

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## Music students host first collaborative recital series

Eleven Texas State students took the stage at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Somos Musicos! concert showcase located in the music building recital hall.

Somos Musicos! is a stand-alone showcase series of concerts, featuring School of Music students and a variety of instrumental and vocal selections. Performers prepared their pieces for three-to-four weeks prior to the event.

Approximately 100 guests attended Thursday night, giving the performers just 50 guests short of a full house. Attendees mostly consisted of Texas State students, but some of the performers’ families were among the audience.

Alex Szabo, trumpet performance senior, said the event’s name originated from an idea Gordon Jones, senior lecturer, had about musicians coming together and listening to different styles of music. Somos Musicos! translates to, “We are musicians”

“This is a unique event for the semester,” Szabo said. “(Somos Musicos! is) better than a regular recital because you’re only having to play one piece.”

The seven performed pieces were written by a variety of composers, featuring piano, French horn, vocals and flute.

Each piece lasted from two-to-nine minutes and gave off a different emotional anchor. Two had fast and dramatic rhythms, one was relaxed and jazzy, romance and elegance was the theme for another, two gave the influence of a battle and cavalry march. The final piece retained an influence of Southeast Asian culture.

Each student contributed to the success of the performances, capturing the audience’s attention through sound. Alexias Ferrer, piano performance sophomore, said there was no question about his selection.

“Ever since this event was announced (at the beginning of the semester), I knew I wanted to play (Serge Prokofiev),” he said.

Ferrer best described the event as a “musical collaboration” between students, which tended to be different in comparison to the recitals and orchestral performances of the spring.

“This is my first time playing in a show like this,” Ferrer said. “It’s nice to actually get to hear the other instruments and the other students for a change.”

The event concluded at 8:20 p.m. without an intermission or post-event gathering in the Music Building lobby. Somos Musicos! was the first of its kind, and it is unknown at this point if the event will become an annual tradition for the School of Music.

Performers included, in order of performance: Jean Park, music sophomore; Jenny Knowles, music performance senior; Esteban Garcia, accounting senior;

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## Faculty quartet demonstrates talents for student body

Four Texas State School of Music faculty members showcased their talents Monday at the faculty artists' event TreSorelle ed Uno.

The concert began at 8 p.m. in the Music Building recital hall, featuring senior lecturers Ames Asbell on viola; Paula Bird on violin; Faith DeBow on piano; and lecturer Karla Hamelin, cello. TreSorelle was the fourth campus performance by the faculty quartet this semester.

Bird said the concert's title refers to the Italian phrase, "three sisters and one." The group originally started in 2011 as a trio with Asbell, Bird and DeBow. Hamelin joined the group, forming the featured quartet of TreSorelle, after returning from maternity leave in 2012.

TreSorelle's lineup consisted of two, 30-minute, four-movement compositions: "Piano Trio in D Minor, op. 49," by Felix Mendelssohn and "Piano Quartet in C Minor, op. 15," by Gabriel Fauré.

Bird opened the event with a brief explanation of the program.

"These pieces were the most beloved of both composers," she said.

Bird said the compositions were from a romantic musical era in the 1800s and the most celebrated of that time. Her favorite was the Fauré composition because of moments she described as "absolutely gorgeous."

TreSorelle's musical theme was romance. Bird said the process lies between a predetermined theme and musical selections when establishing a concert's theme.

"Sometimes, we have a piece we want to do, and we build a theme off of that," Bird said.

Approximately 100 people attended TreSorelle. Asbell said she expected most of the audience to comprise of either strings or "Intro to Fine Arts" students.

"For string area students we're presenting ourselves as role models," she said. "For the others, we're introducing them to major music in the repertoire and demonstrating how to communicate musically."

Speaking for the quartet, Asbell said performing 30-minute pieces was nothing unfamiliar to them. Both compositions were performed from memory, but sheet music was still used for reference - a common practice.

"We're forced to play by memory," Asbell said. "(Performing) isn't exhausting physically, but it is from a mental perspective."

The quartet began preparations for TreSorelle at the start of the semester, rehearsing three and a half hours a week. However, Bird said members began preparing for their individual parts "much earlier."

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## Jazz orchestra begins season with Evans auditorium event

Texas State's jazz orchestra held its first fall performance, directed by jazz studies Director Keith Winking, at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 24 in the Evans Liberal Arts auditorium.

The jazz orchestra opened with "Broadway," arranged by Sammy Nestico. The ensemble performed nine additional tunes without an intermission, closing with an upbeat piece called "Chachanita" by M.P. Mossman.

The evening began with a snap of his Winking's fingers - the only element needed to get a jazz band going. This action is a key difference between traditional orchestras that feature a conductor through the performance. Jazz ensemble members drive the set on their own, with the director spectating from the sidelines.

After "Broadway," Winking preceded each subsequent tune with a brief introduction, but his primary role in the concert was to guide the group.

Winking said Oct. 24 was a late date for the jazz orchestra's first performance. Preparation usually begins earlier in the semester. Winking attributed the delay to increased preparation.

The program originally included 11 selections, but Winking and the group decided to omit one and add it to their next performance.

"We try to work up more for the next show," Winking said. "Ten is a nice, even number, so we just stuck with 10 (for this performance)."

Approximately 150 guests attended, including performers' friends and families, and Texas State fine arts students.

Syrus Farris, social work junior, attended to write a critique for his "Intro to Fine Arts" course.

"I like listening to instrumental jazz drum mixes when I study, so I thought I'd check out some jazz," Farris said.

Farris was not familiar with the evening's set list, but has held an interest in jazz since he was a percussionist in high school.

"I don't play jazz," he said. "At one point I considered joining jazz band in high school, but the program never started up."

Jazz orchestra is not the only jazz ensemble at Texas State. While the big band format of jazz orchestra fills auditoriums, jazz combos typically consist of four to five people, allowing performances in smaller venues.

"They're different animals really," Winking said, regarding big bands and combos. "Combos are more about improvising, so the members get more time for solos."

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## Renowned pianist critiques student performances

The School of Music hosted a piano master class featuring Filipino artist Albert Tiu at 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday in the recital hall. The session was Tiu's second School of Music event of the week, having performed in Evans Auditorium the night before.

According to the School of Music website, Tiu was born in Cebu, Philippines and has been labeled "an artist of uncommon abilities" by American Record Guide. He won First Prize in the 1996 University of South Africa International Piano Competition in Pretoria, SA. Tiu is now an associate professor in the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music at the National University of Singapore.

The audience numbered 10, including the performers, auditorium crew and Tiu. Music education major Jasmine Dullial attended out of interest.

"I just saw the event online," Dullial said. "I'm focusing on piano (at Texas State) and I haven't attended master classes before, but I hope to get a better understanding of how to play."

Dullial attended Tiu's concert Friday night, but had no prior exposure to his work.

"I thought the concert was very nice," she said. "I really liked (Tiu's) focus on light playing."

Tiu critiqued four student performances during the Saturday session: music performance sophomores Jorge Briceno, Martin Kesuma and Keer Wang, and George Cathey, music performance junior.

Tiu's analysis included the use of comedic analogies to get his musical message across to students. The critique sessions gave students the feeling of receiving private lessons even though the session was open to the public.

Wang performed "Variations on the name 'Abegg,'" by Robert Schumann. In his comments, Tiu focused on the use of theme when performing.

"People can tend to do too much with a theme," Tiu said. "A theme should sound like a clean slate that adds layers of color as you progress through the piece."

Tiu emphasized the importance of interpreting foreign phrases incorporated into a piece by the composer. Tiu believes understanding the meaning of a performance is critical, because it tells what the composer was feeling when he or she wrote the composition.

For Mozart's "Piano Sonata in C Major, K. 330 (I movement)," performed by Cathey, Tiu discussed the importance of wrist motion in providing a piece with character.

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## MARCHING

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from instrument-weight stress and improper marching technique," Ortega said. "We had a medical team on staff just like they do with football. We even had people quit midseason just because of injuries."

The final aspect of this issue is what defines a sport and the difference between a sport and an athletic activity.

Kari Klier, senior lecturer and marching percussion coordinator at Texas State University, said a sport typically involves a winner, not disregarding the athletic element associated with marching bands.

At the same time, Klier believes some race car driving, fishing and poker, all classified sports, should not be considered as such because of their lack of athletic involvement.

"The amount of beer you can drink while doing it qualifies whether or not it's a sport," Klier said. "The more you can drink, the less of a sport it is."

Participants of musical marching ensembles agree to sports having a victor by design. However, as with any sport, marching musicians use the muscles in their body, controlled breathing, and overall concentration to execute a specific pattern.

"We're here to support the sports, but (marching band) is still an athletic activity," Klier said.

## SOMOS

(continued from page 3)

Alexias Ferrer; Kevin Park, exploratory professional sophomore; Brandon Pauley, music performance senior; Clay Casey, music studies sophomore; Alex Szabo; Spencer Perkins, music senior; and Mari Cho, flute performance senior.

## TRESORELLE

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"I played (the Fauré composition) a year and a half ago," she said.

In addition to rehearsals, the quartet performs in recitals once a month throughout the semester.

"When you play together that often, it helps your rehearsal," Bird said. "You get to know one another better."

The four faculty artists will continue to perform in individual and group recitals until the end of the semester. The quartet will add a bassist, forming a quintet for a performance March 3, 2014.

The quintet is slated to perform in the recital hall, but the members are making efforts to perform in the new Texas State Performing Arts Center, currently under construction at the corner of University Drive and Moon Street.

# JAZZ

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Winking said big band is more about organization, since the group is made up of 15 to 20 people.

Jerry Clemons, jazz studies junior and guitar player for jazz orchestra, performs in both combos and big band.

"It's nice the way a guitar feels in big band," Clemons said. "Guitar fits in differently in big band than in combos. In a combo, guitar is (melodic) like a piano, but it adds so much more rhythmically in a big band."

The Texas State jazz orchestra features 18 students with a variety of backgrounds and majors.

The program featured guest vocalist Candace Declue, electronic media senior, in the ensemble's performance of "That Old Black Magic," arranged by Mark Taylor.

The jazz orchestra's next performance will be Nov. 17 at 3 p.m. in Evans Auditorium. Cost of general admission will be \$12; with student, senior citizen and military admission with valid ID will be \$7.

# TIU

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"A good economy of motion can help to open up while playing, which gives the music more variety," he said. "(Of course), styles vary from player to player because sometimes what (the composer) prefers may not be ideal."

Kesuma gave an emotional performance in his interpretation of Franz Liszt's "Paraphrase de Concert sur Rigoletto." Even with Kesuma's elaborate motions in his playing, Tiu said no matter how much spirit goes into performing, one can always "heighten the drama."

Briceno closed the session with his performance of Frederic Chopin's "Ballade No. 3." In Tiu's following critique, he addressed the manner in which a performer should approach live music.

"No matter how many times we've heard a piece, we always want to treat it as if we're hearing it for the first time—almost improvisational—to get the sense that we're not sure where this is heading," Tiu said.

