Marco Cappelli and Ken Filiano present music workshop

Sean Goodwin, Staff Writer | Posted: Monday, October 16, 2017 5:33 pm

The Music Department featured musicians Marco Cappelli and Ken Filiano in the first workshop of the quarter, last Wednesday.

With the help of Music Department Chair Peter Yates, faculty and students had the opportunity to listen to the master musicians play, and be a part of a discussion dedicated to the works of Thelonius Monk.

“I’ve known Marco Cappelli for probably 15 years. I first met him when I brought him here as a solo guitarist,” said Yates.

“He contacted me a month ago and said, ‘Could we get together?’ Then I suggested him coming out here.”

Cappelli, Filiano and Satoshi Takeishi all belong to the group known as “Marco Cappelli’s Acoustic Trio.”

In the trio, Cappelli plays a classical acoustic guitar, Filiano plays an upright bass and Takeishi plays percussion.

While Cappelli and Filiano were in Los Angeles on Tuesday night, they played songs by Thelonious Monk to coincide with what would’ve been the jazz musician’s 100th birthday.

The performance also marked the first time Cappelli and Filiano played without Takeishi.

They ended up bringing the act to campus to give students a more casual setting of a special performance.

Cappelli noted that it was only the second time they played in this specific arrangement, calling it a “debut plus one.”

While music only took up a small portion of the event, a majority of the time was spent in group discussion.

The audience was able to ask the musicians questions and get advice about the industry.
Over time, the answers given were less about technique and more about wisdom.

Filiano gave the audience many anecdotes and pieces of advice that resonated well within the recital hall.

He emphasized that music is not constrained to just sound.

“Listen with your five senses,” said Filiano.

He explained this by telling a story of a time he played with a blind pianist.

He wanted to see the world the way the pianist did, so he blindfolded himself.

Filiano then let the pianist guide him around the town they were playing in.

“It was the blind leading the blind,” said Filiano.

Due to this experience, Filiano was exposed to a whole different perspective, which affected how he perceived music.

This perspective turned out to be helpful when Filiano was diagnosed with a hearing problem.

The sounds he heard out of his left ear were perceived to be at a lower pitch than reality.

As a musician, that was a serious problem.

“I was going to give up,” said Filiano.

However, he used his knowledge to his advantage.

By simply keeping his bass close to him, it allowed him to feel the vibrations of the instrument.

That allowed him to judge the pitch properly.

Cappelli and Filiano stressed that the most important element of music is what the musician brings to it with his or her playing.

“Our instrument is only an amplifier of what’s inside,” said Cappelli.

The music they played was an example because of that, as they took Monk’s music and added an unexpected element.

Although the duo performed with acoustic instruments, they both utilized a variety of effects that gave the classical sound a modern twist.
For example, Cappelli digitally reversed what he was playing to give the music an added atmospheric touch.

Filiano, on the other hand, often layered the bass by recording certain sections and then played over what was previously recorded.

Over the course of the workshop, both musicians were able to showcase what made their duo special. But also enlightened students in the room on how to become better musicians.

This workshop marked Cappelli’s third visit to CPP to interact with the music department.