Music department hosts master class featuring Francisca Valenzuela

Nicole Housh, Staff Writer | Posted: Tuesday, April 28, 2015 8:08 am

Cal Poly Pomona’s Department of Music held one of its master classes in the Recital Hall on Thursday.

The department invited musician Francisca Valenzuela to host the class and give students tips on the music industry, as well as answer any questions about being a professional musician.

The Chilean-American singer, songwriter, poet and entrepreneur shared her wisdom on breaking into the industry and advice.

“I guess my only advice that I wish someone would have told me earlier is try to really decide on what kind of artist you want to be and explore that,” said Valenzuela. “Be authentic, and find out who you are and feel comfortable with you because that is what makes you different and unique.”

Valenzuela kicked off the master class with a short set. Two students who sang backup for the last two songs. Valenzuela sung in Spanish, but the underlying meaning transcended any language barriers.

Valenzuela said the first song she performed, “Good Soldier,” is from a male perspective. She joked her songs are not the usual “Ke$ha” pop music heard on the radio, which caused her to struggle in the beginning of her music career.

“I went to all these labels with my demo, and I was told ‘We don’t want singer-songwriters that’s too complicated,’” said Valenzuela. “So they were just like, ‘Take off your clothes, and we’ll do something with that.’”

After her set, students had the option to ask any questions they had on the music industry as well as her career.

Students from the music department were also given the chance to perform an original song and receive critique.

“I thought it was interesting — the master class part of it,” said third-year art history student Jesus Corona. “I’m a pianist, so that’s what really drew me in being able to learn from a master. I hope to get
any tips from [Valenzuela].”

Six students performed original songs for Valenzuela. Some students were told to “dominate a moment” when presenting songs, while others were told to be more comfortable and excited on stage.

Once all the students had performed, a final performance by Valenzuela closed the class.