Music showcase unveils new drum kit

William Cuellar, Staff Writer | Posted: Tuesday, April 28, 2015 8:13 am

The Music Department’s Spring Showcase Music Hour took place during U-Hour on Tuesday. The event unveiled the music department’s new drum kit, the Roland TD-30KV V-Drum Kit.

The showcase consisted of four instrumental performances, two electronic-based instrumental performances, an opera singer and a jazz band.

According to assistant music professor Jennifer Amaya, the drum kit performances, which “opened with a bang,” rewarded students with an “end-of-the-year celebration of all the hard work students put in over the course of the year.”

The Provost’s Office sponsored the department’s new drums following the unfortunate demise of the department’s 15 year-old kit. With over 1,000 sounds, the kit allowed third-year music student Ryan Tiegs to take advantage of its sound capabilities.

“I have never seen an electric drum set that looks as much like a real kit, plays like a real kit and sounds like a real kit as [the TD-30KV],” said Tiegs.

Tiegs incorporated the audience into the first performance, titled “A Spacetime Odyssey,” by using them to “wake up” the kit. Once awake, the kit’s “warp drive” transported the audience back to 1950.

After a 1950s-themed drum solo, the kit’s warp drive turned on again and took the audience to 2058. The futuristic setting allowed Tiegs to demonstrate the drum kit’s full capabilities by showcasing several cutting-edge drum sounds.

Tiegs returned to 2015 and ended his solo with another drum performance using contemporary drum sounds. While the performance structure was intentional, Tiegs completely improvised the drum solo.

“I organized the hits and then went from there,” said Tiegs, “Why practice? That’s just how I play.”

The drum kit has new technology incorporated into each “V-pad,” allowing a drummer to play up to three different sounds on one pad. With the new technology and futuristic look of the TD-30KV, the department has dubbed the drum kit “The Spaceship.”
“I call it a spaceship because of all the spacey sounds I get out of it,” said Tiegs, “It looks like a real spaceship.”

The drum solo was followed by three instrumental performances, including the clarinet, marimba and trumpet, before fourth-year music student Anthony Crespo, a synthesizer and piano player, came to the stage.

The synthesizer performance was also the first of its kind in a music showcase. Crespo used his MIDI keyboard to play an original piece.

“[This] was the first time I played a piece I wrote in public,” said Crespo. “I was satisfied with the way it came out.”

Crespo, introduced as “The Wizard,” performed “La Paz,” which is Spanish for “The Peace.” The composition highlighted his skills as a pianist and a MIDI technician as he simultaneously played the keyboard while using various knobs to add in filters and oscillation sounds.

Fourth-year student Laura Pluth then performed opera, and Josh Franklin followed with a guitar solo. The showcase ended with an ensemble performing the jazz song “My Way.”

Five student musicians including Crespo performed the song, and rehearsed an hour before the showcase began. The group drummed up the largest applause of the afternoon.

“For jazz, we really didn’t have to practice,” said Crespo. “Whatever comes out, comes out.”

The students performed with high degrees of precision and professional skill.

As the show’s director, Amaya looked for engrossing performances to share with the university body.

“I was going for really good performances that were engaging,” said Amaya.

From “A Spacetime Odyssey” to “My Way,” the audience was given a taste of a wide range of music spanning several time periods.

“I knew I wanted to start with the V-drums to set a certain tone and end with the group performance band,” said Amaya. “It ended big.”