Music students aim to refresh studios

Jessica Wang, Staff Writer | Posted: Tuesday, March 1, 2016 7:00 am

Music lovers flocked to the Garage Band Showcase at Dope Spot Studios in Pomona, California on Feb. 12 for a benefit concert to raise funds for Cal Poly Pomona’s Department of Music.

Garage Band Showcase, a senior project by Yamir Arreola, a fifth-year music industry student, sought to raise funds for new equipment for the campus recording studios utilized by music students.

The music department currently houses two recording studios with equipment that Arreola described as old due to being timeworn, which makes it difficult to complete projects and accommodate highly impacted classes.

“If you were to see [the studio], you’d feel like you were transported to the 1970s,” said Arreola. “It’s very vintage, and we’d definitely like to take care of it.”

Arreola described the difficulties of record projects that result from time constraints, too small studio spaces and an overcrowded department. According to Arreola, tensions often ran high due to these factors.

“There’s definitely a good eight classes that revolve around these recording studios,” said Arreola. “So, as you can imagine, it gets pretty impacted with classes trying to record in these little studios.”

Arreola said that while the studios work well, the main concern rests on renovating or replacing equipment. The state of some of the equipment is what inspired Arreola’s senior project.

While students usually record EPs or full-length albums for their required senior projects, Arreola wanted to do something different to help make the studios more accessible.

Consequently, Arreola partnered with Sunlane Music Management Company, a Fullerton, California-based business created by CPP alumnae Georgina Castro and Rosie Morelos, who manage emerging local artists.

Created during summer 2015, Sunlane’s collaboration with local artists developed from Castro’s ties to

musicians that emerged from her job as a music editor for Concert Guide Live, a music magazine based in Orange County, California.

“[Sunlane is] not even a year old — it’s really new,” said Castro. “We’ve been fortunate enough to have so many opportunities, and it’s been really fun, and we’ve grown so much.”

Arreola’s inspiration behind her showcase stemmed from Castro’s senior project, Rock for Recording, which also sought and succeeded in raising funds for equipment through a benefit concert at The Glass House in Pomona in October 2014.

According to Arreola, Castro’s project paved the way for creative benefit within the department and served as the ultimate driving force behind her own senior project.

“It’s a slow progress obviously, but hopefully people continue on with this [tradition of a] benefit [so that] we can start seeing bigger results,” said Arreola.

Sunlane jumped at the opportunity to collaborate with Arreola.

“There’s always challenges when you’re putting these things on, [but] she did a really good job on it,” said Castro. “We put our bands on the bid for her and helped guide her through because I had already gone through it.”

With the guidance of Arthur Winer, an associate professor at the Department of Music, Arreola wanted to leave a lasting contribution to the department before graduating in spring.

“[The department] really helped me out, and a lot of other students thought it’d be a great way to go out,” said Arreola.

Winer said that while the studios are in state-of-the-art condition and house extensive equipment, the fact that they are in constant use warrants the maintenance.

“In the short term, we’re looking for ways to upkeep what we have,” said Winer. “But in the long term, yes, of course, we are looking into building a whole new studio, but that’s a long-term plan that would require a lot of money.”

In an effort that took six months to plan, Arreola secured Dope Spot Studios for her showcase through friend and CPP student DeVante Carpenter, whose local band, Dope by Design, owns the studio.

In addition to Dope by Design, the benefit featured local bands Rough Sole, Falling Doves and Some Type of Stereo. The benefit also featured artwork from local artists.

While the benefit raising sufficient funds for equipment was a successful feat in itself, Arreola said the most rewarding aspect was the connections formed.
“I had a lot of people coming up to me [after the event] saying ‘thank you so much for this, I spoke to so and so, and we’re going to collaborate on an album,’” added Arreola. “Just building those networks and connections made it successful.”