Student musicians present original songs

Sean Goodwin, Reporter | Posted: Tuesday, May 23, 2017 11:51 am

Students of the music department presented a one-of-a-kind show on Thursday and Friday with the 14th Songwriter Showcase concert held in the Music Recital Hall.

Directed by professor Arthur Winer, the concert featured 21 songs all composed by students to show just how talented the department is when it comes to creativity.

“There’s no other ensemble on our campus where the music is written and performed by the students,” said Winer. “We have a lot of ensembles in the music department, but none of them are like this.”

The reaction to the first night of the show made it evident it was something special.

The audience constantly cheered over the musicians getting the opportunity to showcase what they could do.

The concert was divided into four sections with each section being produced by one or two composers. Fourth-year music student Teresa Lem and fifth-year music student Megan Dickinson produced one of the best sections of the night.

It started with their composition, “Too Hot for Me.”

Lem started the fun, energetic song with an extraordinary solo on the baritone saxophone before Dickinson took over vocal duties while playing the vibraphone.

“It was really cool to hear all the ideas planned in our heads and see it evolve and grow,” said Lem.

“I think that we’re both really happy with the way it turned out,” said Dickinson. “I ate a shake right before singing so I was worried that that was going to mess me up, but I felt pretty good about it.”

Their section also contained many of the standout songs of the show, including the powerful “Love’s Lost Song” by Danielle Prioleau.

“She definitely ate up the stage,” said Lem. “Everyone loved it.”
However, the audience truly became mesmerized when Moriah LaPointe took control of the stage with her song, “Demolition Woman.”

Her performance was passionate, and it really won over the audience.

The song even incorporated a rap verse by Tiara Lucas, which the audience applauded heartily as soon as the verse was over.

Winer commented, “I noticed the audience standing up and looking like, ‘What is this?’”

Dickinson and Lem’s section ended the first half of the concert, and the audience couldn’t stop talking about it during the 10-minute intermission.

The concert was filled with great songs, but “Ignorant Bliss” by Kylie Mayhew was the song that stole the show.

The song started out soft and soulful with an excellent use of cello, but it kept getting bigger and more emotional as it went on.

By the end of the song, every musician on stage was playing passionately while Mayhew sang in an extremely moving way.

The Songwriter Showcase was set into motion in January when Winer began holding auditions to perform in the show.

It was just a matter of finding the best of the bunch, and turning those songs presented into much bigger performances.

Of the 60 songs auditioned, Winer handpicked the 21 that made it into the show.

“It’s a truly collaborative effort,” said Winer. “All of these people have been rehearsing together the whole quarter to make the songs that started out as maybe an acoustic guitar and a vocal into what you saw tonight where you had 10 or 12 people on stage.”

Being a part of the show isn’t restricted to just music students; anybody who has the talent and the motivation can participate through auditions.

In fact, Winer stated that many of the musicians who auditioned and didn’t make the cut still ended up participating in the show.

“There’s opportunities for songwriters and all kinds of other musicians in this ensemble,” said Winer.

Second-year music student Sean Gibson was one of the musicians who participated as a guitarist in the show.
“There’s no better time than the present to get started. If you just want to play music, but you feel like you aren’t experienced enough, don’t worry about it, just go for it,” said Gibson. “You’ll learn a lot along the way, and you’ll have a lot of fun.”