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# Zimmerli museum collaborates with Mason Gross to showcase Latin American music

act)23/17 1:26pm Christian Zapata (<http://www.dailytargum.com/staff/christian-zapata>)



Photo by Jeffrey Gomez

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Mason Gross School of the Arts faculty demonstrated their musical talent at the Zimmerli Art Museum's Music at the Museum - "Alma Latina" event Saturday.

The Zimmerli Art Museum hosted their annual Music at the Museum — "Alma Latina" event Sunday in conjunction with the Mason Gross School of the Arts. The event showcased Spanish and Latin American compositions for piano, guitar and voice.

The performance featured Mason Gross Extension Division faculty member Yen Lee on classical guitar and Enriqueta Somarriba on piano, with support from soprano Emily Gibson.

Music at the Museum is a monthly weekend concert series collaboration with

Zimmerli Art Museum featuring Mason Gross School of the Arts faculty performances. The concert series is curated by the extension division of the museum and helps visitors experience art and music side-by-side, according to their **Facebook page**. (<https://www.facebook.com/events/1936555986564888/>)

Christopher Kenniff, the director of the Mason Gross School of the Arts Extension Division, said the event looks to reach new audiences for the museum by use of their faculty curated performances featuring an international theme this year for their third concert season.

Every performance touches on a different culture and each performer holds a particular interest in the genre of music, he said.

Kenniff said that Enriqueta Somarriba is a native of Spain, while Yen Lee completed her doctoral dissertation on the classical guitarist and composer Fernando Sor.

“The feature of the event was trying to place focus on Latin American and Spanish repertoire. There are a lot of people from different regions of Latin and Central America in New Brunswick, so we thought it would be something of interest to show the community,” he said.

Allowing teachers the opportunity to have their voices heard and shine through in performance is crucial to the series, Kenniff said.

He said through the help of their high-quality faculty, the department has been able to give back to the community by offering the event free of charge open to the public.

Whenever possible the department looks to draw ties between the performances and different galleries throughout the museum. Though this series was not able to, previous concerts have featured installments of Russian non-conformist artwork, he said.

“One of the coolest things that the performers did was the world premiere of a work written specifically for the three of them by a composer named Patricio Molina. He is from Chile but currently lives in New Brunswick and was able to write a piece titled 'Love' for them which I thought was very cool,” Kenniff said.

Energy, rhythm and melody are what the department thought to encapsulate in their performances while staying true to what people thought about when they thought of Spanish music. He said the piece by Molina was an interesting contrast of this and really brought out the differences in the music.

With over 100 people seated inside the museum, the event has solidified itself as a common ground for students to celebrate the music performances of their professors, he said. Even those who cannot make it in time to find seating can rest assured that the sounds carry themselves throughout the museum with prominent echoes.

**According to the site** (<https://www.facebook.com/events/1936555986564888/>), each series is preceded by a brief talk related to the performance theme. After the concert, there is typically a tour of museum highlights to close the night.

Audiences are invited to interact and talk back to performers during the Q&A — sometimes performers will even talk briefly between songs, Kenniff said. After the event, many of the spectators talk to performers.

“It’s funny, during our last concert I had a student come up to me and say, 'I was so happy for this concert because I was really feeling down and this really changed my perspective.' We really don’t know why we have so many students but we see them being involved and it’s really great,” he said.

The department has now begun planning for their next season and hopes to have details and promotion ready to send out by June. Students can learn about future event details and involvement through their social media accounts.

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