

MUSIC PERFORMANCE and technology festival



STORY AND PHOTOS BY MATT ROWNING

Clackamas Community College's first "Music Performance and Technology Festival" was a celebration of a new degree and the art that comprises it: music.

The brainchild of Kathleen Hollingsworth, the Music Performance Technology degree and festival is the answer to students' wants.

Hollingsworth said, "We started this degree program because we had a really great studio here at the college. All these kids were coming in to get the Music Tech Certificate; they had all these music skills and no way to work them out. I proposed the idea of building a Music Tech and Performance degree. We spent a year building it, got it approved by the state, and now the degree is live."

Helping young musicians achieve their dreams is the objective.

"We're trying to nurture a more authentic and unique musician, and one that can make it out in the business on their own," she said.

New York percussionist Billy Martin, perhaps best known for his work with Medeski, Martin & Wood, opened with a lecture on creativity on April 20. Martin brought a set of confidence-instilling wisdoms to the students.

His words "Your way is the way," best summed up his attitude towards songwriting and creativity.

As a self-identified "experimental musician," Martin encouraged students to find their own unique voices in the broad world of music.

"There is no musical ideal," said Martin. He encouraged students to "go in any direction as long as we don't stay in one spot." He shared anecdotes on touring, composition and creativity exercises before taking questions.

The other public event on Wednesday was a drumming masterclass, also led by Martin. Students jammed on handheld percussion with him.

Clackamas student Chris Caruthers said

on the festival and the music classes: "I learn so much every single day. There's never a moment where I'm like 'know this already.' It's new stuff to me. Then I can challenge myself more as a musician."

The second day of the festival on April 21 included lectures with Martin and recording and performing software workshops with Isaac Cotes, a composer, teacher and Ableton Certified Trainer.

"Becoming an Ableton Certified Trainer basically means you've pushed yourself out into the world of other musicians," said Cotes. "Ableton sees that, and then you go through their certification program to get their stamp of approval. It's helped me teach at places like this, I work with curriculum at high schools and colleges."

Cotes offered insight on the use of Ableton Live itself, as well as two new innovations from Ableton: Push and Link.

Push is a music composition tool (technically a sequencer and MIDI pad) that uses Ableton's onboard synthesizers

and drums to let you compose quickly. Link is Ableton's new method for syncing software instruments from computers, to iPads, to cell phones that uses internet router signals to share a time code.

The final event of the festival was a concert Thursday evening. Student ensembles played and sang, with the Contemporary Music Ensemble, Onion, the Man and the CCC Chamber Choir representing the students.

CCC staff also took some time in the spotlight. Electronic music instructor and wizard jazz pianist Clay Giberson displayed his otherworldly chops on a red electronic organ, then again on the Ableton Push.

Visiting artist Martin took a fantastic drum solo, and almost magically, aerial dancer Kerri Jonquil took the stage with the band to finish their set.

Debbie Fox contributed to this report.