



Photo by Alex Milstein - Staff Writer

Students played various instruments during the Percussion Ensemble concert.

DRUMS

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with an arrangement of the Jackson 5's classic "I Want You Back," and world music was represented by Farrar's arrangement of Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti's "Water No Get Enemy," and saxophonist John Dallmer's arrangement of Balkan Beat Box's "Gross."

"I usually get a lot of great ideas from the students," Richmond said. "And then we have to evaluate those based on how difficult they are, if they're a good match for the ability of the group and how well they

translate to percussion instruments, since a lot of them are originally on other instruments."

The concert also showcased UNCA's African Ensemble, directed by Agya Boakye-Boaten, Africana studies program assistant professor. Boakye-Boaten and five of his students performed "Fume Fume" and "Kpalongo," two traditional Ghanaian folk tunes. Their performance, which featured danceable rhythms and rousing vocal harmonies, felt somewhat removed from the rest of the concert.

"We didn't have a chance to coordinate," Richmond said. "I'm thinking we're going to continue bringing them in, and

maybe next semester we'll do some pieces together."

The music department offers two ensembles every semester, with the Percussion Ensemble serving as a mainstay. Richmond encourages students with interests in music from all departments, both experienced and inexperienced, to take part in future ensembles.

"The only requirement I have for students coming in is that they can read music, because I can't teach them to read in the course of the class, but I can teach them to play percussion," Richmond said. "It's a one-credit class, so most people can fit it in. I'm happy to have anybody who wants to come."

Arcade Fire awes listeners

Album Review

Noor Al-Sibai

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Reflektor, both the album and single, charmed and awed the music blogosphere – from the highly-coveted 9.2 rating at Pitchfork, to Pretty Much Amazing asserting the album is Arcade Fire's *OK Computer*, to an MTV.com review calling the album the band's "U2 moment."

Perhaps the only highly-disseminated review that couldn't be construed as unabashedly singing the album's praises is St. Vincent's Annie Clark, and only because it's impossible to understand.

It's easy to see why critics have been losing their minds over the album – not only was *Reflektor* the follow-up to Arcade Fire's 2011's Grammy-winning release *The Suburbs*, it also famously includes David Bowie on the title track and LCD Soundsystem's James Murphy as its producer. With the steadily-evolving mythos surrounding frontman Win Butler's inspirations for the album – Kierkegaard, Haitian rara music and the film *Black Orpheus* – and the band's ascent into the annals of musical fame, it's safe to say a lot was riding on this album. With characteristic flair and panache, Butler and wife Régine Chassange – the only remaining members of the original lineup – delivered.

"*Reflektor*," the opening track, is everything you'd expect from an Arcade Fire single: pounding rhythms and newly-mature saxophone sounds, culminating into a bona fide frenzy in which David freakin' Bowie makes his guest appearance, acting as the "ressurrector" to whom Butler is praying. As Chassange, whose Haitian background inspired Butler's first visit to the island, sings in her little-girl French about the time between dawn and dusk – "Entre la nuit, la nuit et l'aurore," – it almost

sounds like she's singing about the ennui that acts as a driving force for the rest of the album. Butler is clearly unsettled, and as Annie Clark said the final paragraph of her bizarre review, he has created an album full of "sleaze, anxiety, and pathos that you can dance to."

It's no coincidence that the pathos of "Reflektor" is immediately followed by "We Exist," a slow, disco-infused meditation on the existential crises of existing in a technological world, set to a storyline Butler revealed to TimeOut London that's about a young gay man coming out to his father. The disco sounds are also not coincidental – Butler has regularly commented on his own disco inspiration as well as producer James Murphy's funk and disco tendencies.

The Haitian influence features heavily on "Here Comes The Night Time," complete with a 22-minute music video featuring some of the band's friends, including Bono, James Franco, Zach Galifianakis, Ben Stiller, Aziz Ansari and Michael Cera. Despite the genuine soulfulness produced by the Haitian rara music, the song's corporate ties to The Creators Project, a subset of Vice funded by Intel, render the video somewhat soulless.

The rest of the album follows a similar pattern of intellectual-cum-disco-cum-rara stylings. From the sepia-tinted throwback to both the '70s and *Neon Bible* on "You Already Know," to the funerary dirge "Here Comes The Night Time II," the album simultaneously follows the formulaic perfection of their first three albums while also throwing it out entirely in favor of their newer, more mature sound. Echoes of the band's literally mythological roots with a hint of new wave comes in on "Awful Sound

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