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Dalí Quartet

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Latin quartet brings rhythm to Temple students

Steve Pettit | Herald correspondent

Violist Adriana Linares, right, explains the origin of salsa music to Temple Independent School District string students Monday at Temple's Cultural Activities Center. About 325 students and teachers were in the audience for the Dalí Quartet's master class.

It was as unexpected as it was spontaneous: more than 300 sixth-through 12th-graders jumping to their feet, laughing and dancing to the rhythms of a classical string quartet.

No stuffy, ploddingly pedantic lecture at this master class — just four youthful Latino string players onstage — known as the Dalí Quartet. The occasion was the annual Marty Lundgren Master Class sponsored by the Central Texas Orchestral Society, held at Temple's Cultural Activities Center on Monday.

Students from the Temple Independent School District strings program took a break from the classroom and arrived at the Mayborn Auditorium via school buses for the 90-minute musical workshop.

The musicians, three Venezuelans and one Puerto Rican, abstained from formal concert attire — no tuxedos or long black dresses — instead choosing casual, relaxed apparel that mirrored the jeans

and untucked shirts of the school kids in the audience.



Violist and spokeswoman for the group, Adriana Linares, forged a near-instant rapport with the audience, managing to get a boy and girl volunteer up on the stage before the quartet's initial downbeat.

Emphasizing the merging of "music from both hemispheres," Linares launched into a rapid-fire crash course in salsa. "It's not from Cuba, not from South America. It came from New York," Linares said as she demonstrated rudimentary dance steps. In no time, the 300-plus audience members were on their feet and boogying.

Apparently this sort of thing happens regularly at Dalí Quartet performances. The ensemble is in its 10th year of hosting the Dalí Camp and Festival, for

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people ages 10 and older, with Linares serving as director of the weeklong music camp. “It’s about excitement, education and performance,” said Carlos Rubio, Dali’s second violinist. “After a week of activities we have chamber orchestra performances by the campers and it’s inspiring and fun.”

The Temple students were attentive as the quartet performed works by various South American composers. The alternative bowing techniques and percussive effects produced a surprising rhythmic beat, said Jade Miller, 14.

“I liked the way they made drum sounds from hitting the side of the cello,” Jade said.

Virtuoso flourishes like double and triple stops, which produced intervals and chords of multiple pitches from a single instrument, contributed to the remarkable fullness of the unamplified group.

Truly a vital fine arts force and in the top tier of area musical nonprofits, the Central Texas Orchestral Society also was responsible for pianist Sean Chen’s incandescent recital in October at the Temple center. The Central Texas Orchestral Society will present the Borealis Wind Quintet on March 23 at the Cultural Activities Center.

Even with all the tangos, boleros, rumbas and joropas, the musicians still accented classical European forms: a quick primer on the fugue had the audience cheerfully singing in “rounds,” with Linares, viola and bow wielded as

conductor’s batons, bounding across the stage, directing the students.

One of the Dali Quartet’s goals is to “take listeners on an eclectic journey of rhythm and sound.” It seemed that Madison Butler, 13, was transported. “It was great and I never thought I’d dance at a concert like this.”

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