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Cross campus concert brings audiences to five different museums

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[Blanton Museum of Art](#), [Ernest Butler School of Music](#), [Texas Memorial Museum](#)

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Published on April 8, 2013 at 10:36 pm
Last update on April 8, 2013 at 11:44 pm
BY [AMANDA O'DONNELL](#)

Audiences broke the concert hall stage barrier Saturday “crawling” to and from the museums of [Austin’s Cultural Campus](#) to listen to five different chamber concerts by [Sarah and Ernest Butler School](#)

of [Music](#) student musicians.

The Austin Cultural Campus is a collection of participating museums including the [Blanton Museum of Art](#), [Harry Ransom Center](#), [Texas Memorial Museum](#), [Visual Arts Center](#) and [Lyndon B. Johnson Library](#). Students played in the front of each museum to encourage audience members to try to visit all of them in a single day.

[Evan Leslie](#), the school’s outreach coordinator, said the crawl highlights the rich variety of art, history and science exhibited on the UT campus.

“The crawl also acts as a learning experience for the students at the Butler School of Music,” Leslie said. “They are challenged to curate a music program that relates to the collections of a specific museum and to interact with their audiences more directly than in a traditional concert.”

Music performance senior Thales Smith, who performed in the Blanton Museum of Art, said holding the concerts in museums allowed audiences to feel more relaxed while listening than if the concert had been held in a traditional hall.

“In our first performance, we had two little girls dancing in the front, and in our last performance there were some older couples that asked a lot of question and joked around,” Smith said. “Making music in a large, beautiful space [like the Blanton atrium] just feels good.”



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Leslie said classical musicians rarely have the opportunity to perform with their audience in close proximity.

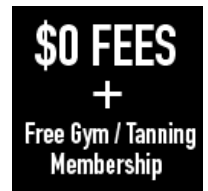
“The crawl format allows us to reach a large cumulative audience, while also enjoying intimate interaction with museum guests in an aspiring setting,” Leslie said. “It allows cross-fertilization of audiences as well — people that love history might realize they also love classical music and vice versa.”

Music performance junior Meera Gudipati said the Texas Memorial Museum was especially appropriate for her performance.

“There was a skeleton hanging right above us, which I found very fitting as a flutist, since the first flutes were made out of bones,” Gudipati said. “The acoustics of the museum fit to the baroque era music we played, because it was often performed in spacious churches and cathedrals with similar acoustics.”

Each of the five concerts was tailored to the museum it was performed in. For example, students who performed in the LBJ Museum presented a concert of jazz pieces from the 1960s to honor Lyndon B. Johnson’s heroic legacy in campaigning for civil rights.

In addition to the annual Concert Crawl, Butler School students perform a “Beat the Rush” concert every third Thursday at the Blanton, in which each part of the museum has a different type of performance.



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