



MAESTRO Mucca Pazza is a street theater marching band without much marching and a lot more rocking. This band of 30 members found itself in the Chicago Underground music scene and has performed at Lollapalooza and on "Late Night with Conan O'Brien."

MUCCA PAZZA

Breaking musical boundaries

At its concert, the band Mucca Pazza led with Brent Roman, one of the band members formerly from the Coles County area, conducting two upbeat pieces of music.

The music was so exuberant Roman hopped across the stage in the middle of conducting because he was so moved by it.

The band performed other pieces including the “Sit Down Waltz,” in which Sharon Lanza and Vanessa Valliere danced with themselves, and the “Tube Sock Tango,” written by Ronnie Kuller.

Kuller, the accordion player and artistic director for the group, said the band performs almost solely things written by its current and former members.

“It’s like an orchestra with legs,” Kuller said. “We make the most beautiful sounds that we can make really and perform the sounds the way they should be performed even though we’re jumping up and down and dancing around and falling over.”

Kuller said the band’s name means “mad cow disease” in Italian. Although she was not there during the naming process, Kuller assumes they picked the name because the band is quirky and their energy is infectious.

“If a bunch of people had gotten kicked out of a bunch of different marching bands for marching in a different direction than everyone else and somehow ended up marching towards each other and making up their own band, then that would be Mucca Pazza,” Kuller said.

Courtney Boyd, a sophomore music performance major, said when she saw the band’s performance on NPR’s Tiny Desk Concerts, she knew she had to go to their concert.

“I like how wild and raunchy they are,” Boyd said. “A lot of their music is very carefree, it’s very fluid, it’s very energetic, it’s very loud and they get in your face.”

Boyd said the band’s fun nature displayed a powerful lesson for performers.

“Hopefully they’ll inspire more musicians at Eastern to explore a bit more,” Boyd said. “One of the really cool things they do is exploring their sound and how far can they push the limits of what they’re going to do and what they’re going to put in.”

Boyd said it was impressive to see how the band approached thinking about music. As a performance major, Boyd said the focus is often on how fast or well a musician can play a piece.

“It becomes very narrow,” Boyd said. “I feel like they take some of those rules that we so commonly follow and kind of just throw those out of the window and play what they want to play.”

Marcial Bustamante, a junior music performance major, said the members’ unique, colorful costumes really stood out to him.

“They all looked like they had old high school marching uniforms,” Bustamante said. “Everyone had something different on.”

Bustamante said this differed greatly from his past marching band experience.

“We all wore the same thing. When your parents came to the games it was kind of hard to see who was who,” Bustamante said. “Marching band for us was strict.”

Mucca Pazza seemed freer, Bustamante said, which made the fact that they were having fun clearly evident to the audience.

“They were dancing and having fun. I feel like that helps though. The more expressive you are sometimes, you play better,” he said. “Sometimes you’re just too worried about being perfect and doing everything correctly, other than just having fun and doing what you love.”

