

Photo Essay by Paola Evangelista (Class of 2026)



Last spring, Trinity College transformed into a celebration of music, dance, and culture as it hosted the 16th annual Samba Fest. The public event brought together a community of performers and students.

Produced by Professor Eric Galm (Music) and coordinated by students Ana Gomes dos Santos and Poliane Soares da Silva, as well as Joe Barber and the Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement, and the Austin Arts Center, Samba Fest kicked off with performances by the student groups, AfroVibe Live and the Trinity Jazz Club.

A “Bicentennial Big Bang” led by Trinity’s Samba Ensemble and joined by Hartford’s Proud Drum and Drill Dance Corp, Ray Gonzalez and Plena del Barrio, and the entire audience in attendance, united 200 musicians in playing together to celebrate Trinity College’s bicentennial.





Nelson Bello and Friends represented the Caribbean rhythms of Bomba. Bomba is an important Puerto Rican musical genre developed on the island by enslaved Africans and their descendants that has continued to influence popular cultural expressions. Bomba notably features a conversation between a dancer and the lead drummer.



The audience experienced another historical musical tradition with a dance workshop of Maculelê led by Efraim Silva. Maculelê, a traditional stick dance of Afro-Brazilian origin developed on sugar cane plantations by enslaved Africans and their descendants. Silva sang while everyone responded by singing the chorus, creating an immersive experience.







Kainga Music, established as a nonprofit community music center by Trinity alum Keli Ross Ma'u, draws inspiration from Trinidad's panyards. Keli's vision, shaped by his experiences in

the Trinity in Trinidad program, aims to emulate the sense of community found in panyards within a community music school environment. The word 'Kainga,' chosen from his Tongan heritage, means 'extended family,' which encapsulates its ethos of community-building. Kainga Music continues to offer classes remotely and in-person.



Samba Fest featured demonstrations by visiting artists, such as Henrique Eisenmann.



Samba Fest also includes a celebration of the talent within our Trinity community through performances by the Trinity Samba Ensemble and Steel Ensemble. These groups are comprised of dedicated students including many first-time musicians who have honed their skills through coursework under the guidance of Professor Galm.









As the day drew to a close, it was evident that the 16th Annual Samba Fest at Trinity College was more than just a gathering of talented individuals. From the movements of capoeira to the pulsating rhythms of the drums, there was a palpable sense of community and the power of art to unite people across diverse histories and traditions.

