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weekender

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2008 • SECTION H

mucho mariachi

Famed Mexican troupe caps
Extravaganza week with Saturday concert

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A rousing grand finale

Mariachi Vargas will wrap up event

BY HECTOR SALDAÑA

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It's the highlight of a seven-day mariachi immersion: Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán's performance Saturday at Municipal Auditorium.

The concert, which officially wraps up the 14th annual Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza, starts at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call (210) 225-3353. Muñoz Public Relations produces the popular family event.

Four years running, the 70-piece UTSA Symphony Orchestra led by Eugene Dowdy performs with Mexico City's Mariachi Vargas.

The 12-piece Mariachi Vargas is known around the world for its dozens of albums and film appearances and has recorded with Luis Miguel and Linda Ronstadt.

Expect an emotional, rousing and passionate night of music. The evening celebrates not only virtuosity but education as well. It's also fun and showy, with mariachis decked out in sombreros and adorned charro suits.

"It's high-jolting energy," said Dowdy,



COURTESY PHOTO

Pepe Martinez (left) and Steeven Sandoval of Mariachi Vargas belt out a song at a recent show.



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| **Keyword:**
Entertainment

Watch Mariachi Vargas in action and find out more about the genre.

MARIACHI VARGAS DE TECALITLÁN

- **WHAT:** Grand finale concert of the Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza; also features student mariachis
- **WHEN:** 7:30 p.m. Saturday
- **WHERE:** Municipal Auditorium, 100 Auditorium Circle, downtown
- **TICKETS:** \$20-\$100 at Ticketmaster outlets

younger musicians that are no relation to the family," Martinez told the El Paso Times.

"But we still have three old men who are 50 and over, including myself, who have 48, 45 and 34 years of music under the belt. So we have that possibility of teaching the younger ones to preserve our rhythm and style of workmanship."

Martinez acknowledged that traditional roots music occasionally gives way to commercial considerations with inclusion of medleys featuring the songs of Juan Gabriel and Vicente Fernandez.

"There are certain songs and artists that we know we have to perform because the people like them so much," said Martinez.

praising Mariachi Vargas' up-tempo quarter-note drive and complex melodic content. "It's quite a switch. Absolutely fun, and the honor of playing with Mariachi Vargas."

The UTSA Symphony Orchestra will also perform the '30s classical Mexican score "Sensemayá" by Silvestre Revueltas, based on an Afro-Cuban poem by Nicolás Guillén. "The piece is so complex. I've heard it described as a Mexican 'Rite of Spring,'" said Dowdy.

For student mariachis who have competed and participated this week, it's an inspirational moment as they perform onstage.

Pepe Martinez is musical director of the Mariachi Vargas, which was founded by his great-uncle.

Since 1975, it has been his task to stay true to family traditions that date back five generations. Such authenticity is why Luis Miguel came to him for "Mexico en la Piel."

"The majority of the mariachi are now